

Gender and Maroua University Students Orientation towards Entrepreneurial Studies: Management Imperatives for Sustainable Development

Dr. Joseph B Besong
Department of Sciences of Education
Higher Teachers' Training College (E.N.S), University of Maroua
Email: besong.joseph@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT:

This study explored gender and Maroua University Students' Orientation towards entrepreneurial studies and its management implications for sustainable development. This ex-post facto designed study isolated two hypotheses which determined the extent of students orientation towards entrepreneurial studies and compared male and female students' orientations towards skills acquisition for the business management, acquisition of practical skills for entrepreneurship and skills acquisition for financial planning 300 students were drawn from two departments of Higher Institute of the Sahel (institut supérieur du sahel) I.S.S to constitute the sample using stratified random sampling technique. The researcher constructed an instrument called "Students' Entrepreneurship Studies Orientation Questionnaire" (SESOQ) to illicit or collect data, population t-test (test of single mean) and Independent t-test Statistical techniques were used to analyze data collected. Results obtained revealed that university students orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is significantly low university students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is significantly dependent on gender with respect to orientation towards skills acquisition for business establishment orientation towards skills for entrepreneurship, orientation towards skills acquisition for financial planning and orientation towards skills acquisition for business management is not significantly dependent on gender. The paper recommends that the university authority should pay more attention equipping the students towards acquiring the necessary entrepreneurial skills to make them employers of labor and self-reliant.

Keywords: gender, university students, orientation, entrepreneurial studies, management and sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION:

It may be true that entrepreneurial education is the panacea to unemployment and youthrestiveness in Cameroon. This assertion seemed to have gained prominence because the present education has been consumptive instead of being productive. The students are taught to master their subjects but have failed to relate those courses taught to Cameroonian needs in general and for the needs of students in University of Maroua in particular in order to enable our school leavers or graduates solve the fundamental problems of living (Ikejiani in Abaride, 2002). He stressed and described this wholesome attitude of lecturers as imprisonment of the minds of students hence these young Cameroonian minds are not provoked by way of inquisitiveness to invent, discover, build and produce by themselves under the guidance of the lecturers. If this protocol is followed, our education seems barren. In relation to this, a UNESCO source showed that a high unemployment rate is causing acute poverty and serious social problems among our university graduates in Cameroon (Edukugho, 2004)

Gender means unisex. According to Hornby (2001: 492) gender means being male or female in this context, it encompasses all the under graduates or university students no matter their level of studies.

In the same vein, those who study in tertiary institutions are university students. However, tertiary institutions include colleges of Education, Polytechnics and universities. Hornby, (2001: 1309) describes university, as the highest level of education where people study for degrees or do research for professionalism. This study concerns unisex that university in Maroua who need to be groomed or be oriented.

Orientation denotes grooming or educating participant towards a goal or an objective, However, Hornby, (2001: 824) explains that orientation is the aim or interest a person or organization act of directing you aims towards a particular thing. In this context students have to be fine-tuned or be directed towards the changing events around the world towards entrepreneurial studies so as to achieve their educational goal at graduation.

Entrepreneurial simply means to be business conscious or minded after completion of studies from a university. An entrepreneur is a person who makes money by stating or running businesses, especially this involves taking financial risk, while entrepreneurial denotes skills, fair and intellect ability in manipulation of processes for production (Hornby, 2001: 388). In relation to this, study, it is obvious that no education is higher than the level of her teachers. In other word, industry, factory, or enterprise cannot operate without acquiring the technological manipulation from a teacher. In the same vein, no entrepreneurial can start functioning without adequate learning though institution organized by teachers.

Organization is an aspect of management. Management means the organization and mobilization of all human and material resources in a particular system for the achievement of identified objectives in the system (Adesina, 1990). In relation to this study, management is an important aspect the entrepreneur has to learn in order to forge ahead. He is a risk bearer of his capital of goods, services, human and materials and also financial resources. The essence of entrepreneurial education is to reduce unemployment, crimes and encourage sustainable development in the country.

