

Effects of Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurship Skill Development and Practices among Postgraduate Students in Nigeria.

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Abstract

Keywords

Entrepreneurship skills,
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Nigeria.

In 2008, the government made it mandatory for every Federal and State Universities to incorporate entrepreneurship education into the educational curriculum with aim of developing entrepreneur-minded citizens. Despite the fact that all universities heeded to this injunction, Nigeria has not been taken out from the shackles of poverty, unemployment and incessant closure of SMEs. This queries the effectiveness and efficacy of the entrepreneurship education in transferring the necessary skills required of a good entrepreneur. Against this background, this study investigated the effects of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurship skills and practices among postgraduate students in Nigeria. The study was guided by three objectives and three hypotheses. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 242,000 postgraduate students in Nigeria. Using multistage sampling procedure, 402 postgraduate students was sampled. A validated instrument with a reliability index of 0.87 was used for data collection. Out of the 402 copies retrieved, only 394 were correctly filled. This represents a 98% return rate. The data collected were then analysed in SPSS using percentage, chi square and PPMC. The result revealed that 248(62.64%) of the respondents were taught entrepreneurship education. also, 10.9% of had no entrepreneurial skill, 62.4% had level of skill, 17.8% had moderate level of skill while only 8.9 were highly skilled. entrepreneurship education had no influence on postgraduate students entrepreneurship skill ($F = 1.467$, $r = 0.041$, $r^2 = 0.0002$, $Pval = 0.690$). however, entrepreneurship education had a low positive influence on students business establishment practices ($F = 36.99$, $r = 0.306$, $r^2 = 0.099$, $Pval = 0.000$) and business management experiences ($F = 30.55$, $r = 0.278$, $r^2 = 0.077$,

Pval = 0.000). in line with the findings, it was recommended among others that university institution administrators and lecturers should design and implement practical approaches to teaching entrepreneurship education to enable the students to improve on their entrepreneurship skills and business management efficiency.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship Education (EE) is the educational process that teaches students how to create wealth by taking calculated risks. To put it another way, it is the education that teaches the act of starting a business with the objective of creating wealth, grooming self-reliant citizens and resourceful human capacity that can revamp dying/dead businesses. According to Onuoha (2016), entrepreneurship is the act of establishing new organisations or reviving old ones in response to newly discovered opportunities. In order to make money, an entrepreneur takes risks, gathers his resources, and invests in a business venture. Anyone who enters the business world does so with a purpose in mind, and no one does so for the sake of it. They're in it to make money, so they're going to great lengths to make sure their resources are being used wisely in order to provide them with the much-needed profit they require.

Entrepreneurship Education has received sufficient focus around the world since it was viewed as an effective strategy for stimulating economic development and creating new employment opportunities by many governments. One of the most important aspects of learning to be an entrepreneur is receiving an education that provides the tools and opportunities necessary to realise one's full entrepreneurial potential. Therefore, if presented in the right way, entrepreneurship education may foster economic growth by equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to start their own businesses and provide jobs for others (Omoankhanlen, 2010). This is especially pertinent in the Nigerian context, where graduate unemployment rates have been steadily growing. Both the rising rate of graduate unemployment and the many periods of economic stagnation

around the world can be seen as reasons for the rise in interest in entrepreneurial education.

Entrepreneurial skills are those activity skills that enable an entrepreneur to manage his/her enterprise. They are the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours which enable an entrepreneur to identify business opportunities, stimulate creativity, and transform ideas into practical and economic activities for sustainable livelihood (Etonyeaku, et al., 2014). Thus, entrepreneurship is not just about establishing a business or doing business, it is not just about making money; it is not just about profiting from making contracts; it is not just about buying and selling; it is not just about short-changing others to make money; it is not just about portfolio carrying businessmen looking for contracts, it is about having the ability and willingness to take risks and to combine factors of production in order to produce goods and services that can satisfy human wants and create wealth (Akande, 2011). Hence, the need for promoting entrepreneurship culture on the basis that youths in all societies have sterling qualities such as resourcefulness, initiative, drive, imagination, enthusiasm, zest, dash, ambition energy, boldness, audacity, and courage which are all valuable traits for entrepreneurship development (Schnurr & Newing, 2007).

