STRATEGIES FOR STIMULATING THE SURVIVAL OF SMALL SCALE BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURS AS PERCEIVED BY BUSINESS EDUCATION LECTURERS IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study assessed strategies for stimulating the survival of small scale business entrepreneurs in Nigeria. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The design of the study was a descriptive survey. The population of the study comprised 133 lecturers in Business Education in Universities in South-South Nigeria. A 74 items questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The content and face validity of the instrument was done by experts in Business Education, and Measurement and Evaluation. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation, and t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings are: that learning of business skills, creation of non-existence saving, check urban-rural drift among others are the contributions of small scale business entrepreneurs to the Nigerian economy.Some of the constraints facing the survival of small scale businesses are sociocultural problems that will make the business not to survive, inadequate operational experience, inadequate experience in the business line among others. The strategies for stimulating the survival of small scale businesses are experience in the business, perception of probability of success in starting the business among others.It was recommended that short and medium term loans should be provided by the government to business education graduateswith low interest rate, to enable them set up small scale businesses in Nigeria. The Government should also formulate policy that will encourage the setting up of small scale businesses by business education graduates.

KEYWORDS: Small Scale Business, Entrepreneurs, strategies, Universities, Nigeria, Business Education Lecturers

Introduction

Business education is a programme of instruction comprising two parts; office education, which is a vocational education programme for office careers and general business education, which is a programme that provide students with information and competencies needed by all managing personal business affairs and using the knowledge acquired in the business world Osuala (2004), Enwemasor, Utebor and Okocha (2016) defined business education as a part of vocational education that prepares individuals for gainful employment through acquisition of skills and knowledge that prepares the individuals for the world of work. According Azuka (2006), business education is defined as a programme of studies which is aimed at creating awareness in business occupations;

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preparing youths for work in business occupation; preparing people to become better citizens and consumers of goods, services and preparing business teachers.

Business education is offered in Colleges of Education and Universities in Nigeria. Business education programme is divided into four major areas of specialization; Accounting, Management, Marketingand Office Technology and Management. Courses such as Keyboarding, shorthand, accounting, principles of management, marketing, leadership, small business management, business communication, business law, computer appreciation are offered. Knowledge acquired will help the recipient to set up their businesses and run it effectively without expecting failures. The purpose of business education is to provide middle level manpower, to contribute meaningfully to the growth of the economy. The objective of business according to Eebo and Oladunjoye (2015) are:

- It presents occupation opportunities in the entire area of business
- It develops in the student knowledge of those business activities that affect everyone regardless of economic status
- It develops in the student the ability to improve his competency as a consumer of business products
- It develops in the student the ability to improve his economic concepts under which the Nigerian free enterprises

Small scale businesses according to the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), is any business having employees of less than or equals one hundred and fifty (150) persons engaged in the enterprise. The New Industrial Policy (1986) defined small scale business as those with total investment of between one hundred thousand and two million naira excluding land but including working capital.

The Committee for Economic Development Standards (1980) in Igbongidi (2015), outlined the following criteria that the small business must meet:

- Management is not independent
- Capital is supplied and ownership is held by an individual or a small group of people
- The area of operation is mainly local
- The business is small when compared with the biggest unit in its field

Small scale business has contributed immensely to the growth of every economy including Nigeria. This assertion is supported by Okenwa (1998) in Igbongidi (2015) who outlined the following as the economic roles of small scale businesses:

- Small scale business serve as placed for learning and training of people at all levels and functions.

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- Small scale businesses facilitate the creation and the use of non-existence saving
- Small scale businesses help to check urban-rural drift since it facilitates decentralization of industrial processes.
- They help to create employment for the teaming population in Nigeria.
- Small scale businesses create more jobs unit of invested capital and per unit of energy consumed
- They help to mobilize resources that would remain idle in the hands of people and employ productivity and by so doing, capital formation is encouraged
- They help to link up the various sectors of the economy and constitute the market for agriculture, extractive and industrial output as well as providing the source of material and labour input for big industries
- They help to build management skills in the local populace by allowing them to start businesses with resources requirement and the opportunity to manage the business themselves.\
- Transformation of traditional industry.

