

**ACTIVE LISTENING COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND ENTREPRENEURIAL
DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This study ascertains the relationship between active listening communication skills and entrepreneurial development of Business Education students in south-south, Nigeria. Positivism philosophical foundation and Correlational survey research designed were adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 1538 Business Education lecturers and final year students in south- south universities, Nigeria, with a sample size of 306 respondents using Krejcie and Morgan formula for sample size determination. Questionnaire was formulated on four point rating scale to elicit data from the respondents. Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that there is a positive relationship between active listening communication skills and entrepreneurial development of Business Education students in south-south, Nigeria. This study thus concluded that active listening communication skills is a strong antecedent and undisputable energetic for enhancing entrepreneurial development of Business Education students in south-south, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended among others that Government and relevant concerned stakeholders should develop an effective and efficient mentorship programme which will enhance mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development in Nigeria thus enhance the economy positively; the products produced by the students should be used for their grading and graduation.

Keywords Active Listening Communication Skills, Entrepreneurial Development, Innovation

INTRODUCTION

The value of entrepreneurship development to the economy of any nation cannot be overlooked. This is as a result of unabated high rates of unemployment especially and commonly found in Nigeria. It is on records that the rate of unemployment in Nigeria has risen to over fifty percent (50%) (Afolayan, 2016). Universally entrepreneurship education has been identified and loved as an intervention for developing and preparing the unemployed for the world of work (job) creation, thus increasing the number of self-employed and that of employers of labour rather than training many of job seekers which characterized the world economic space and landscape.

Entrepreneurship has been proven to be a veritable instrument in stimulating economic growth and a means of employment generation especially in developing countries (Harper in Afolayan, 2016). Entrepreneurship refers to having the ability to discover, evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources, initiate appropriate actions to ensure success, and unemployment action to take advantage of opportunities for rewarding outcome. It is an engine driving the economy of any nation. Entrepreneurship is the capacity to harness the right quantity, quality and combination of resources that are consistent with profit, undertaking risk and uncertainty. It is a confirmation of special knowledge and skills that pulsates an entrepreneur into innovative and creative ideas that are crystallized into quick and risky business decisions that result to sustainable profitability.

Mentoring is a term used to describe a relationship between a less experienced individual called mentee and a more experienced person known as mentor (Packard in Abguruga & Amini, 2017). Mentoring is seen as the pairing of an experienced or skilled person (mentor) with a person who

would like to improve his or her skill (mentee). The mentor acts as a role model, guide, advocate and supports the mentee by sharing knowledge, resources and advice to help him improve his skills.

According to Amaewhule (2014), mentoring is an enabling process which encourages self-responsibility as people make choices and decision or share inner burden. This implies that mentoring enables people to examine their needs and problems and in so doing, reduces the confusion in thoughts and feelings that should be stressed. Lack of vocational mentoring through occupational information has led to the production of graduates without entrepreneurial knowledge and skills for effective running of business. Mentoring provides a protected relationship in which learning and experimentation occur through analysis, examination, successes (of both mentor and mentee) to identifying learning opportunities and gaps (Mckimm, et al 2007). Mentoring is about helping the learner (mentee) to grow in self confidence and develop independence, autonomy and maturity. Mentoring benefits mentors, mentees, and) the organization/institution or department in improving productivity. The private sector drives innovation, investment, and growth, competitive markets are one of the most effective ways of creating more and better jobs, higher incomes and prosperity which is turn leads to empowerment and economic independence. The increasing competition in business environments call for the need for business to mobilize resources and to encourage companies to develop new approaches to extend their core business to contribute positively to the way business is carried out with a view to improve conditions for people living in poverty and in order to make sufficient return on investment to business owners.