Sustainable development is the ability to be self-reliant in the face of economic advancement of self and the society. If the students are able to sustain themselves by establishing small scale industries such as computer engineering firms; agricultural farms of different dimensions and architecting fine arts painting, textile/design and also building firms, to mention but a few, there may be a tendency of employing others both skilled and unskilled workers in the communities.

From the afore-going discourse entrepreneurial education is a form of education that seeks to prepare students to be responsible, enterprising individuals who would become entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial thinkers and contribute to the economic development and sustainable communities (consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, 2005).

Thus, the aims of entrepreneurial education are to produce self-employed and employers of labor individuals. In this vein, the establishing of university of Maroua in 2008 in which departments within Higher Institute of Sahel are created is a measure of government to foster entrepreneurial education in University of Maroua no matter the sex. Nelson (1996) recognized the importance of entrepreneurial education which according to him is much relevant in the curriculum of university of Maroua because it provides knowledge to start their own business venture successfully. It further provides them with the practical skills which are necessary for entrepreneurial success. It therefore means that the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in university of Maroua may improve the ability of entrepreneurs and sharpens their practical performance (David, 2001). Postigo and Tamborini (2002) viewed entrepreneurship education as a process of developing and stimulating ideas, interests and methodologies in promoting entrepreneurial principles.

Odimosu (2002) linked the slow development of entrepreneurship education to poor funding. This may be contrary to article 26 of the United Nations Declaration of Human personality". Which States that "education shall direct to the full development of human personality" The developmental requirements of the society establish the need to produce graduates that will perform effectively in both academic and non-academic professional settings as well as in private sectors (Ajekegbe, 2005).

Despite the importance of entrepreneurship education in preparing students towards self employment upon graduations, it is yet to be proofed it male and female students are oriented towards it, despite their individual interests. It is on this view that this study seeks to find out whether there would be any influence of orientation gender on acquisition of skills for business management, acquisition of practical skills for entrepreneurship, acquisition of skills for financial planning and students' orientation towards entrepreneurship education is imperative for sustainable development.

Research questions:

The following research questions were posed to guide the study.

- (1) Is students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies low?
- (2) Does students orientation towards entrepreneurial studies dependent on gender?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- 1- Students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is not significantly low.
- 2- Students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is not significantly dependent on gender.

Methodology

Ex-post facto design was adopted for this study because the variables are already existing hence they cannot be manipulated (I sangedighu, Joshua, Asim and Ekuri, 2001). The students used as sample population had common characteristic(s). The characteristics included – students of final year study, studying courses leading to self-reliant (computer engineering; agriculture, faming architecture, fine arts/painting and textile design). Another characteristic was that they were students of Higher Institute of Sahel (I.S.S) in the University of Maroua.

Study Area

Maroua is the capital of Far-North Region in Cameroon found in Sahel area (i.e. desert) is the study area and seat of the university. Data were collected from 300 respondents using a questionnaire designed as Students Entrepreneurial Studies Questionnaire (SESOQ). The questionnaire consisted of sections A and B. Section A consisted of 5 demographic variables while B contained 16 items of four point Likert scale which measured each of the four sub-variables namely: orientation towards skills acquisition for business establishment, management, practical skills for entrepreneurship and financial planning.

Validity of the instrument:

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure Simple English expression

of the statements were framed showing their relationship of the constructs to the research questions. The questionnaire items were further shown to colleagues and other experts in evaluation. These items were then examined and approved in terms of content and face validity, relevance and also appropriateness for the study.

