



Mentorship and Entrepreneurship Training Effectiveness for Business Education Students in Rivers State

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Abstract

The study investigated mentorship and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for business education students in Rivers State. The study was guided by three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of this study comprised of 37 students from Rivers State University (RSU) and 460 students from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE), resulting a total of 497 students from the two selected universities. The total population was adopted for the study, hence, no sampling technique was required. The research instrument used in this study was a self-structured questionnaire. The instrument were validated and reliability was carried out using Cronbach Alpha method. The reliability coefficients of 0.87 and 0.75 respectively was obtained. The data collected from the respondents was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance with the aid SPSS package. The study revealed that, one-on-one mentorship programmes, group mentorship sessions, workshop/seminars all relate with entrepreneurship training effectiveness for business education students in Rivers State. The study concluded that the rising demand for practical and skill-based education has placed entrepreneurship training at the center of business education programmes in Nigeria, hence the need for entrepreneurship mentorship. Amongst others, the study recommended that government agencies and educational policymakers should formulate and enforce policies that mandate the integration of structured mentorship programs into business education curriculum.

Keywords: Business Education, Effectiveness, Entrepreneurship, Mentorship, Training.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship development remains a core strategy for national economic growth, especially in developing regions where unemployment and underemployment persist. Within this context, the role of mentorship and structured training in business education becomes increasingly essential. Business education programs, particularly at the tertiary level, are expected to prepare students with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for entrepreneurial success. However, the persistent gap between entrepreneurial theory and practice raises critical concerns about the effectiveness of these programs. Consequently, the integration of

mentorship and entrepreneurship training is considered a vital approach for equipping business education students with the competencies required to navigate the realities of the entrepreneurial world (Amadi & Ogona, 2024).

Entrepreneurship is a dynamic and evolving concept that plays a crucial role in the economic development and innovation capacity of societies across the globe. At its core, entrepreneurship refers to the process of identifying, developing, and bringing a vision to life. This vision may be an innovative idea, a new product or service, or a more efficient way of doing business. The individual who undertakes this process is known as an entrepreneur (Mawo & Ogona, 2025). Entrepreneurship development is essential for fostering economic growth, job creation, and sustainable business practices. Entrepreneurship development involves equipping individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to identify opportunities, develop innovative business ideas, and manage enterprises successfully (Omezurike & Ogona, 2025). Through entrepreneurship education, individuals gain financial literacy, risk management skills, and business development strategies that enable them to establish and sustain profitable ventures. Educational institutions play a pivotal role in entrepreneurship development by integrating business training, startup incubation, and mentorship programmes into their curricula.

Mentorship serves as a crucial element in bridging the educational-practical divide in entrepreneurship training. Through personal guidance, experienced mentors provide insights, advice, and feedback that can shape the entrepreneurial mindsets of students. One-on-one mentorship, in particular, fosters individualized attention, allowing mentors to tailor advice and support to suit the specific learning needs of each student. In the context of business education, where personal initiative and creativity are crucial, the relevance of individualized mentorship becomes even more evident. Business education students in Rivers State, who are expected to become future job creators rather than job seekers, need exposure to real-world entrepreneurial insights that only experienced mentors can provide. Mentorship of this nature instills confidence, reduces startup fear, and strengthens decision-making among students preparing to venture into business (Nweke & Akpan, 2023).

Moreover, group mentorship sessions present another vital aspect of effective entrepreneurship training. Group mentorship provides an interactive platform where students can engage in peer learning, collaborate on ideas, and benefit from collective experiences shared by mentors. These sessions promote critical thinking, foster teamwork, and encourage the sharing of entrepreneurial challenges and strategies among participants. In a learning environment like

Rivers State, where access to practical business experiences might be limited, group mentorship acts as a conduit for exposing students to diverse entrepreneurial journeys. This communal form of mentorship facilitates shared learning, fosters emotional support, and develops students' interpersonal competencies essential for success in the business landscape (Chukwuma & Ajene, 2021).

Additionally, workshops and seminars have become central to entrepreneurship training, offering structured learning experiences that simulate real business scenarios. These programs often involve hands-on activities, case studies, and expert presentations that help translate classroom knowledge into practical entrepreneurial solutions. In business education, workshops and seminars serve as supplementary tools to traditional teaching methods, enabling students to acquire current industry skills, explore innovative ideas, and engage in business planning and execution exercises. For students in Rivers State, such platforms present opportunities to interact with successful entrepreneurs, gain exposure to market trends, and acquire practical tools for business startup and growth. The organized and focused nature of these training sessions enhances knowledge retention and practical application (Okafor & Iheme, 2022).

