

ASSESSMENT OF BUSINESS SKILLS AND SELF-EFFICACY AS PREDICTORS OF STUDENTS' ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION

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Abstract

This study aimed to assess business educators' perceptions of business skills and self-efficacy as predictors of students' entrepreneurial intentions in Jigawa State Colleges of Education. The study used a structured questionnaire titled "Assessment of Business Educators' Perceptions on Business Skills and Self-efficacy as Predictors of Students' Entrepreneurial Intention" (ABEDPBSMSPSEI), which was developed by the researcher and validated by three experts from the College of Education Gumel and the College of Education and Legal Studies Ringim. The questionnaire used a four-point rating scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree) with assigned numerical values of 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. Items with a mean score of 2.50 and above were considered "Strongly Agreed" (SA), while items with a mean score of 2.49 and below were considered "Strongly Disagreed" (SD). The study found that business educators perceive skills in financial management, marketing, and strategic planning, as well as self-efficacy, as strong predictors of students' entrepreneurial intentions. These findings align with previous research and suggest that educators recognize the importance of these factors in fostering students' entrepreneurial aspirations. To address this issue, colleges should integrate business skills into the curriculum, enhance self-efficacy development, promote entrepreneurship education, provide resources and support for entrepreneurs, and monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions.

Keywords: Business Educators, Business skills, Self-efficacy

Introduction

Business education is an educational programme that prepares students for entry and advancement in jobs within business and to handle their business affairs as well as to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy (Umoru and Bala, 2018). Osuala (2007) defined Business Education Programme as that aspect of vocational education, which emphasizes job competency, career preparation and work adjustments.

A business educator is a professional who teaches and trains individuals in various aspects of business, entrepreneurship, and management. They typically work in academic settings, such as universities and colleges, where they teach business-related courses and mentor students. Business educators also work in corporate settings, where they provide training and development programs to employees. Their goal is to equip students and professionals with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the business world (Amoda & Ishola 2020)

Business skills according to Bragg (2007), refers to the set of knowledge, abilities, and competencies that individuals need to perform effectively in a business environment. These skills include financial management, marketing and sales, communication, leadership, and problem-solving, among others. Business skills are essential for success in the business world, as they enable individuals to analyze

business situations, make informed decisions, and take effective action. They are typically developed through a combination of formal education, practical experience, and continuous learning.

Business Education skills are a vital tool for a successful entrepreneurship. It is primarily concerned with assisting the individual to be useful as well as improving their knowledge in the business world which in turn leads to the successful and sustainable enterprises and society at large. Business Education curriculum at College of Education level, equips the students with skills in entrepreneurship, marketing, accounting, information and communication technology (ICT) and office management, which when those skills used appropriately, will enable the Small and Medium enterprises to enjoy the sustainability of its operations (Ezeani, N. S, Ifeonyemetalu, O., Ezemoyih, C.M., 2012).

Intention is seen as a goal or purpose behind a specific action or set of actions. Generally, intention is the cognitive state immediately before executing a behavior. Intention can also be seen as the mind that directs a person's attention (experience and action) towards a specific object (goal) or a path to achieve something (means). It emphasizes the reasons or motivational factors identified by founders which underline their action in starting up a firm.

Entrepreneurship education has been introduced into Nigerian learning institutions since 2006 and yet the rate of unemployment is on the increase (Mamman, 2019). It therefore becomes paramount to find out whether this programme (entrepreneurship education) has been able to instill in the youths the right intention, attitude and desire towards self-employment.

Entrepreneurial intention could be described as a person's motivation, desire or penchant to start his or her personal business now or in the near future. Intention is the motivation and demotivation about objects, issues, feelings, beliefs; which could be verbal and nonverbal expressions and it is one of the best gift of the Almighty to human beings. It provides judgmental opinion by concisions and judicious thinking. Parker (2004) stated that intention is an individual's specific propensity to perform an action or a series of actions. Thompson (2009) defined entrepreneurial intention as self-acknowledged conviction by a person that they intend to set up a new business venture and consciously plan to do so at some point in the future. It is the state of mind directing a person's attention and action towards self-employment as opposed to organizational employment (Bird, 1988).