The federal government of Nigeria has been working since 2008 to implement entrepreneurship education in all disciplines/courses across all universities, with the hope that the programme will prepare undergraduates to start their own business rather than rely on the payoff of making a meagre income or working for gainful employment (i.e., twenty-first century organisations are increasingly recognising the value of having individuals with entrepreneurial profiles on their staff). In Nigeria, the development of entrepreneurial skills and

competencies that inspire entrepreneurial spirit has not been supported by the operating curriculum of the educational system. Therefore, graduates lack an entrepreneurial spirit because of the education system they receive and the expectations of society are focused on getting a job and moving up the corporate ladder. But since 2008, there has been a shift in government attitude, and there has been a corresponding increase in calls for a review of the curriculum at educational institutions to incorporate entrepreneurship education into all subject areas. In 2010, after much clamouring, this demand was met (Nebo, 2021).

The goal of making entrepreneurship education a required subject at all Nigerian universities is to help the country's young adults become economically independent and productive members of society (Chuma, Pearl & Chizoba, 2013, Kostoglou & Siakas, 2012). Bette (2012) professed that the ability to "acquire both physical and intellectual abilities that will enable individuals to be self-reliant and helpful members of society" is a key objective of this type of education. Universities are required by Article 64(c) of the same section to "contribute to" (i.e., be a part of) "making all students," (i.e., be a part of) "offering general study courses such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge, and nationalism," (ii) as part of this provision necessitates a more robust entrepreneurship education programme at universities and colleges. According to the research of Raimi, Akhemonkhan, and Sofoluwe (2013), educating future Nigerian business owners is not a recent phenomenon. Among the many different ethnic nations that make up Nigeria, this is a long-standing custom that has been passed down from generation to generation. The three indigenous peoples all have an ingrained spirit of enterprise thanks to the informal business training they received before colonisation. Before formal entrepreneurship education was added to Nigeria's tertiary education curriculum, the country's Western, Northern, and Eastern regions relied on informal entrepreneurship education to help their communities make money and use their people in productive ways (Musa & Adewale, 2015).

As a result of the government's inability to provide adequate employment for the country's many recent college grads, there is a pressing need in Nigeria for the cultivation of formal entrepreneurial skills and practises (Fasasi & Etegene, 2009). Academic entrepreneurship refers to the practise of cultivating a setting conducive to the development of an entrepreneurial spirit among students and faculty (Kostoglou & Siakas, 2012).

Most young Nigerians nowadays are among those who have graduated from Nigeria's higher institutions and are at a loss as to their future steps. This is mostly due to the fact that the careers for which they have studied for four or five years do not exist. In addition to other practical programmes that may be offered to graduating students, such as the National Youth Service Corps Scheme, the federal government's efforts to create two million jobs every year, and the work of other agencies, entrepreneurship education was introduced to give them basic business skills (Dabo et al., 2019).

Entrepreneurship is widely recognised as an important factor in developing countries' efforts to expand available job possibilities. This effect of entrepreneurship is also visible in regions that have had a drop in the rate of unemployment; these regions have a higher level of increase in the entrepreneurial initiative indexes, which is one of the measures of entrepreneurial activity (Audretsch, 2018). In spite of such widespread recognition on a worldwide scale, the scope of entrepreneurial activity in Nigeria is still somewhat restricted. This is a result of policy makers and the government in the past paying insufficient attention to the topic of entrepreneurship, as well as a lower level of growth in important indicators for launching new businesses in Nigeria and the country's limited ability to absorb economic shocks (Haque, 2019). According to a research by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) on Nigeria, the percentage of individuals in Nigeria who have entrepreneurial attitudes and ambitions is just 23%. This is a direct result of the negative attitude that people in the past have had toward

entrepreneurs (Sarfraz & Qureshi, 2020). According to the survey that was published by GUESS (2021), Nigeria was rated first among the countries in which students intend to become entrepreneurs by launching their own company once they have finished their education. But was rate forty sixth among the countries with active entrepreneur after study. This questions the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in inculcating the right entrepreneurial skills that foster practices after university education.

