

Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on the Quality of SMES Management in Gombe State Metropolis Nigeria

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Abstract

This study main aim is to investigate the influence of entrepreneurship education on the quality of SMEs management in Gombe state metropolis. The population of the study consists of all business proprietors in Gombe Metropolis. However, the number is somehow limitless. Consequently, the current study using a sampling frame, decided to limit the target population to only the knowledgeable small and medium scale owners who are involved in creative endeavors within the metropolis of Gombe. A sample size of 100 respondents was selected among small and medium scale enterprises within the metropolis. Data collection was done through a structured interview, while analysis was done through thematic content analysis. Findings suggest that educative seminars and workshops on entrepreneurship are great ways of improving entrepreneurship skills. The study, therefore suggested that entrepreneurship workshops and seminars should be organized on regular basis for business owners across Gombe state metropolis.

Introduction

The concept of entrepreneurship has for a while been on the increase in Nigeria, with this growth comes the need for entrepreneurship education. The reasons for the interest in entrepreneurship are not farfetched, white-collar jobs are becoming incredibly out of reach, consequently, entrepreneurship has become a tactic for invading unemployment, poverty, as well as facilitating enabling environment for socio-economic development and productivity. For these reasons emphasis is being laid on encouraging entrepreneurship and facilitating small and medium scale enterprises for national development. Entrepreneurship is particularly crucial in developing economies like Nigeria, with its dire need to reduce unemployment among youths.

Education is a vital ingredient in developing a sound mind that can handle the challenges and problems associated with entrepreneurship and the development of a critical mass of entrepreneurs within the economy (Flemming, 1996). And to policymakers, the youth constitute a ready pool of future entrepreneurs. Recently,

promoting entrepreneurship education has become a subject that requires all-out attention in public policy. The reason is owing to the widespread acknowledgment that business start-ups are a driving force of economic growth and substantial job creation. Entrepreneurship education is aimed at promoting a career option and equipping the youth themselves with the skills, knowledge, and attitude required for effective business ownership. Encouraging small-scale business management through entrepreneurship education is unswervingly associated to improving overall living situations (Flemming, 2006). Entrepreneurship education plays a very vital role in making individuals functional part of society as well gainfully employed. Entrepreneurship education most importantly prepares youths to look beyond white-collar jobs. Though it is worth remarking that, the tasks facing entrepreneurs and small-medium enterprises in Nigeria are many, which include; lack of financial support and enabling environment. Nevertheless, it still does not reduce the importance the idea of entrepreneurship plays in a society.

Entrepreneurship education and training plays a major role in providing intending entrepreneurs with the required professional skill, knowledge and intelligence to plan, strategize, and grow their business ideas. The importance of such skills cannot be exaggerated. This is because, knowledge, skills, and abilities boosts creativity, productive, and competencies to engage in a more innovative, advanced, and flexible manner in a changing workplace environment (Becker,1964). World Bank Report (2006), also reports that a major factor that lead to rapid upsurge of poverty among societies is the lack of entrepreneurial knowledge which can create a sense of self-sufficient (WBR,2006). The realizations of the necessity to kick out poverty in our society call for various creative and innovative ideas that can help develop small business enterprises through public or private sectors. For the above reasons, this study is centered on the effect of entrepreneurship education on the management of small and medium scale enterprises in Gombe Metropolis. The specified objectives of the study are to;

- i. Access the significance of entrepreneurship education on the management of small and medium enterprises.
- ii. Assess the skills required in the management of small and medium-scale enterprises.
- iii. Find out intervention necessary in promoting entrepreneurship education.