According to Ajzen (1991), behavior performance is affected by all those factors that can indirectly affect human behavior, although, intentions control the human actions as humans do not execute all of their intentions. Furthermore, several research studies have acknowledged the significance of the entrepreneurial intention (EI). For instance, Krueger et al. (2000) reported that reflexive behavior does not drive entrepreneurial behavior, but it is rather intentional in nature. Similarly, Cai and Zhao (2014) stated that only those people can effectively carry out entrepreneurial activities who have strong EI. EI is one of the important factors that contribute to entrepreneurial behavior whereas EI is rare, but such intentions retain for a longer period of time (Noel, 2002).

The national educational aims and objectives to which the philosophy is linked comprises training of mind in the understanding of world around and the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society. Entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people particularly the youths to be responsible, enterprising individual who became entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by immersing them in real life learning experience whereby they can take risks, manage result and learn from the outcome (Amoda & Ishola 2020). Most of the researchers considered Entrepreneurship education as the effective tool for the solution of unemployment problem. The use of entrepreneurship education (EE) to stimulate students' self-employment intentions (SEI) has been widely adopted, but

its outcome has yielded contrasting results in different contexts. For example, according to Gerba (2012) in the study of Ethiopian business and engineering students, results show that students who had participated in EE had higher entrepreneurial intentions than those who did not. Similarly, Ebewo et al. (2017) concluded that participation in EE positively influences students' intention to become entrepreneurs. Also, Farashah (2013) positioned that completion of entrepreneurship courses increases the likelihood of having entrepreneurial Intention by 1.3 times.

Self-Efficacy is a person's particular set of beliefs that determine how well one can execute a plan of action in prospective situations (Bandura, 1977). To put it in more simple terms, self-efficacy is a person's belief in their ability to succeed in a particular situation. Bandura in Gabriel (2023), however, emphasized that entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) also plays an important part in the field of entrepreneurship, especially in entrepreneurial activities, because starting a business comes with a lot of ambiguities and uncertainties, including rejections, fluctuations in market conditions, and changes in business policies. Someone with high self-efficacy will be able to overcome all uncertainties and problems that can negatively affect the performance of his/her business because self-efficacy is strongly linked with creative behavior, creative ideas and novel activities that are important to overcoming uncertain and diverse conditions of the market. In short, entrepreneurial self-efficacy gives strength and perseverance to someone to make the effort to overcome ambiguous conditions.

Research on the self-efficacy of teachers suggests that there are six components to the overall construct that act as a buffer between teaching stress and teacher burnout:

1. Instruction;
2. Adapting Education to Individual Students' Needs;
3. Motivating Students;
4. Keeping Discipline;
5. Cooperating with Colleagues and Parents;
6. Coping with Changes and Challenges (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

Generally, when teachers believe in their ability to effectively instruct students, adapt the lessons to individual students' needs, etc., they have a high level of overall self-efficacy related to teaching. This six-factor construct has also been shown to correlate with burnout, i.e., greater self-efficacy leads to less burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

As with other populations, the best way to develop greater self-efficacy in teachers is to focus on mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, getting positive and encouraging feedback, and general self-care; however, when applied conscientiously to these six components, teachers may find the most effective way to boost overall self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy can help students overcome various challenges and obstacles that they may encounter as entrepreneurs (Bandura 1997). For example, self-efficacious individuals are more likely to persevere in the face of setbacks and failures, seek out feedback and learning opportunities, and take calculated risks to achieve their goals. They are also more likely to have a positive mindset and view challenges as opportunities for growth and learning. By possessing high levels of self-efficacy, students can develop a strong sense of control over their own success and well-being, which can help them navigate the uncertainties and uncertainties of entrepreneurship. Additionally, self-efficacy can also help students develop a sense of resilience and adaptability, which are critical skills for entrepreneurs in today's rapidly changing business environment (Bandura, 1997)

In addition to helping teachers get through their day with their dignity and spirit intact, self-efficacy has great potential in aiding student performance. Students with high self-efficacy also tend to have high optimism, and both variables result in a plethora of positive outcomes: better academic performance, more effective personal adjustment, better coping with stress, better health, and higher overall satisfaction and commitment to remain in school (Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001).

