



An Assessment of Business Students' Attitude towards Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial Education

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Abstract

The study adopted a quantitative research approach with a survey design to examine the attitude of final year students of the department of business administration in Gombe State University towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. The population of final year students in the department adds up to 67 and the entire population was adopted for the study. A 5-point likert scale questionnaire was used as instrument for the collection of data. Both validity and reliability tests were carried out prior to the administration of questionnaire to respondents. In the aspect of validity, face and content validity tests were conducted and feedbacks were incorporated into the questionnaire's final draft. In ascertaining the reliability of the instrument for data collection, a Cronbach Alpha test was also conducted and a value of 0.74 was recorded which shows that the instrument is reliable. Descriptive statistics were employed for analyses and SPSS version 21 was used for analyses. Corded responses were weighted to calculate for mean score. As for criterion for acceptance, responses with mean score of 3 and above were accepted to represent marginal or very positive attitude of the students towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. Findings of the study generally showed that most of the final year students in the department of business administration in GSU have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education and many of them would prefer to be entrepreneurs upon completion of their study. The study however recommends that the university and its entrepreneurship staffers should endeavor to bring into the lecture environment a number of successful entrepreneurs to share their experiences with the students. This can motivate and positively influence the attitudes of students to venture into entrepreneurship.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship education, Attitude*

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Background to the Study

The global economy has become so complex and uncertain such that people with complex, creative and diversified entrepreneurial skills and knowledge are in constant demand to serve as solutions to growing unemployment and other related issues. This supports the argument of Franke & Luthje (2004) who opine that markets are only able to offer limited job/employment opportunities. This is also confirmed by Teshome (2014) and Hisrich, Michael & Shephard (2005) who argue that world over, graduates continue to find it hard to secure jobs not only in the private setting but even in public enterprises. Ramalan and Ngah (2012) argue that the global economy is so volatile; hence necessitating a need for a focus on entrepreneurship which is believed to serve as catalyst for stabilizing economies and creating employments. In the light of this, entrepreneurship education becomes paramount. This is because entrepreneurial education is used to deliver entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and abilities to the students, helping them to succeed in their entrepreneurial careers. In other words, entrepreneurship education train students to gain innovative enterprise skills and capture the opportunities to succeed in business ventures (Nian, Bakar & Aminul-Islam, 2014). That is to say, to have an entrepreneurial economy, colleges and universities must appreciate the immense importance of entrepreneurship education and what it is capable of contributing to the growth and development of the economy.

Within the Nigerian context, the dwindling ratio of the so-called white-collar jobs when compared to the rate of turnout of graduates at all levels of education remains alarming. This necessitates a need to turn out graduates who will not only be self reliant but employers of labour. Given the trend of events, the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the National Universities Commission (NUC) introduced Entrepreneurship Education which is aimed at equipping students with entrepreneurial skills, attitudes and competencies in order to be job providers as opposed to job seekers. Several studies in relation to the attitude of students towards these entrepreneurship modules had been conducted. However, non in relation to an infant university such as the Gombe State University has been carried out. This study intends to feel this identified gap.

Statement of the Problem

Since the introduction of entrepreneurship courses into the curriculum of universities in Nigeria, there seems to be increase of graduate unemployment. For instance, unemployment rate in Nigeria was recorded at 12.1% in first quarter of 2016, up from 10.4% in the fourth quarter of 2015, making it highest since December of 2009. The number of unemployed persons rose by 18% to 9.485 million, employment grew a meager 0.12% to 69 million and labour force went up 2% to 78.4 million. Meanwhile, youth unemployment increased to 21.5% from 19%. Unemployment Rate in Nigeria averaged 9.04 percent from 2006 until 2016 (NBS, 2016). With this trend of events, a question is being asked to whether the attitudes of students towards entrepreneurship education as offered are anything to go by. This study intends to address such problem. In other words, this study intends to assess the attitude of students in Gombe State University towards entrepreneurship education.

Research Question

What is the attitude of Business students towards entrepreneurship education in GSU?

Objective of the Study

The general objective of the paper is to investigate the attitude of Business students towards entrepreneurship education in GSU. The specific objectives include:

- i. To examine the behavioural component of Business students attitude towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education in GSU.
- ii. To examine the cognitive component of Business students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education in GSU.
- iii. To examine the affective component of Business students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education.