Innovation is the practical implementation of ideas that result in the introduction of new goods or services or improvement in offering goods or services. ISO TC 279 in the standard ISO 56000:2020 defines innovation as "a new or changed entity realizing or redistributing value. Erasmus, (2015); Ayodeji, (2015); Ojukwu and Ojukwu as cited in Ubulom and Ogwunte (2017), undertook a study studies on mentor-mentee skills competences and entrepreneurial development, however none of this study was centered on business education students in south- south, Nigeria. It is in the light of the above that this study is carried out evaluate the relationship between mentor-mentee skills competences and entrepreneurial culture development of business students in south-south, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide this study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between active listening communication skills competency and business start-up development of Business Education Students in South-South, Nigeria
2. There is no significant relationship between active listening communication skills competency and financial management of Business Education Students in South-South, Nigeria
3. There is no significant relationship between active listening communication skills competency and innovation/new business creation development of Business Education Students in South-South, Nigeria

Activities Listening Communication skills

Silver, (2004). Communication is central to human life. Effective communication can help one solve problems in one's professional life and improve one's relationships in one's personal life. Communication is ubiquitous (that is, seems to be everywhere). Communication can improve the way one sees oneself. That means it is vital to the development of the person. People who are naïve about communication process and the development of self-awareness, self-concept, and self-efficacy may not see themselves accurately or may be unaware of their own self-development. Learning communication skills can improve or increase self-confidence; it can increase and strengthened human relationships. At this juncture, communication is viewed as the process by which meaning is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or

behavior (Pearson, et al 2003). Communication principles identified the following that communication begins with the self (mentor) involves others (mentees), and is complicated. Communication is inevitable, irreversible, and unrepeatable.

Shea (1994) Its components are people, messages codes, channels, feedbacks, encoding and decoding and wise. People serve as both the source (mentor) and receivers of the messages (mentees). The message is the verbal and non-verbal forms of the idea, thought, or feeling that one person (the source) wishes to communicate to another person or group of people (the receivers). The message is the content of the interaction. The message includes the symbols (words and phrases) used in communicating the ideas, as well as facial expressions, bodily movements, gestures, touch, tone of voice, and other non-verbal cues. The channels are the means by which a message moves from the source to the receiver of the message. Airwaves, sound waves, twisted copper wires, glass fibres, and cable are all communication channels (Pearson et al, 2003). Person-to-person communication travels through sound waves and light that helps the receivers to see and hear.

Ramsden, and Bennett, (2005) Feedback is the receivers' verbal and non verbal response to the source's message. Feedback is part of any communication situation. Even no response, or silence, is feedback as are restless behavior and quizzical looks from students in a lecture hall. Code is a systematic arrangement of symbols used to create meanings in the mind of another person or persons. Code is otherwise called language. Syntax-rules of management and grammar – rules of functions – in language result in the "systematic arrangement" that becomes a code. Words, phrases, and sentences become "symbols" that are used to evoke images, thoughts, and ideas in the mind of others.

The process of communication can be viewed as one of encoding and decoding. Encoding is defined as the act of putting an idea or thought into a code. Decoding is assigning meaning to that idea or thought (Pearson et al, 2003). Noise is any interference in the encoding and decoding processes that reduces message clarity. Noise can be physical noise, such as loud sounds; distracting sights, such as a piece of food between someone's front teeth; bad handwriting that cannot be read, wrong spellings; or an unusual behavior, such as someone standing too close for comfort. Noise can be mental, psychological, or semantic, such as day dreams about a loved one, worry about projects and dissertations, pain from a tooth, or uncertainty about what the other person's words are supposed to mean.

Active Listening: Listening, an important key to successful communication, is one of the primary ways in which we discover others, enrich our relationships, and broaden our knowledge. Being a good listener involves actively attending to and understanding the messages we hear. The listening process is complicated. Much happens between the reception of sounds and an overt response by the receiver. Hearing is not the same as listening. Listening is therefore defined by the International Listening Association (ILA), is the active process of receiving, constructing meaning from and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages. It involves the ability to retain information, as well as to react emphatically and/or appreciatively to spoken and/or nonverbal messages (ILA, 1995).