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to assess Business Educators' perceptions of business skills and subject mastery as predictors of students' entrepreneurial intention in colleges of education North West. Specifically, the study is carried out in order to:

- (i) Evaluate the influence of business educators' perceptions of business skills on students' entrepreneurial intentions among students of colleges of education
- (ii) Assess the influence of business educators' self-efficacy in fostering entrepreneurial skills on students' entrepreneurial intentions in Colleges of Education.

Research Questions

Based on the purpose of the study, the research paper provides answers to the following specific research questions:

1. What are the influence of business educators' perceptions of business skills on students' entrepreneurial intentions among students of Colleges of Education?
2. What are the influence of business educators' self-efficacy in fostering entrepreneurial skills on students' entrepreneurial intentions in Colleges of Education?

Methodology

The design adopted in this study was descriptive survey. The study was carried out in Jigawa State. The choice of the area was because of the fact that they have vast potential for entrepreneurship opportunities as well as colleges of education offering business education at Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) level. The primary interest of this study was Assessment of Business Educators' Perceptions on Business Skills and Self-Efficacy as Predictors of Students' Entrepreneurial Intention in Jigawa State Colleges of Education. A total of Forty-three (43) Business Educators from College of Education Gumel and College of Education and Legal Studies Ringim in Jigawa State formed the population. Samples were not drawn because the population was relatively small and manageable. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Assessment of Business Educators' Perceptions on Business Skills and Self-efficacy as Predictors of Students' Entrepreneurial Intention" (ABEDPBSMSPSEI) validated by three (3) experts in which two from College of Education Gumel and one from College of Education and Legal Studies Ringim. The instrument was designed on four (4) ratings scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with the assigned numerical values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. A total of forty-three (43) copies of the instrument were distributed to the respondents and forty-two (42) copies were retrieved which represent 98% rate of returned. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Therefore, items with mean score of 2.50 and above were considered Strongly agreed (SA) while items 2.49 and below were considered Strongly Disagreed (SD).

Results

Research Question One

What are the influence of business educators' perceptions of business skills on students' entrepreneurial intentions among students of Colleges of Education?

Table 1: Assessment of Business Educators' Perceptions on Business Skills as Predictors of Students' Entrepreneurial Intention in Jigawa State Colleges of Education

S/N	Items	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1.	Financial management knowledge is an important predictor of students' entrepreneurial intentions.	2.75	1.13	SA
2.	Students should receive financial management training to support their entrepreneurial aspirations.	2.60	0.85	SA
3.	Students' mastery of financial management skills positively influences their entrepreneurial intentions.	3.32	0.73	SA
4.	Financial management is a crucial skill for aspiring entrepreneurs to possess.	3.06	1.10	SA
5.	Assessing students' financial management skills can help identify those with high entrepreneurial potential.	3.27	1.02	SA
6	Marketing knowledge is an essential skill for aspiring entrepreneurs to possess.	2.63	0.86	SA
7	Students should receive marketing training to support their entrepreneurial aspirations.	3.06	1.10	SA
8	Assessing students' marketing skills can help identify those with high entrepreneurial potential.	2.75	1.13	SA
9	Students' mastery of risk management skills positively influences their entrepreneurial intentions.	2.92	0.98	SA
10	Assessing students' risk management skills can help identify those with high entrepreneurial potential.	2.81	0.89	SA
Grand Weighted Mean		2.92	0.98	SA

Source: Field work (2024)

Table 1 revealed the perceptions of business skills on students' entrepreneurial intentions among students of Colleges of Education with mean ratings ranged from 2.60 to 3.32 and weighted mean of 2.92. Based on the findings the standard deviation of all items were ranged from 0.73 to 1.13 meaning closeness and strongly agreed. This implies that all the items identified in Table 1 financial management, marketing skills, Management and operations can influence student entrepreneurial intentions among students of Colleges of Education.

Research Question Two

What are the influence of business educators' self-efficacy in fostering entrepreneurial skills on students' entrepreneurial intentions in Colleges of Education?

