



TACIT KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN RIVERS STATE

DR. E.O. ENYEKIT (MABEN)

drbenowaji2013@gmail.com

Department of Office Tech. and Management

Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic

Rumuola, port Harcourt

DR. P.C. OGWUNTE (MABEN)

K.E.O.ENYEKIT (MABEN)

Research Fellows,

department of Business Education,

Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Port Harcourt

E-mail: peter.ogwunte@yahoo.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine tacit knowledge management and entrepreneurship education skills development among university students for sustainable development in Rivers State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study consisted of 502 students from the three universities in Rivers State. A sample size of 141 students was randomly selected in the graduating classes of the Rivers State University, University of Port-Harcourt, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in Rivers State. A self-structured questionnaire containing 16 item-statements in two clusters according to the research questions was used for data collection. The instruments titled “(KMADESI) and (KDADESI)” were validated by three experts. The internal consistency and reliability of the instrument used was determined by the split-half method which yielded co-efficient index of 0.83. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions, while z-test inferential statistics was used to test the formulated null hypotheses. The study findings revealed that graduating students of entrepreneurship education agreed on the relevance of tacit knowledge management to entrepreneurial skill management. Based on the findings it was recommended amongst others that universities should establish an appropriate culture that encourages students to create and share tacit knowledge within the school.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Education, Knowledge, Sustainable Development, Tacit Knowledge, Tacit Knowledge Management

Introduction

Tertiary institutions are pioneers in knowledge-based societies. They are considered as centers and sources of consuming and producing information used in academic training. Therefore, there is need to harness and manage holistically the available wealth of knowledge assets (database, expertise, tacit knowledge and lectures) towards producing students that on graduation would become self-employed or professional and consultants in their areas of specialization.

Knowledge is an indispensable asset to any organization such that when it is properly harnessed, managed and utilized, will not only bring about increased productivity, but also expansion, growth and sustainable development. In another view, knowledge is one, if not the principal element that styles ones personal, organizational and societal intelligent behavior. Knowledge is the awareness, identification and applied



know-how that people possess. It is an essential resources that are also transformed to other manifestations such as books, technology, practices and traditions within organization of all kinds and in society in general. Knowledge is created in the minds of peoples and increases when people are involved in its acquisition and dissemination.

Koenig (2012) opined that tacit knowledge represent internalized knowledge that an individual may not be consciously aware of such as how one accomplishes particular tasks. Lubit in Enyekit and Enyekit (2015) viewed tacit knowledge as knowledge that resides in human mind, behavior and perceptions, and cannot be easily expressed. It is developed through ones' or other people experiences as well as observation of what happens in the society (Enyekit & Enyekit, 2015). Alwis and Hartmann (2008) asserted that tacit knowledge is hidden and therefore, evolves through the interaction of skills and practice. Dalkir (2005) underscored the properties of tacit knowledge as: personal and hard to familiar formalize, difficult to communicate to others, rooted in actions, procedures, commitment, value and emotion. It is the less familiar unconventional form of knowledge to which we people are not conscious of.

Tacit knowledge management is the process of identifying and acquiring tacit knowledge and generating new ideas and innovations. It involves information, creation of new knowledge and the management of the way people share and apply tacit knowledge (Ogeifo, 2013). According to Duhon in Koenig (2012), tacit knowledge management is a discipline that promotes an integrated approach to identifying, capturing, evaluating, retrieving and sharing all of an individual's information assets, which include expertise and experience. The above definitions of tacit knowledge management have two major things in common. These include knowledge identification and integration, knowledge acquisition and knowledge application (Afrazah, 2010). There is hardly any entrepreneurship education skills development without the use of tacit knowledge.

Entrepreneurship education is that aspect of education specifically designed to prepare the individual for the world of work in specific areas and to develop a level of maturity to be self-employed, to manage resources and create more wealth (Obasi, 2010). In the view of Ikeme (2009), entrepreneurship education is a conscious effort geared towards the education and development of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and ability essential in the management of an economic venture. This implies that entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with skills, knowledge and motivation, as well as to effect attitudinal change, necessary to encourage self-reliance through involvement in entrepreneurial activities through entrepreneurship education.

