

Effect of Peer Tutoring Strategy on the Interest of Business Education Students in Entrepreneurship in Public Tertiary Institutions in North East, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study examined the effect of peer tutoring strategy on the interest of Business Education students in entrepreneurship in public tertiary institutions in North-East, Nigeria. Three specific purposes, three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. Quasi-experimental research design involving pre-test and post-test was used. The population of the study was two hundred and thirty-eight (male 99 and female 139) Business Education students in public tertiary institutions. Four schools (two public universities and two colleges of education) were purposively selected. One university and one college of education were randomly selected and assigned to the treatment group while the other university and one college of education were assigned to the control group. Entrepreneurship Education Interest Inventory (EEII) was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts and tested for reliability using the Crombach Alpha formula which yielded a coefficient of 0.93. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that Business Education students taught entrepreneurship using peer tutoring strategy showed greater and significant interest more than their classmates who were taught using the conventional method. The interest of the males and females improved with peer tutoring strategy, though the females indicated higher interest than the males, the mean score was not statistically different. The findings further revealed that gender had interaction effect with teaching strategies on the mean interest scores of Business Education students in entrepreneurship. Based on the findings, it was recommended that educational institutions in North-East, Nigeria should adopt Peer tutoring in teaching entrepreneurship in tertiary institutions. Relevant authorities should incorporate a more inclusive curricula framework on entrepreneurship, encourage training programmes, provide infrastructures and facilities for effective teaching and learning experiences during entrepreneurship lessons.*

Keywords: peer tutoring strategy, business education students, entrepreneurship, public tertiary institutions, North East, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The educational system in Nigeria aims at fostering a holistic societal development and empowerment of individuals through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills and competencies required for personal survival and contribution to the overall development of the nation. Education transforms and empowers the learner especially through Vocational Education of which Business and Entrepreneurship Education are major components. Business Education is a specialized profession of study designed to provide the learners with knowledge, skills and competencies that lead to empowerment, employability and advancement in office education, pedagogy as well as being an employer of labour, employee or self-employed (NUC, 2023). In an attempt to prepare learners for competence and proficiency to navigate successfully through the complexities of the business landscape and societal demands, Business Education is becoming more interdisciplinary, interconnected, integrated, internationalized and intergenerational through innovation and technology (AACSB, 2020)

Entrepreneurship Education refers to efforts made by educational institutions to instill knowledge, values, mindset, entrepreneurial thinking and attitudes to students in order to equip themselves to become independent, creative and innovative human beings (Pesta & Wany, 2021). Banha et al (2022), added that Entrepreneurship Education is a life-long competence that intends to form more autonomous and proactive citizens with a democratic, pluralistic, critical and creative spirit contributing to the sustenance of the global economy. Entrepreneurship is the creation of new economic values centered on a novel product, new process or improved services that differ from those that are already obtainable in the market. According to Bygrave, et al (2020), entrepreneurship can be taught, learned and acquired in diverse settings including conventional tertiary institutions, entrepreneurship centers/ incubators, online platforms and resources, Massive Open Online courses (MOOCS) etc.

However, Amah in Udu et al (2021), submitted that there is significant lack of workable model that reflects the Nigerian ecosystem in terms of appropriately utilizing academic intellectual potentials as well as inculcating entrepreneurial spirits and skills into the undergraduates at all levels, thus most graduates leave the tertiary institutions without a vision and /or idea of how to create job opportunities. But, Peterson (2024) pointed out that the answer to improving the entrepreneurial capacity of vocational education students lies in the teachers and how they facilitate the learning process.

Teaching methods could be traditional/conventional like lecture method of teaching which is usually teacher- centered in that the teacher more of dispense information to the learners who are passive, or modern methods of teaching which are strategies (combination of techniques) that

introduce innovations in instructional delivery to ensure greater outcomes. They include: peer-tutoring, concept-mapping, scaffolding, role-play/simulations, project, programmed instructions, online and technology-based strategies etc. The teacher in this case is more of a facilitator. Interest is a condition or state of curiosity, wanting to know about something and feelings for something and someone that is, being engulfed with a particular experience. It has both cognitive and affective impacts on a student as it empowers, invigorates, attracts in such a way that once a person shows interest in something or subject matter, he gives full concentration, and effectively process a given information, apply efficient learning styles and think critically, curiously expecting deeper insight about what is being taught (Harackiewicz & Smith, 2016).

