



Service-Based Business Opportunities as Alternative Sources of Fund for Business Education Students in Universities in Rivers State

Ifeanyichukwu Emmanuel Nwabueze
Department of Business Education
Faculty of Education
University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria
ifeanyichukwu.nwabueze@uniport.edu.ng

Bright Junior Chuku
Department of Business Education
Faculty of Education
University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria
d3plecbj@gmail.com

Abstract

The study is aimed at exploring service-based business opportunities that can serve as alternative sources of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State. It was guided by four (4) objectives, research questions, and hypotheses each. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study, as a self-structured 20 items close-ended questionnaire was used to collect data from all 45 lecturers of Business Education in universities in Rivers State. The data collected were analysed with Mean and Percentage to give answers to the research questions, while the null hypotheses were tested with Independent Samples t-Test. The results of the analysis revealed that there are service-based business opportunities that can serve as alternative sources of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State; that there are factors to be considered and challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund; and that there are solutions to the challenges. Based on the foregoing, it recommended, amongst others, that Business Education students in universities in Rivers State should generate alternative sources of fund for themselves by exploiting service-based business opportunities.

Keywords: Service-Based, Business Opportunities, Alternative Sources of Fund, Business Education, Students.

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INTRODUCTION

Funding remains a prerequisite in education. It is a requirement that can never be undermined if one must be academically successful. This is because education is both capital and labour intensive. Education is capital intensive as it requires finance for its operation, and labour intensive as it requires time and energy. The finance required is needed for the construction of educational infrastructures, procurement of educational resources, sponsoring of educational programmes, payment of educational tax, as well as payment of staff salaries. More so, on the part of the students, it is needed for payment of tuition and other fees of the school; procurement of learning resources; funding the feeding, shelter, and clothing needs of the students, as well as other logistics. Candidly, finance is a major resource for attaining the goals of education. However, the fund to finance all these educational needs is not readily available, especially with regards to the students. Hence, the unavailability of the fund calls for an alternative source of fund for the students, which in this context refers to Business Education students in universities in Rivers State.

Many a time, Business Education students are unable to pursue a profitable business career upon graduation, even with their qualification as Business Educators. This may be attributed to their inability to identify business opportunities, develop business ideas, raise capital, attract investors, define a definite goal for their business, as well as their poor knowledge on the choice of business, amongst others. Therefore, in order to solve these problems, it is expedient that the Business Education students should start early to try themselves in businesses even while undergoing the Business Education programme. As a way of doing this, they can profitably exploit service-based business opportunities around them. This will, therefore, serve as an alternative source of fund to foot their educational bills, provide them with experiential learning framework for them to practice what they are being taught which will in turn prepare them for the complex world of business, and also serve as panacea to unemployment when they graduate as Business Educators.

Funding Education as Students through Business Earnings

Fund is defined as a sum of money and/or other resources appropriated and allocated for a specific purpose. Funding on the other hand, is the act of making available resources to finance a project, need, or program. It defines contributing resources to finance certain project, need, or program, while the source of fund refers to the origin of the funds involved in a business relationship or transaction (CFI, 2022). Fund for student's academic pursuit can be sourced through retained earnings (i.e. earnings from business operations), debt capital (i.e. raising funds by borrowing), donations, grants, savings, loans, crowd funding, as well as scholarship. However, it is only natural that the earning from business operations should be the most preferred for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State, as it will not only support the funding of their academic pursuit, but will make them self-sustaining, self-reliant, and economically stable.

Howbeit, a major challenge of carrying out business operations as a student is its ability to encroach into the hours of study, thereby affecting academic performance. On this, Evans (2020) in his study recommended that although working alongside studying eats up study time and impacts negatively on academic performance, university lecturers with regard to business management education, can harness the students' experience from the part-time work to enhance

the teaching and learning experience. As a matter of fact, according to him, using the students' own personal work experience in teaching and learning personalises and concretises the case study method usually adopted in business classes/teachings. Furthermore, the students' part-time work experience or working alongside studying creates a strong connection between students' work experience and the university study, thereby strengthening the higher education relationship with the industry. Thus, Le Barbanchon et al. (2019) opined that working alongside academic study can smoothen the school-to-work transition as the students will acquire skills in the workplace that are not obtained in schools. Also, it will provide students with fund to continue and further their studies, thereby increasing the work experience of youths and their educational enrollment.