Reliability of the instrument:

In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, a trial test of the instrument was carried out with respondents. Those respondents used in the trial test study were not in the main study. For the questionnaire, split-half reliability technique was used in measuring the instrument. This method determined the internal consistency of the measuring instrument. The correlation of the odd and even responses was first computed using the person product moment correlation coefficient analysis of the items of the variables used in the study. To test the instrument the Spearman Brown prophecy formula was applied and the results of the reliability indices between 0.78 and 0.91. The reliability for each of the variables was high and reliable according to Nunnally (1978) who stated that any instrument measuring any variable of early constructs a reliability index of 0.50 and above was correct and reliable for use.

Data collection procedure:

The researcher obtained permission from the dean of the faculty of Higher Institute of Sahel to enable him enter the faculty and later took permission from the head of departments to allow him administer the questionnaire to the 300 respondents. The instrument was administered to the respondents in their departments as scheduled and the completed copies were on the spot to avoid attrition.

Data analysis:

The data generated were analyzed using population t-test (test of single mean) and independent t-test statistical analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The data collected were analyzed item by item as it concerned the two variables: students' orientation and gender towards entrepreneurial education.

Results

Hypothesis1

Students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is not significantly low. Students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is the only variable. Population t-test, (test of single mean) and Independent t-test were statistical techniques used in data analysis A summary of the results is presented in table 1

TABLE 1 Population t-test (test of single mean) analysis of students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies. *N=300*

Variables	Expected mean μ	Observed mean \bar{X}	SD	t
Orientation towards skills				
Acquisition for business				
Establishment	10.00	11.13	2.93	6.647*
Orientation towards skills				
Acquisition for business				
Management	10.00	11.09	2.77	6.813*
Orientation towards				
Practical skills for				
Entrepreneurship	10.00	11.68	2.19	12.923*
Orientation towards skills				
Acquisition for financial				
planning	10.00	10.78	3.03	4.588*
Orientation towards				
Entrepreneurship studies				
Generally	10.00	10.96	2.95	5.647*

*p<. 05; df= 299; critical t- value = 1.968

Observation of the results presented in this table (one), disclosed that students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is significantly low with respect to orientation towards skills acquisition for business establishment (t=6.647, p<.05). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected because the obtained t-values were found to be greater than the critical t-value of 1.968 at 0.05 alpha level of significance with 299 degrees of freedom.

Furthermore, the results in this table revealed that the observed mean orientation towards entrepreneurial studies of 10.00. Statistical comparison of there observed mean values and the expected mean value of 10.00, using population t-test analysis for single mean, positive t-values were obtained. With this finding therefore students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is significantly low. By implication, university students in Maroua

have low understanding or familiarity with entrepreneurial studies in the variables enumerated in this study.

Hypothesis 2:

Students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is not significantly dependent on gender. The independent variable is gender, while the dependent variable is students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies. Independent t-test statistical analysis is used to compare the mean scores of the two groups. Summaries of the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Independent t-test analysis of the dependence of students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies on gender.

Variables	Male (N=150)		Female (N=150)		t
	X	SD	X	SD	
Orientation towards skills					
Acquisition for business					
Establishment	11.65	1.92	10.60	2.92	4.375*
Orientation towards skills					
Acquisition for business					
Management	11.21	2.27	10.82	2.12	1.560*
Orientation towards					
Practical skills for					
Entrepreneurship	12.03	5.72	10.65	3.40	2.556*
Orientation towards skills					
Acquisition for financial					
planning	11.15	1.99	10.12	2.24	4.292*
Orientation towards					
Entrepreneurship studies					
Generally	11.49	2.98	10.81	2.51	2.125*

*p<.05; df= 228; critical t- value = 1.968

The result of the Independent t-test analysis presented in this table (two) indicated that students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is significantly dependent on gender in terms or orientation towards skills acquisition for business establishment (t=4.375, p<.05); orientation towards practical skills for entrepreneurial (t=2.556, p<.05); orientation towards skills acquisition for financial planning (t= 4.292, p<.05) and orientation towards entrepreneurial studies generally (t= 2.125, p<.05). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected given the fact that the obtained t- value were found to be greater than the critical of 1.968 at 0.05 alpha level of significance and 228 degrees of freedom. This result also revealed that students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is not significantly dependent on gender with regards to orientation towards skills acquisition for business management (t= 1.560, p>.05), given the same critical t-value, alpha level of significance and degrees of freedom.

