

Business Education University Curriculum and Students' Entrepreneurial Skills Empowerment in Lagos State, Nigeria

Oluwole Victor Falobi & Bukola Esther Ononiwu

University of Lagos

ofalobi@unilag.edu.ng

Abstract

*This study assessed the concept of entrepreneurship development of business education undergraduates in Lagos State. A survey research design was used for this study. The population comprised of 565 business education undergraduates in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria while a sample size of 160 were used for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while *t*-test was used to test the hypotheses. The *t*-test comparison showed that the difference in mean ratings on the influence of business education undergraduate curriculum on promotion of human resources management skill among male and female respondents in Lagos State was not statistically significant. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended among others that the curriculum planners should ensure that business education curriculum content is relevant to the skills required of industries because of the relevance of the programme in providing the needed manpower in industries.*

Keywords: Business Education, Curriculum Content, Entrepreneurship Empowerment.

Introduction

In order to survive in the Business world as an entrepreneur or someone who wants to work in a reputable organization, there is need for business education undergraduates to be exposed to some entrepreneurship skills that will be of benefit to them. There are two public universities in Lagos state that offer Business education programme. Business education is one of the major components of vocational education. Falobi (2019) opined that Business education is an essential element of general education that is mainly concerned with the impartation of business orientation and skills for personal and national development which can lead to self-reliant. In Nigeria, the discipline is offered at both the secondary and tertiary levels of education. According to Association of Business Educators

of Nigeria, (ABEN, 2017), business education is needed by students in the contemporary world because business education develops life skills for economic success and helps students to develop skills and attitudes needed for career success. In the opinion of the researchers, the relevance of Business education in achieving sustainable development in Lagos States of Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized because of its potential in equipping the recipients with the relevant skills for self-employment. Business education is education for self-reliant and economic development (Falobi, 2018). This is in conformity with the statement made by ABEN (2017) that Business education can be a major instrument for national development because it promotes industrialization through its entrepreneurship offerings. Business education is considered to be one of the crucial vehicles for social equity as well as sustainable development if it is accorded proper status by the government and other stakeholders.

The term curriculum is often used in a much wider sense to incorporate the entire educational activities through which the content is conveyed as well as the materials and methods used. From the forgoing we see curriculum as a structured series of intended learning experiences.

Entrepreneurship can serve as a career path diverging from employment provided that prior skill sets in the area of self-employment have been inculcated (Hattab, 2014; Saberi & Hamdan, 2018). In reality, equipping business education students to be self-employed using entrepreneurship empowerment is one of the efficient and effective solutions that could be used by them to become independent, useful and self-reliant in the world of business and even in the labour market in Nigeria. The main aim of entrepreneurship empowerment is to make an individual useful for himself, the society and to balance the economic, social and environmental needs. In support of this, Ukairo (2017) noted that for sustainable development to be achieved in any nation, there must be a balance between environmental, societal and economic considerations needed to maintain and improve the quality of generations to come.

In order to fully achieve entrepreneurship empowerment for business education undergraduates in order to reduce unemployment rate in the long run in Lagos, Nigeria, integration of some of the things that could promote and enhance entrepreneurship empowerment should be utmost priorities of the stakeholders of business education curriculum. Furthermore, relevant measures should be put in place by the government to ensure that quality of instruction at all level of the university should be oriented towards acquisition of entrepreneurship skills necessary for self-employment, independence and professionalism.

The talents and passions of students can be realized through the creation of Small Medium Enterprises (SME) businesses (Kirkley, 2017). How is public education building entrepreneurial intent in learners so that they can envision using their talents and passion as e-commerce owners that can create much needed employment? Students have endured isolation from school which provides essential social interaction for many young people. Formal assessments have been cancelled or changed, family stress has increased, while routines have been

restricted and modified (Bryant et al., 2020; OECD, 2020 and UNESCO, 2020; Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020). Schools provide many students with lunches, help regulate behaviour, and keep a connection to mitigate family issues (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). In addition to providing more support to vulnerable groups, the purpose of education needs to be re-evaluated to better support student wellbeing and resilience (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). Public education needs to empower learners with competencies that take time to develop (Lackeus, 2015 and Rieckmann, 2020) and magnetise student engagement so that students develop resilience behaviours and remain connected (UNESCO, 2020). It is of concern that so many students have been reported to lack intrinsic competencies and motivation to construct their own learning while at home (Bryant et al., 2020; OECD, 2020; Reimers & Schleicher, 2020; UNESCO, 2020; Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020 and Zhou *et al.*, 2020).

