

## MARKETING EDUCATION PROGRAMME AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN RIVERS STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*The study investigated the relationship between marketing education programmes and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions. The study was anchored on the psychological theory of entrepreneurship. A correlational research design was used to carry out the study. The population of the study consisted of 729 students from three tertiary institutions in Rivers State. A simple random sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 248 undergraduates, which was informed by the Krejcie and Morgan sampling table. Out of the total copies of 248 questionnaires distributed, 238 copies of the questionnaire retrieved were used for further analysis to achieve the specific objectives of the study. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions, while the null hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at the 0.05 significance level. The findings of the study revealed, among other things, that there is a significant relationship between marketing education and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions. The study concluded that the level of entrepreneurial skills developed among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions can be used to enhance the sustainability of business education programmes and contribute to strengthening industrialization as well as the diversification of economic growth. The study, therefore, recommended, among others, that the management of tertiary institutions in Rivers State ensures that the business management programme should focus on the development of entrepreneurial skills that will strengthen the quality of undergraduates and their ability to develop and manage their businesses, and lecturers of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.*

**Keynote: Marketing Education Programme, Entrepreneurial Skills Development, Undergraduate Students**

### INTRODUCTION

Business education in Nigeria's tertiary institutions was designed to promote enterprising entrepreneurship education that could furnish the students with skills for distinctively workable business opportunities, appropriate management, financial management, the right marketing skills, and the avoidance of business failure. However, as the years went by, the vigour that was applied at the earlier stages of its implementation tapered off until it seemed that the heart of the program had died. As such, the program is rarely connected to the development of graduates with the requisite entrepreneurial spirit and determination to be successful entrepreneurs. What is seen by students of business education is a lack of entrepreneurial competencies, learning-by-creative-value, a lack of acquisition of resources needed to create the value, a lack of explorative value, the altering importance of theory over practice, a lack of routine in value creation, a lack of cognitive competences, practical inadequacy, and a lack of pedagogical approaches.

Tearfully, business education programs have been implemented for more than three decades now, yet tertiary institutions' graduates of business education are still stridently plagued with biting unemployment syndrome despite the laudable prospects of this promising aspect of education. Amidst this, tertiary institutions in Nigeria keep producing too many liberal arts and theoretical business education graduates whose entrepreneurial skills and employability potential look blurred. Even those who are said to be employed are found to be unskilled, clueless, and incompetent in

discharging their assigned duties. It can be concluded that the problem of unemployment in Nigeria may be connected with the fact that graduates are consistently incapable of performing to the admiration of recruiters, and they as well lack entrepreneurial skills to aid them in establishing their business ventures.

The idea of entrepreneurial skills is relatively new in the educational and business sectors. Due to the rapid unemployment trend, educational institutions have realized that the narrow, specific technical training graduates receive in school fails to equip them for changes in both the economy and occupations. The concept is that people (graduates) need more than occupationally specific or "technical" skills to be competent in any form of employment (self- or paid), but they must also have entrepreneurial skills to enable them to come up with innovative solutions for joblessness and bad business opportunities. Despite the huge resources put in by both government and non-governmental organizations in support of entrepreneurial skill development among undergraduates in tertiary institutions, one observes with dismay the deepening level of graduate unemployment that persists, even to date, in a country that is blessed with abundant natural resources such as ore, coal, chromium, cobalt, hydroelectric power, manganese, and millions of hectares of uncultivated farmland, as well as an abundance of oil and gas. The idea of introducing entrepreneurship education as a component of business education was to enable graduates to acquire skills for the development of functional skills that would enable them to depend less on government jobs and rely on their abilities to provide for themselves the means of livelihood. This, apart from addressing the problem of graduate unemployment, would also strategically position the Nigerian economy for leadership in Africa. Unfortunately, ever since entrepreneurship education was introduced in Nigerian tertiary institutions, many graduates have remained unemployed for a long time after graduation. It appears that there is a missing link in the relationship between the business education program and the development of entrepreneurial skills in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no known study has investigated the relationship between a business education programme and the development of entrepreneurial skills among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned Tertiary Institutions using the dimensions used to measure the independent variable (business education programme) such as Management Education, entrepreneurship education, accounting education, office and information management education, and marketing education. Furthermore, related research on the subject investigated has focused on areas such as business education curricula (Ibrahim, 2017) and entrepreneurial education (Oguntimehin & Olaniran, 2017), among others. As a result of this context and the need to bridge the knowledge gap in empirical studies, this study was carried out to determine the relationship between a business education programme and the development of entrepreneurial skills among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned Tertiary Institutions.