Review of Related literature

Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Education

According to Henry, Hill and Leitch (2005), entrepreneurship education refers to that education which assists students to develop positive attitudes, innovation and skills for self reliance, rather than depending on the government for employment. Often, the need for this kind of education is to produce graduates with capabilities and self confidence for independent thought to discover new information leading to self empowerment and economic development. This contribution supports that of Agu (2006) who argued that entrepreneurship education refers to the type of education designed to change both the orientation and attitude of the recipients which equips the recipient with both knowledge and skills to enable the him/her to start and be able to manage a business entity. In other words, entrepreneurship education aims at developing the necessary entrepreneurial attitude, competence and skills that will equip an individual to be able commence and manage a business enterprise. Agu (2006) added that entrepreneurship education deals with those skills and attitudes that are needed for an individual to respond to his or her environment in the process of starting and managing a business enterprise; arguing further, (Agu, 2006) averred that this is often based on the fact that some basic skills and attitudes are very essential for an entrepreneur or prospective entrepreneur to respond positively to her or his environment. This supports the position of Sexton and Upton (1984) who argued that entrepreneurial education prepares an individual to be equipped to acquire saleable skills which could be used to manage his/her own business or that/those of other person (s). Concurring also is Souitaris, Zerbinati and Andreas (2007) who argued that entrepreneurship education is not a prerogative of some set of people but maintain that it is an education that is open to all; arguing that it is the reason why the clamor for its introduction into the curriculum of universities to prepare students for entrepreneurial ventures upon graduation. In their conclusion, Souitaris, Zerbinati and Andreas (2007) offered that entrepreneurial education focuses on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit of entrepreneurship behaviors, attitudes and skills in different contexts. These positions are no different from that of Fatoki and Oni (2014) who purported that entrepreneurship education deals with the introduction of changes and new ideas as well as the ability to control resources such that they satisfy an entrepreneurs' objective.

Ramalan and Ngah (2012) averred that entrepreneurship is a critical agent for the growth of any economy. This strengthens the position of Lokoko, Rankhumise and Ras (2012) who argued that entrepreneurship is in fact a veritable vehicle for self employment which often translates to the well being of the state; and also strengthens the position of Denanyoh, Adjei & Nyemekye (2015) who viewed the concept of entrepreneurship as an important driver for productivity and social development. In Nigeria and world over, opportunities for graduates employment continues to be on decline. This is echoed by Opoku-Antwi, Amofah, Nyamaah-Koffuor & Yakubu (2012) who argue that graduate unemployment continues to be an albatross on necks of societies, hence the glamour for entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions.

According to Gerba (2012), promoting a culture of entrepreneurship among university students has become an issue of utmost importance such that nurturing a mindset that is opportunity-oriented driven is seen as very critical. In other words, entrepreneurship is in fact now seen as a cog for growth and development of any viable society given its capacity and potential for the creation of job opportunities.

Contextualizing these submissions and adopting the contribution of Henry, Hill and Leitch (2005) as a working definition for this paper, there is little to argue on the fact that the relevance and/or importance of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education as far as the well being of any society is concerned can neither be over nor under emphasized.

Attitude towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education

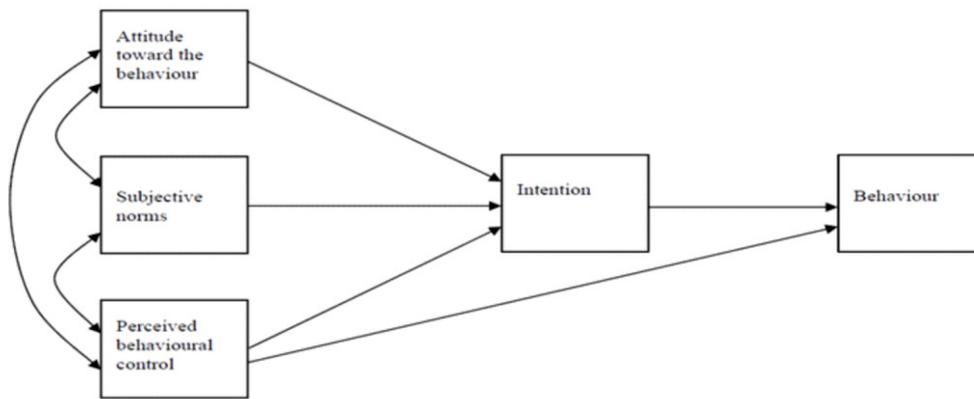
According to Pulka, Aminu and Rikwentishe (2015), attitudes towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education can be measured in terms of cognitive, affective and behavioural components. They (Pulka, Aminu and Rikwentishe, 2015) argue that the cognitive component relates to thoughts, beliefs and knowledge which students/recipients of entrepreneurship education have about entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education which shape their attitudes and behaviors. On the other hand, the affective component relates to the recipients' feelings and emotions about entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. Finally, the behavioral component relates to those actions, responses and willingness of the recipient (student) to accept and/or respond to something different.

Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

This study aligns with the theory of planned behavior. According to Pulka, Aminu and Rikwentishe (2015:151), Ajzen is the proponent of the planned behavior theory. This theory proposes that behavioural intentions are formed by individual's attitude towards that behaviour, subjective norms and perception of behavioural control. The theory states that attitude towards behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, together shape an individual's behavioral intentions and behaviors.

Figure I. The theory of planned behavior (TPB)



Source: Orzanna (2015)

Pulka, Aminu and Rikwentishe (2015) argue that most behaviours result from an individual's intention to perform entrepreneurial behaviour and their ability to make mindful choices among alternatives and make good decisions. As seen in figure I, The TPB is made up of three components which include attitude toward behaviour, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control.

This justification for the adoption of this theory is that TPB explains human attitude towards a behavior. The framework was also adopted because it is most appropriate theoretical basis of entrepreneurship education given that it influences the formation of process of entrepreneurship intention. Finally, the theory was adopted because entrepreneurship is in fact a planned behavior given that new entrepreneurial ventures cannot be created without adequate planning.

Empirical Reviews

In relation to studies regarding students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education, vast amount of literature reveal that studies in this area had been carried out. For instance, a study in relation to entrepreneurship education conducted by Basu and Virik (2008) ascertained that entrepreneurship education often improve the attitude of students towards entrepreneurship. Following their study, Souitaris, Zerbinati and Andreas (2007) deduced that entrepreneurship education encourages students' subjective norm as well as their intentions towards entrepreneurship by providing the students with skills, knowledge and belief which inspires them to apt for a career in entrepreneurship. The findings of Ediagbonya (2013) also show that entrepreneurship education impacts positively towards the attitude of students to engage in entrepreneurship ventures if their knowledge and skills are developed. This is similar given the findings of Kauffman Foundation (2000) who ascertain that education in entrepreneurship increases the probability of business start-ups and self employment which in turn brings about self satisfaction and economic rewards.

Two similar studies were carried out by Zain, Akram and Ghani (2010) and Mapfaira and Setibi (2014). Their findings respectively show that more 50% and as high as 73% of recipients of entrepreneurship education had an intention of becoming entrepreneurs upon completion of entrepreneurship education programme. Kabui and Maalu (2012) confirmed these findings that majority of students who had undergone entrepreneurship training as a result of doing one or more university entrepreneurship courses often have a positive perception on entrepreneurship and are likely to choose that as a future career option. In a nutshell, empirical findings as seen above all reveal that entrepreneurship education impacts positively on the attitudes of the recipient (the student) to become entrepreneurial.

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research approach with a survey design. The population for the study comprised of 400L students of the Department of Business Administration, Gombe State University. The students' total adds up to 67 (n=67). The entire population was adopted for the study, this also formed the sample size for the study. The justification for the selection of 400L students of Business Administration Department is because all the selected students have undergone entrepreneurship education courses in the University before the time of survey.

Questionnaire was used as instrument for the collection of data. The questionnaire, totaling 67 employed a 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (DA) to strongly disagree (SDA) with each of the points assigned a value as follows: SA =5, A=4, N=3, DA=2, SDA=1. Questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section (1) solicited information on respondents' demographic variables. Section two (2) sought to ascertain the attitudes of the students towards entrepreneurship education as offered. The questionnaire was adapted from a previous study on the attitudes of university students towards entrepreneurship education (Rudhumbu, Svtowa, Munyanyiwa & Mutsau, 2016).

Validity of the instrument (Questionnaire)

The questionnaire used was subjected to face and content validity. A couple of senior staffers of the Department of Business Administration of GSU where handed draft copies of questionnaire used for the study and their inputs were all incorporated into the final questionnaire administered to respondents.