Table 1 Assessment of Business Educators' Perceptions on Self-Efficacy as Predictor of Students' Entrepreneurial Intention in Jigawa State Colleges of Education

S/N	Items	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1.	Lecturers' guide can help students have a strong desire to start and manage their own business.	2.75	1.13	SA
2.	I believe that students with the necessary Business skills and knowledge can assists students entrepreneurial intentions	2.60	0.85	SA
3.	confident in ability to develop and implement effective business strategies can influence students entrepreneurial intentions	3.32	0.73	SA
4.	Confidence in ability to identify and capitalize on business opportunities can influence students' entrepreneurial intentions.	3.06	1.10	SA
5.	Ability to manage financial risks and make sound financial decisions influenced Students' entrepreneurial intentions	3.27	1.02	SA
6	Ability to navigate legal and regulatory requirements for starting and managing a business can influence students' entrepreneurial intentions.	3.22	0.82	SA
7	Ability to build and maintain strong relationships with customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders can influence Students' entrepreneurial intentions.	2.63	0.86	SA
8	Ability to adapt to changing market conditions and consumer preferences can influence students' entrepreneurial intentions.	2.60	0.85	SA
9	Ability to overcome obstacles and setbacks in the process of starting and managing a business can influence students' entrepreneurial intentions.	3.06	1.10	SA
10	Ability to balance the demands of entrepreneurship with other responsibilities, such as work, family, and personal life can influence students' and entrepreneurial intentions.	2.92	0.98	SA
Grand Weighted Mean		2.95	0.85	SA

Source: Field work (2024)

Table 2 revealed the mean ratings and standard deviation on the influence of business educators' self-efficacy in relation to confidence and ability in fostering entrepreneurial skills on students' entrepreneurial intentions in Colleges of Education with the mean ratings ranging from 2.60 to 3.32 and grand weighted mean of 2.95. The standard deviation of the findings ranged from 0.73 to 1.13 meaning agreed. This implies that all the items can influence students' entrepreneurial aspiration in colleges of education.

Discussion of Findings

The findings as shown in table 1 revealed that skills in financial management, marketing, and strategic planning and others among all are component of Business Skills which serve as the predictors of

students entrepreneurial intentions. The findings of this study agreed with that of Gartner (1988) that individuals with a higher level of business skills are more likely to be successful in entrepreneurship. The findings of this study as regards to research question two revealed that the respondents agreed with all the items in table 2 as the Self-efficacy influence students' entrepreneurial aspirations. Another study by Lin et al. (2016) found that self-efficacy is positively related to entrepreneurial intentions among a sample of Chinese entrepreneurs.

Several studies have examined the influence of self-efficacy and business skills to entrepreneurial intentions. For example, a study by Kourtleba et al. (2016) found that self-efficacy and business skills were significant predictors of entrepreneurial intentions among university students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study found that business educators in Jigawa State Colleges of Education perceive business skills, specifically in financial management, marketing, and strategic planning, and self-efficacy as strong predictors of students' entrepreneurial intentions. These findings align with previous research by Gartner (1988), Lin et al. (2016), and Kourtleba et al. (2016), which have consistently shown the positive influence of these factors on entrepreneurial success and intentions. The strong agreement among respondents suggests that educators recognize the importance of these factors and are likely to incorporate them into their teaching practices to foster students' entrepreneurial aspirations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. **Integrate business skills into the curriculum:** Colleges of Education should revise their curriculum to include more comprehensive training in financial management, marketing, and strategic planning. This will equip students with the necessary skills to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities.
2. **Enhance self-efficacy development:** Colleges should develop programs and interventions to enhance students' self-efficacy beliefs. This can be achieved through workshops, mentoring, and other support services that help students develop confidence in their abilities.
3. **Promote entrepreneurship education:** Colleges should establish entrepreneurship programs and courses to educate students about the realities of entrepreneurship and provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to start their own businesses.
4. **Provide resources and support for entrepreneurs:** Colleges should establish incubators, accelerators, and other resources to support students in starting their own businesses. This can include access to funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities.
5. **Monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions:** Colleges should regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of their interventions on students' entrepreneurial intentions and success. This will help identify areas for improvement and ensure that the interventions are effective in fostering entrepreneurship among students.

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