Peer-tutoring is an active teaching and learning strategy whereby students are taught by their peers who had been trained or given orientation by their class teacher. In this case, the class teacher acts as a moderator, facilitator and mentor, guiding and correcting including technicalities that may involve gender- sensitive content and situations. Okoye in Okeke and Okoye (2023), described peer tutoring as a cooperative teaching and learning strategy in which a more competent student under the supervision of the class teacher helps other students to learn a skill or concept. Peer tutoring adopts the paradigm shift in pedagogical dimensions; applying the strategies of learning focus as learning to learn, pedagogical base to be constructive; learning goals as autonomous, teachers role becomes facilitative with an open delivery model while the leaning structure is flexible; the learning method is active whereas the instructional models of learning is team-centered (Fumiyo & Rilyei, 2024).

Gender is a cluster of characteristics that differentiate male and female. Okeke in Madumere and Nwabueze (2020), considered gender as the socially constructed roles, learned behaviours and expectations associated with males and females – mental, emotional, physical, psychological and socio-cultural attributes. Gender is a psychological construct with socio-economic implications and it guides educators and managers in assigning roles, responsibilities, opportunities and constraints to males and females.

In as much as disciplines and school subjects are not clearly gender-stereotyped, male and female students sometimes and somehow still vary in their interests in some subject areas, methodologies, course contents, skill acquisitions and career choices Afu et al (2017). Research has shown that the quality of teaching is the key factor in improving learners' entrepreneurial thinking capacity, achievement and interest, (Abdulkarim et al, 2016). Ogungboyega (2021) observed that most teachers do not use appropriate pedagogical approaches in handling entrepreneurship; employing lecture method instead of active, student- centered and cooperative strategies which affect students' interests in the course and consequently their poor academic achievements.

In view of the perceived dissatisfaction and level of interest, it became imperative therefore, to determine the effect of peer tutoring strategy, as an intervention approach, on the interest of male and female Business Education students as well as investigate the interaction effect of teaching methods and gender.

Statement of the Problem

Business Education in Nigerian tertiary institutions is aimed at preparing the learners with employable skills for personal and societal development. Entrepreneurship curriculum, on the other hand, contains guidelines on how students can identify business opportunities, assess business concepts, develop operational plans and examine entrepreneurial strategies in a classroom setting.

The researchers have observed that the didactical approaches and conventional methods used in handling general subjects is not suitable for entrepreneurship- related courses as they lack provisions for interpersonal relationships, discrete learning, teamwork, critical analysis and collective development of ideas. Entrepreneurship therefore calls for a re-tooling of the teaching and learning approaches towards experiential and active teaching/learning strategies so as to set a proper agenda for inculcating entrepreneurial thinking and enhance students' interest.

Peer tutoring as an active and learners'-centered instructional strategy could be useful and appropriate in addressing these pedagogical and interest gaps in entrepreneurship education.

There is paucity of research on peer tutoring and students' interest in entrepreneurship in tertiary institutions especially in the North-East Zone and so, in the strength of this gap the researcher sought to determine with empirical evidence, the efficacy of peer tutoring strategy on the interest of Business Education students in entrepreneurship.

Purpose of the study

The primary purpose of the study was to determine the effect of peer tutoring strategy on the interest of Business Education students in entrepreneurship in public tertiary institutions.

