



Assessment of Entrepreneurial Intention Among Business Education Undergraduate Students in Rivers State Universities

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the assessment of entrepreneurial intention among Business Education undergraduate students in Rivers State universities. The study adopted descriptive research survey design. Two research questions were answered while two corresponding null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study consisted of 572 Business Education Undergraduate Students of 2020/2021 academic session in the two Universities offering Business Education. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 410 final year students which were used as sample for the study. Data was collected through a self-structured questionnaire, designed after four-point rating scale. The instrument was validated by the researcher's supervisor and two other experts from Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was established using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and a coefficient of 0.83 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation for the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses. The study found that Business Education undergraduate students in Rivers State Universities possess the ability to start up their own business upon graduation. It was further found that an entrepreneurial trait of Business Education student affects their entrepreneurial intentions in Rivers State Universities to a high extent. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that entrepreneurial education should be made more practical in other to encourage students who have the intention, Business Education students should also be encouraged to be involved in small entrepreneurship where they can utilize their innovative ideas to generate entrepreneurial intentions.

Keywords: Assessment, Entrepreneurial Intention, Business Education, Undergraduate

INTRODUCTION

Assessment is a vital means to determining or ascertaining the occurrence or performance of event or person. It is the act of estimating or evaluating the nature of something or someone. In education, assessment refers to the wide variety of methods or tools used to evaluate, measure, and document the academic performance, learning progress as well as skill acquisition of students (Education Glossary, 2019). Assessment measures how well or effective a particular education or training is. Consequently, assessment of Entrepreneurial intention among students of tertiary institution is vital to determining the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education administered in tertiary institutions especially, through business education programmes (Remeikiene, Startiene & Dumciuviene, 2019). It is assumed that effective education or training has the ability to influence the intention of students because it has the potentials to develop their personality traits. The researcher believes that assessing students' entrepreneurial intention is key to determining student's preparedness to becoming entrepreneurs because, intention is the starting point of every dream or venture. Actually, everything begins with intention. According to Wikipedia (2019), intention simply means, a mental state that represents a commitment to carrying out an action or actions in the future. Consequently, students' entrepreneurial

intention could be referred to as the mental state of students that represents a commitment to becoming entrepreneurs in the future. Entrepreneurial intention could also be referred to as the willingness of students to perform entrepreneurial behaviour, engage in entrepreneurial action, become self-employed, or establish new business (Ayedun & Ajayi, 2018). Entrepreneurial intention usually involves inner guts, ambition and the feeling to stand on one's feet (Zain, Akram & Ghani, 2010). Ayedun and Ajayi (2018) opined that entrepreneurial intention refers to individual's state of mind that aimed at creating new ventures and developing new business ideas. It is a major contributing factor to the formation, growth and development of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial intention is an important factor in facilitating towards the establishment of new business and has significant impact on the business success, survival and growth. It promotes self-reliance and brings about initiatives. It is suggested that entrepreneurial intentional process often begins on the basis of an entrepreneur's personal needs, values, wants, habits and beliefs. Entrepreneurial intention is considered to be a primary predictor of future entrepreneurial behaviour. According to Mungai and Ogot (2012), an individual may have the potential of being an entrepreneur because of own competency and self-efficacy but may not make the transition into entrepreneurship because of a lack of intention. Education is a vital tool for promoting entrepreneurship intention because it provides knowledge that is capable of positively affecting its recipients' personality traits, and also, provide them with better professional competences, more enterprising skills and willingness to "make things happen". Business Education programmes are believed to have strong formative influence on the attitudes and behaviour of students and have immense potentials to developing students' entrepreneurial intention. Business Education is a functional educational programme that provides individual with functional and suitable skills, knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values that would enable him or her to be fit in the field of work and contribute to economic development of the society. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), Business Education is central in the acquisition of skills and techniques in a chosen occupation or profession to enable the individual earn a living. Aliyu (2013) opined that Business Education is an education for and about business. It combines both theoretical and practical knowledge. In the same vein, it exposes the recipient to the economic system of his country and equips him with lifelong skills that would enable him to make reasonable judgment as a producer (entrepreneur), employee or consumer of goods and services. Nwaiwu (2009) stated that the essence of Business Education is to turn out graduates who will become entrepreneurs tomorrow, especially in Nigeria today where the white collar jobs are hard to find. Business Education programmes equip students with skills that would enable them to identify viable investment opportunities in their societies. Graduate Students of Business Education are expected to be able to see opportunities where others see chaos. They are supposed to be well equipped with skills that would make them function well as successful entrepreneurs. This is because they have substantial chances to acquire the relevant and necessary behaviours and skills such as SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunity and threats) analysis and other techniques to be able to understand business environment and identify businesses that strives even in the face of unfavourable economy. According to Ayedun and Ajayi (2018), reliable measure of entrepreneurial behaviour and skills, is entrepreneurial intention. Although, there are several factors that could influence student's entrepreneurial intention and one major factor is exposure to entrepreneurship education which has the ability to develop students' entrepreneurial personality traits of the need to achieve, risk taking propensity, generate innovative ideas, have internal locus of control, perceived behavioural control and self-efficacy. It is true that Business Education graduate programmes exposes students to several entrepreneurship courses. These courses are expected to improve students' knowledge and skills necessary to make students begin to develop the desire and nurture the ambition to becoming entrepreneurs. With all the benefits Business Education graduate programmes has to offer its students and coupled with its inherent ability of turning out graduate entrepreneurs, little or none is known about Business Education graduate entrepreneurs in Rivers State. One may begin to ask whether or not entrepreneurial content of Business Education graduate programme curriculums in universities in River State are adequate enough to supply the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to influence student's entrepreneurial intentions? Could it be as a result of poor entrepreneurship educational or skill acquisition facilities in the universities? Or external factors such as socio-economic background and social norm of students? It is in the light of the above, that an assessment of entrepreneurial intention among Business Education students is being conducted.

