

EXTENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION INFLUENCES THE ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS OF BUSINESS EDUCATION UNDERGRADUATES IN UNIVERSITIES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study determined the extent entrepreneurship education influences the entrepreneurial intentions of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The design of the study was descriptive survey. Population of the study was 619 (226 male and 393 female) business education undergraduates in the three universities in Anambra State offering the programme. The stratified random sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used to select a sample size of 243 (male and female) students. An adapted Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ) developed by Linan and Chen (2009) was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was a 5-point scale containing 37 items in four 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 co-efficient which yielded values of 0.97, 0.80, 0.71, and 0.75 respectively for the four clusters and overall value of 0.80. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze data to answer the research questions and determine the cohesiveness or otherwise of respondents' mean ratings. The z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that entrepreneurship education influenced attitude and perceived behavioural control of business education undergraduates towards becoming entrepreneurs to a great extent. Gender did not significantly influence the respondents' mean ratings in all the contents covered. It was concluded that business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State would benefit from effectively delivered entrepreneurship education programme as it would improve their entrepreneurial intention. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that university authorities should assist business education undergraduates that indicate intention to become entrepreneurs while in school and after graduation through incubator programmes.

Key Words: Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Intentions, Business Education

Introduction

Education is a lifelong process set out to inculcate sound reasoning as well as to prepare individuals for real life experiences. Matheson (2008) defined education as a structured process in which knowledge, skills, attitudes, character and behaviour of a person are shaped and molded. Matheson further opined that education is a mirror of a society. Thus, whenever the needs of a society change, its educational system changes accordingly. This is the reason why no society can afford to toy with the education of its citizens as this could result to a snail speed development.

Different countries including Nigeria have restructured their educational curricula in the light of existing economic and social factors with a view to providing students with an education capable of adequately preparing them for the world of work. The economic turbulence in the world market and the consequential crises of graduate unemployment led to the belief that if youths are properly educated, they could find and create their own jobs (Bae& Song, 2006). Similarly, the challenges of modern societies demand a type of education that can equip learners with knowledge that will make them functional in the society upon graduation. In the same vein, in a bid to bridge the gap between youth unemployment in Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education (2008) introduced into the educational curricula, entrepreneurship education and made it one of the compulsory general studies for students in tertiary institutions across the country to inculcate in the youths the spirit of self-reliance.

Entrepreneurship education is designed to re-orient students from being job seekers to become job creators. Ezemoyih (2011) opined that entrepreneurship education is the type of education that involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and management abilities necessary for self-reliance which can turn around the economic fortunes of the country and reduce the poverty level. Similarly, Arogundade (2011) asserted that entrepreneurship education prepares people, especially youths to be enterprising and to become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers that will contribute to economic growth and sustainable development. Shai (2009) gave a three component of entrepreneurship education curriculum considered to be comprehensive to equip students with the necessary skills and capacities for future life as personal development, business development and entrepreneurial skills' development. These are integral elements of the desired skills and capacities that will enable business education students to become self-reliant and productive in the society. Okoro (2015) asserted that in business education programme, there are several courses on 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) defined business education as the intellectual and vocational preparation of people for earning a living in the contemporary industrial and business environment. Iwu (2016) perceived business education as a tree of five branches which include general education, office education, accounting education, marketing/distributive education

and entrepreneurship education. The essence of entrepreneurship education is to build in the business education students entrepreneurship intention and culture (Adejimole & Olufunmilayo, 2009). Entrepreneurial intention is the intent to go into entrepreneurship ventures.

Entrepreneurial intention is a state of mind directing a person's attention and action towards self-employment as opposed to organizational employment (Souitaris, Zerbinati & Al-Laham, 2007). It refers to self-acknowledged convictions by individuals that they intend to establish new business ventures in the future. It is not merely a yes or no question but can range from very low, zero, to a very high level of intention to set up a business. Intention is a state of mind directing a person's attention, experience and actions toward a specific goal or path (Zhao & Cal, 2010). 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 simply an expectation or prediction of future actions but a proactive commitment which contain three major elements namely; personal attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control.