In the views of Okolie, Elom, Ituma, Opara, Ukwa, Inyiagu and Ndem (2014) entrepreneurship education is a training which prepares learners to be accountable and innovative persons who become entrepreneurs, thinkers and contribute to development and sustainable communities. It provides opportunities for youths to be experienced, acquire entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes including opportunity recognition, idea creation and marshalling resources in face of risk to chase opportunities, ventures creation and operation, creativity and critical thinking. Also, Wiklund (2011) referred to



entrepreneurship as the act of having ability to find and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources, initiate appropriate actions to ensure success, and unemployment actions to take advantage of the opportunities for rewarding outcome. Also, Wu (2008) described entrepreneurship as the act of being an entrepreneur or one who undertakes innovations, into economic goods. This may result to new organization or may be part of revitalizing mature organizations in response to a perceived opportunity. In today's world, anybody, industry or business leader with innovative and creative business abilities is described as an entrepreneur or someone who engages in entrepreneurship (Onuka, 2008). The entrepreneur is the person venturing into organizing and managing a business, while entrepreneurship is the service rendered by the entrepreneur (Gibb & Hannon, 2006). These definitions denote that entrepreneur is the person who perceives a business opportunity and take advantage of the scarce resources to meet with unlimited opportunities profitably.

In terms of the objective of entrepreneurship education, Pihie (2009) opined that entrepreneurship education is structured to offer functional education for the youths that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant, provide the youths and graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities, to serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development to offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management, to make certain bearing feasible. Also, Wu (2008) stated that the objective of entrepreneurship education is to reduce high rate of poverty, create employment generation and reduce rural-urban migration.

Every country in the world is faced with the challenges of improving the capacity of their workforce to respond to their national development needs and to the demands of a rapidly changing and more competitive world. Therefore, the future success of every nation, individual, enterprise and community is highly dependent on the existence and possession of transferable skills and ideas.

Alwis and Hartmann (2008) stressed on the relevance of tacit knowledge management to entrepreneurial skills development. They contended that tacit knowledge assets equip students with self-confidences technical skills in specific business area, negotiation skill, planning skill, marketing skills, knowledge of relevant market, time management skill, knowledge of relevant product, financial management skills leadership skills and human relation skills etc.

From the foregoing, entrepreneurship is the engine fuelling innovation, employment generation and economic growth. The general assembly of the United Nations, during its 48th session, adopted a resolution-Entrepreneurship and privatization for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development encouraging members to promote and facilitate the growth of entrepreneurship and the support to local entrepreneurs (Mundra, 2012). This resolution is a reflection of the growing international realization that "lighting the flame of the entrepreneurial spirit empowers national and peoples, with the knowledge and ability to fish, rather than just giving them a fish' (Mundra, 2012).



Sustainable development is concerned with meeting the needs of people today without compromising ability of future generation to meet their own needs. This implies that sustainable development involves an inclusive approach to action which recognizes the need for all people to be involved in the decisions that affect their lives. James (2009) viewed sustainable development as and all round development of individuals. It is concern not only with personality development, but also nation building. However, Junie (2012) emphasized that national development encompasses social and political development as well as economic development defined as the attainment of a number of ideas of modernization such as a rise in social and economic equity a rise in productivity, improved institutions and values etc.

Statement of Problem

There is a considerable concern by parents and employers of labour that a large number of graduates of tertiary institutions are jobless. This is so because majority of them learn through lectures and academic textbooks and are academically sound, but have limited opportunity of acquiring practical experience by using machinery, equipment and practical techniques associated with a profession. As such, relevance of tacit knowledge management to entrepreneurial skills development and the extent to which tacit knowledge management equip students with entrepreneurial skills and attributes may be lacking in these graduates.

Under these circumstances, it would appear that entrepreneurship education may not be meeting the needs, aspirations and expectations of the society. To address this, there is need to empirically study and ascertain the extent to which the development of entrepreneurial skills among university students is susceptible to tacit knowledge management. On this premise, a gap in knowledge therefore exist which needs to be filled empirically through this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine tacit knowledge management and entrepreneurship skills development among university students for sustainable development in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

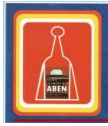
1. Determine the relevance of tacit knowledge management to entrepreneurial skill development.
2. Determine the extent to which tacit knowledge assets equipped students with entrepreneurial skills and attributes.

Research Questions

1. What is the relevance of tacit knowledge management to entrepreneurial skills development of students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?
2. To what extent has tacit knowledge assets equipped students with entrepreneurial skills and attributes?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level.



1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the relevance of tacit knowledge management to entrepreneurial skill development.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female students on the extent to which tacit knowledge assets equip students with entrepreneurial skills and attributes.

Method

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was made up of 502 students in graduating classes in the three universities in Rivers State. A sample of 141, consisting of 47 students from each institution was drawn using stratified random sampling technique. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was titled “Knowledge Management and Development of Entrepreneurial skill Inventory (KMADESI) and Extent of knowledge Assets and Development of Entrepreneurial skill Inventory (EKADESI). The first instrument was designed on a 4 point Likert-type response formula of Strongly Agree (SA-4points), Agree (A-3points), Disagree (DA-2points) and Strongly Disagree (SDA-1point), while the second instrument was structured on a 4-point scale as follows: Very Great Extent (VGE), 4 points, Great Extent (GE) 3 point, Small Extent (SE), -2 Points and Very Small Extent (VSE), -1 Point. The instruments were validated by three experienced business educators from Rivers State University, University of Port-Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru university of Education, in Rivers State. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the split half method to determine the degree of reliability which yielded a correlation co-efficient of 0.89. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviations and z-test for the test of hypotheses.