Entrepreneurship is now seen as an important component within the contemporary economic development of a nation (Falobi, Ishola & Jacob, 2019). Entrepreneurship skills are important tool in obtaining development and self-reliant Business education undergraduates. This is why the researchers try to find out how Business education curriculum can have impact on the entrepreneurship empowerment of undergraduates in Lagos, Nigeria.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2017) in its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) stated that Goal four of the agenda shall be achieved via the "... acquisition of foundational and higher-order skills; greater and more equitable access to technical and vocational education and training and higher education; training throughout life; and the knowledge, skills and values needed to function well and contribute to society". It also pointed out that Goal five of the agenda aims to empower women and girls to reach their full potential, which requires eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against them, including harmful practices, violence by intimate partners, sexual violence and harmful practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation.

Based on the gender disparity, it therefore means that female business education students would lack feminine role models and executive guest speakers. This gender gaps among business education students have been recognized by the FRN (2017) and may be the reason why it stressed the need for vocational education sector (of which business education is a major part) to do more in closing the gender gap, stipulating that the SDG focuses on the acquisition of foundational and higher-order skills, greater and more equitable access to technical and vocational education, training, higher education, training throughout life, the knowledge, skills and values needed to function well and contribute to society.

In order for this goal to become a reality, technical and vocational education, training and higher education needs to tackle the "invisible barriers" that prevent women from progressing into entrepreneurial and lifelong learning activities. This speaks more on gender differences of business education students' human capital, which resulted in females being constantly judged as less having opportunity to contribute to sustainable development agenda. Although, some emerging research

streams have focused on gender issues in business education programme such as: (Ball, 2012; Blau, Mittal, Schirmer, & Ozkan, 2017; Igbinedion & Ojeaga, 2013; Kaenzig, Hyatt, & Anderson, 2007; Kelan & Jones, 2010; Riley, 1987; Simpson, 2006). It was revealed that the issue of gender should not be a factor for not getting necessary entrepreneurship skills that would be needed for independence in the business environment and also being qualified for securing a good job. So, more female should be given an opportunity to actualize their dream especially in business education, there should be no form of barrier that should stand against them becoming successful entrepreneurs and getting good jobs.

In this paper we provide evidence that entrepreneurship education provides the opportunity for students to gain meaning from their learning and develop the types of competencies that will support them throughout their lives. The entrepreneurship education pedagogy provides growing evidence of the effectiveness of programmes that support students to act on opportunities that addresses unemployment and other negative effects of not acquiring entrepreneurship skills.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, it has been discovered that Business Education graduates are not meeting the required employability skills needed by the employer for them to be employed in the world of work. In order to solve this problem, they are being exposed to entrepreneurship skills while in school. These skills will make them to be self-employed and be able to have the skills needed to be employed in the labour market. Without a real exposure to entrepreneurship skills, the problem will still continue to surface.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to determine the impact of Business education curriculum on the entrepreneurship empowerment of undergraduates in Lagos State. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the extent to which Business education curriculum promotes human resources management skills in Lagos State.
2. Assess the extent to which Business education curriculum promote financial management skills in Lagos State.

Research Questions

The research work provided answers to the following questions:

1. What is the extent to which Business education curriculum influences human resources skills in Lagos State?
2. What is the extent to which Business education curriculum influences financial management skills in Lagos State?