Literature Review

This session presents literature that relates to the subject matter of the study, which is the impact of entrepreneurship education on the quality of SMEs management. The key issues reviewed and synthesized into a different section which is listed respectively: the concept of entrepreneurship, the concept of education, management of small and medium scale enterprises, the concept of entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship education and management of small and medium scale enterprises, the significance of the entrepreneurship education on management of small and medium scale enterprises, skills of entrepreneurship education, challenges encountered in the management of small and medium scale enterprises and promoting of entrepreneurship education.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

The notion of entrepreneurship has been variously defined by different scholars, however. It was first used in the early 18th century by an Irish man named Richard Cantillon, it is a term used generally in connection with the innovation or inventor, which describes a creator of a lucrative business idea (Akanni, 2010). Scholars from different disciplines such as management, Psychology anthropology, Sociology and economics (Slevenson, 1985, Steward, 1991, Shaver & Scotch, 1991, Reynolds 1991, Litvak & Maule, 1991) and Tonge (2001) have all researched entrepreneurship with a varied set of interpretation and explanations to theorize the notion of entrepreneurship. Additional examinations of the literature also suggest that scholars have struggled to agree on a single definition of entrepreneurship. There is at least, over a hundred definitions describing the concept of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship. To that extent, the meaning of entrepreneurship arguably depends on a lot of factors, mostly environmental, government policies and society in which the various researchers developed their framework (Di-Masi, 1999).

Bolton and Thompson (2002), noted that entrepreneurship is a word that describes individuals who “take on risk” or who undertake a new assignment such as starting a new venture with the sole purpose of creating a product or services, aimed at making a profit. With the above assertion, it is safe to assume that entrepreneurship is a self-motivated process with individuals of vision, change-makers, and creation as well as risk-takers. It involves an application of dynamism, vigor, and appetite for the creation and application of new ideas and resourceful solutions. Indispensable requirements include the readiness to take calculated risks in terms of control, and the skill to articulate an effective venture

term; the creative cleverness to marshal the necessary resources; and fundamental expertise of building a solid business plan; and finally, the vision to identify prospect where others see chaos, contradiction, and confusion (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2004).

Alawiye (2004) defines entrepreneurship as the process of increasing the supply of entrepreneurs or the addition of new stock to the already existing small, medium, and big enterprises accessible to a country by generating and encouraging creative individuals 'who are capable of becoming successful entrepreneurs, who can positively run innovative businesses, nurture and develop them to grow and sustain them to achieve far-reaching socio-economic development goals. Further to this, Igbo (2005) posits that entrepreneurship is concerned with building a strong society where every individual is functional, creative and gainfully employed, furthermore, it deals with the creation, and building of something of value from practically nothing to something of value. The process is said to involve the planning and organization of small business ventures through the mobilization of people and resources to meet people's needs. Entrepreneurship is also about learning the expertise necessary in dealing with the risks associated with opening a new business, as well as mastering potent strategies needed to be become successful in business (Inegbenbor, 2001). Aruwa (2006) further noted that entrepreneurship is the preparedness and the ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully. Entrepreneurship serves as a foundation for detection, invention, and introduction of new products and services in the business world and also allows the entrepreneurs to act as tools for growing and developing the economy (Ketchen, 2003; Venkataramana, 1997). Entrepreneurship is consequently related to entrepreneurial opportunities, and compelling force empowering business persons to introduce or develop new products or services.

According to Donald and Hodgetts (2004), entrepreneurship involves individuals who identify prospects where others see disorder and confusion, which means that entrepreneurs are exceptional individuals of change amidst economic adversity. In other words, they are catalysts for change in the economy. They are positive-minded in every economic setting in which they find themselves with the anticipated hope of making changes. Hisrich, Peters, and Shepherd (2008) noted that entrepreneurship is the process of shaping something new with value by dedicating the required time and determination, putting the associated monetary, cognitive, and societal risks needed in other to achieve the resulting rewards of

financial and personal gratification as well as independence. This definition refers to the four foundations of being an entrepreneur.

First, entrepreneurship encompasses the conception process that is, fashioning something new of worth. Secondly, entrepreneurship requires the commitment of the needed time and effort. The third part of the definition involves the rewards of being an entrepreneur while assuming the necessary risks are the final aspects of entrepreneurship.

Shane (2003) further suggested that entrepreneurship is the act of being a value capitalist, which can be viewed as one who accepts challenges and have desire for inventions, finances and exhibit business intelligence as well as exertion to transform innovations into economic goods. This could result in creation of new organizations or maybe part of reviving previously established businesses in reaction to a perceived opportunity.

