

ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET FOR ALLEVIATING UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITIES IN ABIA AND ENUGU STATES, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among business education students in universities in Abia and Enugu states of Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 68 Business Education lecturers and 206 final year Business Education students formed the respondents for the study. A structured questionnaire developed by the researchers and validated by three experts was used to collect data for the study. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.85 through Cronbach Alpha statistics. Data collected was organized and analysed using mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance, in line with the research questions and hypotheses formulated for the study. The results of the study identified 17 specific items of entrepreneurial mindset and 13 measures for improving the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset in Business Education students. The hypotheses tested showed no significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the mean of the responses of Business Educators and students on items of entrepreneurial mindset in Business Education students whereas, there was significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the mean of the responses of Business Educators and students on measures for improving the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset in Business Education students. The study recommends, among others, that government should provide adequate fund for sufficient and functional modern facilities and scholarship to Business Education students.

Keywords: Poverty Alleviation, Persuasion, Environment, Innovation, Conducive Learning

Introduction

Unemployment is one of the major socio-economic issues bedeviling Nigeria at the moment. The rate of unemployment, especially among the youths, has continued to increase during the last few years due to the fallout from the nation's economic challenges. In 2020, the unemployment rate in Nigeria was estimated to be about 33 percent and available data showed that the rate has steadily risen (Sasu, 2022). Worsening the unemployment situation in Nigeria is the fact that many Nigerian graduates, particularly business education graduates, have been regarded as unemployable (Olawale, 2017). This, among others, has been as a result of poor educational programmes that are more or less of theories and thus lacking practical and entrepreneurial skill acquisition that will enable the students develop entrepreneurial mindset even though they are exposed for entrepreneurial skills.

Entrepreneurial skills deal with efforts to acquire trainings to venture into investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully. Entrepreneurship teaches starting a business, arranging the business deals and taking risks in order to make profit through appropriate skills (Baba, 2013). The acquisition of entrepreneurship skills and competencies has continued to feature as a captivating theme in local summits and international conferences because of its potency as a tool to alleviate unemployment and other social-economic challenges inhibiting sustainable development in all parts of the globe (Akhuemonkhan, *et al*

2013). One important thing about entrepreneurship skill acquisition is that it provides opportunities for youths to gain experience, acquire entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes including opportunity recognition, idea creation and marshalling resources in the face of risk to chase opportunities, venture creation and operation, creativity and critical thinking (Okolie, *et al*, 2014). It is imperative to state that no nation can build a strong economy through entrepreneurship without inculcating entrepreneurial mindset in the youths.

Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial mindset could be said to relate to the mind. Thus, entrepreneurial mindset is a specific state of mind which orientates human conduct towards entrepreneurial activities and outcomes (Connatser, 2019). An entrepreneurial mindset could be regarded as a set of skills that enable people to identify and make the most of opportunities, overcome and learn from setbacks and succeed in a variety of settings (Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship [NFTE] (2022). Entrepreneurial mindset is valued by employers because it boosts educational attainment and performance; it is also crucial for creating new businesses. Individuals with sound entrepreneurial mindset are often prone to opportunities, innovations and new value creation. Value can be created by individuals with an entrepreneurial mindset (Daspit *et al*, 2021). Mindset allows an entrepreneur particularly business education students to keep changing and trying new things to improve their processes in order to create the extra degree of effort which turns hot water into steam that can power a train (Connatser, 2019). The rise of interest in entrepreneurial education has led to calls in several fora to instil an entrepreneurial mindset in students (Andrew & Sung-Hee, 2010). Therefore, there is the need for government and other stakeholders to champion the need for entrepreneurial mindset as a strong tool for alleviating unemployment among business education students in Nigerian universities.

