

**MENTOR-MENTEE SKILLS COMPETENCIES AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT: A
MODERATING ROLE OF BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT OF BUSINESS STUDENTS IN
SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA.**

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ABSTRACT

This study ascertains the relationship between mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development of Business Administration students in south-south, Nigeria. 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 mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development of Business Administration students in south-south, Nigeria with business environment having a positive moderating effect on the relationship. It also investigated the relationship between mentor-mentee skills competencies dimensions and measures of entrepreneurial development. The findings show an undisputable relationship between and among them. This study thus concluded that mentor-mentee skills competencies is a strong antecedent and undisputable energetic for enhancing entrepreneurial development of Business Administration 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: Mentor-Mentee Skills Competencies, Entrepreneurial Development, Business Administration Students

INTRODUCTION

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.

Entrepreneurship constitutes a vital engine for economic, social, practical, and all round development of any nation. Entrepreneurship has been identified by many both universally and nationally as a tool for a sustainable, virile and stable economy. This is why successive governments in Nigeria attempted to strengthen relevant agencies in order to achieve this position Akpomi (2009) opined that no country can as a matter of truth, move forward technologically, industrially and economically without developing strong private partner initiate in the creation of wealth, poverty

reduction and employment generation, with required skills. These skills include managerial, comparative, communication; technical, human and special skills too cope with the challenges of the future since entrepreneurship is vital to the sustainable advancement of any nation.

Mentoring is speedily becoming global as highly as effective human resource development process. Many organizations such as schools, business organizations church or mosque, health sector, political sectors, etc have either gone through or are presently experiencing significant change. Mentoring is one way in which organizations can provide assistance as there is a high level of trust and mutual regards which will enable the person to become what he aspires to be by realizing his or her potential. Mentoring as recognized as vital contributor to capacity building within an organization. Mentoring is therefore, an assistance given by a professionally trained personnel called the counsellor or an individual or group of people who have challenges to help them understand themselves did their environment with a view to solving the problems, make necessary adjustment, bring about right decision and finally live satisfactory and productive life now and in the future (Anyamamene et al 2009).

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. In the world of business, there are many different types of innovation that a company might pursue. 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.

Hypothesis

1. Business environment does not have any moderating effect between mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development of Business Administration Students in South-South Nigeria.

Mentor-Mentee Skills Competencies

Mentoring occurs when a senior person (mentor) in terms of age, experience undertakes to provide information, advance, and emotional support for a junior person (the protégé) in a relationship lasting over an extended period of time and marked by substantial emotional commitment by both parties (Kram, 1985 as cited by Ayodeji (2015). Therefore, mentoring "is the teaching-learning process acquired through personal experience within a one-to-one, reciprocal, career development relationship between two individuals diverse in age, personality, life-cycle, professional status, and/or credentials ("Ayodeji, 2015). Mentoring is a "dynamic and non-competitive nurturing "process" that promotes independence, autonomy, and self- actualization in the protégé while fostering a sense of pride fulfillment, support and continuity in the mentor". Mentoring is usually a formal and informal relationship between two people – a senior mentor and junior protégé (Little, 1990) in Ayodeji Gravells (2006) defines entrepreneurial mentoring as mentoring support provided to owners of small business, both at start-up and beyond.

Harrington (1999) also defines entrepreneurial mentoring as the relationship that involves one entrepreneur acting as a "critical friend" or "guide" helping to oversee the career and development of a less experienced entrepreneur. In the same vein, St-Jean and Audet (2009) describe entrepreneurial mentoring as a form of support relationship between a novice entrepreneur (the mentee) and an experienced entrepreneur (the mentor). Through the relationship the mentee is able to develop as both an entrepreneur and a person. Entrepreneurial mentoring can also be viewed as a business development process for owner-managers (Hold et al., 2003). This is based on the premise that there is a direct link between – entrepreneurs' actions and capabilities and the performance of their business.

Mentorship: Arogendable (2000) conceptualizes a mentor as an individual that drives the facilitation process that seeks to accelerate personal and professional growth through activities such as knowledge sharing learned over the years. It goes to aver that mentoring can be described as a process that is built on a personal development relationship between a more experienced or more knowledgeable person and less experienced ones. The more experienced, educated, exposed and most importantly knowledgeable mentor share a close, developmental relationship with the mentee. Mentoring no doubt guarantees and facilitates a process where other partner in all human endeavours. The institute of Business Advisors, South Africa (IBA) perceived mentoring as an ongoing, long-term business counseling relationship- that subsists between an experienced business advisor and client, covering a diverse range of topics as a business develops.

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 descending 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 front 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.

