

Managing Entrepreneurial Mindset toward Bridging Skill Gap in Tertiary Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

An entrepreneurial mindset is a key factor in bridging the skill gaps. This study examines the relationship between positive mental attitude, creativity, self-confidence, and bridging skill gaps in Nigeria. A sample of 248 business education students was selected for the study. Data are collected using the “Entrepreneurial Mindset and Bridging of Skill Gaps Questionnaire” (EMBSGQ). Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis have been used to test the hypotheses. The findings show that positive mental attitude, creativity, and self-confidence significantly correlate and influence skill gaps. Therefore, it is recommended that lecturers continue to impact the habit of positive mental attitude skills in the mind of the students and make it become part of their attitude before going out into the labour market. Also, creativity must be a learning objective in the academic curriculum to encourage the students to establish new innovative skills in running a business. Furthermore, administrators of tertiary institutions should develop entrepreneurship education to provide life skills training and self-confidence for the students to help the students control their ability towards the achievement of stated entrepreneurship educational goals.

Keyword

Positive Mental Attitude, Creativity, Self-Confidence, Skill Gaps, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The importance of entrepreneurship education as a field of study requires an appropriate mindset that arouses the learners’ interest in getting focused on which attitudes, skills, and knowledge are required to venture into a business or chosen career. The entrepreneurial mindset is gained through entrepreneurship education, which invariably improves human existence in terms of employment generation, poverty reduction, wealth creation, and global economic recognition. Today’s global economy demands highly educated entrepreneurial mindset people who possess many required and necessary skills such as positive mental attitude, creativity, self-confidence, persuasiveness, tenacity, and communication.

Entrepreneurial mindset emerged through entrepreneurship education which plays a significant role in nurturing the students to achieve entrepreneurial skills. Hence, an entrepreneurial mindset can potentially communicate and transfer the students the ability, skills and knowledge needed to identify potential business opportunities (Konan et al., 2019).

Entrepreneurship education is lifelong learning that seeks to provide students in tertiary institutions with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in various ventures. Entrepreneurship education instils in students the development of entrepreneurial competencies to prepare for entrepreneurship life. It is the type of education that prepares students to set up small business enterprises rather than remain in the circus unemployment for a long period after graduation.

Tertiary education is the terminal stage of formal education after secondary education in universities, colleges of education and polytechnics. The activities of the tertiary institution include teaching, research and development, and generating and disseminating knowledge. University education is expected to contribute optimally to the nation's development because it is the highest level of education in the country. The research that the universities undertake is expected to be relevant to the nation's development.

Numerous studies have been conducted on entrepreneurship education and addressing skill gaps. Mahammad et al. (2017). Embarked on building-up students' entrepreneurship education through an entrepreneurial mindset. Pollard and Wilson (2013) investigated the influence of entrepreneurial mindset on performing arts education in Australia. Fayolle and Gailly (2015) focused hysteresis and persistence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial attitudes and intention of students. Zaidotol and Keetanjaly (2016) studied entrepreneurial mindset predictors among university students. A sample of 366 university students was selected. The data collected were analyzed using regression analysis. The finding revealed a high correlation between self-entrepreneurial competencies with an entrepreneurial mindset.

Neneh (2012) focused on the South African perspective of the small and medium enterprise sectors in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset. A sample of 86 entrepreneurs in the SME sector in the Bloemfontein area was selected. The result shows a low level of entrepreneurial mindset in South Africa and performed better in some factors such as creativity, risk taking, and growth mindset, which are critically considered for effective business success. Khaled and Maysoon (2018) conducted business students' skills and gap analysis in the 21st century. Abdul Ghani (2013) investigated the gap between employed electronic engineering and the demands required of the electronic industry. A semi-structured interview technique was used for data collection. A sample of 10 lecturers, 13 employers from different electronic firms, 11 unemployed electronic graduates and 12 employed electronic graduates were selected. The result shows that the graduates lack soft skills, which are important in a working environment. However, none of the authors quoted in this study recognized the importance of entrepreneurial mindset as a critical measure of addressing students' skill gaps. Another obvious gap that warranted this study is that the locale or areas of study of the aforementioned extant studies differ considerably from the studies. Also, the past studies could not explain the relationship between positive mental attitude, creativity, self-confidence and skill gaps in Nigeria. Thus, this study endeavour to fill the gaps left by the previous scholars. The following objectives have been formulated to guide the conduct of the present study:

- a) Examine the relationship between positive mental attitude and bridging skill gaps in Nigeria.
- b) Examine the relationship between creativity and bridging of skill gaps in Nigeria.
- c) Examine the relationship between self-confidence and bridging of skill gaps in Nigeria.