Specifically, the study sought to investigate the:

Effect of peer tutoring strategy on the interest of Business Education students in in tertiary institutions in North-East, Nigeria

2. Effect of peer tutoring strategy on the interest of male and female Business Education students in entrepreneurship in tertiary institutions in North-East, Nigeria

3. Interaction effect of gender and teaching strategies on the interest of Business Education students in entrepreneurship in tertiary institutions in North-East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the effect of Peer tutoring strategy on the interest of Business Education students in entrepreneurship?
2. What is the effect of peer tutoring strategy on the interest of male and female Business Education students in entrepreneurship?
3. What is the interaction effect of gender and teaching strategies on the interest of Business Education students in entrepreneurship?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study and were tested at 0. 05 level of significance:

Ho₁.There is no significant difference in the mean interest scores of Business Education students taught entrepreneurship using conventional teaching method and those taught using peer tutoring strategies.

Ho₂. There is no significant difference in the mean interest scores of male and female Business Education students taught entrepreneurship using peer tutoring strategy

Ho₃. There is no interaction effect between gender and teaching strategies on the mean interest scores of Business Education students in entrepreneurship.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher used Quasi-experimental, pre-test and post-test non-randomized research design for the study. The population of the study was two hundred and thirty- eight (male 99 and female 139) Business Education students in public tertiary institutions in the North-East Zone. Four schools (two public universities and two colleges of education) were purposive selected. One university and one college of education were randomly selected and assigned to the treatment group while the other university and one college of education were assigned to the control group. Entrepreneurship Education Interest Inventory (EEII) was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts and tested for reliability using Crombach Alpha formula which yielded a coefficient of 0.94. Research questions were answered using mean and

standard deviation while the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A null hypothesis is rejected if p.value is less than or equal 0.05 Alpha level and accepted if p.value is greater than 0.05 Alpha.

FINDINGS

The results of data analyses are presented below in tables based on the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

Research Question 1

What is the effect of peer tutoring strategy on the interest of Business Education students in? entrepreneurship?

The answer to this question was obtained from the data analysis of the Entrepreneurship Education interest inventory (EEII) and summarized in the Table 1 below:

Table 1: Mean interest scores of Business Education students in entrepreneurship

Method	Group	N	Pre-test		Post Test	
			Mean	Std	Mean	Std
Peer tutoring	Treatment	110	2.35	0.57	3.14	0.85
Conventional	Control	120	2.13	0.56	2.30	0.55

Table 1 indicated that the treatment group under peer tutoring strategy showed greater interest :pre-test mean interest score of 2.35 and standard deviation of 0.57 and post-test interest mean score of 3.14 and standard deviation of 0.85 which are far more than the interest levels of those under the conventional method (control group) that had interest mean score 2.13 with standard deviation of 0.56 and 2.30 with 0.55 standard deviation respectively in the pre-test and post-test interest inventories.

Research question 2

What is the effect of peer-tutoring strategy on the interest of male and female Business Education students in entrepreneurship?

Table 2 below provides the summary of the answer to Research Question 2

Table 2: Mean interest scores of male and female Business Education students in entrepreneurship using peer tutoring

Gender	No	Pre-test		Post Test	
		Mean	Std	Mean	Std
Male	52	2.60	0.64	2.70	1.00
Female	58	2.13	0.39	3.53	0.41

From Table 2, it can be seen that peer tutoring has effect on the interest of Business Education students in entrepreneurship especially the female students whose interest scaled from pre-test mean score of 2.13 to 3.53 in the post-test, and their male counterparts in the same group that improved also in interest from pre-test mean score of 2.60 to post-test mean score of 2.70.

Research question 3

What is the interaction effect of gender and teaching strategies on the interest of Business Education students in entrepreneurship?

The responses to the question above are summarized in the descriptive statistics table below.

Table 3: Interaction effect of gender and teaching methods on the mean interest scores of Business Education students in entrepreneurship

Method	Male (N – 97)				Female (N – 133)			
	Pre-test		Post-test		Pre-test		Post test	
	Mean	Std	Mean	Std	Mean	Std	Mean	Std
Peer tutoring	2.60	0.64	2.70	1.00	2.13	0.40	3.53	0.41
Conventional	2.63	0.60	2.72	0.67	1.83	0.23	2.05	0.21

As can be observed from Table 3, gender interacted with methods. The male Business Education students scored a mean interest of 2.60 and 2.70 in the pre and post-tests respectively in the treatment group whereas the females scaled from 2.13 to 3.53 mean interest scores in the pre and post-tests respectively under the treatment group and had mean interest scores of 1.83 and 2.05 in the pre-test and post-test respectively in the control group.

