



Perceived Influence of Mentoring on Entrepreneurship Development of Business Education Students in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study determine the perceived influence of mentoring on entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprised 86 lecturers and 599 undergraduate students in Business Education in Universities in Rivers State: namely the Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Purposive sampling technique was employed due to the small nature of the population. A validated 16-item self-designed instrument titled “Influence of Mentoring on Entrepreneurship Development Questionnaire (IMEDQ), was used for data collection. The researchers employed face and content validity methods and established the reliability of the research instrument through test-retest. The Cronbach Alpha was used to arrive at the reliability index of 0.86. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed among others that mentoring on entrepreneurship motivation influence the entrepreneurship development of students, entrepreneurship motivation enhances to high extent students’ self-independences, students ability to identify challenges, students ability to excel on entrepreneurship development programmes. It was recommended among others that mentoring programmes should be integrated into entrepreneurship education programmes and made compulsory at all levels of education.

Keywords: Business Education, Entrepreneurship Development, Mentoring, Universities.

INTRODUCTION

Business Education is an aspect of learning that prepares individuals for roles in business and offers them knowledge about business (Nwazor, 2014). Obanya (2002) in Nwazor (2014), opined that business education is an educational programme that is offered at the higher institution which prepares students for careers in business through inculcating in them skills, knowledge about or useful in the business world. Business Education represents a broad and diverse discipline that is included in all levels of educational delivery systems – elementary, secondary and post secondary (Amesi, 2016). Business education is perceived by Okoli and Osifila (2010) as an important part of general education which emphasizes skills and competency acquisition for use in office and business related occupations. Nwaneweizi and Essien (2010) described business education as encompassing education for office occupations, business teaching, business administration and economic understanding. Business education is a component of vocational technical education programme that prepares an individual for career in business and also to be an intelligent consumer of economic goods and services (Utoware & Kren-Ikidi, 2014). According to Ugwoke (2011), business education is work-focused, skill-based, result-oriented and technology-base.

Okolocha and Oneneke (2013), opined that business education equips recipients with personal skills, consumer skills and knowledge for clerical and managerial abilities needed to adapt to changing economic and business realities and these skills make them to be wealth and job creators rather than wealth and job seekers. In order to function effectively, there is need for business education students to be mentored by experts. Mentoring is a help or assistance given by a professionally trained personnel called the counselor to an individual or group of people who have challenges to help them understand themselves and their environment with a view to solving their problems, make necessary adjustment and finally live satisfactory and productive life now and in the future (Anyamene, 2010). Amaewhule (2014) opined that mentoring is an enabling process which encourages self-responsibility, as people make choices and decisions or share inner burden. This implies that mentoring enables people to examine their needs and problems and in so doing, reduce the confusion in thoughts and feelings that should be stressed. The lack of vocational mentoring through occupational information has led to the production of graduates without entrepreneurship knowledge and skills for effective running of business. Shane (2003) contends that the result of entrepreneurship may be a new organization or a part of revitalizing mature organisation in response to perceived opportunity. In today's world, anybody, industry or business leader with innovative and creative business abilities is described as an entrepreneur or someone who engages in entrepreneurship (Okala, 2008). Entrepreneurship education plays a prominent role in providing the opportunity for new entrepreneurs to develop entrepreneurship skills and motivation needed to start-up a new venture and to manage it successfully. Abdullah (2009) opined that entrepreneurship education increases new entrepreneurs' interest in becoming entrepreneurs at some stage after graduation. Skill is an indispensable asset to an enterprise that when it is properly harnessed, managed and utilized, will not only bring about increased productivity, but also expansion, growth and sustained profitability to the enterprise.

Stressing further, Abdullah (2009) averred that entrepreneurship competencies enhance entrepreneurship key skills, intention to create new ventures and business ownership and provide opportunities which affect their desire to step into entrepreneurship. This method of entrepreneurship development is referred to as traditional and repetitive. The traditional method of entrepreneurship development makes students to get bored and distracted easily. The beginning entrepreneurs are bored because they are not actively and fully engaged in the process of learning entrepreneurial knowledge (Koeign, 2012).