Pearson et al, (2003) Importance of Listening include Listening helps us build and maintain relationships, helps us determine whether the person we are talking to is being deceitful, helps us improve workplace relationships and be more productive, It is directly connected to our ability to think about and remember information In the listening process, four types of listening occur and they are: active listening; emphatic listening, critical listening and listening for enjoyment, but attention is limited to active listening. Active listening is involved listening with a purpose" (Barker, 1971 in Pearson, 2003). Active listening involves the steps of: Listening carefully by using all available senses, Paraphrasing what is heard both mentally and verbally, Check one's understanding to ensure accuracy and Providing feedback

Entrepreneurial Culture Development

Egan, (2005) Entrepreneurial culture is a term derived from two words, "entrepreneurial" and "culture". Our understanding of the meaning of these two words can to a great extent aid in the conceptualization of entrepreneurial culture. Wickham (2006) perceived the term entrepreneurial as an adjective describing how entrepreneurs undertake what they do. Wickham asserted that to use this adjective suggests that there is a particular style to what entrepreneurs do. Atherton (2004) viewed the term entrepreneurial as a behaviour that can be demonstrated and manifested regardless of the nature of involvement in an organization. On the other hand, Brownson (2011) connotes that culture is an attribute, values, beliefs and behaviour which can be learned or acquired by man from one generation to another, one is a member of the society. Therefore, the nurturing of certain attributes, values, beliefs and behaviour indicate an attempt to foster a certain types of culture.

Consequent upon the aforementioned facts therefore, entrepreneurial culture can be conceptualized as a society that depicts that exhibition of the attributes, values, beliefs, attitudes, or mindset and behaviour associated with entrepreneurs by individuals in such society which distinguishes them from others (Brownson, 2013). McGuire (2001) posits that entrepreneurial culture is the attitude, values, skills and power of a group or individuals working in an institute or an organization to generate income. Easterby-Smith, and Lyles, (2003) An entrepreneurial organizational culture is a system of shared values, beliefs and norms of members of an organization, including valuing creativity and tolerance of creative people, believing that innovating and seizing market opportunities are appropriate behaviours to deal with problems of survival. Within small business enterprises, innovativeness, risk taking posture, and proactiveness will directly affect the capacity to be creative and entrepreneurial, as the enterprises are not determined by desire, but by entrepreneurial culture and action.

Similarly, Dymock, (1999) entrepreneurial culture can also be viewed as the values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of individuals within a society. These factors facilitate or obstruct the creation and management of enterprises and can be considered as the basic of a socio-cultural environment. It can also be referred to as common beliefs, standards and practices related to innovation, creativity and risk affinity shared by a group of people with the aim to increase awareness and utilization of entrepreneurial opportunities.

Innovation theory by Joseph A. Schumpeter (1934).

Schumpeter is regarded as one of the greatest economists of the first half of the twentieth century. According to Schumpeter (1934) cited by Amadi (2018), carrying out innovations is the only function which is fundamental in history. The author equally opined that it is entrepreneurship that replaces today's pareto optimum with tomorrow's different new thing" Schumpeter viewed that entrepreneurship as innovation has not been world economy is passing through an excruciating crisis. The Schumpeter's most distinctive contributions to economics (Amadi, 2018). One of the most common themes in Schumpeter's writings was the role of innovation (new combinations) and entrepreneurship in economic growth. Despite the fact that Schumpeter was among the first who lay out the clear concept of innovation his views on the topic changed over time.

Schumpeter highlighted the functions of entrepreneurs as we diligently working out new combinations. He viewed the occurrence of discontinuous and 'revolutionary' change as the core of 'economic development' which breaks the economy out of its static mode ('circular flow') and sets it on a dynamic path of fits and starts (Sledik, 2015 as cited in Amadi,2018). Schumpeter's innovation theory of entrepreneurship holds that an entrepreneur is such a one with the following three major characteristics; innovation, foresight, and creativity (Amadi, 2018). To Schumpeter innovation in entrepreneurship takes place when the entrepreneur: Creates a new Product: the new product could be a new programme, new leader among others (Nayabq & Scudder,2011). introduces a new way to make a product: This could be new ways of worship, a new way of organizing wedding programme, new ways of evangelization, a new and unique way of welcoming visitors and new formers, a "spectacular" miracle, a new way of worship and sings among others.

