

Chapter 17

Creativity as a Predictor of Business Performance: Empirical Investigation of Selected Undergraduate Entrepreneurs in Nigerian Universities

Olu Ojo

Osun State University, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of creativity as a predictor of business performance of undergraduate entrepreneurs in Nigerian universities. Survey research design was used. A sample size of 120 respondents was selected while only 100 of them actively participated in the study. Research questions were set with one main hypothesis that was formulated and tested. Descriptive statistics comprising the simple percentage and tables were used for detailed presentation and analysis of data. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was adopted to test the hypothesis. The study reveals that there is a positive relationship between creativity and business performance. The researcher concluded by recommending that young entrepreneurs be more creative, attend more business seminars, invest in reading wide, scanning the environment regularly, and identifying society problems as well as customers' needs and wants. It was also recommended that universities should widen their curricula to include core courses that encourage creativity, lateral-thinking, brainstorming, and problem solving as well as entrepreneurship development. In addition, universities should set up programmes to encourage the commercialisation of student's business ideas and possibly self employment scheme.

INTRODUCTION

In today's Nigeria business education environment, more than 200,000 graduates are released yearly into the labour market (Soludo, 2007), of which a large percentage of them are either

unemployed or unemployable. This therefore remained a major problem that has led to a high level of disguised and chronic unemployment in the country. This phenomenon has become a big problem in Nigeria, as university students upon graduation find it difficult to get placement in the

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labour market. This could be attributed to many reasons originating from universities' curricula, national educational policy and unpreparedness of these graduates for entrepreneurial positions while they were undergraduates rather than waiting for readymade white collar jobs after graduation.

However, even when these graduates are employed, most of them are employed below their capacity. This is just in the bid to ensure that they are not idle and are able to make ends meet, they take up such jobs and waste national manpower and their creative ability.

In view of these challenges, some universities in Nigeria are propounding various solutions by being employment and entrepreneurship driven by inclusion of entrepreneurial development studies in their curricula. It is along this line that some undergraduates in Nigerian universities are embarking on the process of converting their theoretical based knowledge in entrepreneurship studies and venture creation into profitable business activity before graduation. Thus, this study assesses the impact of creativity as a predictor of business performance in selected undergraduate entrepreneurs in Nigerian universities. The researcher tries to answer one main research question: Is there any relationship between undergraduate entrepreneurs' creativity and business performance? The overall objective of this research is to examine sources that can enhance creativity in undergraduate entrepreneurs as well as determine the impact of creativity on business performance of undergraduates' entrepreneurship. One null hypothesis was formulated and tested in the course of this study. It is stated thus: There is no relationship between undergraduate entrepreneurs' creativity and business performance. Despite the plethora of studies on creativity in the last few decades, there is no widely accepted causal relationship between creativity and performance. Besides, the impact of creativity on firm performance of undergraduate entrepreneurs in Nigerian universities has not received adequate research attention. This present

study becomes necessary because many researches that have been carried out and many articles that were written on the subject of creativity placed emphasis on the developed economies. Thus, Simonton (2000) says psychologists efforts have concentrated on the cognitive processes behind creativity, the characteristics of creative people, and the development of creativity across the individual life span, and the social environments most conducive to creativity. Sternberg and O'Hara (1998) examine creativity and intelligence while many other researchers have suggested that creativity is important for the long-term survival of any organisation or business (Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Lapierre & Giroux, 2003). Thus, a review of academic literature on the subject of creativity reveals that there is a dearth of literature on it in the developing countries including Nigeria and that this creates a major gap in knowledge that has to be filled. This research attempts to fill this gap by studying creativity as it relates to business performance of undergraduate entrepreneurs in Nigerian universities by providing more empirical evidence based on individual undergraduate entrepreneur's data.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework of Creativity

The formal starting point for the scientific study of creativity, from the standpoint of orthodox psychological literature, is generally considered to have been J.P. Guilford's 1950 presidential address to the American Psychological Association, which helped popularise the topic and focus attention on a scientific approach to conceptualising creativity and measuring it psychometrically.

The definitions of creativity are different from one school of thought to another. Yeh (2002) defines creativity as an individual's procedure to generate a product with originality and value in a

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