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean interest scores of Business Education students taught entrepreneurship using conventional method and those taught using peer tutoring strategies the researcher employed Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to test hypothesis one and the result is presented in the table below

Table 4: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) for the mean interest scores of Business Education students taught entrepreneurship using conventional method and peer tutoring strategy

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Corrected Model	61.724 ^a	3	20.575	121.989	0.000
Intercept	.765	1	.765	4.534	0.038
PRE-TEST	41.993	1	41.993	248.983	0.000
Gender	5.660	1	5.660	33.569	0.000
Methods	.001	1	.001	.005	0.942
Gender + methods	.000	0			
Error	17.878	106	169		
Total	1164.577	110			
Corrected Total	79.602	109			

Table 4 indicates that p-value is 0.000 which is less than alpha value (0.05), hypothesis one is rejected, suggesting that there is a significant difference in the mean interest scores of the students.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean interest of male and female Business Education students taught entrepreneurship using peer-tutoring strategy.

Using relevant data, this hypothesis two was tested by applying the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and the result is presented in the table below.

Table 5: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) for the mean interest scores of Business Education students in entrepreneurship based on gender

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	P-val
Corrected Model	30.681 ^a	2	15.340	342.334	0.000
Intercept	.173	1	.173	3.858	0.052
CONPRETEST	17.963	1	17.963	400.863	0.000
Gender	.156	1	.156	3.481	0.065
Error	5.243	117	.045		
Total	669.344	120			
Corrected Total	35.924	119			

Table 5 reveals that the p-value is 0.065, which is greater than alpha significant value of 0.05. Hypothesis two is accepted, meaning that there is no significant difference in interest by gender.

Hypothesis 3

There is no interaction effect of gender and teaching strategies on the mean score interest of Business Education students in entrepreneurship.

The data on this hypothesis three was tested by applying the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and the result is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) for the mean interest scores of Business Education students in entrepreneurship based on gender and teaching methods

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	P-val
Corrected Model	30.898 ^a	3	10.299	237.722	0.000
Intercept	.119	1	.119	2.744	0.100
CONPRETEST	17.948	1	17.948	414.257	0.000
Gender	.218	1	.218	5.041	0.027
Method	.217	1	.217	5.013	0.027
Gender + method	.000	0			
Error	5.028	116	.043		
Total	669.344	120			
Corrected Total	35.924	119			

With reference to Table 6, it can be seen that p-value is 0.027 which is less than the specified alpha of 0.05, thus, the null hypothesis is rejected which implies that there is a significant interaction

effect between gender and teaching methods on interest of Business Education students in entrepreneurship.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result in Table 1 reveal that Business Education students taught entrepreneurship using peer tutoring (treatment group) showed higher interest than their counterparts using conventional method of teaching (control group). The test of hypothesis in Table 4 indicated a statistically significant difference on interest in entrepreneurship between the students taught entrepreneurship using peer tutoring and those taught using conventional teaching method.

The result is not unconnected to the characteristics of peer tutoring as an active against passive learning platform which fosters interest in entrepreneurship. Peers help each other to achieve self-confidence and efficacy which help to reduce anxiety and fear of failure.

The findings concur with the report of Okeke et al (2024) that students taught Economics using peer tutoring performed better than their peers who were taught using conventional approach both in achievement and interest. Xu in Pesta and Wany (2021) found out that when students placement are based on normal distribution, there is significant relationship between academic achievement and interest in learning, between teachers interaction with students and the way the teachers handle the teaching to arouse the interest and motivate the learners, spurring them to learn and achieve. Peer tutoring makes entrepreneurship lessons more practical than abstract. The increased engagement translates into higher interest as compared to the passive listening experienced in conventional teaching method.