Further examination of the results in table two showed that male university students had higher mean values than their female counterparts in their orientation towards entrepreneurial studies in all the variables studied. This implies that male university students had better orientation towards entrepreneurial studies than their female university students' counterparts.

Discussion of results

The results of the analysis of hypothesis one revealed that university students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is significantly low. This finding means that the university students in Maroua have low understanding of entrepreneurial studies, and as such are not very familiar with skills acquisition for business establishment, skills acquisition for

financial planning. By implication therefore, the university students are not well exposed to entrepreneurial studies, and as such have low perception about what it involves.

The reason for this finding borders on the facts that students in this university are yet to recognize the potentials of this course in solving unemployment problems, and as such perceive it like any other conventional course. This is so because the teaching of entrepreneurial studies has been going on an ad hoc basis, run by departments in the university. Thus this, course has not been fully embraced by the university. Secondly, the departments that run this course have no qualified lecturers for it. These impacted negatively on the development of the course, which is responsible for the low students' orientation towards it. This articulation is in consonance with Bau, Wagner, Steiner and Baumgartner's (2007) view that students may perceive the provision of entrepreneurship education by tertiary institutions as significantly adequate if it equips them with specific operational knowledge for a useful living. However, with entrepreneurial studies constituting part of the courses in Maroua University,

there is likelihood improvement in students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies in the near future. Results of hypothesis two disclosed that students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is significantly dependent on gender. In other words, male and female university students in Maroua differ significantly in their orientation towards entrepreneurial studies with respect to orientation towards skills acquisition for business establishment, orientation towards practical skills for entrepreneurship, and orientation towards skills acquisition for financial planning. With regards to orientation towards skills acquisition for business establishment, male university students were found to be better than their female counterparts judging from their higher mean value. This means that male university students are more familiar in acquiring skills needed for business establishment, than their female colleagues. A plausible explanation for this finding is that male students have the inclination to be more aggressive than their female counterparts in seeking for avenues for employment (Bassey, Akuegwu, Umoren, Ekpiken, Egbona & Uche, 2008), and as such are more favored to have better orientation towards entrepreneurial studies.

This result also showed that male university students are more oriented towards acquiring practical skills for entrepreneurship. That is, the male students are more knowledgeable in acquiring the necessary expertise to run a commercial venture than their female counterparts, especially those ones that require physical strength. Given this development therefore, the likely reason for this finding centers on the fact that males are traditionally breadwinners and as such more likely to tune their minds towards income generating ventures as opposed to women who are home managers.

In the aspect of orientation skills acquisition for financial planning, male university students were found to have an edge over their female counterparts. This is so because since entrepreneurial studies revolve round venture creation for self-employment, and males are more inclined to running ventures to fulfill their family roles, they are more likely to acquire better skills for financial planning, than the females. However, this finding also revealed that male and female university students' orientation towards skills acquisition for business management is not significantly different. That is, their orientation towards skills acquisition management is the same. This finding is not surprising because the students are taught the same course, by the same lecturer with the same methods. It therefore follows that they will have the same orientation towards skills acquisition for business management. The findings of Peterman and Kennedy (2003), stated that students who participated in an entrepreneurship education programmed have significant higher perceptions of the programmer's capability of making them business managers, lend credence to this position. Despite this, male university students in have higher mean orientation towards skills acquisition for business management, than their female counterparts. By implication, the odds favor them.