Entrepreneurial Attributes: This allows a practical understanding of how entrepreneurial culture are manifest itself (Lee-Ross & Mitchell, 2007). Entrepreneurial attributes are considered important due to the level of relationship they share with the other constituent elements of entrepreneurial cultural. For instance, entrepreneurial attributes were found to be a critical factor in influencing an individuals' entrepreneurial decisions to start a business (Gray et al 2006). They have been found to predict entrepreneurial behaviour that is, new firm formation (Lee, Florida & Acs, 2004; Ranch & Frece, 2009) and/are also been found to have a strong impact on individuals' mindset towards self-employment (Lwthje & Franke, 2003). Mahadea (2001) adds that the supply of effective entrepreneurial culture can be enhanced through appropriate training and experiences, as such, encouraging entrepreneurial attribute is essential in influencing the development and realization of starting ideas. Consequently, students of business education require entrepreneurial attributes through appropriate training which will enable them develop and realize the ideas of setting up businesses of their own after graduation.

Entrepreneurial Values

Entrepreneurial values are those values or standards of behaviour associated with entrepreneurs in which when nurtured can distinguish such individual from others (Brownson, 2013). Morris and Schindehutte (2005) point out that values can become internalized in such a way that they reflect entrepreneurial motives and behaviours.

Entrepreneurial Mindset

Mindset is a mental attitude which determines how an individual will interpret and respond to situations (Wordweb, 2009). Individual who participates in any designated government policy in their bid to foster entrepreneurial culture may have a change of mindset towards entrepreneurship (Schwarz et al 2009). This is because they have to consider the upcoming entrepreneurs' who has the ability to fill in the niche of the society as well as making themselves useful to the society at large.

Entrepreneurial Behaviour

The creation of a new venture is the central focus of entrepreneurship research (Samuelson & Davidson, 2009). New venture creation is sometimes referred to as the entrepreneurial behaviour/action startup. This implies that new ventures are likely to spring up with the focus of government policy in nurturing this constituent of entrepreneurial culture. Hence, this will go a long way in adding in the reduction of unemployed. In addition to the constituents of entrepreneurial, Craft (2020) enumerated the following as steps to creating an entrepreneurial in an organization:

communicate to get input, develop a clear method for submitting new ideas and taking action; give positive feedback to all ideas, allow failure, teach entrepreneurial thinking, give employee autonomy, reward innovation that helps the bottom line, and document entrepreneurial development initiatives.

Mentor – mentee skills competence and entrepreneurial culture development

The term mentor originates from Homer's *Odyssey*, where Odysseus placed Mentor in charge of his son Telemachus while away on his voyage (Homère 2001). Mentor was to see to Telemachus' education and the development of his identity in the adult world. Similarly, in modern times, this term has come to denote a person with certain qualities, or who is in a position of authority that watches benevolently over a younger person, who benefits from counsel and support from the mentor. Mentoring differs from other similar forms of individual support, such as coaching, in that the mentor places the interests of the individual to whom he is providing support as an absolute priority, and not as part of a set of priorities (Gibson 2005). Mentoring can be practiced in a variety of contexts, such as providing help to troubled youth.

Similarly, many mentoring programs have been developed within large organizations. The main goals of these programs are to promote hierarchical ascension and wage increases for the protégé, while developing a better overall understanding of the organizational culture (for example, see studies by Chao (1997), Allen et al. (2004) or Wanberg et al. (2006)). As the mentor is often in a position of authority, he can ensure increased visibility, promote his protégé, and advise him regarding opportunities for advancement and so forth.

With regards to entrepreneurial mentoring, the small number of studies makes it difficult to find a generally agreed upon definition. Generally speaking, however, entrepreneurial mentoring involves a support relationship between an experienced entrepreneur (the mentor), and a novice entrepreneur (the mentee), in order to foster the latter's personal development. Moreover, the form of accompaniment can also vary. We are currently witnessing the emergence of a number of remote mentoring programs, where participants conduct virtual meetings in what is known as e-mentoring (for more details, a number of examples are reported by Perren (2003)). A number of initiatives also pair novice entrepreneurs among themselves, such as with support groups (see Mitchell (1999)). mentoring with a single experienced mentor since studies indicate that exclusive online entrepreneur programs would be difficult, if not impossible, to implement and should only be considered complimentary to "face-to-face" assistance (Evans & Volery 2001).

Few researchers have conducted in-depth studies of the benefits of entrepreneurial mentoring through mentee interviews. Benefits reported in the reviewed literature appear rather disparate. Deakins et al. (1998) are among the first to underscore the benefits of working with a mentor. They cite an increase in the ability to manage, to achieve goals, to learn, as well as transformations with the business itself, such as an increase in turnover figures, jobs, and profits. In the second part of this longitudinal study, Sullivan (2000) unfortunately does not go any further as the benefit categories had been set in the first part of the study. McGregor and Tweed (2002) subsequently studied the activities of mentors with a group of businesswomen. When paired with a mentor, they received advice, suggestions for solutions, help in a variety of areas (marketing, finance, etc.) and access to a contact network. At the psychological level, reported benefits pertained to motivation, confidence, coming out of isolation, and obtaining feedback. All of this support also fosters increased turnover figures.