Table 2 revealed that peer tutoring enhanced the interest of both males and females' interest in entrepreneurship. Although the females' interest was slightly higher than the interest of the male students, the difference was not statistically significant as seen in Table 5. Peer tutoring is effective and unbiased with gender because both genders receive similar benefits. The males and females enjoy the same level of engagement either as tutors or tutees which reduces gaps in interest. There is active learning, collaboration, confidence-building, self-efficacy skill acquisition in leadership and communication, idea sharing, innovations, problem-solving, team work, real-life business simulations and all these contribute to the development of entrepreneurial mind-set and interest as reported by (Radu-Lefebvre et al, 2021).

The findings in this study also align with the report of Agu and Azih (2019) that the relative efficacy of peer tutoring strategy was consistent across gender groups. Its enhanced students' interest without implications on gender. However, the slight difference in the interest levels of the male and female students is in consonance with the observations of Idayat and Dutsumina (2024)

who reported male dominance in practice of entrepreneurship, emphasizing that males are more actively involved in entrepreneurship than female possibly due to high-risk taking propensity, societal expectations and confidence differentials. Supportive to the finding, Baluku et al (2020) observed that women benefit more from peer tutoring in building their self-confidence, self-efficacy and improving their entrepreneurial interest. The lack of statistical significance in gender difference in interest between the male and female students suggest that peer tutoring creates an all- inclusive learning environment and strategy since both male and female students interactively engage in entrepreneurship lessons.

The results in Tables 3 and Table 6 showed that gender interacted with teaching methods and the effect was statistically significant. The females were more interested in peer tutoring strategy much more than their peers in the conventional group while the male students, though improved also in the treatment group, had higher mean interest score in the control group as against their mean scores in the treatment group.

This finding is in consonance with the report of Igboke (2020) who noted that learning outcomes of every learner depends so much on the teaching strategy used by the teacher for instructions because teaching approach influences the degree of learning by students. In other words, an alignment of teaching methods with students' needs and preferred learning styles influences students' achievements (Zeeb et al, 2020). Additionally, Tiffany et al (2024) observed that interest in learning entrepreneurship is influenced to a large extent by the teacher, his teaching strategy and how he facilitates the teaching process. Females' high interest in peer tutoring is justified considering its social, seamless/soft and modeling features while the males will naturally be more interested in more practical, project-oriented, hands-on-tasks, experiential methods of instructional delivery. Although there are exceptions, males and females do differ in ways that parallel conventional gender stereotypes and that affect how they behave at school and in class in terms of social interactions, learning styles, academic motivations, choices and interest (Powell, 2018). A single instructional strategy did not affect students' interest uniformly across genders. A one-size-fits all approach would undermine gender differential responses as interest in academics generally is mostly content- specific, consisting of valences influenced by topics, fields and experiences and so can be moderated by motivational factors, instructional delivery approaches and other external variables.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from the study, the following conclusions were made:

The findings show that Peer tutoring strategy significantly improved the interest of Business Education students in entrepreneurship in public tertiary institutions in North-East, Nigeria. This

positive effect reveals a comparative advantage of Peer tutoring strategy over Conventional method of teaching entrepreneurship. The study further concluded that peer tutoring strategy is not gender- biased; it promotes active participation, integration and cooperation of male and female students of different intellectual abilities and creates a learner-centered classroom environment that motivates students, increase their interest and also enhance their confidence in learning.

Peer tutoring was therefore concluded to be an effective instructional approach for teaching entrepreneurship and can serve as an effective alternative to conventional teaching methods in higher institutions in order to improve and sustain student interest in entrepreneurship.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in this study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were made:

1. Educational institutions should adopt peer tutoring strategy as the teaching method for entrepreneurship in public tertiary institutions.
2. Government, Curriculum planners, policy-makers, and school administrators should incorporate and support the integration of peer tutoring strategy through funding, monitoring and provision of adequate facilities in tertiary institutions in the form of instructional materials and supportive classroom environments that encourage interaction, group learning and Peer- Assisted activities during lessons in entrepreneurship
3. Regular training workshops, seminars, conferences and symposia should be organized for Business educators and facilitators on the effective application of peer tutoring strategy so that they can step-down the experiences to the peer tutors accordingly.

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