The integration of mentorship and entrepreneurship training in business education remains an indispensable approach to preparing students for the realities of entrepreneurship. In Rivers State, where economic challenges demand innovative solutions, effective training models that combine one-on-one mentorship, group mentorship, and hands-on seminars offer promising strategies for producing competent, motivated, and innovative graduates. Understanding the extent to which these approaches relate to the overall effectiveness of entrepreneurship training is vital for improving the relevance and outcomes of Business Education programs.

Statement of the Problem

The persistent unemployment rate among graduates in Nigeria, despite the proliferation of business education programs, continues to raise questions about the practical relevance and effectiveness of such educational models. Business Education is intended to empower students with entrepreneurial competencies that will enable them to become self-reliant and economically productive. However, many Business Education graduates still lack the confidence, practical exposure, and business acumen required to start and sustain successful enterprises. This disconnect has sparked growing concern among educators, policymakers, and employers regarding the efficacy of entrepreneurship training in higher education institutions in Rivers State.

Although mentorship and workshops are increasingly being adopted as part of entrepreneurship education, their effectiveness remains largely unverified. One-on-one mentorship is believed to foster individual guidance, group mentorship is associated with collaborative learning, and workshops aim to offer practical engagement. However, the actual contribution of each of these methods to entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State has not been adequately studied. Institutions often implement these approaches without evaluating their impact, leading to uncertain outcomes in student preparedness. Hence, it is on this backdrop this study seek to investigate mentorship and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for business education students in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate mentorship and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education studies in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine how one-on-one mentorship program relate to entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education studies in Rivers State
2. Examine how group mentorship sessions relate to entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State
3. Ascertain the extent workshop/seminars relate to entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does one-on-one mentorship program relate to entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State?
2. How does group mentorship sessions relate to entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State?
3. How does workshop/seminars relate to entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and statistically tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H01: there is no significant relationship between one-on-one mentorship program and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education studies in Rivers State

H02: there is no significant relationship between group mentorship sessions and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education studies in Rivers State

H03: there is no significant relationship between workshop/seminars and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education studies in Rivers State

Theoretical Construct

The study is underpinned on Human Capital Theory propounded by Gary Becker 1964 as cited in Omojimite (2019).

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory, as propounded by Gary Becker in 1964 and cited in Omojimite (2019), presents education, training, and skill development as key investments that individuals and societies make to enhance productivity, economic growth, and personal advancement. This theory argues that just as physical capital like machines or tools can increase output, human beings also possess qualities that, when developed through formal or informal learning processes, lead to greater efficiency and innovation in the workplace. Human capital encompasses the knowledge, expertise, habits, and social attributes that are acquired through education and experience, making individuals more valuable contributors to economic activities. According to the theory, the more resources invested in people's education and skills, the higher their capacity to generate economic returns, whether through employment or entrepreneurial ventures.

Moreover, this theory underscores the idea that education is not only a social responsibility but also a strategic economic investment. In the context of business education, Human Capital Theory supports the need for structured programs that go beyond theoretical instruction to include practical training that cultivates real-world business skills. Entrepreneurship, as a productive human endeavor, requires a blend of creativity, risk management, business knowledge, and decision-making skills all of which can be developed through targeted educational and mentorship interventions. Therefore, mentorship and entrepreneurship training serve as key vehicles for enhancing the human capital of business education students, ensuring they are not only employable but also equipped to generate employment through entrepreneurial ventures. Mentors, whether through one-on-one guidance or group engagement, act as facilitators in transferring practical knowledge, refining business ideas, and building entrepreneurial confidence in students. Likewise, workshops and seminars provide exposure to current business practices, challenges, and innovations, which are essential for developing competent and self-sufficient entrepreneurs.