Entrepreneurial motivation simply refers to the processes whereby entrepreneurs find opportunities, evaluate these opportunities and if the opportunities are feasible, they request for resource to develop them (Shane, 2003). Azikiwe (2010) posited that mentoring Business Education students in entrepreneurial motivation enhances students' capacity to sustain enthusiasm to start up a new business or manage an existing one. Igboko (2009) averred that mentoring improves on the techniques of provoking students' intellect towards problem solving.

A number of factors have been found to motivate entrepreneurs. Amadi (2012) contends that these factors can be internal. Motivators are classified into four categories. These include extrinsic rewards, independence/autonomy, intrinsic rewards and family security. However, Yakin and Kapu (2008) classified entrepreneurial motivations into four categories. These are: financial, recognition, freedom and family tradition (i.e. the motive to continue the family business and to imitate family members). In the opinion of Brana (2008) motivating factors can also be classified as push or pull factors. Push factors include the need to increase family income, dissatisfaction with a salary-based job, problems with finding an appropriate job and the need for flexibility for family responsibilities. Pull factors on the other side include the need for independence, self-actualization, increase status-quo and reputation in society (Yakin & Kapu, 2008).

In addition to factors that motivate entrepreneurs, another frequently studied dimension of entrepreneurship research addresses the problems faced by entrepreneurship (Yakin & Kapu, 2008). Okolocha and Onyeneke (2013) opined that entrepreneurs are faced with such problems as the liability of newness, lack of funding management, identifying an appropriate market segment, protecting intellectual property, operational issues, and legal/regulatory issues. Ekpe, Raza and Mat (2012) identified ten critical problems encountered by entrepreneurs in their first three years in business. These problems include:

finding new customers, obtaining financing, recruiting and hiring new managers, dealing with current employee problems, product pricing, planning for market expansion, handling legal problems, product quality and dealing with government agencies. Unlike in developed countries, an unstable and bureaucratic business context is the common problem in Nigeria. For instance, entrepreneurs in Africa struggle with government. Laws concerning private enterprises such as enforcement of contract and private property laws, as well as overly complex business registration and tax system.

On the success factors of entrepreneurs, Brana (2008) posited that capital is a major factor linked to entrepreneurs' success. He further explained that capital exists as human capital, social and reputational capital. Human capital is an individual's knowledge and skills, and it is important in entrepreneurial discovery, problem solving, adapting to change, and implementing new technologies. According to Shrader and Siegel (2007), two critical components of human capital are education and prior experience. Social capital often thought of as social networks, is a set of social resources embedded in relationships and is derived not only from networks, but also from norms and relationships in the social structure in which a person operates. Reputational capital refers to social resources and legitimacy certified by well-regarded individuals and organizations and it accrues from a good reputation (Antonic, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

Observation by parents, teachers and the general public has shown that the purpose of introducing entrepreneurship education by the Federal Government in Universities in the country, has not been satisfactorily achieved (Umunadi, 2010). This has been largely attributed to the claim that vocational mentoring/counselling has not been fully integrated into entrepreneurship education programme. As such, Business Education students have not been properly mentored on the requisite skills and motivation needed for entrepreneurship development. In addition, students seems not to have been adequately taught entrepreneurship motivation and skills acquisition (Agboola & Ademiluyi, 2015).

Under these circumstances, it would appear that entrepreneurship education programme may not be meeting the expectations of the society. The present problem is that research in this area of mentoring business education students for entrepreneurship development through entrepreneurship skill and motivation is not very common particularly in Rivers State. A gap in knowledge therefore exists in which this study will fill empirically.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the perceived influence of mentoring on entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which mentoring on entrepreneurship skills influence entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State.
2. Ascertain the extent to which mentoring on entrepreneurship motivation influences the entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does mentoring on entrepreneurship skills influence entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does mentoring on entrepreneurship motivation influence entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study at 0.05 level of significance:

- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the extent to which mentoring on entrepreneurship skills influence entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State.
- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the extent to which mentoring on entrepreneurship motivation influence entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State.