- d) Examine the influence of positive mental attitude, creativity, self-confidence and bridging of skill gaps in Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Entrepreneurial Mindset and Bridging of Skill Gaps

The entrepreneurial mindset is very important in understanding the needed factors to foster business success (Kalu & Peace, 2017). It facilitates action towards exploiting the energetic, innovative opportunities to succeed in the business endeavour (Neneh, 2012). The entrepreneurial mindset is seen as acting, analyzing, and mobilizing possibilities and opportunities under uncertain conditions and translating ideas into action (Mohammed et al., 2017).

Haynie, Shephard, Mosakowski and Early (2010) defined entrepreneurial mindset as the cognitive tendencies through which individuals develop innovation, creativity and foster flexibility. The entrepreneurial mindset is important because it affords students the ability to entangle themselves with innovation and ideas to establish entities and grow them effectively (Pollad & Wilson, 2013). The entrepreneurial mindset is supreme to mitigate skill gaps among students through a positive mental attitude, creativity and self-confidence. The dimensions of entrepreneurial mindset in this study are positive mental attitude, creativity and self-confidence.

A positive mental attitude is not about being regularly glad or joyful. It is about incorporating both the positive and negative into your perspective and choosing to be persistent. A positive mental attitude is an emotional attitude that focuses on the bright side of life and expects positive outcomes (Hannah, Woolfolk & Lord, 2009).

Creativity is a means of bringing out individuals and organizations' entrepreneurial ability and potential (Matheson, 2013). Creativity has become a critical skill that job seekers need to possess. Creativity refers to a set of coherent acts by an individual to put more effort into dealing with non-routine activity in a proactive way, unique and imaginary (Birgili, 2015). It means that creative learners think literally and independently and challenge conventions and assumptions or the status quo. Also, creativity is the ability to create a new device or method to solve a problem (Kalu & Peace, 2017). The individual students that is not creative and innovative cannot survive in the business venture. Therefore, students need to be continuously creative to remain relevant in the global economy.

Self-confidence skill describes the individual ability to adapt new work environment, demonstrate leadership capacity, display professionalism and social responsibility (Khaled, 2018). It can be seen as the extent to which an individual believes himself to be worthy, significant, capable and successful in completing the task without any anxiety (Hanton et al., 2004). Self-confidence can be viewed as the degree of assurance in judging a specific context at a particular point in time (Mathew, Deary & Whiteman, 2003). It implies the ability to complete tasks successfully. It refers to an individual's self-esteem and self-evaluation (Dessi & Zhao, 2011). People with high confidence are thought to be active in any business and have a positive attitude. Self-confidence redefines student skills to have a positive outlook on himself and business opportunities.

Skill Gaps

Skill gap can be seen as insufficient skill levels among individuals to meet the needed requirement in an organization or carrying out an establishment (McGuinness & Ortiz, 2016). Malik and Venkatraman (2017) concluded that university students do not possess the necessary skills needed to establish a business. The skill gap is defined as the skills that an individual lack that is hindering his performance for a gainful job (Sodipo, 2014). There is no doubt that to be found employable in this global economy world, an individual must possess specialist skills such as positive mental attitude, creativity, tenacity, motivation, persuasiveness and self-confidence in addition to qualifications. The dimensions of the skill gap in this study include lack of critical thinking, lack of creativity and lack of self-confidence. Lack of positive mental attitude was viewed as a lack of mind that envisions and expects a favourable outcome. It refers to the inability to harness the power of optimism to cope with the business establishment (Mohadeseh et al., 2017). Lack of critical thinking refers to non-interest in having intrinsic values for learning and cognitive development (Nauman, 2017).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical basis for this study was self-theories proposed by Dweck (2000). The theory is based on two types of views or intelligence; (i) entity view and (ii) incremental view. He posits that learners with the entity view treat intelligence as fixed and stable, and these learners have high esteem to prove themselves to others as smart and intelligent. Students who adhere to the entity view of intelligence are vulnerable to learning because they may feel that circumstances are outside their control and may give up easily. Given this, entity theorists often make academic choices that will maximize their possibility and probability of performing well.