Other research confirms the significance of these support elements with regards to business management (Bisk 2002; Cull 2006; Kent et al. 2003), psychological support (Nandram 2003; Waters et al. 2002), or both (Gravells 2006; Miettinen 2003; Wikholm et al. 2005). Although learning is clearly illustrated in some studies, such as with Deakins et al. (1998) or Wikholm et al. (2005), it remains implicit in all other studies. For example, when Gravells (2006) discusses mentor contributions to marketing, financial planning or access to information, this help implies mentee learning as the mentor's advice and suggestions are implemented, although it is not explicitly

mentioned by the author. Others have underlined that learning or the development of competencies could act as "moderators" between the mentoring relationship and growth or increase in profits (Priyanto and Sandjojo 2005). In fact, even results stemming from outside advice provided by support organizations are not immediately apparent and discernable, considering the overall effect of many other changes and decisions made by the SME over time, as suggested by Ramsden and Bennett (2005: p. 229). However, one must keep in mind that any mentoring impact on a business is necessarily due to the entrepreneur, since the business itself is not a stakeholder in the mentoring relationship and cannot provoke any outcomes without mentee involvement. It would appear relevant to consider learning as first level outcomes of a mentoring relationship, or what Wanberg et al. (2003) refers to as proximal outcomes.

Literature pertaining to mentoring in other sectors, such as large organizations and education, suggests that knowledge about the learning that occurs as a result of mentoring is somewhat more prevalent. Without going into too much detail, the work of Dymock (1999: 316) reports increased understanding of business operations, specific work-related knowledge, networking opportunities as well as the ability to solve management issues with the protégé. Bard and Moore (2000: 258) list the main protégé learning outcomes: "The possibility of resolving problems with a person other than their line manager; gaining a wider knowledge of the company, particularly outside their own business areas; receiving general advice on working practices, interpersonal skills, appropriate people to approach with questions, etc; increasing their own confidence; and faster integration into the company.

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.

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 Administration (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 hypothesis was tested with the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient.

Hypothesis: 1

Business environment does not have any moderating effect between mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development of Business Administration Students in South-South Nigeria.

Three variables were identified in this hypothesis as follows:

1. Business environment; moderating
2. Mentor-mentee skills competencies and
3. Entrepreneurial development

Table 1: Relationship on the extent business environment moderates' mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development of Business Administration Students

Variable	(n=300)			
	ΣX	ΣX	ΣX	r
	ΣY	ΣY^2		
Business environ	813.65	168.84	140.41	0.82
Mentor/mentee, ent dev.	878.00	173.64		

r-critical=0.179

The above table shows that the calculated r-value of 0.82 is greater than the r-critical value of 0.179 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that business environment does not have any moderating effect between mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development of Business Education Students in South-South Nigeria is rejected, meaning that buissness environment has a moderating effect between mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development of Business Administration Students.

Discussion of Findings

Moderating effect between mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development of Business Administration Students in South-South Nigeria

From the output of hypothesis 13, Business environment bears a significant influence on the relationship between mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development of Business Education Students in South-South Nigeria. It means that Business environment influences the interplay of mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development of Business Education Students in South-South Nigeria as depicted by the calculated value of 0.82 which is higher than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 and table value of 0.179 this findings is supported by Hans (2018) who opined that business environment connotes external forces and these force determine to a significant extent the level of entrepreneurial development, Han (2018) believes

these forces cannot be control however it contribute significantly to mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development as such he recommended that this force should be put into consideration and adequately study by the mentor in other to developed measure of mentor-mentee skills competence that will be in accordance with force that business environment pose, also the mentor should be very dynamic in nature seen the force are incontrollable and can change at it occur.

CONCLUSION

This study has primarily investigated mentor-mentee skills competencies and entrepreneurial development of Business Administration students in south-south, Nigerian found that there is a strong relationship between the two variables. It also significantly investigated the relationship between mentor-mentee skills competencies dimensions and measures of entrepreneurial development. The findings show an undisputable relationship between and among them. This study thus concluded that mentor-mentee skills competencies 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 programe 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. Government should lay emphasis that vocation of choice should be tilt towards entrepreneurship to make the country an industrialized nation.
4. The Institutions in conjunction with the government should create a tripartite collaboration between the institution, government and industries to absorb the graduates as they leave school.

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