Test for Reliability

The questionnaires were coded and analysed after being tested for reliability of instrument using the Cronbach Alpha test. Being that a value of 0.70 is required for the reliability of instrument, the Cronbach Alpha for this study which revealed a value of 0.743 is reliable and good for further analyses. This is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.743	22

Data Analyses

Descriptive statistics were employed for analyses and SPSS version 21 was used for quantitative analyses. Responses ranging from SA, A, N, DA & SDA were respectively coded 5-1 where sum of weights were calculated for average score to get a mean criterion. Responses with 3 and excess were accepted to represent marginal or very positive attitude of students towards entrepreneurship education. On the other hand, responses with mean score showing less than 3 were rejected. All rejections show that there is negative attitude towards entrepreneurship education on the part of the students of the department.

Results and Discussions

Population and sample size for the study comprised of 67 final year students of The Department of Business Administration in Gombe State University. A total of 67 well structured questionnaires were administered to the respondents and the entire 67 were retrieved, 3 were discarded because respondents erroneously completed the questionnaire or were unable to complete some vital portions of the questionnaire. As such, 64 questionnaires representing 95.52% of the total administered were subjected for further analyses. In terms of gender, a total of 29 and 35 respondents, representing 45.3% and 54.7% were females and males respectively.

In relation to the ages of respondents, findings reveal that those within the ages of 19-24 were 21 (32.81%), those within the ages of 25-30 were 28 (43.75%), while those within the ages of 31 and above were 15 (23.44%).

Table 2: Behavioural component of Business students attitude towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education in GSU

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.
I enjoyed lectures on entrepreneurship as offered in the university.	3.96	1.2
Lectures on entrepreneurship I received in GSU have increased my interest to pursue an entrepreneurial career.	4.27	1.1
I consider entrepreneurship as a very important course in the university.	4.24	1.4
Entrepreneurship education courses I have undergone in GSU have prepared me to make informed decisions on entrepreneurial career choices.	3.09	0.9
I am happy to have had entrepreneurship education in GSU	3.16	1.2
I sincerely consider entrepreneurship a desired career option	4.18	1.2
Entrepreneurship education I received in GSU has encouraged me to venture into entrepreneurship after graduation.	3.21	1.0
GSU and my entrepreneurship lecturers have helped me to meet and interact with successful entrepreneurs.	2.48	0.9
GSU and its entrepreneurship staffers help students to meet successful entrepreneurs who provide motivation to students to become entrepreneurs.	3.01	1.1
Average	3.51	1.11

Source: Survey (2016)

Table 2 shows results for the behavioral components of GSU students' attitude. Among other revelations, the recipients of entrepreneurship education in GSU did indicate that they consider entrepreneurship as an important course in the university (mean=4.24). Respondents also indicate that entrepreneurship education offered in the University has encouraged them for entrepreneurial career. Following the benchmark set as criterion for acceptance, an average mean score of 3.51 from all items considered portray positive behavioral attitude of GSU students towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. The study of Basu and Virik (2008) supports these findings. Basu and Virik (2008) in their study adduced that entrepreneurship education generally stimulates the intentions of students towards entrepreneurship.

Table 3: Cognitive component of Business students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education in GSU

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.
GSU entrepreneurship courses have enabled me to identify business related opportunities.	3.01	1.1
Entrepreneurship courses I took in the university have taught me to create services and/or products that can satisfy the needs of customers.	2.91	1.3
GSU entrepreneurship courses have taught me to develop business plans successfully	3.22	1.0
Due to the university's entrepreneurship education programme, I now have skills to can create a new business	4.01	1.2
With the university's entrepreneurship education program I had undergone, I can now successfully identify sources of business finance	3.76	1.0
Entrepreneurship education program of the university has taught me to perform feasibility studies	2.02	1.2
The university's entrepreneurship courses have stimulated my interest in entrepreneurship	4.71	1.1
Through the university's entrepreneurship program, my skills, knowledge and interest in entrepreneurship have all improved	4.19	1.2
Overall, I am very satisfied with how entrepreneurship education programme is being taught in GSU	4.24	1.0
Average	3.56	1.12

Source: Survey, (2016)

Table 3 shows cognitive components of the attitude of respondents towards education in entrepreneurship. Overall, findings reveal that students feel satisfied with entrepreneurship education as offered in the university (mean=4.24). This is same with entrepreneurship courses as respondents have expressed that these courses have stimulated their interest in entrepreneurship (mean=4.71). With an average mean score of 3.56 for the cognitive variables employed and adopting the criterion set for acceptance, we could conclude that GSU students who had undergone entrepreneurship education

training had a positive cognitive attitude towards both entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. The study of Ediagbonya (2013) validates the findings of this research. The conclusion of Ediagbonya (2013) offers that if the knowledge and skills of students are developed and the students are motivated, entrepreneurship education can impact positively on student's attitude towards entrepreneurship.