Attitude is a mental and neural representations organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence on behaviour. In respect to this study, attitude refers to the degree to which business education students hold a positive or negative personal valuation about being entrepreneurs. Personal attitude plays a major role in the decision of an individual towards becoming an entrepreneur (Liñán, Rodríguez-Cohard & Rueda-Cantucho, 2011). Perceived behavioural control is another form of entrepreneurial intention which reflects an individual's perception of his or her ability to successfully initiate a new venture (Shook, Priem & McGee, 2003). It is the perception of an individual on the easiness or difficulty in the fulfillment of entrepreneurial pursuit. Individuals with high perceived behavioural control towards entrepreneurship are more likely to start a business. Literature abound that entrepreneurship education can influence students' entrepreneurial intentions. As a result, Alain (2009) revealed that entrepreneurship education fosters entrepreneurial intentions and skills of students such as idea generation, start-up, growth and innovation. Puka and Aminu (2015) in a study of the effects of entrepreneurship education on university students' attitude and entrepreneurial intention in selected universities in North East, Nigeria showed that entrepreneurship education influenced students' intention to become entrepreneurs. Agboola and Ademiluyi's (2015) study also revealed that entrepreneurship education enhances entrepreneurial motivation and promoted entrepreneurial intention of students. Similarly, Mares, Costa and Galina's (2015) study on students' entrepreneurial intention showed that students' entrepreneurial intentions (EI) were significantly influenced by attitudes towards entrepreneurship (ATE) and perceived behavioural control (PBC). Martinez, Kelley and Levie (2010) agreed 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. According to Gerba (2012), 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 extent to which entrepreneurship education influences entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State is not clearly known. To get an insight of the extent entrepreneurship education influences entrepreneurial intentions of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State intensified the need for this study.

Statement of the Problem

The negative socio-economic effects of unemployment in Nigeria pose serious threats and challenges to both government and the well-being of citizens of the nation as a whole. 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 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 problem of this study was that empirical research that ascertained the extent entrepreneurship education influences the entrepreneurial intentions of university undergraduates (business education undergraduates in particular) in Nigeria especially in Anambra State is limited. Ascertaining the influence of entrepreneurship education on the factors that shape university undergraduates' intentions to become entrepreneurs is critical to enable business education stakeholders make informed decisions, hence the study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the extent entrepreneurship education influences the entrepreneurial intentions of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State. Specifically, the study determined the extent:

1. Entrepreneurship education influences the attitude of business education undergraduates in Anambra State towards becoming entrepreneurs.
2. Entrepreneurship education influences the perceived behavioural control of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State towards entrepreneurial intentions.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does entrepreneurship education influence the attitude of business education undergraduates in Anambra State towards becoming entrepreneurs?
2. To what extent does entrepreneurship education influence the perceived behavioural control of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State towards entrepreneurial intentions?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Male and female business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurship education influences their attitude towards becoming entrepreneurs.
2. The mean ratings of male and female business education university undergraduates in Anambra State do not differ significantly on the extent entrepreneurship education influences their perceived behavioural control towards entrepreneurial intentions.

Method

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Survey research design was considered most appropriate for this study because a questionnaire was used to elicit respondents' opinions on the aim of the study. The study was conducted in Anambra State which is located in South East, Nigeria. The population for this study consisted of 619 (226 males and 393 females) business education undergraduates in the three universities in Anambra State offering business education. The sample size of 243 (98 male and 145 female) students was selected using stratified random sampling technique. In the process, two strata were purposely formed based on gender (male and female students). Simple random sampling technique was used to select 164 students from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, 64 from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbaram and 15 students from Madonna University, Okija giving a total of 243 students. The data for the study were collected through an adapted Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ) developed by Linan and Chen (2009). The researcher made some modifications on the items of the instrument to suit the present study. The validity of the instrument was established using three experts, two from the field of business education and one from measurement and evaluation. The Cronbach Alpha co-efficient was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficients obtained for the four clusters (A to D) are 0.97, 0.80, 0.71 and 0.75 respectively with the overall reliability coefficient of 0.80 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 null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The

Extent Entrepreneurship Education Influences the Entrepreneurial Intentions ...

decision was that, when calculated z-cal is greater or equal to z-crit, the null hypothesis was rejected otherwise the null hypothesis was retained.