The need for contemporary graduates of any education programme, such as business education to be skillful cannot be over-emphasized. Business education is an academic programme designed to inculcate into the students understanding, values, knowledge, business and technical skills required in the world of work and for teaching other business students (Umoru, 2015). Business education is also the type of education that gives individuals the needed skills and knowledge to succeed in small, medium or large-scale businesses (Nwuzoh, 2016). Business education is the aspect of total education programme which provides the learners with knowledge, skills, understanding and attitude to perform well in office, secretarial and distributive trade. Business Education offers students the opportunity to acquire and make contributions to the economic system while also equipping them with lifelong skills that would enable them to make reasonable judgement as producers (entrepreneurs), employees or consumers of goods and services (Gidado & Akaeze, 2014). When properly managed, business education can serve as a pivotal tool in wealth creation, economic growth and development; poverty alleviation, crime reduction and security challenges. The aim of business education, among others, is to train students for self-employment or paid jobs and also help workers update job skills. Hence, the achievement of this aim can better be sustained when entrepreneurial mindset is properly inculcated in the students while in their training institutions (Ekoh, 2015). However, in order to achieve the desired result, the involvement of relevant stakeholders such as the training institutions, government at all levels and the business community is of utmost importance.

Statement of the Problem

Business Education teaches skills and attitudes to function and succeed in any economic environment. To achieve this, individuals that take business education as a course of study require orientation that can be inculcated through entrepreneurial mindset. However, business education students may have made up their minds before commencing the

programme or while in the programme with regard to entrepreneurship intention or entrepreneurship itself. This could create problems in inculcating entrepreneurial mindset, thus, posing a serious challenge to the students, the teaching institutions and the drive for entrepreneurs needed as change agents for the economy. Entrepreneurship as a field of study and as a sphere of human endeavour, requires that there are adequate facilities, appropriate government policies as well as a conducive environment for success. However, training institutions in Nigeria appear to lack facilities such as adequate and functional instructional facilities to drive entrepreneurship training that would in turn, stimulate entrepreneurial mindset among business education students. The absence of improved pedagogical training of business educators required to drive the programme also appears to be the case in the training institutions. Furthermore, the need for adequate and sustainable funding cannot be ignored. However, it would appear that training institutions are lacking in this area. There appears, therefore, myriad of challenges standing in the way of using entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among business education students in universities in Abia and Enugu States, Nigeria. It was based on this background that this study was carried out to determine the entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment and measures for improving the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among business education students in universities in Abia and Enugu States, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among business education students in Universities in Abia and Enugu States. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among business education students in Universities in Abia and Enugu States.
2. Suggest measures that would improve the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among business education students in Universities in Abia and Enugu States.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

1. What are the entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among business education students in Universities in Abia and Enugu States?
2. What are the measures that could be employed to improve the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset among business education students in Universities in Abia and Enugu States?

Hypotheses

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

H0₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators and students on the entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among business education students in Universities in Abia and Enugu States.

H0₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators and students on the measures for improving the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset among business education students in Abia and Enugu States.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in four (4) public universities in Abia and Enugu States. The universities are Abia State University, Uturu, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu and University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State. A total of 374

respondents comprising of 68 Business Education lecturers and 206 Final Year Business Education students from four public universities was used as a total population for the study. Since the population is of manageable size, no sampling technique was used for the study hence, the entire population was used for the study. A structured questionnaire titled: Business Education Students Unemployment Entrepreneurial Mindset Questionnaire (BESUEMQ) developed by the researchers and validated by three (3) experts was used for data collection for the study. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.85 through Cronbach Alpha statistics.

The data collected was organized and analyzed in line with the research questions and hypotheses formulated for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses for the study. The decisions for the research questions were based on the resulting mean score interpreted relative to the boundary limit of Strongly Agreed (SA) = 3.50 – 4.00, Agreed (A) = 2.50 – 3.49, Disagreed (D) = 2.00 – 2.49 and Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1.00 – 1.99 respectively. The hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected when the t-cal (t-calculated) value was greater than the t-tab (t-table) value of 1.96 while the hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted when the t-cal (t-calculated) value was less than the t-table (t-table) value of 1.96 degree of freedom.

Results

Research Question One

What are the entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among Business Education students in Abia and Enugu States?