Small scale business could be funded through long term finance such as equity funds and debt funds, short term finance such as loans from friends, trade financing, borrowing from the bank, over drafts, inherited funds, cooperative societies, retained earnings, selling of personal property, personal savings, and equipment renting.

Research findings by Igbongidi (2015) shows that small scale businesses in Nigeria does not survive for a long time, some survive within six months, one year, two years, three years, as the case may be. Only few survive after four years of operation. Reasons for failure of small scale businesses according to Igbongidi (2015) are: Sociocultural problems, Inadequate operational experience, Lacking experience in that business line, Inconsistencies in government policies, Lack of access to loans, Innovation in society that need changes, Inadequate capital, Lack of proper planning, Lack of competitive edge, Failure to sell yourself, Inadequate flexibility, Knowledge entrepreneur but mediocre employees, and Over expansion of business

However,Braimoh and Ihionkhan (as cited by Igbogidi (2015) outlined the following reasons for the survival of small scale businesses in Nigeria:Experience in the intended line of business, Perception of probability of success in starting and sustaining the business when it is started, Viable ideal can be translated into product or service to meet customers' demand, Availability of business opportunity in the society and the ability to identify its exercise, Success rule model to emulate, Hard work and self-confidence, Government incentive through supportive set of institutions, Credit and supplier assistance and access to capital, Availability of capable manpower especially where specialise and technical skills are required to launch and operate the business, Lack

of motivation, Right social connections, Feasibility report before actual commencement of business to assess viability of the intended business, Ability to take risk coupled with a strong urge to succeed rather than avoiding failure, Having a clear business goal, Level of education, Pointer in the type of business venture, Family support, Nature of competition in the line of business, Human relations skills, Choosing the right location, Information, and Management ability.

Statement of the Problem

Business education graduates that set up small scale businesses always run at a loss in their business enterprises as a result of inexperience, government policies, inadequate funding that will make them to be out of business, despite the numerous contribution of small scale business to the growth of the economy.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study is to assess the strategies for stimulating the survival of small scale business entrepreneurs in Nigeria as perceived by Business Education lecturers in Universities in South-South Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives are to:

i Assess the contributions of small scale business entrepreneurs to the growth of Nigerian economy

ii Identify the constraints facing the survival of small scale businesses entrepreneurs

iii Determine thestrategies that stimulate the survival of small scale businesses entrepreneurs

Research Questions

The following research questionswas raise the study:

1 What are the contributions of small scale business entrepreneurs to the growth of Nigerian economy as perceived by business education lecturers in South-South Nigerian Universities?

2 What are the constraints facing the survival of small scale businessesentrepreneursas perceived by business education lecturers in South-South Nigerian Universities?

3 What are the strategies that stimulate the survival of small scale businessesentrepreneursas perceived by business education lecturers in South-South Nigerian Universities?

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Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for this study:

1 There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business education lecturers on the contributions of small scale business entrepreneurs to the growth of Nigerian economy

2 There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business education lecturers on the constraints facing the survival of small scale businesses entrepreneurs

3 There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business education lecturers on the strategies for stimulating the survival of small scale businesses entrepreneurs

4 There is no significant difference in the mean rating of federal and state university business education lecturers on the contributions of small scale business entrepreneurs to the growth of Nigerian economy

5 There is no significant difference in the mean rating of federal and state university business education lecturers onthe constraints facing the survival of small scale businesses entrepreneurs

6 There is no significant difference in the mean rating of federal and state university business education lecturers on the strategies that stimulate the survival of small scale businesses entrepreneurs

Method

Descriptive survey was the design adopted for the study, which assessed strategies for stimulating the survival of small scale business entrepreneurs in Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 133 lecturers in Business Education in Universities in South-South Nigeria. There was no sampling since the population was manageable. A questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection, it has 74 items. Section A has 3 items on demographical variables (Gender, Type of Institution and Experience), while section B has 71 items based on the three research questions used for the study. The questionnaire was given to three experts in Business Education, and two experts in Measurement and Evaluation Department, for content and face validity. To determine the internal consistency of the instrument, the questionnaire was administered to ten lecturers of Business Education at Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu in South East zone of Nigeria, which were not part of the study. The data collected were subjected to Cronbach alpha which yielded coefficient value of 0.92. The data collected were analysed using mean. The questionnaire was structured on a 4 point rating scale of Strongly Agree 4-points, Agree 3- points, Disagree 2- points, and Strongly Disagree 1-point. Anymean score which has 2.50 and above wasregarded as agree responses while a

mean score which has below 2.50 wasregarded as disagree responses. T-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The result of the study is presented in tables and interpretation.

