STRATEGIES FOR MENTORING THE YOUTHS FOR EFFECTIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP: EVIDENCES FROM SEASONED ENTREPRENEURS

AMAHI, FIDELIS UCHE
Department of Business Education
College of Education, Agbor, Delta State
Nigeria
fidelis_amahi@yahoo.com

ODIMMEGA, CHINYERE GENEVIVE
Department of Vocational Education,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, P.M.B. 5025,
Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria
chinyere_odimmega@yahoo.com

NWOSU, NGOZI LORRETTA
Department of Vocational Education,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, P.M.B. 5025,
Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria
lorretta4real@yahoo.com

Abstract
The study was carried out to determine the strategies for mentoring the youth for effective entrepreneurship. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 2319 small and medium scale enterprise managers and a sample size of 232 was taken. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was ensured using test re-test technique. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient formula which yielded a reliability co-efficient of 0.82. Data related to the research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the z-test analysis was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings arising from the study revealed that managers’ use of role modelling and reflective practice mentoring strategies enhanced the youth skills in the development of business plans and strategies, improved performance and productivity; improved knowledge and skills and improved creativity and innovation in business experience. It was recommended among others that these aspects of learning be incorporated in all levels of education in Nigeria so as to change the mindset of people from engaging in white-collar-job as a major source of good income.

KEYWORDS: Mentoring, entrepreneurship, small and medium scale enterprises.

Introduction
Entrepreneurship is the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth. The wealth is created by individuals who assume the major risks in terms of equity, time and career commitment or provide value for some products or unique, but value must somehow be infused by the entrepreneur by receiving and locating the necessary skills and resources. Entrepreneurship is also the process of getting into managing one’s own business enterprise (Pompa, 2012). Beginning entrepreneurs need guidance to navigate the ecosystem and require a variety of supports and services—in addition to training and financing—to be successful. In particular, aspiring entrepreneurs need to connect with
and learn from more experienced entrepreneurs rather than be grouped only with peers of similar background and ability. This connection can be consummated through effective mentoring.

According to Chronus (2015), mentoring is a great approach to help employees get organized, and give them access to experts that can give feedback, and help answer questions that may not be known to find young entrepreneurs. Mentorship is a personal developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. The mentor may be older or younger, but have a certain area of expertise. It is a learning and development partnership between someone with vast experience and someone who wants to learn (Caela, 2015). The idea of mentoring came into the business domain to provide entrepreneurs and business people opportunities to reduce the level of risks and failures in doing businesses. Mentorship relationship is different from apprenticeship. In mentoring, a business mentor provides guidance to a business owner or an entrepreneur (mentee) on the affairs of the business.

Entrepreneurial understanding of industry is a key to having success in business. Playing games one does not understand is very dangerous, so mentoring in entrepreneurial activities is actually an attempt to learn the strategy of business success from experts who have been in business for long. Mentors are crucial to the success of entrepreneurs and small business owners. Mentors work through a variety of organizations and help their communities create and grow great businesses with one common goal – to help their peer entrepreneurs and small business owners succeed by supporting their efforts through teaching, training, and consulting (Graveills, 2006). The bundle of decisions and activities that entrepreneurs choose to achieve long term goals could be through mentorship. Entrepreneurs have to figure out what they want to achieve and how they intend to make it happen, with products, customers and operations probably using mentor’s guidance.

Mentors play a vital role in supporting entrepreneurs to succeed in their business activities. They provide important depth and breadth to entrepreneurial activities by sharing their own experiences and lessons-learned and helping to guide entrepreneurs in their entrepreneurial journeys (Renee & Martin, 2014). It is a win-win situation that provides crucial support for the entrepreneurs and a rewarding giveback opportunity for the mentor. Mentoring accelerates learning and the development of entrepreneurs by having focused conversations rather than simply learning how to apply theory to practice. Mentoring approach to the development of entrepreneurial skills is practical and experiential. According to Jibril and Tende (2016), mentoring keeps the mentee (entrepreneur) focused on the business priorities, goals and sustainability of the business. It builds resilience to help the mentee (entrepreneur) meet the challenges of a growing
Starting a business can sometimes be a lonely activity because of issues of resources. Entrepreneurship success requires a diversity of talents, a broad range of knowledge, a passion to succeed and an attitude that believes in do it better after being mentored. Entrepreneurs get on their ways to success and beyond when guided by seasoned entrepreneurial experts and business leaders.