Table 4 as seen below shows the affective component of GSU students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. All items with the exception of whether entrepreneurship programmes in GSU has effectively prepared the respondents for an entrepreneurial career scored a mean score of more than 3. With an average mean score for all items as 3.45, this reveals that overall, the affective intentions of GSU students towards entrepreneurship are positive.

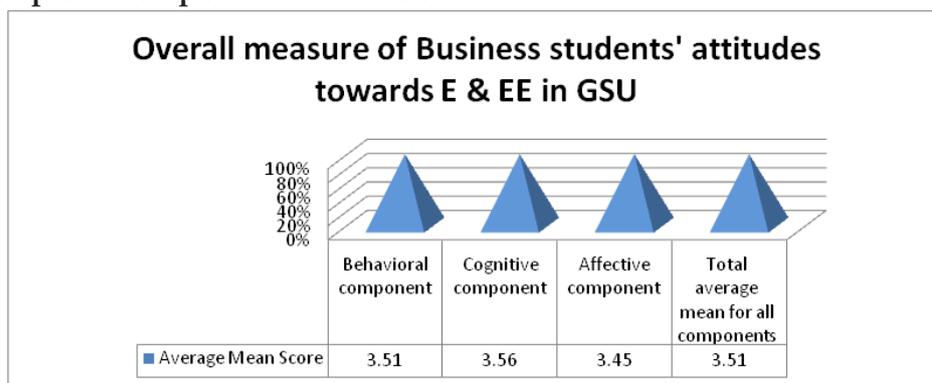
Table 4: Affective component of Business students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.
I would want to be an entrepreneur after school graduation	4.04	1.0
The idea to become an entrepreneur and work for my self is appealing to me	4.15	1.1
I really consider self-employment as something very important	3.19	1.2
The entrepreneurship programme in GSU has effectively prepared me to establish a career in entrepreneurship	2.41	0.92
Average	3.45	1.06

Source: Survey, (2016).

These findings align with that of a study conducted by Mapfaira and Setibi (2014) who found that over 72% of recipients of entrepreneurship education were willing to becoming entrepreneurs, own their businesses and work for themselves.

Figure 2: Overall measure of Business students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education in GSU



Source: Survey (2016)

The graph above shows that with a total average mean score of 3.51, the overall attitudes of GSU students towards entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship is generally positive.

Conclusions

The study ventured to investigate the attitude of Business Students towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education in GSU. The study concludes that the attitude of respondents towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education is positive. Students' skills and knowledge of entrepreneurship has increased due to the university's entrepreneurship education courses they had taken. As such, many of the respondents are willing to become entrepreneurs upon graduation from the university.

Recommendations

- i. From the findings of the study, the behavioral component of the attitude of respondents towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education shows a mean score of 2.48 in relation to whether the university and its entrepreneurship lecturers help the students to meet and interact with successful entrepreneurs. A mean of 2.48 is relatively weak given the criterion employed by the study for acceptance. As such, a recommendation is hereby proffered that the university and its entrepreneurship staffers should endeavor to bring into the lecture environment a number of successful entrepreneurs to share their experiences with the students. This can motivate and positively influence the attitudes of students to venture into entrepreneurship.
- ii. Secondly, the cognitive portion on the attitude of respondents towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education in relation to whether courses entrepreneurship courses offered have taught the respondents to develop services and/products that can satisfy the needs of customers and whether the taught entrepreneurship courses has helped them to perform feasibility studies. Mean scores of 2.91 and 2.02 were recorded respectively. Again, these mean scores are weak when based on the criterion for acceptance as adopted by this study. A recommendation is therefore made that entrepreneurship courses offered by the university should encapsulate such elements relating to value creation. This would educate students to appreciate the importance of creating services or products that would satisfy needs of the customer. Also, the modules should orient students of the university to be able to successfully conduct feasibility studies.
- iii. On the affective component, relative weakness was also recorded (mean=2.41) in relation to the entrepreneurship courses in GSU as to whether such courses have effectively prepared the respondents to establish a career in entrepreneurship. This study therefore recommends that both the curriculum and entrepreneurship teaching methods should be revised such that students are effectively prepared to establish a career in entrepreneurship upon graduation.

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