A number of factors that influence an individual's propensity toward entrepreneurial behaviour have been identified by scholars studying the topic of entrepreneurship. Among these factors, entrepreneurship is among the fundamental ones. Multiple empirical studies have shown the importance of an entrepreneur's education in shaping young peoples' abilities and habits, including those by Galloway and Brown (2012), Fayolle, Gailly, and Lassas-Clerc (2016), Potter (2015), Henderson and Robertson (2014), and Zhang, Duysters, and Cloudt (2013).

However, the positive relationship between entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial skill development and practices is relative to nations. Particularly to quality of the educational system and approaches to learning. In Nigeria, it has been observed time without number that the educational system is not career oriented and incapable of raising self-reliant youth due to over theorizing. Anagun (2020) said that the over emphasis on theory as seen in Nigeria educational system today has made the system loss touch with its main purpose of building economically buoyant youth. It has rendered education useless and even discourage many Nigeria youth to the point where they have become accustomed to to the slogan "*who school help?*" and have transgressed to the younger one's at Junior Secondary School, birthing the so-called social deviance, "*Yahoo-Yahoo*". This notwithstanding, should not warrant a blind conclusion that entrepreneurship education does not have any positive effect on entrepreneurial skill development and practice. Hence, the need for empirical study.

Even though the relevance of entrepreneurship education had been acknowledged in the previous researches, only a small number of empirical studies have been carried out to investigate the effect that entrepreneurship education has on the development of entrepreneurial skills and practices in isolation from general education (Peterman & Kennedy, 2017). According to Byabashaija and Katono (2016), the effect of general education has been investigated, but just a few studies have looked into entrepreneurial education, particularly at postsecondary institution level. Byabashaija and Katono (2011) found that the influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial abilities was modest and was still undergoing empirical testing at the time of their research. According to the findings of their research, Zhang et al. (2018) came to the conclusion that despite the significance of entrepreneurship education, a surprisingly small number of studies have been carried out to investigate the effect that entrepreneurship education has on the growth of skills. They found this to be an unusual observation. To fill this gap in literature, the present study investigated the **Effects of Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurship Skill Development and Practices among Postgraduate Students in Nigeria**. However, the study scope will be limited to federal Universities in Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

At the broad base, this study investigated effects of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurship skill development and practices among postgraduate students in Nigeria. However, the specific objectives of the study were:

1. To examine whether students who received entrepreneurship education have higher entrepreneurial skills than students who did not receive entrepreneurship education in their first degree.
2. To determine whether exposure to entrepreneurship education influence students' establishment business after first degree.
3. To determine whether exposure to entrepreneurship education influence students'

efficient management of business after first degree.

Research Questions

1. Do students who received entrepreneurship education have higher entrepreneurial skills than students who did not receive entrepreneurship education in their first degree?
2. Did exposure to entrepreneurship education influence students' establishment of business after first degree?
3. Did exposure to entrepreneurship education influence students' efficient management of business after first degree?