Schumpeter argued that anyone seeking profits must innovate as he believed that innovation is considered as an essential driver of competitiveness and economic dynamics. He also believed that innovation is the center of economic change causing gales of "creative destruction" which is a term created by Schumpeter in capitalism, socialism and democracy (Sledzik, 2015 cited in Amadi, 2018). According to Schumpeter. Innovation is a "process of industrial mutation that incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, and continuously creating a new one. Schumpeter described development as historical process of structural changes, substantially driven by innovation. Schumpeter divided the innovation process into four domains: invention, innovation, diffusion and initiation. Then he puts the dynamic entrepreneur in the middle of his analysis. In Schumpeter's theory, the possibility and activity of the entrepreneurs, drawing upon the discoveries of scientist and inventors, create completely new opportunities for investment, growth and employment (Sledzik, 2015 as cited in Amadi, 2018). From the above, it goes without saying that the relevance of Schumpeter's theory in entrepreneurship education and poverty alleviation cannot be over stressed. Schumpeter categorically opined the importance of creative participation of the n explained that innovation (which involves as active participation of the mind and brain) is a vital tool necessary for creating new business opportunities for wealth creation or poverty alleviation. Therefore, it is important that instructors teach and inform their students to utilize the body of knowledge and skills acquired through entrepreneurship education to become creators of business opportunities. Schumpeter believes that there is hardly any significant structural change or development in the economy without the application of innovation and creative invention in entrepreneurship education especially when it has to do with wealth creation or poverty alleviation. From the foregoing it is logical to conclude that entrepreneurship education cannot completely achieve its objectives without the application of Schumpeter's innovation theory, as innovation in entrepreneurship education is the business of every day affairs; hence the theory is relevant to the present study.

METHODOLOGY

A correlational survey design was used in the study. It is a survey design in which the researcher does not have any control over or influence the variables. The population for this study consists of one thousand, five hundred and thirty eight (**1538**) Business Educators (Lecturers) and final year students of 2021/2022 academic session from ten (10) Universities in South-South region Nigeria. The sample size of the study consists of three hundred and six (306) respondents used for the distribution and retrieval of instrument for data collection of the study. The sampling technique adopted by the researcher for the study is Krejcie & Morgan formula for sample size determination to arrive at the figure. The instruments for this study were researchers' structured questionnaires. Data collected were processed with the use of Excel calculation. The data were organized and analyzed around the research questions and hypotheses formulated to guide the study. The research questions were answered with the use of weighted mean to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The hypotheses were tested with the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient.

Results

Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant relationship between active listening communication skills competency and Business Education Students development of business start-up

Two variables were identified in this hypothesis as follows:

1. Active listening communication skills competency; and
2. Business start-up development

Relationship between Active listening communication skills and business start-up development of Business Education Students

	(n=300)			
Variable	ΣX	ΣX	ΣX	r
	ΣY	ΣY^2		
Active listening Communication skills	811.89	177.35	151.44	0.87
Business start-up dev.	872.51	170.27		

r-critical=0.179

The above table shows that the calculated r-value of 0.87 is greater than the r-critical value of 0.179 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that active listening communication skills competency has no significant relationship with business start-up development of Business Education students in South-South Universities is rejected, meaning that there is a "significant relationship between active listening communication skills competency and Business Education Students development of business start-up.

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant relationship between active listening communication skills competency and Business Education Students development of financial management

Two variables were identified in this hypothesis as follows:

1. Active listening communication skills competency; and
2. Financial management development

Relationship between Active listening communication skills and financial management development of Business Education Students

	(n=300)			
Variable	ΣX	ΣX	ΣX	r
	ΣY	ΣY^2		
Active listening Communication skills	806.76	177.18	148.56	0.86
Financial Mgt. Dev.	872.51	170.27		

r-critical=0.179

The above table shows that the calculated r-value of 0.86 is greater than the r-critical of 0.179 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that active listening communication skills competency has no significant relationship with business start-up development of Business Education students in South-South Universities is rejected, meaning that there is a "significant relationship between active listening communication skills competency and Business Education Students development of business start-up.