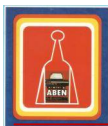
Results

Research Question 1

What is the relevance of tacit knowledge management to entrepreneurial skills development of students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean Responses of Students on the Relevance of Tacit Knowledge Management to Entrepreneurial Skill Development

S/N	Statements	X	SD	REMARKS
1.	Sharing of information with other students helps in knowledge dissemination.	3.21	0.89	Agree
2.	Sharing of knowledge and information on business formation with other students help them in developing creative and innovative business ideas	3.19	0.89	agree
3.	Students have acquired a lot of entrepreneurial ideasthrough knowledge and information sharing among themselves	3.16	0.88	Agree



4.	Students clarify their entrepreneurial thought by sharing knowledge and information with other students and mentors	3.24	0.9	Agree
5.	Students entrepreneurial thoughts and skills are natured through networking and group brainstorming	3.21	0.89	Agree
Aggregate mean (\bar{X}) and (SD)		3.20	0.89	Agree

The data on Table I show that graduating students of entrepreneurship education rated items 1, 2, 3, and 5 above 3.00 indicating that the respondents agreed on the relevance of tacit knowledge management to entrepreneurial skill development. The standard deviations of these items were within 0.88 and 0.9.

Research Question 2

To what extent has tacit knowledge assets equipped students with entrepreneurial skills and attributes?

Table 2: Mean Response of Students on the Extent to Which Tacit Knowledge Assets Equipped Students with Entrepreneurial Skills and Attribute

S/N	Statements	\bar{X}	SD	REMARKS
6.	Tacit knowledgeassets equip students with self confidence	3.99	0.68	Great extent
7.	Tacit knowledgeassets equip students with technical skill in specific business	3.89	0.86	Great extent
8.	Tacit knowledgeassets equip students with negotiation skill	4.03	0.78	Great extent
9.	Tacit knowledgeassets equip students with planning skill	4.45	0.50	Great extent
10.	Tacit knowledgeassets equip students with Marketing skill	4.31	0.86	Great extent
11.	Tacit knowledgeassets equip students with knowledge of relevant markets	4.48	0.59	Great extent
12.	Tacit knowledgeassets equip students with time management skill	4.64	0.60	Very Great extent
13.	Tacit knowledgeassets equip students with knowledge of relevant products	3.65	0.77	Great extent
14.	Tacit knowledgeassets equip students financial management skill	4.86	0.40	Very Great extent
15.	Tacit knowledgeassets help students to identify opportunity & challenges	4.10	0.82	Great extent
16.	Tacit knowledgeassets equip students with human relation skills	4.77	0.54	Very Great extent
17.	Tacit knowledgeassets equip students with	4.03	1.08	Great extent



leadership skill

Aggregate mean (\bar{X}) and SD

4.26 0.62 Great extent

Data presented in Table 2 show that graduating students of entrepreneurship education rated items 12, 14 and 16 above 4.50 indicating that knowledge assets equip students with entrepreneurial skill and attribute to a very great extent. The nine remaining items 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15 scored 3.50, thus, showing that knowledge assets equipped student with entrepreneurial skills and attribute to a great extent. The standard deviations of these items were within 0.40 and 1.0.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female students on the relevance of knowledge management to entrepreneurial skill development.

Table 3: The z-test of Difference in the Mean Responses of Male and Females Students on the Relevance of Tacit Knowledge Management to Entrepreneurial Skills Development

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	Z-cal	Z-crit	α	Decision
Male students	76	2.17	0.46	139	-0.15	1.96	0.05	Accepted
Female student	65	1.0	0.43					

In Table 3, the calculated z of = 0.15 is less than the critical – z value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female students on the extent to which tacit knowledge assets equip students with entrepreneurial skills and attributes.

Table 4: The z-test of Difference in the Mean Response of Male and Female students on the Extent to which Knowledge Assets Equip Students with Entrepreneurial Skills and Attributes

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	Z-cal	Z-crit	α	Decision
Male students	66	2.06	0.29	139	-2.6	1.96	0.05	Accepted
Female students	75	2.2	0.33					

As presented in Table 4, the calculated z-value of -2.6 is less than the critical –z value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the analysis of the relevance of tacit knowledge management to entrepreneurial skill development as shown in Table 1 indicated that graduating students of entrepreneurship education agreed on the relevance of tacit knowledge management to



entrepreneurial skill development. The findings agree with the report of Ghorbani (2012) who found a meaningful link between tacit knowledge shared and used with organization entrepreneurship. The test of the first hypothesis indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean response of male and female students on the relevance of tacit knowledge management to entrepreneurial skills development.