Hypotheses

1. The entrepreneurial skills of students who received entrepreneurship education is not significantly higher than the entrepreneurial skills of students who did not receive entrepreneurship education in their first degree
2. Exposure to entrepreneurship education does not significantly influence students' establishment business after first degree
3. Exposure to entrepreneurship education does not significantly influence students' efficient management of business after first degree

Methodology

This study was a descriptive survey research. This implies that data was collected from a large sample. The population of the study was 242,000 post graduate students. According to Sasu (2022), in the academic year 2018/2019, Nigerian universities counted 242 thousand postgraduate students. Among the students, 150,319(62%) were males while 92,014(8%) were females. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial skills, and practices among postgraduate students in Nigeria. A sample of 402 participants was selected from six federal universities across the country's six geopolitical zones using Taro Yamane's formula and simple

random sampling techniques. The universities included were the University of Port Harcourt, Federal University Lokoja, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Federal University Gusau, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, and Federal University Wukari.

An adapted questionnaire, titled "Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Skills and Practices Questionnaire (EDESPO)," was used as the instrument for data collection. This questionnaire incorporated the EntreComp entrepreneurial skill scale, covering four dimensions: Ideas and Opportunities, Personal Resources, Specific Knowledge, and Into Action, using a 4-point Likert scale. Additional sections assessed respondents' entrepreneurship practices, exposure to entrepreneurship education, and demographic characteristics.

For validation and reliability, the instrument was reviewed by six experts, yielding a content validity index of 0.99. A pilot study with 40 respondents from the University of Calabar and University of Ilorin established a reliability index of 0.89, indicating the instrument's adequacy. Data collection was conducted by the researcher and four assistants, recruited from the respective universities. They were briefed via a Google Meet conference and distributed soft copies of the questionnaire for local administration. Out of 402 distributed questionnaires, 394 were properly filled, equating to a 98% return rate. The data were analyzed using SPSS, employing percentage, chi-square, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) methods. The study's methodology was thorough, incorporating diverse universities to ensure wide-ranging insights into the research topic.

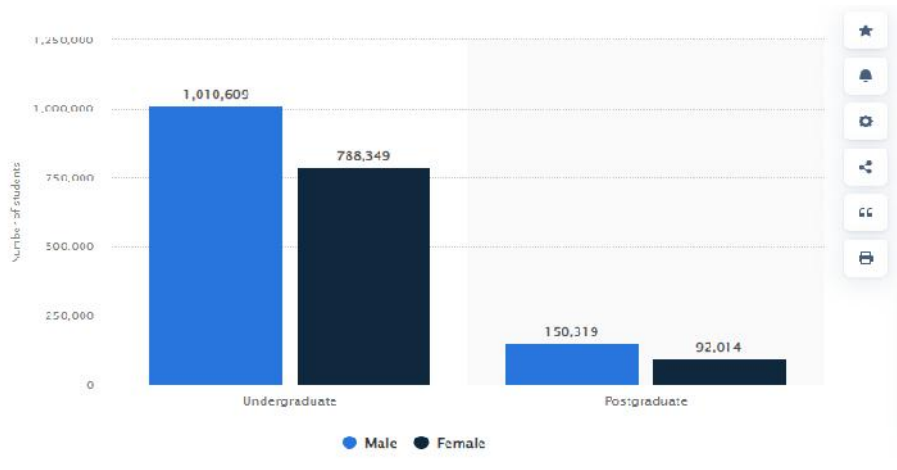


Figure 1: Population of student’s tertiary students in Nigeria 2018/2019 academic session (Sasau, 2022)