Mentoring can help youth as they go through challenging life transitions, including dealing with stressful changes at home. Close, healthy, supportive relationships between mentors and mentees that last for a significant portion of time (i.e., more than one year) are central to success. Without this, mentoring programs run the risk of harming young people who are paired with ill-equipped mentors to meet the mentees' needs (DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine, 2011).

The steps a mentor should adopt to enhance effective mentoring are known as strategies. Strategy can be defined as a plan designed to achieve a particular purpose (Hornby, 2005). Amesi (2011) stated that strategy is all about competitive position, about differentiating oneself in the eyes of others or customers as the case may be, about adding value through a mix of activities different from those used by competitors. Zachury in Okoro (2015) pointed out that mentors, in addition to their expertise and experience, need to be familiar with specific process skills that can facilitate the mentoring process: namely, asking questions that will help mentors to clarify their own understanding and encourage youths to reflect on and articulate their own thinking. According to Rusell and Rusell (2011) factors that contribute to successful mentoring strategies include active participation and recognition of success. This study will focus on these mentoring strategies: role modeling and reflective practice.

According to Burke and Mckeen in Oppedisano and Laird (2006), role modeling is one of the basic tenets of mentoring process; some of its aspects are teaching/learning, advising/coaching, career development guidance and psychosocial benefits. Role modelling is a system of mentoring and discipline that focuses on positive workplace behavior and performance. For companies big and small, role modeling can provide a way to train employees and improve employee success. It has an effect on both the individual worker and those who are part of a larger team effort. Role modelling as a mentoring strategy is a factor in mentoring success. Experienced entrepreneurs (mentors) can demonstrate to the mentees that the necessary skills for successful entrepreneurship can be learned. In part, this inspiration comes from the idea that the mentor is now going to share the secrets of the start-up process with the mentee. Imparting information on the start-up process from someone who has been there can increase the mentees’ confidence, abilities and entrepreneurial self efficacy, increasing the likelihood and level of success (Nanda & Sorensen, 2010). The entrepreneurial mentor can thus become a role model.
Mentors play powerful roles in assisting young entrepreneurs to reflect on practice and engage in inquiry. A safe environment and a relationship based on mutual rapport and trust helps to expand a pool of understandings. By asking reflective questions, mentors can assist young entrepreneurs to build on their capacity and capabilities. Reflective questions are open ended and it is important that mentors carefully self-manage their emotions and judgments. There should be no feelings of “I know better”, “I know more”, or “that’s not right” (Costa, 2006). During the relationship-building phase it is important to know what it is that makes people think. However, the mentor’s role is to help the youth to reflect on what is happening. Within the reflective process there may be a disguised ‘call for help’ brought on by the reality of running a business and the mentor can help by listening for signs of anxiety, and be there to support the young entrepreneurs. According to Pompa (2012), mentoring allows entrepreneurs to examine their enterprises from a more objective standpoint, while continuing to play their role as leaders and think about development. Mentoring relations can play an important role in facilitating feedback loops – helping the entrepreneurs reflect on their learning and mistakes and to develop forward strategies that are informed by these experiences.

Through mentoring, entrepreneurship open the window of sustainable development of human capital and repositions our graduates to eradicate poverty. Eradication of poverty in the youths is translated to mean transformation of the society which empowers the youths economically to contribute to their own development as well as that of the nation (Ordu, 2015). The society of today is going technological and only those who possess knowledge-based skills through mentoring by experienced entrepreneurs would survive market competition. This brings the youths to learning skills of creativity and innovation. The creative ability of the youths in entrepreneurship enables them solve market problems, identify new business opportunities, exploit these opportunities to create businesses and finally, are influencing economic decisions of the society.