Statement of the Problem

Today's university students are tomorrow's potential entrepreneurs, which may explain why a growing number of Nigerian universities introduced courses and programmes in entrepreneurship. Unfortunately, a larger percentage of students, especially Business Education students, fail to make use of entrepreneurial aspect of their training but are left in the world of work either searching for employment or being underemployed despite their exposure to entrepreneurship education (Aliyu, & Bambale, 2016). The inability of graduates from universities to start-up their own businesses after graduation has been a major societal problem. Several factors such as lack of start-up capitals, poor infrastructure amongst others have been identified as responsible for the students' inability to venture into entrepreneurship by starting up their own businesses after graduation. Despite the problems stated above, there seems to be no record that shows an assessment of entrepreneurship intention among business education students in universities in Rivers State with a view to measuring the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education as obtainable in Business Education programmes as it affects students' personality traits; and how socio-economic, social norm and attitude of student affects their entrepreneurial intention, towards becoming successful entrepreneurs. To this end, the researcher wished to assess the entrepreneurial intention among Business Education students in Universities in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study was to assess the entrepreneurial intention of Business Education students in universities in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. Determine the extent to which Business Education undergraduate students possess the ability to start up their own business upon graduation.
2. Determine the extent to which socio-economic background of Business Education undergraduate students affect their entrepreneurial intention.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed for the study:

1. To what extent do Business Education students possess the ability to start up their own business upon graduation?
2. To what extent does socio-economic background of Business education students affect their entrepreneurial intention?

Test of Hypotheses

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

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent they possess the ability to start their own business upon graduation.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent socio-economic background affects their entrepreneurial intentions.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study adopted descriptive research survey design. The population of the study consists of 538 Business Education undergraduate students for 2020/2021 academic session in the two universities offering Business Education in Rivers State Universities. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 410 final students which were used as sample for the study. Data for the study was collected through a self-structured questionnaire instrument titled: Assessment of Entrepreneurial Intention Among Business Education Undergraduate Students in Rivers State Universities (AEIBEUSRSU). The questionnaire was structured on a four point rating scale of High Extent, Moderate Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent. All the copies of the questionnaire were retrieved. Two research questions guided the construction of the questionnaire. The instrument was validated by experts from Business Education and measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was established using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and a Coefficient of 0.83 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent do Business Education students possess the ability to start up their own business upon graduation?*

Table 1: Mean Responses on How Business Education Students Possess the Ability to Start up their own Business upon Graduation

S/N	Item Statement	RSU (N ₁ = 98)			IAUE (N ₂ = 312)		
		X ₁	SD ₁	Remarks	X ₂	SD ₂	Remarks
1	The entrepreneurial skills and knowledge that I have acquired stimulate my interest towards identification of Business opportunity.	3.47	0.57	HE	3.43	0.59	HE
2	Through critical thinking, I analyze every business for its profitability.	3.39	0.60	He	3.68	0.57	HE
3	Through the acquired knowledge, I am able to develop new ideas for improvement on existing products.	3.28	0.78	HE	3.33	1.11	HE
4	By practical application of knowledge and skills acquired, I can function progressively as an entrepreneur.	2.77	0.84	HE	3.57	0.48	HE
5	Through consistent research, I set out plans for stepwise development, growth and expansion of a business.	3.46	0.61	HE	2.96	0.87	HE
Average Mean/SD		3.27	0.68	HE	3.39	0.72	HE

Result from Table 1 show mean responses on the extent to which Business Education students possess the ability to start up their own business upon graduation. The result shows that Business Education students possess the ability to start up their own business upon graduation to a High Extent (HE) with an average mean of 3.27 and 3.39 for Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education students respectively.