The result of the analysis of the extent to which tacit knowledge assets equipped students with entrepreneurial skills and attributes as shown in Table 4 indicates that graduating students of entrepreneurship education affirmed to a great extent on how tacit knowledge management equipped students with entrepreneurial skills and attributes. Among the 12 items of relevance to tacit knowledge management and entrepreneurial skills development, the respondents rated three to a very great extent, while nine were rated to a great extent. This finding agrees with the report of Agboola and Ademulity (2015) that found relationship between education entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial skills development. The test of the second hypothesis indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent to which tacit knowledge assets equip students with entrepreneurial skills and attributes.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the conclusion is that graduating students of entrepreneurship education in universities in Rivers State agreed on the relevance of tacit knowledge management to entrepreneurial skills development. Similarly, respondents affirmed to a great that tacit knowledge management equipped students with entrepreneurial skills and attributes. In essences, the ability to promote entrepreneurship requires an enquiring mind that is able to make connection between theory and practice.

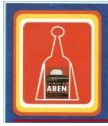
Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made;

1. Universities should establish an appropriate culture that encourages students to create and share tacit knowledge within the school.
2. Educators productivity areas should be encouraged though conference attendance, workshops, excursions and seminars.
3. Universities should invest more on curriculum and activities that can foster entrepreneurship and innovations, refocus their methods of teaching towards practical engagements and discovery techniques.
4. Students should be exposed to some activities and learning tools used inside and outside the classroom.

References

Afazah, B.J. (2010). Contribution of management skills to entrepreneurial success: A survey of small and medium enterprises in the trade sector. *International Organization of Scientific Research Journal of Business and Management* 7(1), 8-16.



- Enyekit, E.O & Enyekit, K.E.O. (2015). Assessment of input Resources for Entrepreneurial Skills Delivery for Human Capital Development in Rivers State. *Rivers Business Education Journal*, 1 (2), 54-63.
- Enyekit, E.O & Enyekit, K.E.O. (2015). Extent of Availability of School Plants and Facilities for Effective Administration of Business Education Programmes in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education*, 2 (2), 118-128.
- Gborbani, S.N. (2012). Capacity building in knowledge creation for university lecturers: Cost challenges. *Journal of Educational Review*, 4(4), 489-509.
- Gibb, A. & Hannon, P. (2006). Towards the entrepreneurial university? Durham, Birmingham: *National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship*, 3(2), 62-72.
- Ikeme, S.A. (2009). *Entrepreneurship and development*. Ibadan: Lasenmi press INC.
- James, N. (2009). Sustainable Economic development: Initiatives, programmes and strategies for cities and regions. *Urban Sustainability Associates, Sustainable Systems*, 2(1), 23-32.
- Junie, Z. (2012). *Delivering environmental sound economic Growth: The case of China: Asia Society*, San Diego
- Koenig, M. (2012). Knowledge management: *International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science*. New York: Routledge.
- Mundra, R.S. (2012). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control. New York: W.H. Freeman
- Obasi, J.F. (2010). Entrepreneurship education and undergraduates attitude to self-employment. A case study of Nigerian universities. Retrieved from www.readperiodical.com/2010_09/208747.
- Ogeifo, S.A. (2013). Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. A panacea for sustainable Development in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4 (6), 61-67.
- Okolie, U.C., Elom, E.N, Ituma, A., Opara, P.N, Inyagu, E.E & Ndem, J.U (2014). Influence of entrepreneurship education of students attaining business development awareness and skills acquisition in Nigeria. *Journal of Research & Method in Education*. 4(3), 37-44.
- Onuka, P.C. (2008). *Entrepreneurship education in school*. Aba; Linco Publishers Nig Ltd.
- Pihie, Z (2009). Entrepreneurship as a career choice: An analysis of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intention of university students. *European Journal of Social Science*, 9(2), 76-82.
- Vinceta, .S. (2014). An impact and challenges of sustainable development in global era. *Journal of Economic and Development Studies*, 2(2), 39-43.
- Wiklund, J.S. (2011). Breeding more gazelles: The role of European universities. *European Foundation for Entrepreneurship Research*. 3(6), 29-49.
- Wu, S. (2008). Impact of higher education on entrepreneurial intention of university students in China. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprises Development*. 15 (4), 56-66.