Research Question 1

What are the contributions of small scale businesses to the growth of Nigerian economy as perceived by business education lecturers in South-South Nigerian Universities?

Table 1: ***Mean rating of Business Education lecturers on the contributions of small scale businesses to the growth of Nigerian economy. N = 133***

S/N	Contributions of small scale businesses	X	SD	REMARK
1	Small scale businesses serve as places for learning of business skills	3.15	0.83	Agree
2	Small scale businesses facilitate the creation of non-existence saving	3.20	0.88	Agree
3	Small scale businesses help to check urban-rural drift since it facilitates decentralization of industrial processes	3.11	0.86	Agree
4	Small scale businesses help to create employment for the teaming population	2.58	0.65	Agree
5	Small scale businesses help to create more jobs	2.83	0.87	Agree
6	Small scale businesses help to mobilize resources that would remain idle.	3.22	0.85	Agree
7	Small scale businesses help to link up the various sectors of the economy	3.08	0.75	Agree
8	Small scale businesses help to build management skills in the local populace	3.35	0.54	Agree
9	Small scale businesses help in the transformation of traditional industry	2.86	0.60	Agree
10	Small scale business serve as places for training of people at all levels and functions	2.80	0.68	Agree
11	Small scale businesses facilitate the use of non-existence saving	3.01	0.53	Agree
12	Small scale business help in wealth creation	2.87	0.54	Agree
13	Small scale businesses help in capital formation	2.76	0.83	Agree
14	Small scale businesses help to constitute the market for agriculture, extractive and industrial output	3.12	0.76	Agree
15	Small scale businesses help to provide the source of material	3.46	0.86	Agree
16	Small scale businesses help to provide labour input for big industries	2.89	0.78	Agree
Total		**3.02**	**0.74**	Agree

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All the items listed in table 1 are contribution of small scale business to the growth of Nigerian economy since the mean ranges from 2.58 to 3.46.

Research Question 2

What are the constraints facing the survival of small scale businesses as perceived by business education lecturers in South-South Nigerian Universities?

Table 2: ***Mean rating of Business Education lecturers on the constraints facing the survival of small scale businesses. N = 133***

S/N	Constraints Facing the Survival of Small Scale Businesses	X	SD	REMARK
17	Sociocultural problems that will make the business not to survive	2.57	0.92	Agree
18	Inadequate operational experience	3.16	0.74	Agree
19	Inadequate experience in the business line	3.33	0.59	Agree
20	Inconsistencies in government policies	3.26	0.66	Agree
21	Inability to access adequate loans	3.05	0.78	Agree
22	Innovation in society that need changes	3.16	0.92	Agree
23	Inadequate capital to sustain the business	3.24	0.85	Agree
24	Inadequate planning for the business	3.16	0.74	Agree
25	Lack of competitive advantage	3.33	0.59	Agree
26	Failure to sell yourself	3.26	0.66	Agree
27	Inadequate flexibility to customers and clients	3.05	0.78	Agree
28	Knowledgeable entrepreneurs but mediocre employees	3.16	0.92	Agree
29	Over expansion of business	3.24	0.85	Agree
30	Failure to plan	3.18	0.87	Agree
31	Excess credit	2.76	0.84	Agree
32	Inadequate warehousing	2.66	0.57	Agree
33	Problem of transportation	2.78	0.98	Agree
34	Family excess consumption of products	3.04	0.85	Agree
35	Inadequate record keeping	2.78	0.98	Agree
36	Death of owners	2.96	0.76	Agree
Total		**3.06**	**0.79**	Agree

All the items listed in table 2 are constraints facing the survival of small scale businesses. This is because; the mean ranges from 2.57 to 3.33.

Research question 3

What are the strategies for stimulating the survival of small scale businesses as perceived by business education lecturers in South-South Nigerian Universities?