### **Purpose of the Study**

1. Examine the relationship between marketing education and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions.

### **Research Question**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between marketing education and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions?

### **Hypothesis**

The following hypothesis was formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

**H<sub>01</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between marketing education and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions.

### **Business Education Programme**

Business education is an integral part of vocational and technical education that deals with the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are needed in this dynamic economy. Business education as a course is divided into three specializations, i.e., accounting option, secretarial option, and marketing option. Business education as a concept cannot be subjected to a single definition. Business education has been defined by different scholars; Nanassy (1976) and Ibrahim (2011) define business education as a part of the total educational programme that provides the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitude to perform in the business world as a producer and consumer of goods and services that the world offers. In a related manner, Ibrahim (2011) defined business education as a subject that permeates the entire life of the nation, that touches everyone collectively and individually, be it in the field of sports, in the place of worship, or even at home doing domestic duties. According to Aliyu (2004) states that business education is the deliberate intent of teachers to inform students about business concepts and skills that might be of use in their later life. Aliyu (2004) and Ibrahim (2010) further emphasized that business education is an aspect of education that prepares people to enter into the business world, to participate in productive activities in an attempt to meet the nation's needs, and also to be able to make wise use of financial rewards in order to attain a successful living.

### **Concept of Marketing education**

In the work place, skill is what the workers give in exchange for remuneration. If the skill (or the cluster of skills popularly referred to as aptitudes) given is satisfactory, the worker gets satisfaction and the employer gets satisfactoriness in correspondence. This process, if sustained culminates in promotion, retaining and prolonged tenure that leads to productivity. Inculcation of marketing skills is among the focus of business education. According to Gidado and Akaeze (2014), marketers conduct surveys leading to the identification of people's needs and wants and develop products that would meet those needs and wants. This implies that business education could promote entrepreneurship through making entrepreneurs to properly perform their entrepreneurial functions. This is because the knowledge of marketing would prompt them to make good use of the four-ps of marketing namely; product, price, place and promotion. It is expected that this would lead to the development of sound product idea which would be translated into an acceptable product in the market.

Similarly, if it is a business of trading, an understanding of the product mix will make an entrepreneur to procure products that will be appealing to the customers. Finally, acquisition and utilization of the right marketing skills will promote entrepreneurship by leading to proper and acceptable pricing of the product, making it available at the right place and time as well as using the right promotional technique(s) to stimulate customers to buy the product (Gidado & Akaeze, 2014).

### **Concept of Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of any economy in the sense that the majority of jobs are created by small-scale businesses started by entrepreneurial-minded individuals who later create big businesses (Abdulkadir, 2011). Since the Middle Ages, entrepreneurship has been defined by various professions to encompass many things (Igbo, 2006). The entrepreneur, as seen by Abdulkadir (2011), is an anchor, innovator, or developer of technology. However, the term "entrepreneurship" has historically referred to the efforts of an individual who takes risks in creating a successful business enterprise. More recently, entrepreneurship has been conceptualized as a process that can occur in organizations of all types and sizes (Kurger, 2004). According to Kurger (2004), no person, act, or product is creative, entrepreneurial, or non-creative, non-entrepreneurial in itself. The author says judgment of creativity is inherently communal, relying heavily on individuals' expertise within a domain. In consonance with the assertion, it is an agreeable fact that in business, it is necessary to have an appropriate, useful, and actionable idea before it can be accepted as creative. It must somehow influence the way business gets done –

for instance, by improving a product or by opening up a new way to approach a process (Kurger, 2004).