**Statement of the Problem**

Unemployment and poverty especially among the youths have remained major challenges threatening the economic growth and development of Nigeria. This is because the youths are deficient in basic entrepreneurial and productive skills required to function effectively. The fall out of this situation is that those that venture into businesses soon find themselves in tight conditions. These failures occur probably because of young entrepreneurs lack the requisite counsel and advise of seasoned entrepreneurs by way of mentoring, or that the mentoring offered them seem to be lacking both in depth and relevance. This may hamper their attempts to set up or run their businesses. The problem of this study is that young entrepreneurs seem to be lacking the right complements of entrepreneurial mentoring.
Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the strategies for mentoring the youth for effective entrepreneurship in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent to which:

1. Role modelling mentoring strategy enhance the youths for effective entrepreneurship.
2. Reflective practice mentoring strategy enhance the youths for effective entrepreneurship.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does role modeling enhance the youth for effective entrepreneurship?
2. To what extent does reflective practice enhance the youth for effective entrepreneurship?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Managers of enterprises do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the use of role modelling as a mentoring strategy to enhance the youths for effective entrepreneurship on the basis of size of the business.
2. Managers of enterprises do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the use of reflective practice as a mentoring strategy to enhance the youths for effective entrepreneurship on the basis of size of the business.

Method

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The researchers considered this design appropriate for this study since it collected data from managers or owners of enterprises in Anambra State. The population of the study consisted of 2319 small and medium scale managers in the three senatorial zones of Anambra State who registered with the State Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Technology (1481 small and 838 medium). The sample of this study comprised 232 managers made up 148 small and 84 medium entrepreneurs managers were selected through randomization from each stratum. Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire tagged “Strategies for Mentoring the Youth for Effective Entrepreneurship Questionnaire (SMYEEQ)”. The instrument was validated by three experts in business education. Their comments enhanced the content validity of the instrument.

Test re-test method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument, and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the reliability of the
instrument. The analysis yielded a co-efficient of 0.82 indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study. The questionnaire was structured on a five-point rating scale with response categories as “Very High Extent”; “High Extent”; “Moderate Extent” “Low Extent” and “Very Low Extent”. The administration of the instrument was carried out personally by the researchers with the aid of five research assistants. All copies of the questionnaire distributed were retrieved and used for data analysis.

Data collected regarding the research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) while the z-test was used to test the hypotheses. In order to determine the strategies for mentoring the youth, a decision rule based on a mean rating between 4.50-5.00 was used by managers of enterprises to a very high extent, an item with mean rating of 3.50-4.49 was used at a high extent and an item with 2.50-3.49 was used at a moderate extent. Furthermore, items with mean rating of 1.50-2.49 and 0.50-1.49 were used by managers of enterprises to a low and very low extent respectively. In testing the hypotheses, a null hypothesis was accepted where the calculated z value was less than the critical value of z. It meant that there was no significant difference and the hypothesis was not rejected. Conversely, where the calculated z value is equal to or greater than the critical z value, it meant that there was significant difference and the hypothesis was rejected.

Results
Research Question 1

To what extent does role modelling mentoring strategy enhance the youth for effective entrepreneurship?

Table 1: Mean ratings of enterprise managers’ on use of role modelling in enhancing youth effectiveness in entrepreneurship. N= 232

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/NO</th>
<th>Role Modelling Strategy</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Developing business plan and strategies</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Improved understanding of the business</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Counselling and orientation</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Formulating business proposal</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Enhanced decision making skills</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Inspiration and motivation</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Improved creativity and innovation</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Encouragement of positive risk taking</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in Table 1 show that role modelling is highly used in mentoring the youth. Their mean ranges from 4.29 to 4.38. Item 4 (Formulating business proposal) had the highest mean score of 4.38 indicating that the respondents considered role modelling as a
mentoring strategy in enhancing the youth for effective entrepreneurship. There was homogeneity amongst responses indicating a greater consensus of opinion.

**Research Question 2**

To what extent does reflective practice mentoring strategy enhance the youth for effective entrepreneurship?