On the other hand, the incremental view learners treat intelligence as changeable and malleable. These students see satisfaction coming from learning and often see opportunities to get better through mastering specific content knowledge by putting more effort and working harder to understand the content rather than giving up on challenging academic situations.

This theory can be applied in an education setting such that entity theorists prefer to focus on a growth mindset and have to look smart, which means that they have to work hard to keep their “smart title”. In contrast, the incremental theorists are eager to succeed by wanting to acquire more knowledge and pursue tasks through a positive mental attitude that will make them strive to master the challenges at hand. The incremental theorists often develop a mastery-oriented outlook regarding establishing business and creativity in putting more effort on increasing their strategy development to self-confidence, which would assist them in being proactive in establishing various business entities. This study is anchored on Dweck theory, where each student’s motivation has a large impact on the type of methods they will use when face with academic challenges. It will assist in identifying intelligence as a malleable, unchangeable trait.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

A quantitative research design was adopted in this study to determine the relationship between entrepreneurial mindset and skill gap. It is also considered suitable because it helps the researcher to gather the opinion of the sample population, using appropriate data analysis to analyze the data collected and reach a rational conclusion about the population from the study findings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Dilliman, Jolene and Leah, 2014).

Population and Sampling Methods

The target population of this study comprises 654 business education 100 to 400 level students in the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. A sample of 248 students was selected using the Research advisor (2006) table of determining the sample size of a known population (confidence level =95%, Margin of Error = 5%). Stratified random sampling techniques were used to select the participants to ensure that every member of the students was given an equal chance of being selected (Creswell, 2015). By doing this, all categories of students in the business education programme are represented in this study.

Instrumentation

The research instrument for this study was a self-designed questionnaire titled “Entrepreneurial Mindset and Bridging of Skill Gap Questionnaire (EMBSGQ)”, and an adapted questionnaire entitled Skill Gap Questionnaire (SGQ) were used in this study. A total of 24 items were used to measure entrepreneurial mindset with three sub-variables: positive mental attitude (9 items), creativity (8 items) and self-confidence (7 items). The items of the questionnaire regarding skill gap were concluded from Ganwar (2013) on lack of critical thinking with (5 items) and lack of creativity with (5 items) and Abdullahi (2019) on lack of self-confidence with (7 items). Participants answered to four Likert scale point as follow: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The criterion mean is given thus: $4 + 3 + 2 + 1 / 4 = 2.50$. Any item that is above or equal to the criterion mean value of 2.50 is interpreted as “agree”, while the value below 2.50 is interpreted as “disagree” (Allen & Christopher, 2007; Patton, 2002). A 4-point Likert scale answer format was used because it is faster and easier to complete than the 5- or 7-point scale answer format.

Validity and Reliability

Validity of the instrument was done by giving the draft copies of the instrument to two experts in measurement and evaluation and two experts in business education to look into the appropriateness and suitability of the instrument. The questionnaire was corrected and adjusted based on experts’ recommendations and comments. Furthermore, 20 copies were also administered to students who are part of the sample to examine their understanding of the wording, instructions, and scales to determine if there may be any challenges when filling the questionnaire. Thus, some suggestions made were modified correctly before sending the final copies. The reliability of the instrument was done with the use of Cronbach’s alpha, as revealed in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability test for EMBSGQ