METHODS

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design with a population of 86 Business Education lecturers and 599 undergraduate students of business education degree programme from the two universities in Rivers State, namely Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUOE). A validated 16-item self-designed instrument titled: Influence of Mentoring on Entrepreneurship Development Questionnaire (IMEDQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was designed using the four point modified Liker rating scale of High Extent (HE-4 points), Moderate Extent (ME-3points), Low Extent (LE-2points) and Very High Extent (VHE-1point). Its reliability coefficient was established at 0.86 using Cronbach Alpha. Out of the 685 copies of the questionnaire distributed, all the copies were correctly field and retrieved. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation statistics to answer the research questions while z-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Any value from 3.50-4.00 was regarded as High Extent, from 2.50-3.49 as Moderate Extent, from 1.50-2.49 as Low Extent, and from 0.50-1.49 as Very Low Extent. A null hypothesis was accepted if the calculated z-value is less than the critical z-value of ± 1.96 and rejected if the calculated z-value is greater than the critical z-value of ± 1.96 .

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent does mentoring on entrepreneurship skills influence the entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State?*

Table 1: Extent to which Mentoring on Entrepreneurship Influence Entrepreneurship Development of Business Education Students in Universities in Rivers State (N = 685)

S/N	Item - Statement	Lecturers (N = 86)			Students (N = 599)		
		\bar{X}_1	SD_1	Rmks	\bar{X}_s	SD_2	Rmks
1.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship skills promote students ability to apply practical sense.	2.86	1.02	HE	HE	0.95	High Extent
2.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship skills promote students ability to try new things.	2.79	1.05	HE	3.02	0.94	High Extent
3.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship skills promotes students ability to proactive ideas.	2.71	1.10	HE	2.98	0.94	High Extent
4.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship skills promotes students ability to learn by doing.	2.89	1.01	HE	3.13	0.91	High Extent
5.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship skills promotes students ability to want to demonstrate.	2.87	1.10	HE	3.10	0.89	High Extent
6.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship skills promotes student opportunities to be guided in application of new ideas.	3.14	0.89	HE	3.13	0.90	High Extent
7.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship skills provides students with the opportunity to be self-employed.	2.81	2.81	HE	3.08	0.90	High Extent
Aggregate Mean (\bar{X}) and SD		2.87	1.03	HE	3.06	0.92	High Extent

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The data on Table 1 revealed the items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 have mean values and standard deviation values for lecturers and students respectively that fell within the range of high extent. Therefore, with an aggregate mean of 2.87/30.06 it was evident that lecturers and students agreed to a high extent that the mentoring on entrepreneurship skills influence the entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: *To what extent does mentoring on entrepreneurship motivation influence the entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State?*

Table 2: Extent to which Mentoring on Entrepreneurship Motivation Influence Entrepreneurship Development of Business Education Students in Universities in Rivers State (N = 685)

S/N	Item - Statement	Lecturers (N = 86)			Students (N = 599)		
		\bar{X}_1	SD_1	Rmks	\bar{X}_s	SD_2	Rmks
8.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship motivation enhances their self independence	2.76	1.04	HE	3.13	0.95	High Extent
9.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship motivation enhances their effectiveness to want to venture into new business	2.93	2.98	HE	2.86	1.09	High Extent
10.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship motivation enhances their ability to identify challenges.	2.92	2.96	HE	3.01	0.95	High Extent
11.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship motivation enhances their ability to want to excel	2.84	1.08	HE	2.89	0.99	High Extent
12.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship motivation enhances their ability to be resilient	2.77	1.04	HE	2.96	0.96	High Extent
13.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship motivation makes them to aim higher.	2.95	1.06	HE	3.13	1.00	High Extent
14.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship motivation enhances their capacity to sustain enthusiasm to start up or manage an existing venture on graduation.	3.04	1.03	HE	2.99	1.00	High Extent
15.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship motivation enhances the technique of provoking students intellect towards problem solving.	3.93	1.05	HE	3.02	1.00	High Extent
16.	Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship motivation enhances their capacity to stimulate independent thinking.	3.01	0.98	HE	2.85	1.02	High Extent
Aggregate Mean (\bar{X}) and SD		2.91	1.02	HE	2.97	1.00	High Extent

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The data on Table 2 revealed that items 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 have mean values and standard deviation values for lecturers and students respectively and fell within the range of high extent. Therefore, with an aggregate mean of 2.91/2.99, it was evident that lecturers and students agreed to a high extent that the mentoring on entrepreneurship motivation influences the entrepreneurship development of Business Education students Universities in Rivers State.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the extent to which mentoring on entrepreneurship skills influence entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State.