Generally, this finding disclosed that Maroua university students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is significantly dependent on gender. That is, gender plays a significant role in determining how students understand or exhibit familiarity towards entrepreneurial studies. It further showed that male students have better orientation towards entrepreneurial studies than their female counterparts, as observed from their mean values. The implication of this finding is that male students feel the pangs of unemployment more than their female folks, because of the reality of providing for their families, unlike the females who enjoy the privilege of being provided for by their spouses in most cases.

Recommendations / Conclusion

On recommendation the strength of the findings, these conclusions were drawn. University students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is significantly low with respect to orientation towards skills acquisition for establishment, orientation towards skills acquisition business management, orientation towards practical skills for entrepreneurship and orientation towards skills acquisition for financial planning. University students' orientation towards entrepreneurial studies is significantly dependent on gender. That is, male and female students differ significantly in their orientation towards entrepreneurial studies with regards to orientation towards skills acquisition for business establishment, orientation towards practical skills for entrepreneurship orientation towards acquisition for financial planning. University students' orientation towards skills acquisition for business management is not significantly dependent on gender.

Management imperatives for sustainable development.

- 1- University management should pay more attention to the provision of an enabling environment for entrepreneurial studies to thrive. This should focus on equipping students towards acquiring the necessary skills to make them employers of labor and self-reliant.
- 2- Professionals in business and industrial organizations should be brought into the university from time through seminars and workshops to teach students on how to establish and manage to time business ventures.
- 3- The university management should ensure that the teaching of entrepreneurial studies should be practically oriented so as to sustain students' interest in it. This will necessitate the inculcation of entrepreneurship knowledge on the students, and as such promote entrepreneurship behavior among them.
- 4- University management should create avenues whereby students are encouraged to exhibit their products, from entrepreneurship studies once every session in a Trade Fair manner. This will create opportunities

for students to interact among themselves and outsiders, and thus enhance their experiences, skills and knowledge on entrepreneurship.

5- University management should ensure that students offer entrepreneurship courses compulsorily throughout the duration of their university education. This will place the students on better pedestal to acquaint themselves with the concepts, and thus provide a solid foundation for future entrepreneurial life.

6- Management of universities should as a matter of urgency initiate modalities for the continuous development of the course lecturers through sponsoring them for local and international conferences. This will enable them acquire relevant experiences and knowledge to equip future entrepreneurs with the necessary skills for effective functioning.

References

- Abaribe, E. (2002, June 2). *Are we really being educated?* Guest Lecture delivered on the occasion of the graduation ceremony of Babcock University, Ogun State held on Sunday.
- Ajekigbe, M. (2005, March 30). Nigerian graduate: Yesterday and today. *THISDAY*, p. 51
- Asia Africa Intelligence Wire (2004). *Education comment: Taming graduate unemployment with entrepreneur education*. Retrieved from file <http://www.accessmylibrary.com/cons2/summary> on 24/6/2008.
- Bassey, U.U. akuegwu, B.A, Umoren, G. U. Ekpiken, W. E., Egbona, A. E., & Uche, K.K. (2008, April). University administrators' provision for entrepreneurial studies in Nigeria: Implications for employment promotion. *South African Journal of Education Leadership And Management*, 1(1), 35-51.
- Bau, F., Wagner, K., Steiner, W., & Baumgartner, B. (2007). Student preferences For entrepreneurship education: An application for conjoint analysis. *Journal of Marketing Education*. Retrieved from file <http://www.google.com> on 3/7/2008.
- Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (2005). *Criteria for youth entrepreneurship education*. Retrieved from file <http://www.google.com> on 5/7/2008.
- David, O. (2001). *Advancing innovation and entrepreneurship education*. London: Longman group.
- Edukugho, O. (2004, November 24). UNESCO tackles decline in technical, Vocational education. *Vanguard*. Retrieved from file [http://www.Sdnetwork.kabisa.org/news collection/ideanews-2.htm](http://www.Sdnetwork.kabisa.org/news_collection/ideanews-2.htm) on 20/2/2007.
- Hornby, A. S (2001). Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (6th ed.) university press

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:
<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