Hypothesis 3:

There is no significant relationship between active listening communication skills competency and Business Education Students development of innovation and new business creation

Two variables were identified in this hypothesis as follows:

1. Active listening communication skills competency; and
2. Innovation/new business creation

Relationship between Active listening communication skills and business Education Students development of innovation and new business creation
 (n=300)

Variable	ΣX	ΣY	ΣY^2	ΣX	r
Active listing Communication skills		810.64	179.18	148.49	0.85
Innovation/new bus. creation		872.51	170.27		

r-critical=0.179

The above table shows that the calculated r-value of 0.85 is greater than the table value of 0.179 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that active listening communication skills competency has no significant relationship with business start-up development of Business Education students in South-South Universities is rejected, meaning that there is a "significant relationship between active listening communication skills competency and Business Education Students development of business start-up.

Discussion of Findings

Active listening communication skills competency and business start-up skills development of Business Education Students

Correlation1 reveals that there is a significant relationship between active listening communication skills competency and Business Education Students development of business start-up(where r =0.87and table value =0.179). this finding is supported by Okiridu and Nwoko (2019) who opined that e-mentoring is an adequate measure of entrepreneurial business development however such skills is common in this new generation, irrespective of the type of mentor- mentee skills competences that was adopted by Okiridu and Nwoko (2019) effective or active listening communication skill determine the success of impacting into the mentee by the mentor which was observed that mentoring contribute significantly to entrepreneurial business development which positively influence Business Education Students development of business start-up.

Active listening communication skills competency and financial management skills development of Business Education Students

Correlation 2 reveals that there is a significant relationship between active listening communication skills competency and Business Education Students development of financial management (where r =0.86 and 'r' critical value =0.179). this finding is similar to Ubulom and Ogwunte (2017) who revealed from the study that entrepreneurial skills enhance Business Education Students development of financial management which active listening communication skill is no exception, it was recommended that government should enhance entrepreneurial skills development at all level of education.

Active listening communication skills competency and new business creation skills development of Business Education Students

Correlation 3 reveals that there is a significant relationship between active listening communication skills competency and Business Education Students development of new business creation(where r = 0.85 and table value =0.179)Bolatito et al (2020)revealed in their studies that entrepreneurial mentoring culture is adequate for sustainable leadership development in Nigeria which effective mentoring can only be ascertain through effective mentor – mentee relationship skills

competencies which is part of listening communication skills, this implies that active listening communication skills competency enhance Business Education Students development of new business creation as well as positively influence sustainable leadership development as such it was recommended that there is a need for effective and efficient mentorship program which will enhance new business creation and sustainable development in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

This study has primarily investigated active listening communication skills and entrepreneurial development of Business Education students in south-south, Nigeria and found that there is a strong relationship between the two variables. It also significantly investigated the relationship between active listening communication skills and measures of entrepreneurial development. The findings show an undisputable relationship between and among them. This study thus concluded that active listening communication skills are strong antecedent and undisputable energetic for enhancing entrepreneurial development of Business Education students in south-south, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were drawn from the study, based on the findings:

1. Government and relevant concern stakeholders should develop an effective and efficient mentorship programme which will enhance mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development in Nigeria thus enhances the economy positively at large.
2. Government should inculcate entrepreneurial skills development programme at all level of education which positively enhance entrepreneurial development in the light of business startup, financial management and innovation/new business creation thus: reduce the social burden on the government.
3. School management should make provision of adequate feedback/advice system in mentor-mentee skill competencies evaluation in order to determine and ascertain that entrepreneurial development is actualized through effective business startup, financial management and business innovation.
4. Students should be motivated by government and multinational companies through scholarship.

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