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Table 3: ***Mean rating of Business Education lecturers on the strategies for stimulating the survival of small scale businesses. N = 133***

S/N	StrategiesStimulating the Survival of Small Scale Businesses	X	SD	REMARK
37	Experience in the business	2.53	0.70	Agree
38	Perception of probability of success in starting the business	2.76	0.72	Agree
39	Viable ideas can be translated into product to meet customers' demand	2.54	0.73	Agree
40	Availability of business opportunity in the society	2.75	0.96	Agree
41	Success rule model to emulate others	2.50	0.85	Agree
42	Hard work of employees	2.53	0.92	Agree
43	Government incentives to businesses	3.50	0.71	Agree
44	Credit assistance	2.53	0.80	Agree
45	Availability of capable manpower	3.15	0.83	Agree
46	Motivation of employees	3.20	0.88	Agree
47	Right social connections	3.11	0.86	Agree
48	Feasibility report before starting the business	3.22	0.65	Agree
49	Ability to take risk	3.29	0.87	Agree
50	Having a clear business goal	3.22	0.85	Agree
51	Level of education	3.08	0.75	Agree
52	Pointer in the type of business venture	3.35	0.54	Agree
53	Family support	3.06	0.24	Agree
54	Nature of competition in the line of business	3.12	0.33	Agree
55	Human relation skills	3.09	0.29	Agree
56	Choosing the right location	3.05	0.22	Agree
57	Availability of warehousing facilities	3.12	0.33	Agree
58	Management ability	3.13	0.35	Agree
59	Perception of probability of success in sustaining the business when it is started	3.15	0.83	Agree
60	Ability to identify the exercise of business opportunities	3.20	0.88	Agree
61	self-confidence	3.11	0.86	Agree
62	Supplier assistance	3.22	0.65	Agree
63	access to capital	3.29	0.87	Agree
64	Hard work of the owner	3.22	0.85	Agree
65	Training of employees	3.08	0.75	Agree
66	Retraining of employees	3.35	0.54	Agree
67	Self-motivation of the owner	3.00	0.60	Agree
68	A strong urge to succeed rather than avoiding failure	3.16	0.74	Agree
69	Nature of goods to sell	3.33	0.59	Agree

70	Adequate transportation	3.26	0.66	Agree
71	Availability of market	3.05	0.78	Agree
Total		**3.06**	**0.69**	

All the 35 items in table 3 are the strategies that stimulate the survival of small scale business enterprises, since the mean of all the items range from 2.50 to 3.35 and the grand total is 3.06.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business education lecturers on the contributions of small scale business to the growth of Nigerian economy

Table 4: *t-test result of the difference in respondents' mean rating of male and female business education lecturers on the contributions of small scale business to the growth of Nigerian economy*

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Remarks
Male	77	3.26	0.90	131	1.32	1.96	NS
Female	56	3.02	0.87				

The table 4 showed that the calculated t-value of 1.32 is less than the t-tabulated value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore retained.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business education lecturers on the constraints facing the survival of small scale businesses

Table 5: *t-test result of the difference in respondents' mean rating of male and female business education lecturers on the constraints facing the survival of small scale business to the growth of Nigerian economy*

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Remarks
Male	77	3.21	0.97	131	1.48	1.96	NS
Female	56	2.80	0.93				

From the table, the calculated t-value of 1.48 is less than the t-tabulated value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore retained. This means that there isno significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business education lecturers on the constraints facing the survival of small scale business to the growth of Nigerian economy.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business education lecturers on the strategies that stimulate the survival of small scale businesses

Table 6: *t-test result of the difference in respondents' mean rating of male and female business education lecturers on the strategies that stimulate the survival of small scale businesses*

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Remarks
Male	77	3.38	0.95	132	1.57	1.96	NS
Female	56	3.14	0.90				

From the table, the calculated t-value of 1.57 is less than the t-tabulated value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore retained.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of federal and state university business education lecturers on the contributions of small scale business to the growth of Nigerian economy

Table 7: *t-test result of the difference in respondents' mean rating of federal and state university business education lecturers on the contributions of small scale business to the growth of Nigerian economy*

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Remarks
State University	75	3.28	0.89				
Federal University	58	3.04	0.96	132	1.49	1.96	NS

In the table, the calculated t-value of 1.49 is less than the t-tabulated value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore retained.