Results

Table1

Respondents' mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurship education influences attitude of business education undergraduates towards becoming entrepreneurs

S/N	Items on Attitude		SD	Remarks
	Entrepreneurship education:			
1	Increases my belief that a career in entrepreneur will be totally attractive to me.	3.53	1.24	Great Extent
2	Increases my desire to start a business If I have the opportunity and resources.	3.29	1.19	Moderate Extent
3	Improves my understanding that amongst various options, I will rather be anything but an Entrepreneur.	3.22	1.19	Moderate Extent
4	Gives me the belief that being an entrepreneur will give me great satisfaction	3.64	1.14	Great Extent
5	Increase my desire to be my own boss rather than have a secure job.	3.57	1.18	Great Extent
6	Makes a career as an entrepreneur attractive for me.	3.60	1.01	Great Extent
7	Makes me feel that if I have the opportunity and resources, I would like to start a firm.	4.20	0.89	Great Extent
8	Makes me feel that being an entrepreneur would entail greater satisfactions	3.57	1.19	Great extent
	I believe that if I will start my business, I will certainly succeed	4.06	1.05	Great Extent
10	Provides more advantages than disadvantages to me.	3.87	0.94	Great extent
	Cluster Mean	3.66		Great Extent

Data in Table 1 show that entrepreneurship education influences business education undergraduates' attitude towards becoming entrepreneurs to a great extent. This is shown by the cluster mean of 3.66. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their ratings.

Table 2
Respondents' mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurship education influences perceived behavioural control of business education undergraduates towards entrepreneurial intentions

S/N	Items on Perceived Behavioural Control	SD		Remarks
	Entrepreneurship education:			
11	Makes it easy for me to start a new firm and keep it viable	3.14	1.19	Moderate Extent
12	Improves my believe that would be completely enable to start a business	4.14	0.94	Great Extent
13	Helps me to control the creation process of a new business	3.68	1.16	Great Extent
14	Increases my understanding that if I tried to start a business, I would have a high chance of being successful.	4.26	0.81	Great Extent
15	Helps me to know all about the practical details needed to start a business.	4.42	0.74	Great Extent
16	Helps me to identify the number of events outside my control which could prevent me from starting a new business are very few.	3.90	1.20	Great Extent
17	Increases my understanding that developing a business idea would be easy.	4.33	0.63	Great Extent
18	Increases the belief that to start a firm would be easy for me.	2.31	0.93	Small Extent
19	Improves the belief that keeping a firm working well would be easy for me.	2.61	1.20	Moderate Extent
20	Helps me to know how to develop an entrepreneurial project.	4.38	0.68	
21	Enhances the idea that if I try to start a firm, I will have a high probability of succeeding.	4.69	0.46	Very Great Extent
22	Increases the understanding that if I want, I could become self-employed after my studies.	4.73	0.52	Very Great Extent
23	To enhance the belief that to start my own firm would probably be the best way for me to take advantage of my education.	4.11	0.82	Great Extent
Cluster Mean		3.90		Great Extent

Data in Table 2 show that entrepreneurship education influences perceived behavioural control of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State to a great extent. This is shown by the cluster mean of 3.90. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their rating.

Extent Entrepreneurship Education Influences the Entrepreneurial Intentions ...