Results

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

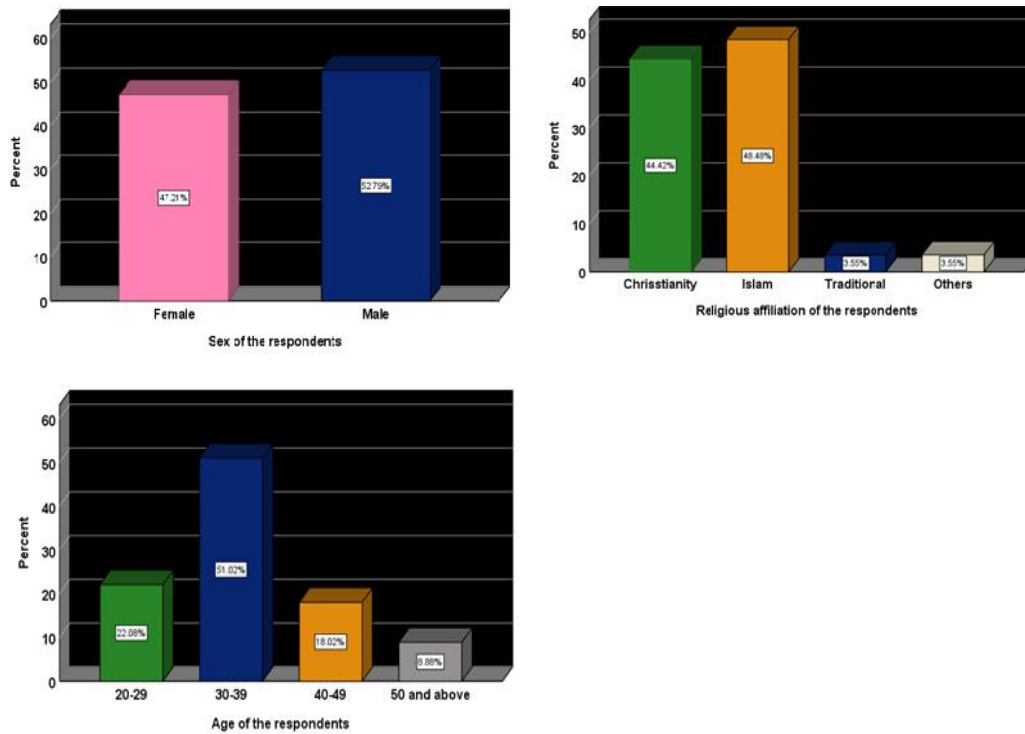


Figure 1: bar charts showing the demographic characteristics of the respondents

Figure 1 revealed that 52.79% of the respondents were males while 47.21% were females. In relation to religion, 44.42% of the respondents were Christians, 48.48% were Muslims, 3.55% were traditionalists while 3.55% practice other forms of religion. In terms of age, majority of the respondents, 51.02% were within the age of 30-9, followed by those within the age bracket of 20-29, 22.08%, then, those within the age bracket of 40-49, 18.02% and those 50 years and above, 8.88%.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research question 1: Do students who received entrepreneurship education have higher entrepreneurial skills than students who did not receive entrepreneurship education in their first degree?

Table 1: Analysis of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship skills of the students

		Were you taught entrepreneurship during your undergraduate				Total	Chi Square	P.Val
		No	%	Yes	%			
Students Entrepreneurship skills ranking	not skilled	19	13.0	24	9.7	43	1.467^a	0.690
	low skilled	91	62.3	155	62.5	246		
	Moderately skilled	23	15.8	47	19.0	70		
	Highly Skilled	13	8.9	22	8.9	35		
Total		146	100	248	100	394		

Table 1 shows the analysis of exposure to entrepreneurship education and students' entrepreneurship skills. The result revealed that: among the respondents who were not taught EE during undergraduate time, 13% had no entrepreneurship skill, 62.3 had low level if skill, 15.8 had moderate level, while only 8.9% were highly skilled. On the other hand, among the respondents that were taught EE, 9.7% had no entrepreneurship skill, 62.5% had low level of skill, 19% had moderate level of skill while 8.9%

were highly skilled. Furthermore, the chi square analysis revealed a chi square value of 1.467 and Pvalue of 0.690). Since thep value wasgreater than the alpha value of 0.05, it was concluded that entrepreneurship education did not influence students' acquisition of entrepreneurship skills.

Research question 2:Did exposure to entrepreneurship education influence students' establishment of business after first degree?