**Table 2: Mean ratings of enterprise managers on the use of reflective practice in enhancing youth effectiveness in entrepreneurship N= 232**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/NO</th>
<th>Reflective Practice Strategy</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Engaging in inquiry</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mutual rapport and trust</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Self managing their emotions</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Facilitating feedback</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Development of good leadership abilities</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Providing a good track record</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Greater confidence</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in Table 2 show that the respondents agreed that the youths can be motivated to interact with one another in a reflective engaged manner. Their mean scores range from 4.26 to 4.33 indicating that the respondents considered reflective practice as a mentoring strategy for enhancing youth’s effectiveness in entrepreneurship. There was homogeneity amongst responses indicating a greater consensus of opinion.

**Testing the Hypotheses**

**Null Hypothesis One**

Managers of enterprises do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the use of role modeling as a mentoring strategy to enhance the youth for effective entrepreneurship on the basis of size of the business.

**Table 3: z-test analysis of the difference in the mean responses of managers’ of enterprises on the use of role modeling as a mentoring strategy to enhance the youth for effective entrepreneurship on the basis of size of the business.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managers’ of Enterprises</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>z-cal</th>
<th>z-crit</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Enterprises</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Enterprise</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The z-test analysis presented in Table 3 shows that the managers’ of enterprises in Anambra State did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the use of role modeling as a mentoring strategy to enhance the youth for effective entrepreneurship. This was shown by the fact that the calculated z-value of .38 was less than the critical value of 1.96. This shows that there was no significance difference. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was therefore accepted.

Null Hypothesis Two
Managers of enterprises do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the use of reflective practice as a mentoring strategy to enhance the youth for effective entrepreneurship on the basis of size of the business.

Table 4: z-test analysis of the difference in the mean responses of managers’ of enterprises on the use of reflective practice as a mentoring strategy to enhance the youth for effective entrepreneurship on the basis of size of the business.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managers’ of Enterprises</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>z-cal</th>
<th>z-crit</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Enterprise</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Enterprise</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The z-test analysis presented in Table 4 shows that managers’ of small and medium enterprises in Anamabra State did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the use of reflective practice in enhancing the youth for effective entrepreneurship. This was shown by the fact that the calculated z-value of .91 was less than the critical z-value of 1.96. This shows that there was no significance difference in the mean ratings of managers’ of SMEs. Therefore the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was accepted.

Discussion of Findings
The study revealed that role modelling mentoring strategies enhanced youth effectiveness in entrepreneurship. These results agreed with the views of Cull (2006) who stated that the presence of an entrepreneurial role model can positively affect the level of entrepreneurial success. A role model can also help entrepreneurs who may rely too much on personal experience to guide decision making. It can be used to inspire and motivate young people. Further, the result of the first hypothesis revealed that the managers’ of small and medium scale enterprises in Anambra State did not differ significantly in their
mean ratings on the use of role modeling as a mentoring strategy for enhancing the youth effectiveness in entrepreneurship on the basis of size of the business.

The result of the study also revealed that reflective practice mentoring strategies enhanced youth effectiveness in entrepreneurship. The findings agreed with the views of Costa (2006) who stated that mentors play powerful roles in assisting the young entrepreneurs to reflect on practice and engage in inquiry. By asking reflective questions, mentors can assist young entrepreneurs to build on their capacity and capability. The test of the second hypothesis showed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of managers’ of small and medium scale enterprises in Anambra State on the use of reflective practice in enhancing the youth for effective entrepreneurship.

Conclusion
Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that mentoring strategies are used by managers’ of SMEs in Anambra State in motivating the youth for effective entrepreneurship. Furthermore, mentoring strategies impacted on the youth in developing business plan and strategies, improved performance and productivity; improved knowledge and skills and improved creativity and innovation in business.

Recommendations
Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it was recommended that:

1. It is essential that entrepreneurship mentoring be incorporated in all levels of education in Nigeria so as to change the vision of the people towards doing it alone. This will help them seek the advice of seasoned entrepreneurs to succeed.

2. The role of guidance counselors in educational institutions should be expanded to have frequent workshops where professionals will enlighten youths and undergraduates on the need to subject themselves to mentorship.

3. Entrepreneurship education should be made a key component in all educational offerings. The goal is to expose young people at every grade in every school to entrepreneurship content. This will contribute to building a strong entrepreneurial culture.

REFERENCES