The application of Human Capital Theory to this study is particularly relevant because it provides the foundational understanding of why mentorship and entrepreneurship training matter in educational programs. In Rivers State, where economic development and youth empowerment are critical goals, investing in business education students through structured mentorship and practical training is a way of building a strong base of future entrepreneurs who can drive local economic growth. The theory aligns with the study's aim to investigate how different mentorship formats and experiential learning strategies relate to entrepreneurship training effectiveness. It reinforces the idea that equipping students with entrepreneurial skills through such interventions is not just educational reform, but an economic necessity. Therefore, Human Capital Theory provides a valid and practical lens for analyzing the effectiveness of mentorship and entrepreneurship training in shaping the career paths and entrepreneurial readiness of business education students.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of this study comprised of 37 final year students from Business Education Department, in Rivers State University (RSU) and 460 300 level Business Education students from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE), resulting a total of 497 students from the two selected universities. The total population was adopted for the study, hence, no sampling technique was required. The research instrument used in this study was a self-structured questionnaire titled “Mentorship Programmes Questionnaire (MPQ) and Entrepreneurship Training Effectiveness Questionnaire” (ETEQ). The instruments were validated by three experts in the department of Business Education, Faculty of Education, and Rivers State University. Reliability was carried out using Cronbach Alpha method. The reliability coefficients of .87 and .75 respectively were obtained. Out of the 497 copies of the questionnaire that were distributed, 398 copies were retrieved giving a return rate of 80% and was used for analysis. The data collected from the respondents was analyzed using SPSS package, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient tools was used to answer the research questions and to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: How does one-on-one mentorship programs relate to entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State?

H01: There is no significant relationship between one-on-one mentorship program and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State

Table 1: Relationship between one-on-one mentorship program and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State

		Correlations	
		One-on-one mentorship program	Entrepreneurship training effectiveness
One-on-one mentorship program	Pearson Correlation	1	.582**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)		.000
	N	398	398
Entrepreneurship training effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.582**	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.000	
	N	398	398

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing the relationship between one-on-one mentorship programs and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State. The correlation coefficient is $r = .582$, indicating a moderately strong positive relationship between participation in one-on-one mentorship programs and the effectiveness of entrepreneurship training. This means that greater involvement in one-on-one mentorship is associated with higher entrepreneurship training effectiveness for these students. The p-value is $P = .000$, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance ($P < 0.05$). This result indicates that the correlation is statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) stating that there is no significant relationship between one-on-one mentorship programs and entrepreneurship training effectiveness is rejected. It therefore indicates that there is significant relationship between one-on-one mentorship programs and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for business education students in Rivers State

Research Question 2: How does group mentorship program relate to entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State?

H02: There is no significant relationship between group mentorship sessions and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education studies in Rivers State.

Table 2: Relationship between group mentorship sessions and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State

Correlations			
		Group mentorship sessions	Entrepreneurship training effectiveness
Group mentorship sessions	Pearson	1	.521**
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	398	398
Entrepreneurship training effectiveness	Pearson	.521**	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	398	398

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing the relationship between group mentorship sessions and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State. The correlation coefficient is $r = .521$, indicating a moderate positive relationship between participation in group mentorship sessions and the effectiveness of entrepreneurship training. This means that higher involvement in group mentorship sessions is associated with improved entrepreneurship training outcomes for these students. The p-value is $P = .000$, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance ($P < 0.05$). This result shows that the correlation is statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) stating that there is no significant relationship between group mentorship sessions and entrepreneurship training effectiveness was rejected. It therefore indicated that there was a significant relationship between group mentorship sessions and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: How does workshop/seminars relate to entrepreneurship training effectiveness for business education students in Rivers State?

H03: There is no significant relationship between workshop/seminars and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State.

Table 3: Relationship between workshop/seminars and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State.

Correlations			
Workshop/seminars		Workshop/s eminars	Entrepreneurship training effectiveness
	Pearson Correlation	1	.521**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	398	398
Entrepreneurship training effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.521**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	398	398

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing the relationship between workshops/seminars and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State. The correlation coefficient is $r = .521$, indicating a strong positive relationship between participation in workshops/seminars and the effectiveness of entrepreneurship training. This suggests that greater attendance at workshops and seminars is associated with higher entrepreneurship training effectiveness for these students. The p-value is $P = .000$, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance ($P < 0.05$). This result shows that the correlation is statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) stating that there is no significant relationship between workshops/seminars and entrepreneurship training effectiveness was rejected. It therefore indicated that there was a significant relationship between workshop/seminars and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