Table 2: Analysis of exposure to entrepreneurship education influence students' establishment of business after first degree

	Were you taught entrepreneurship during your undergraduate						Total	Chi Square	P.Val
	No	%	Yes	%					
Did you establish any business after your graduation	No	115	78.8	118	47.6		233	36.987^a	0.000
	Yes	31	21.2	130	52.4				
Total		146	100	248	100		394		

Table 2 showed that 78.8% of the respondents who were not exposed to entrepreneurship education did not establish any business after their graduation while 21.2% them did; 47.6% of the respondents exposed to entrepreneurship education did not establish businesses more than half 52.4% did establish. The chi square analysis revealed a chi square value of 36.97 with a pvalue of 0.000. Since the pvalue was less than 0.05, it

was concluded that exposure to entrepreneurship education had influence on students' establishment of business after graduation.

Research Question 3: To determine whether exposure to entrepreneurship education influence students' efficient management of business after first degree.

Table 3: analysis of whether exposure to entrepreneurship education influence students' efficient management of business after first degree

	Were you taught entrepreneurship during your undergraduate						Total	Chi Square	P.Val
	No	%	Yes	&					
Did you establish any business after your graduation	No	111	76.0	118	47.6		229	30.552^a	0.000
	Yes	35	24.0	130	52.4				
Total		146	100	248	100		394		

Table 3 showed that 76% of the respondents who were not exposed to entrepreneurship education have not managed any business after their graduation while 21.2% them have; 47.6% of the respondents exposed to entrepreneurship education have not manage businesses more than

half 52.4% did establish. The chi square analysis revealed a chi square value of 30.552 with a pvalue of 0.000. Since the pvalue was less than 0.05, it was concluded that exposure to entrepreneurship education had influence on students' business management after graduation.

Test of hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: there is not significant relationship between exposure to entrepreneurship education and students’ entrepreneurship skills.

Table 4: PPMC analysis of relationship between exposure to entrepreneurship education and students’ entrepreneurship skills

		Were you taught entrepreneurship during your undergraduate	Students entrepreneurial skills' ranks
Were you taught entrepreneurship during your undergraduate	Pearson Correlation	1	.041
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.417
	N	394	394
Students entrepreneurial skills' ranks	Pearson Correlation	.041	1

The correlation analysis revealed coefficient (r) of 0.041 and r^2 of 0.0016851 with pvalue of 0.417. The pvalue was greater than the alpha value of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. Hence, there is no significant relationship between exposure to entrepreneurship education and students entrepreneurship skills. The r^2 of 0.0016851 which is the coefficient of

determination revealed that entrepreneurship only determined 0.2% of students’ entrepreneurship skills.

Hypothesis 2: Exposure to entrepreneurship education does not significantly influence students’ establishment business after first degree

Table 5: analysis of the influence of students’ Exposure to entrepreneurship education on establishment business after first degree

		Were you taught entrepreneurship during your undergraduate	Did you establish any business after your graduation
Were you taught entrepreneurship during your undergraduate	Pearson Correlation	1	.306**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	394	394
Did you establish any business after your graduation	Pearson Correlation	.306**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	394	394

The correlation analysis in table 5 revealed coefficient (r) of 0.306 and r^2 of 0.093636, with pvalue of 0.000. The pvalue was less than the alpha value of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, there was significant relationship between exposure to entrepreneurship education and students business establishment. The coefficient of 0.306 indicates a low significant positive relation. The r^2 of 0.093636 which is the

coefficient of determination revealed that entrepreneurship education only determined 9.36% of students' business establishment.

Hypothesis 3: Exposure to entrepreneurship education does not significantly influence students' efficient management of business after first degree

Table 6: analysis of exposure to entrepreneurship education does not significantly influence students' efficient management of business after first degree

		Were you taught entrepreneurship during your undergraduate	Have you ever managed any business since after your graduation
Were you taught entrepreneurship during your undergraduate	Pearson Correlation	1	.278**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	394	394
Have you ever managed any business since after your graduation	Pearson Correlation	.278**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	394	394
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.417	
	N	394	394

The correlation analysis in table 5 revealed coefficient (r) of 0.278 and r^2 of 0.077284, with pvalue of 0.000. The pvalue was less than the alpha value of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, there was significant relationship between exposure to entrepreneurship education and students business management efficiency. The coefficient of 0.278 indicates a low significant positive relation. The r^2 of 0.077284 which is the coefficient of determination revealed that entrepreneurship only determined 7.73% of students' efficiency in business management.