Table 1: Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Entrepreneurial Mindset for Alleviating Unemployment Among Business Education Students in Abia and Enugu States, Nigeria (n = 267)

SN	Specific items of entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among Business Education students include:	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1	The ability to maintain a positive attitude	3.46	0.49	Agree
2	The openness to innovation	3.68	0.60	Agree
3	Having the curiosity of a child	3.56	0.44	Agree
4	Having strong will and persuasion for doing something new	3.37	0.81	Agree
5	Strong ability for creativity	3.53	0.49	Agree
6	Self-motivation attribute	3.50	0.56	Agree
7	Strong innovative ideas	3.33	0.47	Agree
8	Resiliency and tenacity	3.71	0.57	Agree
9	Ability to take responsibility for everything that happens	3.45	0.49	Agree
10	Having persuasive communication ability	3.76	0.84	Agree
11	Ability to learn from past failures	3.54	0.49	Agree
12	Having positive mental attitudes	3.67	0.55	Agree
13	Independent thinking ability	3.54	0.57	Agree
14	Having very strong thirst for knowledge	3.60	0.47	Agree
15	Strong flexibility	3.72	0.83	Agree
16	Firm informed decision making ability	3.55	0.49	Agree
17	Internal entrepreneurial drive and focus	3.57	0.60	Agree
Ground Mean/Standard Deviation		3.56	0.57	Agree

Note: \bar{X} = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; n = number of respondents

Table 1 shows the mean responses of the respondents on the seventeen (17) items posed to determine the entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among Business Education students in Abia and Enugu states with grand mean of 3.56. This implies that respondents agreed with all the items as entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among business education students. The standard deviation of the items ranges from 0.44 – 0.84 which indicated that the responses of the respondents are not only close to the mean, but also to one another.

Research Question Two

What are the measures for improving the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among Business Education students in Abia and Enugu States?

Table 2: Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Measures for Improving the Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Mindset for Alleviating Unemployment Among Business Education Students in Abia and Enugu States (n = 267)

SN	Measures for improving the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among business education students include:	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1	Regular engagement of business education students on excursion to entrepreneurial firms.	3.73	0.60	Agree
2	Invitation of successful entrepreneurs as resource persons to engage Business Education students.	3.66	0.47	Agree
3	Provision of foreign entrepreneurial textbooks in Business Education libraries.	3.53	0.83	Agree
4	Provision of modern instructional facilities to stimulate entrepreneurial mindset of Business Education students.	3.49	0.61	Agree
5	Adoption of ICT-based instruction in business education programme.	3.24	0.87	Agree
6	Regular organization of entrepreneurial mindset workshops and training for Business Educators and students.	3.62	0.48	Agree
7	Adoption of computer-based test in Business Education examinations and assessments.	3.54	0.61	Agree
8	Introduction of more entrepreneurship courses into the curriculum of Business Education programme.	3.70	0.45	Agree
9	Allocating more periods to the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship courses.	3.63	0.49	Agree
10	Creating entrepreneurship skill training centres in all localities in the country.	3.55	0.60	Agree
11	Improved pedagogical training of Business Educators for effective instruction in entrepreneurship studies.	3.43	0.55	Agree
12	Introducing entrepreneurship in secondary school curriculum to prepare students before entry into tertiary institutions.	3.57	0.62	Agree
13	Giving scholarship in entrepreneurship studies to students at all levels for increased entrepreneurial mindset.	3.39	0.73	Agree
Ground Mean/Standard Deviation		3.54	0.61	Agree

Note: \bar{X} = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; n = number of respondents

Table 2 shows the mean responses of the respondents on the thirteen (13) items posed to determine measures for improving the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among Business Education students in Abia and Enugu states with grand mean

of 3.54. This implies that respondents agreed with all the items as measures for improving the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among Business Education students. The standard deviation of the items ranges from 0.45 – 0.87 which indicated that the responses of the respondents are not only close to the mean, but also to one another.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators and Students on the items of entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among Business Education students.

Table 3: Test of Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of Business Educators and Students on the items of entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among Business Education students

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	Std. Error	t-cal	t-tab	Level of sig.	Re-marks
Business Educators	65	3.58	0.49						
Business Education Students	202	3.54	0.51	265	0.033	0.58	1.96	0.05	NS

Note: NS = Not Significant at 0.05

The data presented on the t-test statistics in Table 3 show that the t-calculated (t-cal) value of 0.58 is less than the t-table (t-tab) value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 265 degree of freedom. This indicates that there is no significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the mean ratings of the responses of Business educators and students on the items of entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among Business Education students. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the mean ratings of the responses of Business educators and students is accepted on hypothesis one.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators and Students on the measures for improving the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset in Business Education students.