Variables	Sub-construct	N	Cronbach's alpha	Decision
Entrepreneurial Mindset	Positive mental attitude	9	0.86	All items are acceptable and reliable
	Creativity	8	0.82	All items are acceptable and reliable
	Self-confidence	7	0.80	All items are acceptable and reliable
Skill gaps	Lack of critical thinking	5	0.84	All items are acceptable and reliable
	Lack of creativity	5	0.82	All items are acceptable and reliable
	Lack of self-confidence	7	0.80	All items are acceptable and reliable

Table 1 reveals the results of the reliability test for EMBSGQ. Cronbach's alpha value for positive mental attitude is 0.86 with 9 items, 0.82 for creativity with 8 items and 0.80 for self-confidence with 7 items. Also, for skill gaps variable, the Cronbach's alpha values are 0.84 for lack of critical thinking, 0.82 for lack of creativity and 0.80 for lack of self-confidence. Values above 0.70 are considered acceptable and reliable (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009; Diamantopoulos, Marko, Christoph, Petra & Sebastian, 2012)

Data Collection Technique

The questionnaire was distributed to all students who attended classes and who voluntarily agreed to participate. Effective distribution of the instruments to the students was aided with the help of colleagues in business education. The questionnaire was administered to over 300 participants in the selected field of study. However, a total of 261 questionnaires were retrieved and filled in correctly. The retrieved number meet the suggestion of the Research advisor (2006) of 248 used in this study. Participants were required to complete the questionnaires instantly. Furthermore, permission was sought from the participants before distributing the questionnaire in order to adhere to ethical issues. Based on the guideline of Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011), the ethical consideration and safety of participants, the researcher guaranteed that participants are preserved with adequate respect beyond what may be required by law.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to examine the objective of the study from the data collected. Inferential statistics like Pearson product-moment correlation and multiple linear regression were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significance level to determine the rejection or acceptance of the hypothesis (Dillman, Jolene & Lean, 2014). The data gathered was coded into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22 for statistical analysis to compile data from students' questionnaires on entrepreneurial mindset and skill gap (Mayer, 2013).

FINDINGS

Demographic Information of the Respondents

This part discusses the demographic data of the respondents using a simple percentage.

Table 2. Demographic data of the respondents

		N= 248	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	154	62%
	Male	94	38%
		248	100%
Average age	16-19	46	19%
	20 -22	104	42%
	23-26	78	31%
	26 above	20	8%
		248	100%
Level	100L	57	22%
	200L	91	37%
	300L	66	27%
	400L	34	14%
		248	100%

Table 2 reveals the demographic data of the respondents who participated in this study. The majority 154 (62%) participants are female and 94 (38%) are male. Based on average age, majority 104 (42%) of the respondents are between ages 20-22 years while 20 (8%) of the respondents are 26 years above. In terms of level, the majority, 91 (37%), are in 200 level while 34 (14%) are in 400 level in the sample programme.

Positive Mental Attitude

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation responses of students on positive mental attitude in Nigeria.

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation of items on positive mental attitude

*S/N	Positive Mental Attitude	Mean	SD	Decision
1	A positive mental attitude helps students make rational choices in developing a growth-oriented business.	2.88	0.962	Agreed
2	Enhances willingness to take the risk of starting a business.	2.96	0.910	Agreed
3	Helps students to cope with uncertainty in the process of implementing business.	2.80	0.956	Agreed
4	Improves students' ability to cope with stress and stay positive.	2.88	1.002	Agreed

5	Increases student’s potential ability to manage depression.	2.91	0.959	Agreed
6	Improves in students the attitude of continuous growth and personal development.	2.93	0.964	Agreed
7	Encourages ability to establish and maintain close interpersonal relationship.	2.88	0.910	Agreed
8	Encourages optimism to make an effort and take a chance in establishing a new venture.	2.78	1.034	Agreed
9	Enhances the ability to focus and dedicate mind to conscious awareness of a business.	2.92	0.951	Agreed
Overall mean		2.88	0.961	Agreed