There is no consensus on the exact meaning of entrepreneurship as scholars and practitioners have tried to define it in various ways. Entrepreneurship is the term used broadly in connection with innovative and creative modern industrial business leaders. It is often defined with respect to the functions of an entrepreneur as the man who perceives business opportunities and takes advantage of the scarce resources to use them profitably, which is why Adejimala and Olufumilayo (2009) define it as the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled. It is a source of innovation and change and, as such, spurs improvements in productivity and economic competitiveness. It is the active process of recognizing the demand in an economy and supplying the factors of production to meet such demands in order to generate profit. Basse and Olu (2008) see entrepreneurship as a transforming process from an innovative idea to an enterprise as well as from an enterprise to the creation of value. Entrepreneurship has been discussed as the most effective economic power in the global economic and social history.

The concept of entrepreneurship is also the process that involves the efforts of an individual or group of individuals in identifying viable business opportunities in an environment and obtaining and managing the resources needed to exploit the opportunities. However, Nwachukwu (2005) defined entrepreneurs as people who have the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources to take advantage of them, and initiate appropriate action to ensure success. For this author, entrepreneurship entails the ability and willingness of an individual to seek investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully.

An entrepreneur is also an individual who organizes or operates a business or businesses (Okebukola, 2009). For Okebukola, such a person pays a certain price for a product and resells it at an uncertain price, making decisions about obtaining and using the resources while consequently admitting the risk of enterprise. A successful entrepreneur, therefore, has the ability to lead a business in a positive direction by proper planning, to adapt to changing environments, and to understand their own strengths and weaknesses. It is, however, common to associate the term "entrepreneur" with "small business." While most entrepreneurial ventures start their businesses on a low-key basis, not all small businesses are entrepreneurial in the strict sense of the word. Many small businesses are sole proprietor operations consisting solely of the owner, or they have a small number of employees, and many of these small businesses offer an existing product, process, or service, and they do not aim at growth. In contrast, entrepreneurial ventures offer an innovative product, process, or service, and the entrepreneur typically aims to scale up the company by adding employees and seeking international sales, among other things, a process that is financed by venture capital.

## **Theoretical Review**

### **Psychology Theory of Entrepreneurship (McClelland, 1961) -Trait and Behavioural**

McClelland propounded the psychological theory of entrepreneurship in 1961. The theory dealt with an entrepreneur's characteristics and the entrepreneurial process. In the view of psychologists, the entrepreneurial ability of an individual is determined by his or her levels of need for achievement, autonomy, and problem solving. The theorist's assumption is that the greater the needs for achievement, autonomy, and problem solving, the greater the entrepreneurial ability and vice versa (Mamman, 2010). In this psychological theory, motives and personality traits play a significant role in determining the entrepreneurial skill development ability of an individual. Coon (2004) defines personality traits as "stable qualities that a person shows in most situations". To the trait theorist, there are enduring inborn qualities or potentials of the individual that naturally make him an entrepreneur. According to Kurger (2004), explaining personality traits means making inferences from behavior. Some of the characteristics or behaviors associated with entrepreneurs, Kurger (2004) said, are that they tend to be more opportunity driven (they nose around), demonstrate a high level of creativity and innovation, and show a high level of management skills and business know-how. They have also been found to be optimistic (they see the cup as half full

rather than half empty), emotionally resilient and energetic. They are hard workers, show intense commitment and perseverance, thrive on the competitive desire to excel and win, and tend to be dissatisfied with the status quo and desire improvement. Entrepreneurs are also transformational in nature; they are life-long learners and use failure as a tool and springboard, and so on (Mohar et al., 2007).