Research Question 2: *To what extent do the socio-economic backgrounds of Business Education students affect their entrepreneurial intention?*

Table 2: Mean Responses on How Socio-economic Background of Business Education Students Affect their Entrepreneurial Intention

S/N	Item Statement	RSU (N ₁ = 98)			IAUE (N ₂ = 312)		
		X ₁	SD ₁	Remarks	X ₂	SD ₂	Remarks
1	The entrepreneurial skills and knowledge that I have acquired stimulate my interest towards identification of Business opportunity.	3.21	0.76	HE	3.50	0.64	HE
2	Through critical thinking, I analyze every business for its profitability.	3.31	0.80	HE	3.50	0.67	HE
3	Through the acquired knowledge, I am able to develop new ideas for improvement on existing products.	3.21	0.77	HE	3.56	0.64	HE
4	By practical application of knowledge and skills acquired, I can function progressively as an entrepreneur.	3.02	0.67	HE	3.23	0.57	HE
5	Through consistent research, I set out plans for stepwise development, growth and expansion of a business.	3.39	0.83	HE	3.09	0.59	HE
Average Mean/SD		3.23	0.77	HE	3.38	0.62	HE

Source: *Researcher's Field Result, 2021*

Results from Table 2 show mean responses on the extent do the Socio-economic backgrounds of Business Education students affect their entrepreneurial intention. The result shows that Socio-economic backgrounds of Business Education students affect their entrepreneurial intention to a High Extent (HE) with an average mean of 3.23 and 3.38 for Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education students respectively.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent they possess the ability to start their own business upon graduation.

Table 1: z-Test Analysis on How Business Education Students Possess the Ability to Start up Business

Category	\bar{X}	SD	N	Df	A	Zcal	zcrit	Remark
RSU	3.27	0.68	98	408	0.05	-1.49	1.96	Accepted
IAUE	3.39	0.72	312					

Source: *Researcher's Field Result; 2020* Accept Ho if $z_{cal} \leq z_{crit}$, Otherwise Reject Ho.

Since the calculated value of z ($z_{cal} = -1.49$) is less than the critical value of z ($z_{crit} = 1.960$) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent they possess the ability to start their own business upon graduation.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent socio-economic background affects their entrepreneurial intentions.

Table 2: z-Test Analysis on How Business Education Students' Socio-Economic Background Affects Entrepreneurial Intentions

Category	\bar{X}	SD	N	Df	A	Zcal	zcrit	Remark
RSU	3.23	0.77	98	408	0.05	-1.43	1.96	Accepted
IAUE	3.38	0.62	312					

Source: *Researcher's Field Result; 2020* Accept Ho if $z_{cal} \leq z_{crit}$, Otherwise Reject Ho.

Since the calculated value of z ($z_{cal} = -1.43$) is less than the critical value of z ($z_{crit} = 1.960$) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent socio-economic background affects their entrepreneurial intentions.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result showed that Business Education students in Rivers State Universities possess the ability to start up their own business upon graduation. The result further revealed that Business Education Students; develop personality traits for entrepreneurial intention, communicate effectively for entrepreneurial intention, Absence of specific knowledge and technique that are required to perform organizational role by Business Education Undergraduate Students and involvement in entrepreneurship by Business Education students requires great risk taking among others. These finding are in line with Andrew (2015) who found that entrepreneurship and innovation are regarded as in important tool to resolve the global challenges of the 21st century, to structure the sustainable development of an economy, to create new employment areas, to bring about renewed economic growth, and to enhance welfare. The findings of the study is also in line with Rae (2010) as opined that entrepreneurship education is vital to create an understanding of entrepreneurship, to develop entrepreneurial capacities, and to contribute to entrepreneurial identities and cultures at individual, collective and social levels.

The result further revealed that socio-economic background of Business education students affects their entrepreneurial intention. These findings are in line with Ejekwu (2016) as found that high inclination towards entrepreneurship indicates that most of the students want to become their own boss rather than organizational employee and that entrepreneurial intention of individuals must be regarded as an important factor of economic growth in order to propagate entrepreneurial intentions among students and graduates. The study also agrees with Igwe (2014) that for increasing the level of entrepreneurial intentions among students, it is needful to increase positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship, so attitudes can be viewed as the steppingstone to entrepreneurial intentions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from the study, it was concluded that Business Education students has possess the ability to start up their own business upon graduation, entrepreneurial traits of Business Education students affect their entrepreneurial intentions, socio- economic background of Business education students affect their entrepreneurial intention, Business Education students' attitude to entrepreneurial education affects entrepreneurial intentions among others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions made, the study recommended the following:

1. Entrepreneurship education should be made more practical in other to encourage student who have the intention.
2. Business Education students should involve in small entrepreneurship where they can utilize their innovation ideas generated for entrepreneurship intention.
3. Business Education students should be exposed to further training that will build in them business control and self-efficacy for entrepreneurial intentions.

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