The overall perception of the respondents on positive mental attitude, as revealed in Table 3 is interpreted as “Agreed” (M = 2.88, SD= 0.961). This result reveals that respondents agreed that a positive mental attitude improves bridging skill gaps in Nigeria. Also, all the responses obtained mean values higher than the criterion mean value of 2.50. This shows that participants agreed that positive mental attitude i) helps students to make rational choice in developing a growth-oriented business (M = 2.88, SD = 0.962), ii) enhances willingness to take risk of starting a business (M = 2.96, SD = 0.910), iii) helps students to cope with uncertainty in the process of implementing business (M = 2.80, SD = 0.956), iv) improves students’ ability to cope with stress and stay positive (M = 2.88, SD = 1.002), v) increases students’ potential ability to manage depression (M = 2.91, SD = 0.959), vi) improves in students the ability the attitude of continuous growth and personal development (M = 2.93, SD = 0.964), vii) encourages ability to establish and maintain close interpersonal relationship (M = 2.88, SD = 0.910). viii) encourages optimism to make an effort and taking a chance in establishing new venture (M = 2.78, SD = 1.034) and ix) enhances the ability to focus and dedicate mind to conscious awareness of business (M = 2.92, SD = 0.951)

Creativity

Table 4 presents the respondents’ responses on creativity and skill gap in Nigeria.

Table 4. Mean and standard deviation of items on creativity as responded by respondents

*S/N	Creativity	Mean	SD	Decision
10	Creativity encourages students to establish new ways of innovative skills in running a business.	2.92	0.972	Agreed
11	Offers students the ability to assemble and organize resources while exploiting a business opportunity.	2.89	0.991	Agreed
12	Helps students to develop the manipulative potential for the benefit of humanity.	2.90	0.988	Agreed
13	Strives to awaken the interest and curiosity of the students to establish a business.	2.91	0.959	Agreed
14	Helps students to make decisions based on their own standards rather than being influenced by others’ opinions.	2.97	0.953	Agreed

15	Helps students take responsibility for their own actions.	2.92	0.951	Agreed
16	Helps students to strive and grow in their chosen careers.	2.91	1.000	Agreed
17	Allows students to develop to their fullest extent.	2.88	0.969	Agreed
Overall mean		2.91	0.973	Agreed

Table 4 shows the overall perception of respondents on creativity is interested as “Agreed” (M = 2.91, SD = 0.973). This result shows that participants agreed that creativity effectively bridges skill gaps in Nigeria. Also, all responses obtained mean values higher than the criterion mean value of 2.50. This reveals that participants agreed that creativity i) encourages students to establish new ways of innovative skill in running a business (M = 2.92, SD = 0.972), ii) offers students the ability to assemble and organize resources while exploiting business opportunity (M = 2.89, SD = 0.991), iii) helps students to develop manipulative potential for the benefit of humanity (M = 2.90, SD = 0.988), iv) strives to awaken the interest and curiosity of the students to establish business (M = 2.91, SD = 0.959), v) helps students to take decision based on their own standards rather than been influenced by other’s opinions (M = 2.97, SD = 0.953), vi) helps students take responsibility for their own actions (M = 2.92, SD = 0.951), vii) helps students to strive and grow in their chosen career (M = 2.91, SD = 1.000) and viii) allows students to develop to their fullest extent (M = 2.88, SD = 0.969).

Self-confidence

Table 5 shows the analysis of the respondents’ responses on self-confidence and skill gap

Table 5. Mean and standard deviation of items on self-confidence

*S/N	Self-confidence	Mean	SD	Decision
18	Self-confidence helps students to control their ability towards the achievement of organizational goals.	2.82	0.958	Agreed
19	Helps students to make wise choices that can aid in realizing personal success.	2.85	1.037	Agreed
20	Helps students have a positive relationship with people.	2.97	0.966	Agreed
21	Gives room for responsible decision-making.	2.89	0.974	Agreed
22	Promotes the development of social and interpersonal skills.	2.78	1.033	Agreed
23	Promotes the sprits of self-efficacy, optimism and resilience in students.	2.92	0.951	Agreed
24	Enhances emotional well-being of students.	2.86	1.035	Agreed
Overall Mean		2.87	0.993	Agreed