Vandewered and Brush (1989) cited in Akanni (2010) suggested that, entrepreneurship is a business activity comprising of some inter-sections of the following behaviors; originality, novelty, innovation, risk-bearing, and intention to realize a high level of growth and development. Hisrich and Peters (1992) further state that entrepreneurship is an ongoing process of generating something diverse that has value to the users. Entrepreneurship is therefore a process that comprises the conception of an innovative economic organization for gain or growth under the condition of risks and uncertainty (Dollinger, 2001 cited in Akanni, 2010).

After, reviewing the above assertions of entrepreneurship, three basic philosophies were conceptualized to further understand the subject matter. The first emphasizes on the individuals, meaning that the human being forms the foundation of the concept of entrepreneurship, in other words, entrepreneurial activities are majorly attributed to human activities, such as the readiness to face ambiguity, uncertainty and insecurities associated with businesses (Kihlotrom & Lattont, 1979), accepting risks, and the need for achievement (McClelland, 1961), which differentiate entrepreneurs from the rest of society. The second important notion highlights financial, eco-friendly aspects that inspire and permit entrepreneurial actions such as the dimension of markets, the dynamic of technological changes (Tushman & Anderson, 1986), the structure of the market-normative and demographic- (Aes & Audretsch, 1990), or simply the industrial

dynamic. The third factor is connected to the operational institutions, principles, and social values. These approaches are not exclusive given that entrepreneurial activity is also a human activity and does not spontaneously occur solely due to the economic environment or technological normative or demographic changes (Eckhardt & Shane, 2003:2).

National and private entrepreneurship programs have been established to increase entrepreneurship programs through various reforms, but these have so far proven unsuccessful. Several management training programs have been developed to strengthen, finance, marketing, personnel, and management skills, but these do not constitute entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship Education

Education remains a very important wheel upon which society grows. Farrant (1964) noted that education is not just about learning how to read and write; rather it is the process that equips individuals with the necessary and useful tools needed to be a valuable and conventional member of society. It is the training of the mind and the development of intelligence that rides within human beings. From Farrant (1964), views, one can deduce that the obvious and essence of education is the functionality of the human mind. Section 1 paragraph of 76 of the National Policy on Education (NPE) highlighted that one of the major goal of nationwide education goals is the attainment of appropriate skills and the expansion of psychological, physical, and societal capabilities as well as competencies for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society (Micheal 2004). The core of any educational program is to ensure that the products of the system are armed with the appropriate knowledge, attitude, and skills needed to contribute meaningfully to the economic growth and development of the nation.

There seems to be an agreement among researchers that entrepreneurship education and drill have a very important part to play in the progress of entrepreneurial abilities, attitude, and associated skills among individuals and at the enterprise level (Lizhang & Matlay, 2003; European Commission, 2002). According to Idada, et al (2011), Entrepreneurship education is the kind of teaching given to individuals to advance their entrepreneurship potentials properly together with support services for the smooth take-off and positive running of the business. In a comparable vein, Ekankumo and Kemebaradikuno (2011) suggested that entrepreneurship education strives to provide the individual with the information, assistance, and inspiration to encourage entrepreneurial actions in

a variety of settings. From these assertions, it is obvious that well-implemented entrepreneurship education will lead to economic empowerment, self-sufficient, individual growth, and development. In general, beyond the individual advantages, it is perceived that a well-planned and implemented entrepreneurship program will enhance economic empowerment and development in Nigeria. According to Erikalla (2009), about 93 percent of scholars believe that entrepreneurial skills can be developed through quality education and training. Consequently, the creation of entrepreneurial education is perceived as a plausible measure to encourage entrepreneurship (Bunger, O'Neil, & Mahodea, 2005). Alain (2009) describes entrepreneurship education as all actions aim at nurturing entrepreneurial skills, attitude, mindsets, as well as covering a range of features such as idea generation, innovation, and start-up growth. Akudohe (2010) further suggested that entrepreneurship education is the acquisition of skills, attitudes, and skills to enable the individual to tackle life challenges in whatever form it comes and take decisive steps to comprehend new tendencies and opportunities for meeting those challenges in all aspects of human life.