### **Implication of the theory to the present study**

This theory is related to the present study as it emphasizes the role played by personality traits and motives in developing entrepreneurial skills among undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. However, for a business education student to develop entrepreneurial skills, other forms of personality skills must be developed, such as sociability, confidence, decisiveness, and interpersonal skills. This implies that the absence of personality traits and skills among undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Rivers State will make it difficult for them to develop entrepreneurial skills. However, this theory gives some insight into these traits or inborn qualities by identifying the characteristics associated with the entrepreneur. The characteristics give a clue or an understanding of these traits or inborn potentials. The identification of such characteristics as perseverance, inner locus of control, flexibility to change, creativity and innovation, persuasiveness, and so on will enable the graduates to harness the other resources to ensure the growth of their start-ups.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The research design was informed by the position of Ahukannah and Ugoji (2017) on what a study using the design will achieve. Ahukannah and Ugoji (2017) describe the correlational research design as a means of a collection of data to determine the relationship between variables. The population of this study consisted of 729 final year students of the tertiary institutions to be used for the study. The population was drawn from the Department of Business Education from the three tertiary institutions in Rivers State that offered business education and has students up to final level (Federal College of Education Technical (FCET) Omoku, Rivers State University, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education). The simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting 248 respondents for the study. However, to ensure equal distribution to the institutions, Bowley's proportional allocation formula was adopted to allocate sample distribution to the three tertiary institutions selected for the data collection. The sample of 248 was derived from the population of the study based on the recommendation of the Krejcie and Morgan, (1970) sample size determination table. The table recommended that for a population of 700-749, a sample size of 346 should be adopted. **The questionnaire was the instrument for data collection.** Mean, Standard deviation, and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) were used to answer the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using Simple and Multiple Regression at the 0.05 significance level. The data analyses were carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.

## **RESULTS**

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant relationship between marketing education and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions.

**Summary of simple linear regression of the relationship between marketing education and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions**

Variables	Coefficients	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.781	0.590	8.099	0.000
Marketing education	0.730	0.039	18.835	0.000*
R	0.717 <sup>a</sup>			
R-squared	0.514			
Adjusted R-squared	0.512			
F-statistic	354.743			
P-value	0.000 <sup>b</sup>			
Df	236			

- a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Skills Development
- b. Independent Variable: Marketing education
- c. \*Items show a significant relationship with the dependent variable at the 0.05 level of significance

**Source:** SPSS Computation, 2022.

The result of table above shows that an r-value of 0.717 indicates a strong relationship between marketing education and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions. The r<sup>2</sup>-value of 0.514 indicated roughly a variation of 51% in the relationship between marketing education and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions. Furthermore, since, F-statistic = 354.743, t = 18.835, at df = 236, and p = 0.000 < 0.05, hence, null hypothesis five is rejected at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between marketing education and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions.

**Discussion of Findings**

The result in table above shows that the extent of the relationship between marketing education and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions is strong. Furthermore, the result of table above indicated there is a significant relationship between marketing education and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions. This finding is consistent with the study of Amaewhule and Wolugbom (2018) which revealed that marketing skills such as the ability to determine the needs of customers, the ability to capture, maintain and retain the attention of customers, the ability to determine demand and supply situation, ability to develop good negotiation skills and others were identified as entrepreneurial marketing skill needs required for self-reliance by business education students.

**CONCLUSION**

The study investigated the relationship between the marketing education programme and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned Tertiary Institutions. The analysis of the data gave results from which the objectives of the study were accomplished. However, some of the results of the study revealed that the extent of the relationship between marketing education and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions is very strong, and the extent of the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions is moderate. Furthermore, the corresponding hypotheses revealed that there is a significant relationship between management education and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions and that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education

and entrepreneurial skills development among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings, discussion and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The management of tertiary institutions in Rivers State ensures that the management education programme should focus on the development of entrepreneurial skills that will strengthen the quality of undergraduates and their ability to develop and manage their businesses.
2. Lecturers of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in Rivers State are trained by the Department of Entrepreneurship and Small Scale Enterprises, Rivers State Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Tourism, to ensure that the subject is taught to expose students to more practical application and thus assist in the development of entrepreneurial skills.
3. Lecturers teaching marketing education in tertiary institutions in Rivers State should collaborate with masters of industries as well as managers of enterprises for insight on the design of interdisciplinary courses in marketing education that will contribute to the development of entrepreneurial skills among undergraduates in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions.

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