Table 5 shows the overall perception of respondents on self-confidence is interpreted as “Agreed” (M = 2.87, SD = 0.993). This result shows that respondents agreed that self-confidence enhances bridging skill gaps in Nigeria. Also, all responses obtained mean values higher than the criterion mean value of 2.50. This shows that respondents agreed that self-confidence i) helps students to control their ability towards the achievement of organisational goals (M = 2.82, SD = 0.958), ii) helps students to make wise choices that can aid in realizing personal success (M = 2.85, SD = 1.037), iii) helps students have a positive relationship with people (M = 2.97, SD = 0.966), iv) gives room for responsible decision-making (M = 2.89, SD = 0.974), v) promotes the development of social and interpersonal skills (M = 2.78, SD = 1.033), vi) promotes the spirits of self-efficacy, optimism and resilience in students (M = 2.92, SD = 0.951) and vii) enhances emotional well-being of students (M = 2.86, SD = 1.035)

Hypotheses Testing

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient statistic was used to test hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 in this study as follows:

H₁: There is a significant relationship between positive mental attitude and bridging of skill gaps.

Table 6. Correlation analysis for positive mental attitude and bridging of skill gaps

		Positive Mental Attitude	Skill Gaps
Positive Mental Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.880**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)		.000
	N	248	248
Skill Gaps	Pearson Correlation	.880**	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.000	
	N	248	248

Table 6 reveals that a positive mental attitude significantly relates to bridging skill gaps with a calculated r-value = .880; p < .000. This result reveals a significant relationship between positive mental attitude and bridging of skill gaps in Nigeria (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between positive mental attitude and bridging skill gaps is rejected.

H₂: There is a significant relationship between creativity and bridging of skill gaps

Table 7. Correlation analysis for creativity and bridging of skill gaps

		Creativity	Skill Gap
Creativity	Pearson Correlation	1	.910**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)		.000
	N	248	248
Skill Gaps	Pearson Correlation	.910**	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.000	
	N	248	248

Table 7 shows that creativity has a significant and positive relationship with bridging of skill gaps with a calculated r-value = .910; $p < .000$. This result shows a significant relationship between creativity and bridging of skill gaps in Nigeria (Fayers & Machin, 2010). Thus, the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between creativity and bridging skill gaps is rejected.

H₃: There is a significant relationship between self-confidence and bridging of skill gaps

Table 8. Correlation analysis for self-confidence and bridging of skill gaps

		Self-confidence	Skill Gaps
Self-confidence	Pearson Correlation	1	.920**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)		.000
	N	248	248
Skill Gaps	Pearson Correlation	.920**	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.000	
	N	248	248

Table 8 shows that self-confidence has a significant and positive relationship with bridging of skill gaps with a calculated r-value = .920; $p < .000$. This result reveals a significant relationship between self-confidence and bridging skill gaps in Nigeria (Cresswell, 2015). Hence, the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between self-confidence and bridging skill gaps is rejected.

H4: Positive mental attitude, creativity and self-confidence significantly influence bridging of skill gaps

Table 9. Linear regression of entrepreneurial mindset and bridging of skill gaps

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.609	0.620	0.506	0.376

a. Predictors: (constants), positive mental attitude, creativity and self-confidence

Table 9 summarizes the result of multiple regression analysis that analyzed the relationship between entrepreneurial mindset and bridging of skill gaps in Nigeria. It shows that entrepreneurial mindset has a significant influence on bridging of skill gaps with R-square= 0.620.

Table 10. Linear regression coefficient for entrepreneurial mindset and bridging of skill gaps

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.724	0.356		10.257	0.000
Positive mental attitude	0.338	0.054	0.507	5.854	0.000
Creativity	0.366	0.196	0.531	5.672	0.000
Self-confidence	0.363	0.056	0.542	6.410	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Skill Gaps

Table 10 reveals that all entrepreneurial mindset variables significantly influenced the skill gap. Self-confidence has the highest impact (Beta = 0.542) followed by creativity (Beta = 0.531) and positive mental attitude (Beta = 0.507). Therefore, the entrepreneurial mindset, represented by positive mental attitude, creativity, self-confidence, has a significant influences skill gaps at $\alpha=0.05$.