Research Hypotheses

In line with the research questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated for this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the influence of Business education curriculum on promotion of human resources and management skills between male and female students.
2. There is no significant difference in the influence of Business education curriculum on promotion of financial management skills between male and female students.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was used to carry out this study. The study was carried out in Lagos State, Nigeria with a population of 565 undergraduates. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 160 undergraduates as the sample size. Out of the 160 questionnaires distributed, only 151 were returned. The instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. The items had a 5 – point rating scale of Very Great Extent, Great Extent, Moderate Extent, Poor Extent and Almost Non- Existent, with corresponding values of 4.50-5.00; 3.50 -4.49; 2.50-3.49; 1.50-2.49; and below 1.50 respectively. The structured questionnaire instrument consists of 12 items. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, test re-test was adopted. The researchers administered the instrument on 15 Business Education students who were not part of the sample used in an interval of two weeks. The two sets of scores were computerized using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. The reliability co-efficient obtained was 0.87. The researchers employed face-to-face method in the administration of the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation.

Results

The results of the study were obtained from the research questions answered by the study and two hypotheses tested and analyzed.

Research Question One: What is the extent to which business education curriculum influences human resources skills in Lagos State?

Table 1: Mean ratings of male and female business education undergraduates on the influence of business education curriculum on human resource skills

Item	Almost non-existent	Poor extent	Moderate extent	Great extent	Very great extent	Mean	ST. DEV.
Curriculum and pedagogical strategies promote team work	0(0.0)	1(0.7)	29(19.2)	53(35.1)	68(45.0)	4.25	0.783
Curriculum and pedagogical strategies promote leadership skill	0(0.0)	1(0.7)	38(25.2)	75(49.7)	37(24.5)	3.98	0.725
Curriculum and pedagogical strategies promote communication skill	0(0.0)	1(0.7)	44(29.1)	62(41.1)	44(29.1)	3.99	0.783
Curriculum and pedagogical skills promote self-regulating skill	0(0.0)	3(2.0)	46(30.5)	54(35.8)	48(31.8)	3.97	0.840
Curriculum and pedagogical strategies promotes motivational skill	0(0.0)	3(2.0)	43(28.5)	68(45.0)	37(24.5)	3.92	0.779
Curriculum and pedagogical strategies promote evaluation skill.	1(0.7)	1(0.7)	42(27.8)	63(41.7)	44(29.1)	3.98	0.812

Table 1 shows that all the 6 items with corresponding mean of 4.25, 3.98, 3.99, 3.97, 3.92, and 3.98 are the extent to which Business education curriculum influences human resources skills in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference on the influence of business education curriculum on promotion of human resources management skill among male and female respondents.

Table 2: T–test analysis of Business education curriculum on promotion of human resource management skills among male and female respondents

Sex	N	Mean	S.D	T	Df	P-value	Remark
Male	57	23.93	3.310	-0.451	149	0.653	NS
Female	94	24.18	3.321				

The researcher in table 2 presents the t-test comparison of the scores of mean ratings on the influence of Business undergraduate curriculum on promotion of human resources and management skill among male and female respondents. The t-test comparison showed that the difference in mean ratings on the influence of Business education undergraduate curriculum on promotion of human resources

management skill among male and female respondents in Lagos State is not statistically significant (T calculated = -0.451, df = 149, p > 0.05). We therefore accept the null hypothesis. It therefore follows that the mean rating of female respondents (Mean = 24.18, S.D = 3.321) is higher than that of their male counterparts (Mean = 23.93, S.D = 3.310). Since the difference is not statistically significant, we cannot generalize the result.

Research Question Two: What is the extent to which business education curriculum influences financial management skills in Lagos State?

Table 3: Mean ratings of male and female business education undergraduates on the influence of business education curriculum on financial management skill

<i>Item</i>	<i>Almost non-existent</i>	<i>Poor extent</i>	<i>Moderate extent</i>	<i>Great extent</i>	<i>Very great extent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>ST. DEV.</i>
Curriculum and pedagogical strategies promote skill to be able to source capital	0(0.0)	7(4.6)	45(29.8)	57(37.7)	42(27.8)	3.89	0.868
Curriculum and pedagogical strategies promote skill to prepare financial inventory	1(0.7)	4(2.6)	51(33.8)	57(37.7)	38(25.2)	3.84	0.857
Curriculum and pedagogical strategies promote skill to keep necessary books of account	0(0.0)	1(0.7)	29(19.2)	64(42.4)	57(37.7)	4.17	0.755
Curriculum and pedagogical strategies promote skill to limit personal expenditure	0(0.0)	3(2.0)	29(19.2)	87(57.6)	32(21.2)	3.98	0.697
Curriculum and pedagogical strategies promote skill to invest in business finance wisely	1(0.7)	3(2.0)	41(27.2)	67(44.4)	39(25.8)	3.93	0.817
Curriculum and pedagogical strategies promote skill to avoid unplanned expenditure	1(0.7)	4(2.6)	28(18.5)	75(49.7)	43(28.5)	4.03	0.800