Hypothesis 5

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of federal and state university business education lecturers on the constraints facing the survival of small scale businesses

Table 8: *t-test result of the difference in respondents' mean rating of federal and state university business education lecturers on the constraints facing the survival of small scale businesses*

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Remarks
State University	75	3.36	0.96	132	1.46	1.96	NS
Federal University	58	2.92	0.90				

In table 8 shows that the calculated t-value of 1.46 is less than the t-tabulated value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore retained.

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Hypothesis 6

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of federal and state university business education lecturers on the strategies that stimulate the survival of small scale businesses

Table 9: *t-test result of the difference in respondents' mean rating of federal and state university business education lecturers on the strategies that stimulate the survival of small scale businesses*

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Remarks
State University	75	3.07	0.98	132	1.52	1.96	NS
Federal University	58	2.91	0.91				

In table, the calculated t-value of 1.57 is less than the t-tabulated value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore retained.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed the following as contributions of small scale business entrepreneurs to the growth of Nigerian economy, learning of business skills, creation of non-existence saving, checking of urban-rural drift, create employment for the teaming population, create more jobs, mobilize resources that would remain idle, link up the various sectors of the economy, build management skills in the local populace, transformation of traditional industry, training of people at all levels and functions, facilitate the use of non-existence saving, wealth creation, capital formation, constitute the market for agriculture, provide the source of material, and provide labour input for big industries. This study is consistent with the earlier studies of Igbongidi (2015), who earlier outlined similar contributions of small scale businesses to the economy of Nigeria. The result of hypotheses shows that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male; female and federal and state universities business education lecturers on the contributions of small scale business entrepreneurs to the growth of Nigerian economy.

The study also revealed that some of the constraints facing the survival of small scale businesses as perceived by business education lecturers in South-South Nigerian Universities include sociocultural problems that will make the business not to survive, inadequate operational experience, inadequate experience in the business line, inconsistencies in government policies, inability to access adequate loans, innovation in society that need changes, inadequate capital to sustain the business, inadequate planning for the business, lack of competitive advantage, failure to sell yourself, inadequate flexibility to customers and clients, knowledgeable entrepreneurs but mediocre employees, over expansion of business, failure to plan, excess credit, inadequate warehousing, problem of transportation, family excess consumption of products, inadequate record keeping, and death of owners. This study is consistent with the studies

of Igbongidi (2015), who gave similar reasons for the failure of small scale businesses. The result of the hypotheses revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female; state and federal universities business education lecturers on the constraints facing the survival of small scale businesses entrepreneurs.

The findings revealed that some of the strategies for stimulating the survival of small scale businesses as perceived by business education lecturers in South-South Nigerian Universities include experience in the business, perception of probability of success in starting the business, viable ideas can be translated into product to meet customers' demand, availability of business opportunity in the society, success rule model to emulate others, hard work of employees, Government incentives to businesses, credit assistance, availability of capable manpower, motivation of employees, right social connections, feasibility report before starting the business, ability to take risk, having a clear business goal among others. This finding is in line with the studies of Braimoh and Ihionkhan (as cited by Igbogidi, 2015), who outlined similar strategies for the survival of small scale businesses in Nigeria. The result of the hypotheses showed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female; state and federal universities business education lecturers on the strategies that stimulate the survival of small scale businesses entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

Small scale business entrepreneurs in Nigeria are very vital instrument for the growth of Nigerian economy. It is therefore imperative that business education programme, which is designed for training and retraining of prospective entrepreneurs should be encouraged private sectors and public sectors by providing the necessary environment, to enable them set up businesses that can boost the survival of the economy now that the country in facing economic recession.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for the study:

1. Business education graduates should be trained and retrained by the government to grain more knowledge on the strategies to set up businesses without failure
2. Short and medium term loans should be provided by the government to business education graduates with low interest rate, to enable them set up small scale businesses in Nigeria
3. Government should formulates policy that will encourage the setting up of small scale businesses by business education graduates
4. Business education graduates should conduct proper feasibility studies before embarking on any business

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