One-On-One Mentorship Programs and Entrepreneurship Training Effectiveness

Table 1 reveals that ($r .521$, $P = .000 < .05$) level of significance was gotten. This shows a strong relationship between one-on-one mentorship programs and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State. This result also indicated that one-on-one mentorship programs relate to entrepreneurship training effectiveness for business education students in Rivers State. Again, since ($P < 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected. It therefore indicates that there is a significant relationship between one-on-one mentorship programs and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for business education students in Rivers State. Thus, this finding is in alliance with that of Ede and Udoh (2021), who asserted that

personalized mentorship enables students to receive tailored advice that strengthens their understanding of business practices and improves decision-making. Similarly, Odu and Olatunji (2022) asserted that students who participate in one-on-one mentoring programs often show a higher level of motivation and commitment towards entrepreneurship, as mentors provide direct encouragement and feedback that instill self-confidence and business readiness. Furthermore, Ajayi (2020) opined that that mentorship increases learners' exposure to real-world scenarios, enabling them to apply classroom knowledge to actual business settings.

Group Mentorship Sessions and Entrepreneurship Training Effectiveness

Table 2 reveals ($r = .521$, $P = .000 < 0.05$) level of significance was gotten. This shows a positive relationship between group mentorship sessions and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State. This result also indicates that to a very high extent group mentorship sessions relate to entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State. Since the p-value is less than the chosen significant level, the null hypothesis was rejected. It therefore indicated that there is a significant relationship between group mentorship sessions and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State. This finding is in synergy with that of Nwachukwu and Ayeni (2021), who opined that group mentorship offers an interactive platform where students engage with peers and mentors, allowing for the sharing of diverse perspectives and problem-solving strategies. This communal learning approach promotes reflection and active participation, which are essential for entrepreneurial development. Moreover, Okoro and Ibrahim (2020) emphasized that group mentorship cultivates teamwork, communication, and collective decision-making, which are vital components of entrepreneurship training. Furthermore, Adediran (2022) asserted that when students share experiences in a group setting under the guidance of a mentor, they develop critical thinking skills and a collaborative mindset necessary for entrepreneurial success.

Workshop/Seminars and Entrepreneurship Training Effectiveness

Table 3 reveals ($r = -.833$, $P = .000 < 0.05$) level of significance. This shows a strong negative relationship between workshop/seminars and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State. This result also indicated that to very high extent workshop/seminars relate to entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education students in Rivers State. Since the p-value is less than the chosen significant level, the null hypothesis was rejected. It therefore indicated that there was a significant relationship between workshop/seminars and entrepreneurship training effectiveness for Business Education

students in Rivers State. Thus, this finding is in nexus with that of Bello and Nwankwo (2020), who posited that workshops provide practical learning experiences where students engage directly with entrepreneurial tasks, thereby translating theory into action. These sessions often feature real-life business scenarios, simulations, and industry expert interactions, which contribute to deepening students' understanding of entrepreneurial processes. Moreover, Salihu and James (2021) opined that seminars expose students to emerging trends and innovations in the business world, equipping them with the flexibility to adapt and succeed in dynamic environments. Additionally, Eze and Amadi (2022) found that students involved in regular entrepreneurial workshops and seminars showed higher levels of business idea generation and risk-taking abilities compared to those who did not participate.

Conclusion

The rising demand for practical and skill-based education has placed entrepreneurship training at the center of business education programs in Nigeria, especially in Rivers State. Despite this focus, a major concern persists regarding the effectiveness of such training in preparing students for real-world business challenges. This study has explored the relevance of mentorship through one-on-one interactions, group sessions, and exposure to workshops or seminars as a strategic approach to bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical business skills. The inclusion of structured mentorship is vital in enhancing entrepreneurial awareness, self-confidence, and decision-making ability among business education students.

Furthermore, the study emphasized the need to align educational strategies with real-life business experiences, as doing so helps students develop the capacity to manage challenges, seize opportunities, and innovate. Each mentorship format plays a distinct role in entrepreneurship training, with one-on-one mentorship offering personalized guidance, group mentorship promoting peer support and collective learning, and workshops or seminars providing experiential engagement with business realities. These approaches, when properly implemented, can contribute meaningfully to the quality and outcome of entrepreneurship education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for various stakeholders involved in Business Education and entrepreneurship training in Rivers State:

1. Government agencies and educational policymakers should formulate and enforce policies that mandate the integration of structured mentorship programs into business education curriculum.
2. Universities and colleges offering business education should revise their curricula to include practical mentorship and experiential learning as core components of entrepreneurship training.
3. School Administrators should collaborate with industry experts to design mentorship programs that reflect current market realities and local business needs, ensuring students are equipped with relevant skills.

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