Role of Entrepreneurship Education in Nation Building

Many developed nations have struggled economically; this is due to economic recession, accompanied by massive unemployment rates, and instability in global trade successions to a degree not witnessed since World War II. These circumstances have led to a surge in the attention of the government to the probable role entrepreneurship can play in the society as a possible response to decreasing unemployment rates which can serve as a recipe for economic prosperity. Principally, attention is being fixated on the role of small medium business, because of its adaptability to an ever-changing environment and because its organization permits it to adjust itself to economic, technical, and environmental changes at a rate fast enough for survival. Countless countries have now recognized the role entrepreneurship plays in economic revivals and are formulating new strategic measures to fund small firms and entrepreneurs. Detailed efforts are also being focused on, encouraging ground-breaking innovation, and improving advanced capabilities through entrepreneurs.

There is now a wide recognition within the European Union (EU) that future economic success hinges on the conception of vibrant indigenous entrepreneurs' that are genuinely rooted in the local economy. However, for this to happen, there is a need to inflate, support, and fund the pool of local entrepreneurial talents within every nation. Furthermore, for this objective to realized, effective and

efficient support mechanisms' must be put in place in other to harness indigenous initiatives and encourage new enterprises that are capable of creating justifiable employment. In the past, the emphasis was (and continues to be) primarily placed on the corporate entity with the area of small business being largely ignored. However, this scenario is no longer acceptable, for any country that wishes to remain relevant and move with the trend, developing entrepreneurs' should be at the forefront of policymaking with the government.

Methodology

This section discussed all the methodologies adopted in carrying out the study which includes; research design, the population of the study, sample size, method of data collection as well as sample technique, information gathering research instrument, and method of data analysis.

The intended population of the study consists of all business proprietors in Gombe Metropolis. However, the number is somehow limitless. Consequently, the current study using a sampling frame, decided to limit the target population to only the knowledgeable small and medium scale owners who are involved in creative endeavors within the metropolis of Gombe. Considering the size of entrepreneurship activities in Gombe state metropolis. A representative sample through the use of random and cluster sampling techniques was used to ensure proper representation.

Gombe metropolis was divided into two, Gombe South metropolitan and Gombe North metropolitan. Thus, each metropolitan served as a cluster. Then two wards were selected randomly from each of the two metropolitans so that the required sample for the study will be drawn. 50 respondents were selected from each of the metropolitan making up a sample size of 100 respondents who are managing small and medium scale enterprises.

The study made use of interview for Data collection. The interview procedure followed the same structure; every respondent was asked the same question. This is to enable the study identify a common pattern within the responses of the participants. The interview questions were formulated based on the research objectives. The study interviewed 100 entrepreneurs over two months in both metropolises in Gombe state, Nigeria. The study made use of thematic content analysis (TCA) in analyzing the interview transcript. The thematic content analysis was employed while analyzing the interview transcript. TCA is "graphic

prearrangement of qualitative information; qualitative data often take the form of interview transcripts collected from research participants or other identified texts that reflect experientially on the topic of study” (Anderson, 2004). In content analysis, the content of the data assembled is explored to divulge emerging patterns over multiple cases.

Presentation of Findings
Thematic Content Analysis

Table 1.1

Concept	Interview Question	Themes	Correlation/Percentage
Entrepreneurship Education	Have you ever received any entrepreneurship education before?	41 Yes	63.18%
		21 No	33.87%
	if your answer to question 1 is yes, was it before or after you started your business?	25 Yes	60.98%
		16 No	39.02%
	What was your level of satisfaction with the entrepreneurship education	Helpful Satisfactory Increased awareness Positive insight	Strong Correlation
	What was your enterprise's performance after entrepreneurship education?	Increased productivity Increased customer base Increased performance Digital Awareness	Strong correlation

Do you think the success of your enterprise could be attributed to entrepreneurship education?	Certainly Beyond any doubt Eyes opener Global acceptance	Strong correlation
Do you think entrepreneurship education is significant in the management of SMEs?	Without any doubt Road map Root to success Lifeline	Strong correlation
How can you describe the effect of entrepreneurship education skills in the management of SMEs?	Positive Helpful Insightful Very effective	Strong Correlation
Do you think seminars and workshops are necessary interventions for promoting entrepreneurship education?	Guidelines Most efficient way Helpful	Strong correlation

Table 1.1 represents the thematic content analysis of the study. The first column represents the subject matter of the research (Entrepreneurship education). The second column implies a summary of the interview questions asked. The third

column exemplify emerging patterns of responses with regards to the impact entrepreneurship education will have on SMEs, while the last column point to the strength of associated between the different variables and employee engagement.