DISCUSSION

Results from hypothesis one show a significant and positive relationship between positive mental attitude and bridging of skill gaps in Nigeria. The finding is in line with Hannah, Woolfolk and Lord (2009) that individuals with a positive mindset can find opportunities towards achieving the

stated goals. This finding agreed with Avey et al. (2011) that positive attitudes leaders encourage motivation and engagement in subordinates.

Results from hypothesis two reveal a significant and positive relationship between creativity and bridging of skill gaps in Nigeria. This finding concurs with Duru (2011); Obed, Jaja and Ukoha (2018) that creative individuals can adapt and command great confidence to survive in business. This finding conforms to Bosman and Fernhaber (2018) that creativity creates a positive contribution to organizational innovation and development. This finding also agreed with earlier studies (Boyle, 2007; Baron, 2012) that creativity helps stimulate students to discover business opportunities and think out of the box.

Results from hypothesis three show a significant and positive relationship between self-confidence and bridging of skill gaps. This finding supports the finding of Brinol and Petty (2009) and Dessi and Zhao (2011) that self-confidence promotes group cohesion, encourage problem-solving and resourcefulness.

The finding of regression analysis reveals a significant relationship between entrepreneurial mindset and bridging of skill gaps in Nigeria. The results agreed with Mohammad et al. (2017) that an entrepreneurial mindset ensures successful future strategies in enhancing effective business growth. Similarly, this finding agreed with Mathisen and Arnulf (2013), Blackwell et al. (2007), Burnette and O'boyle et al. (2013), Cury and Dafonsec (2008), Osborn (2007), Pfeifer et al. (2016) and Burnette (2010) that entrepreneurial mindset provides more effective ways to make greater progress and improve persevere in the face of setbacks.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study aims to identify the relationship and influence of entrepreneurial mindset variables (positive mental attitude, creativity and self-confidence). The result indicated that positive mental attitude, creativity and self-confidence were key significant determinants of bridging skill gaps. The findings of this study will benefit higher institution students to exhibit entrepreneurial mindset measures in establishing business opportunities in their chosen careers. This study will also help government, educational managers, and stakeholders find the proper focus in providing effective entrepreneurship education to enhance entrepreneurial learning towards mitigating skill gaps. Furthermore, this finding would serve as a reference point for further research in education.

Lecturers should continue to encourage a positive mental attitude in the mind of the students and make it become part of their attitude before going out into the labour market. A positive mental attitude could help students make a rational choice in developing a growth-oriented business and enhance willingness to take the risk of starting a business. Furthermore, it helps students cope with uncertainty in the process of implementing business, improves students' ability to cope with stress and stay positive. A positive mental attitude also increases students' potential ability to manage depression, improves continuous growth and personal development, encourages the ability to establish and maintain close interpersonal relationships, encourages optimism to make an effort and take a chance in establishing new venture as well as enhances the ability to focus and dedicate mind to conscious awareness of a business.

Also, creativity must be a learning objective in the academic curriculum to encourage students to establish new ways of innovative skill in running a business, offers students the ability to assemble and organize resources while exploiting business opportunities, helps students to develop the manipulative potential for the benefit of humanity, strives to awaken the interest and curiosity of the students to establish a business, helps students to take decision based on their own standards rather than been influenced by other's opinions, helps students take responsibility for their own actions, helps students to strive and grow in their chosen career as well as allows students to develop to their fullest extent.

Furthermore, administrators of tertiary institutions should develop entrepreneurship education in order to provide life skills training and self-confidence for the students to help students to control their ability towards the achievement of organizational goals, allows students to make wise choices that can aid in realizing personal success, helps students have a positive relationship with people, gives room for responsible decision-making, promotes the development of social and interpersonal skills, promotes the sprits of self-efficacy, optimism and resilience in students as well as enhances emotional well-being of students. The entrepreneurial mindset is a perfect way of improving skill gaps for enhancing positive mental attitude, creativity, and self-confidence to realize entrepreneurship educational goals and objectives.

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