Discussion of Findings

The development and improvement of national economy is greatly dependent on human capital

development and business orientation of the youth. However, there are many ways youth acquire entrepreneurship skills. This study made effort to decipher the extent Nigeria university entrepreneurship education influence students entrepreneurship skills and practice by evaluation their skills, business establishment and efficiency in management business.

The study found that entrepreneurship education taught to students in their undergraduate level had positive significant impact of the students' entrepreneurship skills. From the result in table 4, it was clearly shown that 62% and 8.9% of both the students who had entrepreneurship education and those who did had low level of skills and high level of entrepreneurship skills respectively. A

further analysis of the result in table 4 disclosed that only 0.2% of students' entrepreneurship skills were determined by exposure to entrepreneurship education. This result coincides with the findings of Amesi and Peterside (2019) who discovered that students are not benefiting much from entrepreneurship education in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education due to too much theoretical teaching pattern. On the contrary, Chukwunye and Igboke (2011) said that entrepreneurship education is an essential educational content which students gets or learns a specific talent or kind of behaviour necessary for business through experiential learning or innovative problem solving. Ekpe (2012) illustrates that such abilities comprise the likes of creativity, leadership, self-employment, analysis, communication, knowledge, attitude, and personality characteristics including achievement, motivation, imagination, and entrepreneurial drive.

The study also discovered that a larger proportion of the students who were taught entrepreneurship education established business and have managed at least one business. Similar Gieure et al. (2020) argued that students may be more likely to engage in entrepreneurial behaviour if they are exposed to entrepreneurship education at university. Entrepreneurship education instils knowledge and providestools that students can use to create or discover new business opportunities (Shirokova et al., 2016). The provision of business courses is critical to enhancing students' capacity to recognise opportunities (Zhao et al., 2005; Nicolaou et al., 2009) and act efficiently (Nicolaou et al., 2009). These courses improve students' knowledge and skills and provide them with access to business contacts, networks, and financial resources (Robinson, 2006). Literature on entrepreneurial universities demonstrates that in this context, universities are aware of their role as engines for regional economic development (in addition to their teaching and research missions) and have configured entrepreneurial ecosystems (educational programmes, business incubators, and other infrastructures) to support potential entrepreneurs (Guerrero, et al, 2020). In spite of the importance of environmental influences on

decisions and actions, there has been little research into the connection between entrepreneurship education and the formation of new businesses (Good et al., 2019).

The fact universities are teaching entrepreneurship education, implies that they can both restrict and facilitate self-employment and entrepreneurship (Welter et al., 2017), and because institutions may influence, directly and indirectly, the perceptions that individuals may have about the desirability and viability of entrepreneurship (Fayolle&Lián, 2014), understanding the mechanisms of this relationship at this level is important.

Conclusion

Following the government injunction in 2008, all federal universities in Nigeria offers entrepreneurship education. however, the introduction of the course into the schools has not improved the entrepreneurship skills of the students rather it only motivate them to develop intentions for business and perhaps open or manage other peoples' business. This incongruent relationship between the entrepreneurship education and development of entrepreneurship skills is a major contribution to the short live of most SMEs in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study survey, it was recommended that

1. University school administrators should develop practical entrepreneurship teaching method and ensue its implementations to enable students improve on their entrepreneurship skills.
2. lecturers should invite successful entrepreneurs to teach practical business establishment approaches to the students
3. Lecturers should invite successful entrepreneurs to teach practical business management strategies to the students to enhance the real life management skills of the students after school.

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