Table 3: Z-test Analysis of the Mean Ratings of Lecturers and Students on the Extent the Mentoring on Entrepreneurship Knowledge Influences the Entrepreneurship Development of Business Education Students in Universities in Rivers State

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Lecturers	86	2.87	1.03	683	-1.83	±1.960	Accepted
Students	599	3.06	0.92				

Table 3 showed z-test of difference between lecturers and students on the extent the mentoring on entrepreneurship skills influences the entrepreneurship development of Business Education students. The z-test statistics calculated and used in testing the hypothesis stood at -1.83 while the critical z-value stood at ±1.96, using 683 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated z-value was less than critical z-value, the researcher therefore, accepted the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the extent the mentoring on entrepreneurship skills influences the entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the extent to which mentoring on entrepreneurship motivation influence entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State.

Table 4: Z-test Analysis of the Mean Ratings of Lecturers and Students on the Extent the Mentoring on Entrepreneurship Motivation Influences the Entrepreneurship Development of Business Education Students in Universities in Rivers State

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Lecturers	86	2.91	1.02	683	-0.58	±1.960	Accepted
Students	599	2.97	1.00				

Table 4 showed the z-test of difference between lecturers and students on the extent the mentoring on entrepreneurship motivation influences the entrepreneurship development of Business Education students. The z-test statistics calculated and used in testing the hypothesis stood at -0.58 while the ±1.96, using 683 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated z-value was less than the critical z-value, the researcher therefore, accepted the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the extent the mentoring on entrepreneurship motivation influences their entrepreneurship development of Business Education student in Universities in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

On the extent of mentoring on entrepreneurship skills influences the entrepreneurship development of Business Education students, the findings of this study revealed that mentoring on entrepreneurship skills promotes, mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship skills promote students ability to apply practical sense, mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship skills promote students ability to try new things, mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship skills promotes students ability to proactive ideas, mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship skills promotes students ability to learn by doing, mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship skills promotes students ability to want to demonstrate, mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship skills promotes student opportunities to be guided in application of new ideas, Mentoring Business Education students on entrepreneurship skills provides students with the opportunity to be self-employed. These findings agree with the assertions of Adbullah (2009) that entrepreneurship education increases new entrepreneurs interest in becoming entrepreneurs at some stage after graduation as entrepreneurial competencies enhances key skills, intention to create new ventures and provides opportunities for students to exercise significant responsibilities which affect their desire to step into entrepreneurship. Shane (2003), also supported these findings as he opined that the result of entrepreneurship may be new organization or a part of revitalizing mature organization in response to a perceived opportunity.

On the extent the mentoring on entrepreneurship motivation influences the entrepreneurship development of students, the findings of this study revealed that entrepreneurship motivation enhances to a high extent students' self independence; students' ability to identify challenges; students' ability to excel; students' ability to excel; students ability to be resilient and makes them to aim higher, students' capacity to sustain enthusiasm to start up or manage an existing venture on graduation, and the technique of provoking students intellect towards problem solving; and students capacity to stimulate independent thinking. In corroboration with these findings, Azikiwe (2010) posited that mentoring Business Education students in entrepreneurial motivation enhance students' capacity to sustain enthusiasm to start up further support by Igboko (2009) who averred that mentoring improves on the techniques of provoking students' intellect towards problem solving. Stressing further, Shane (2003) opined that entrepreneurial motivation refers to the processes whereby entrepreneurs find opportunities, evaluate these opportunities and if the opportunities are feasible, they request for resources to develop these opportunities.

The findings of this study revealed in Table 3 and 4 that there were no significance differences in the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the extent the mentoring on entrepreneurship knowledge and motivation influence the entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that the mentoring on entrepreneurship knowledge and entrepreneurship motivation influences to a high extent the entrepreneurship development of Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should provide adequate funding to enhance the smooth and effective running of entrepreneurship programmes.
2. Lecturers of undergraduate entrepreneurship education programmes should adopt a more practical skills approach in teaching entrepreneurship education courses in Universities in Rivers State.
3. Mentoring programmes should be integrated into entrepreneurship education programmes and made compulsory at all levels of education.

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