Table 3 shows that all the 6 items with corresponding mean of 3.89, 3.84, 4.17, 3.98, 3.93, and 4.03 are the extent to which Business education curriculum influences financial management skills in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference on the influence of Business education curriculum on promotion of financial management skill among male and female respondents.

Table 4: T–test analysis of business education curriculum on promotion financial management skills among male and female respondents

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	T	Df	P – value	Remark
Male	57	24.16	3.427	1.058	149	0.292	NS
Female	94	23.64	2.577				

The researchers in table 4 presents the t-test comparison of the scores of mean ratings on the influence of Business curriculum on promotion of financial management skill among male and female respondents. The t-test comparison showed that the difference in mean ratings on the influence of Business education curriculum on promotion of financial management skill among male and female respondents in Lagos State is not statistically significant (T calculated = 1.058, df = 149, $p > 0.05$). We therefore accept the null hypothesis. It therefore follows that the mean rating of male respondents (Mean = 24.16, S.D = 3.427) is higher than that of their female counterparts (Mean = 23.64, S.D = 2.577). Since the difference is not statistically significant, we cannot generalize the result.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the findings in table 1 revealed that business education curriculum influences human resources skills. More than half of the respondents accepted all the six (6) items as true both to a great extent and a very great extent. The mean ratings of each of the six (6) items are each above the 3.00 benchmark for the acceptance of a statement in a five likert scale. This is a confirmation of the result found from the frequency and percentages analyses. Conclusively, in the opinion of the majority of the respondents; the following statements on the six (6) are all true at least to a great extent. Curriculum promotes team work, leadership skill, communication skill, self-regulating skill, motivational skill and evaluation skill. The findings of this study agreed with Griffin (2017), who defined human resource management as the set of organizational activities directed at attracting, developing and maintaining an effective workforce. It also helped business education undergraduate to acquire skill that will make them to be self-reliant and also meet the necessary requirement needed for gaining employment.

From the findings of research question two, table three above showed the extent to which business education curriculum influence financial management skills. More than half of the respondents accepted all the six (6) items as true both to a great extent and a very great extent.

The mean ratings of each of the six (6) items are each above the 3.00 benchmark for the acceptance of a statement in a five likert scale. This is a confirmation of the result found from the frequency and percentages analyses. Conclusively, in the opinion of the majority of the respondents; the following statements on the six (6) are all true at least to a great extent. Curriculum promotes skill to be able to source capital, prepare financial inventory, keep necessary books of account, limit personal expenditure, invest in business finance wisely and avoid unplanned expenditure.

The finding also agreed with Balderson (2000) asserts that entrepreneurship is the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth. The researchers are of the opinion that if the undergraduates are exposed to the necessary financial management skills, eventually when they graduate and want to start up their own businesses, they will not find it difficult to operate and it will make them relevant, useful for themselves, the society and the world at large.

Conclusions

This study could be concluded through the findings that business education curriculum is a very important tool that helps the undergraduate to achieve entrepreneurship skills like human resource management and financial management skills. These skills could help them to create job for themselves, and gain meaningful employment. This will bring about entrepreneurship empowerment of undergraduates in the universities in Lagos state, Nigeria and development in the country at large.

Recommendations

According to the findings of the study, the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. The human resource management skill component of the business education curriculum should be enhanced because it had positive influence on the graduates' human resource management skills.
2. Business education curriculum should be improved on by Business education curriculum planners to broaden its financial management skill components and ensure effectiveness and efficiency of the financial management skill components delivery.
3. Business education curriculum should be reviewed from time to time by Business education curriculum planners and stakeholders to ensure adequate incorporation of relevant entrepreneurship skills.

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