Table 4: Test of Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of Business Educators and Students on the measures for improving the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset in Business Education students

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	Std. Error	t-cal	t-tab	Level of sig.	Re-marks
Business Educators	65	3.63	0.57						
				265	0.067	2.07	1.96	0.05	S*
Business Education Students	202	3.45	0.59						

Note: S* = Significant at 0.05

The data presented on the t-test statistics in Table 4 reveal that the t-calculated (t-cal) value of 2.07 is greater than the t-table (t-tab) value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 265 degree of freedom. This implies that there is significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the mean ratings of the responses of Business educators and students on the measures for improving the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset in Business Education students. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the mean ratings of the responses of Business educators and students is rejected on hypothesis two.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in Table 1 relating to research question 1 revealed that the respondents agreed with all the items as entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among Business Education students in universities in Abia and Enugu States of Nigeria. The findings revealed that Business Education students should take responsibility for everything that happens. This is in line with Shallard (2018) who held that the ability of an entrepreneur to take responsibility for everything is a secret skill and weapon. Connatser (2019) also opined that entrepreneurial mindset is a state of mind that stimulates human conduct towards entrepreneurial activities. The findings also revealed the need for Business Education students to have strong will and persuasion for doing something new, ability to be creative and innovative; having strong thirst for knowledge, self-motivation and possessing the curiosity of a child. This finding substantiated the report of Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship [NFTE] (2022) which identified entrepreneurial mindsets as sets of skills such as ability to maintain a positive attitude and openness to anything. Others are strong-will and persuasion, ability for creativity and innovative ideas that enable people to identify and make the most of opportunities, overcome and learn from setbacks as well as succeed in a variety of settings.

The findings in Table 2 relating to research question 2, revealed that the respondents agreed with all the items as measures for improving the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among Business Education students in Abia and Enugu States, Nigeria. The findings revealed that the provision of modern instructional facilities and materials as well as the adoption of ICT-Based instruction in Business Education programme requiring adequate funding are measures that would improve the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset in business education students. This agrees with Nwosu and Micah (2017) who, in their previous study, found that adequate financing for the provision of adequate instructional materials and facilities is very crucial for the overall success of education, Business Education inclusive. The report by Ukachi and Ejiko (2019) that technical and vocational education should be well-equipped and funded for guaranteed sound mind of the learners also support the findings of this study. The study also revealed the need for interaction with business firms and

entrepreneurs through excursion, inviting successful entrepreneurs to address the students and regular participation in entrepreneurial mindset and training for Business educators and students as necessary. The findings of this study agreed with the report of UNESCO (2017) which showed that entrepreneurial education of the mind can better be stimulated through improved use of interactive instructional techniques, creation of conducive learning environment in schools and the engagement of problem-solving instructions.

Conclusion

The study examined entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among Business Education students in Abia and Enugu states of Nigeria. The study identified 17 items for alleviating unemployment and 13 items that would improve the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset for alleviating unemployment among Business Education students in Abia and Enugu states. The need for interaction with business firms and entrepreneurs to enhance entrepreneurial mindset through excursion and invitation to successful business owners to speak and relate with the students and their teachers was identified in the study. The crucial role of adequate funding to provide the needed facilities, materials and ICT-based learning environment and granting of scholarship in entrepreneurial studies to students at all levels for increased entrepreneurial mindset is imperative. Based on the findings from the study, therefore, it could be concluded that entrepreneurial mindset is a panacea for alleviating unemployment among Business Education students in Abia and Enugu State universities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the study recommends that:

1. Business Education students should be regularly engaged on excursion to entrepreneurial firms to help build and stimulate in them, entrepreneurial mindset. Avenues should also be provided for successful entrepreneurs to interact with Business Education students towards the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset.
2. There should be regular entrepreneurial mindset workshops and training for Business educators and students. This is to help awaken the entrepreneurial interest of the students on graduation from their training institutions.
3. Government and tertiary institutions' administrators should provide adequate fund for Business Education for the provision of adequate and functional modern facilities, instructional materials as well as ICT-based learning environment.
4. Government should introduce entrepreneurship into the secondary school curriculum to inculcate in the students, the spirit of entrepreneurship and also prepare them for entry into tertiary institutions. Government should give scholarship to Business Education students at all levels to stimulate their entrepreneurial mindset as well as improve the acquisition of entrepreneurial mindset.

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