Table 3
Summary of z-test analysis of male and female respondents on the extent entrepreneurship education influences their attitude towards becoming entrepreneurs

Gender	N	Mean	SD	α	df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Male	79	3.86	0.98	0.05	213	0.21	1.96	Not significant
Female	136	3.83	0.98					

Data in Table 3 show that the calculated z-value of 0.21 is less than the critical z-value of 1.96 ($0.21 < 1.96$) at 0.05 level of significance and 213 degree of freedom. This means that male and female business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurship education influences their attitude towards becoming entrepreneurs. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 4
Summary of z-test analysis of male and female respondents on the extent entrepreneurship education influences their perceived behavioural control towards entrepreneurial intentions

Gender	N	Mean	SD	α	df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Male	79	3.57	0.88	0.05	213	- 0.62	1.96	Not significant
Female	136	3.65	0.97					

Data in Table 4 show that the calculated z-value of -0.62 is less than the critical z-value of 1.96 ($- 0.62 < 1.96$) 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 extent entrepreneurship education influences their perceived behavioural control. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion

Findings of this study revealed that business education undergraduates were of the opinion that entrepreneurship education influences their attitude towards becoming entrepreneurs to a great extent. This was shown by a mean score of 3.66 which fell under great extent category range of 3.50 – 4.49. This finding is consistent with that of Li (2007) which reported that entrepreneurship education is geared towards changing undergraduates' attitude towards becoming self-employed upon graduation. In agreement, Dinis's (2011) study disclosed that entrepreneurship education does not only equip students with practical skills required for functional living, but also focused on changing students' negative attitudes about

entrepreneurship. Dinis further stated that positive attitude is significant to the process of business creation and to overcome the perceived barriers hindering individuals from starting small businesses. Dell (2008) agreed that desirability to be an entrepreneur is a measure of an individual's attitude toward entrepreneurship. In addition, the result of the test of null hypothesis showed that male and female business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurship education influences their attitude towards becoming entrepreneurs. This concurs with the findings of Lee et al. (2012) which revealed that gender did not influence business education students' ratings on the extent entrepreneurship education influenced their attitude towards becoming self-employed upon graduation.

The study also showed that business education undergraduates agreed to a great extent that entrepreneurship education influence their perceived behavioural control. The findings of this study is in line with the earlier findings of Kimmel (2008), which revealed that entrepreneurship education to a great extent influences students' perceived behavioural control which is closely related to self-efficacy (that is, believes of students that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in creating a small business upon graduation). Zaidatol and Lope (2009) revealed that undergraduate students who need entrepreneurial exposure have a high score on perceived behavioural control. This means that the greater the students are exposed to entrepreneurship education, the greater they will perceive that they possess relevant skills and therefore, are capable of handling challenges that come with being entrepreneurs. Similarly, the test of null hypothesis showed that male and female business education undergraduates did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurship education influences their perceived behavioural control. This finding concurs with that of Zafar (2013) which revealed that gender did not significantly influence business education students' opinion on the influence of entrepreneurship education on undergraduates' perceived behavioural control.

Conclusion

In the light of the findings of this study, it could be concluded that business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State would benefit much from effectively delivered entrepreneurship education programme as it would improve their entrepreneurial intention. As Nigeria is facing increased youth unemployment, effective delivery of entrepreneurship education in universities is imperative as it could enhance business education undergraduates' attitude towards becoming entrepreneurs. The findings of this study have some implications on teaching resources, human capacity development and teaching strategies. The findings that revealed that entrepreneurship education influences to a great extent business education undergraduates' attitude towards becoming entrepreneurs implies that if adequate teaching resources are provided in universities across Nigeria, entrepreneurship education is capable of curbing the high rate of unemployment among graduates. It was also found that entrepreneurship education influences

perceived behavioural control 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 the graduates and the dwindling economic resources in the country. This, therefore, has serious implications for resources and material provision, research and development activities in the training and retraining of business education lecturers in universities in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the researchers recommend that:

1. University authorities should assist business education undergraduates that indicated their intention to start enterprise while in school and after graduation through incubator programme. This will help to encourage more students to be serious with their intention to be entrepreneurs.
2. University authorities should ensure that well equipped and functional entrepreneurial development centers are made available for business education undergraduates in universities.
3. Government should make entrepreneurship education compulsory from primary level school in order to positively influence youth's attitude towards entrepreneurship development.
4. Governments and Professional bodies such as the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN) should organize regular seminars, symposium and conferences on entrepreneurship development to enhance business education undergraduates' entrepreneurial intentions.

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