Discussion of Findings

The first column shows that 41 respondents (66.13%) have received entrepreneurship education; 21 respondents (33.87%) have not. This implies that the majority of the respondents sampled for this study have received entrepreneurship education. This to some extent answers the study objective (i) on how significant entrepreneurship education is on the quality of SMEs management in Gombe metropolis.

The second column shows that 25 respondents representing (60.98%) have received entrepreneurship education before starting the business while 16 respondents representing (39.02%) received entrepreneurship education after they started their business. This implies that the majority of the respondents received entrepreneurship education before starting their business.

Analysis from the third column indicated that most of the participants believed that entrepreneurship education is very useful in managing SMEs, most of the respondents argued that through entrepreneurship education, they gain more insight into the business world and become more positively aware of how to manage their businesses better. 70.78% of the respondents were extremely satisfied with entrepreneurship education. This shows that the majority of the respondents were very satisfied with entrepreneurship education.

86.46% of the respondents argued that entrepreneurship education has improved their performance. The majority of the respondents argued that through entrepreneurship education, they have become digitally aware of how to reach their customers better as well increment in performance level. This depicts that entrepreneurship education helps to improve the respondent's performance in managing SMEs. Thereby answering objective (iii) on the interventions need to promote entrepreneurship education in Gombe state metropolis.

The table above shows that 35 respondents representing (85.37%) agreed with the statement that the success of their enterprise is attributed to the entrepreneurship education they received while 6 respondents representing (14.63%) disagreed with the statement. This shows that entrepreneurship education helps in

complementing the established goal of the enterprise. The finding above shows that entrepreneurship education is very significant on the quality of SMEs management in Gombe metropolis.

Table 1.1 shows that all the respondents representing 100% believed that seminars and workshops are necessary interventions toward promoting entrepreneurship education. The argued that through seminars and workshop, entrepreneurs will acquire the necessary skills need to manage their businesses adequately. This shows that seminar and workshop have to be put into consideration because it helps in promoting entrepreneurship education.

The table above reveals that 32 respondents representing 51.6% argued that entrepreneurship education skills are effective in the management of SMEs; thereby answering objective (ii) on skill acquisitions through entrepreneurship education. 5 respondents representing 8.1% said that it is not effective in the management of SMEs while 25 respondents are undecided.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the study of the Effect of Entrepreneurship Education on Management of SMEs in Gombe Metropolis, the researcher noted or discovered:

1. The thematic content analysis shows that there is a relationship between entrepreneurship education and the management of SMEs. With the attainment of this, the enterprise's profitability would be enhanced, while the efficiency and effectiveness of the enterprise's system as a whole are ensured.
2. The thematic content analysis shows that most of the respondents filled satisfied after acquiring entrepreneurship education as it was reflected on the quality of managing their businesses.
3. The study also revealed that the skills required for entrepreneurship education have a significant effect on the management of Small and Medium enterprises.
4. Furthermore, also discovered that there is a lot of challenges (translating theoretical knowledge to real life practices) faced by the entrepreneur in translating the acquired skills in the management of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs).
5. That the skills acquired during entrepreneurship education by respondents help in the management of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs)

6. That having Seminar and workshop on entrepreneurship education help in the management of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs)
7. That respondent records a lot of success in their organization or SMEs as a result of entrepreneurship education

Recommendations

Some of the recommendations of the study include;

- ✓ Regular seminars and workshop should be organized by the government on the importance of entrepreneurship education on the quality of SMEs management within the State
- ✓ Entrepreneurship education should be thought from the primary level to start developing the mind-set of children to the significance of entrepreneurship

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