Service-based Business Opportunities for Business Education Students in Universities in Rivers State

“Business is usually associated with buying and selling of goods and services” (National Open University of Nigeria; NOUN, n.d, p. 9). This assertion by the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is true as in business one is either rendering service or selling goods to make money. Hence, business is all about the exchange of goods and services for profit making. It is classified in terms of their ownership as Sole proprietorship, Partnership, Corporation; classified in terms of size as Micro scale businesses, Small scale businesses, Mid-size or Medium scale businesses, and Large-scale businesses; and by grouping related businesses into one industry. It is important to note that whether a macro, small, medium or large scale business, or a sole proprietorship, partnership or corporation, or whichever industry of business, the establishment of a business is a no mean feat. It involves certain activities which are: identifying the business opportunity, conducting a market research, deciding on the business location, deciding on the business structure/model, determining the business audience/target market, determining the suppliers/source of raw materials, preparing a business plan, funding the business, registering the business, and bringing others into the business (investors, partners, associates, employees, clients/customers). Thus, opportunity plays an indispensable role in business. Hence, Aashish (2023) asserted that opportunity is a necessity to the success of any business, because without it businesses cannot begin, expand or even succeed, and thus every business without an opportunity is bound to fail.

A service-based business opportunity involves intangible items that cannot be embraced with any of the sense organs. It entails rendering services and being paid for the service. Schofield and Hill (2021) defined it as a business opportunity that offers intangible items which are typically provided by an individual. According to them, the service-based business comprises persons who deliver the work or assist in completing a task for the good and satisfaction of the customer. It is, therefore, made up of personal labour and the expertise required for the work to be done. In supporting this, it was explained in the article *What is a Service Business?* (2022) as providing personal labour and expertise rather than physical products. The opportunities include: laundry, cleaning, marketing, entertainment, consulting, logistics and delivery services amongst others. It is advantageous, especially for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State, as they are less expensive to open and operate; have flexible working hours; are easily scalable as they grow rapidly without requiring significant resources; are adaptable; help others to save time, focus on their goal and core operation, and increase their efficiency.

Statement of the Problem

As fund remains an important factor in schooling, the acquisition of an alternative source of fund becomes imperative in the dwindling global economy as observed in Rivers State. This is so as entrepreneurship has being adopted as a veritable tool in tackling the societal menace of unemployment, as well as a veritable tool for wealth creation and poverty alleviation, thereby resulting to the inclusion of entrepreneurship as a compulsory course of study in the Nigerian university system. However, this entrepreneurship education has not been fully maximized by the recipient, most especially the Business Education students in whose programme is domiciled the entrepreneurship education. This poor utilisation of the entrepreneurship education may be associated with the structure, composition and delivery pattern of the course, as the graduates are unable to recognise business opportunities, develop business ideas, raise capital, source for investors or partners, and/or develop business ideologies that will help to define their goals, formulate policies and, select and implement best international practices. Therefore, it is in solving these problems of scarcity of fund and poorly utilised entrepreneurship education that this study explored service-based business opportunities that can serve as alternative sources of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study is aimed at exploring service-based business opportunities that can serve as alternative sources of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State. Specifically, it sought to:

- Ascertain service-based business opportunities that can serve as alternative sources of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State;
- Determine the factors to be considered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund;
- Determine the challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund; and
- Proffer solutions to the challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund.

Research Questions

Four research questions guided this study:

- What are the service-based business opportunities that can serve as alternative sources of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State?
- What are the factors to be considered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?

- What are the challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?
- What are the solutions to the challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?

Hypotheses

Four corresponding hypotheses further guided that study:

- There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on service-based business opportunities that can serve as alternative sources of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on the factors to be considered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund.
- There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on the challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund.
- There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on the solutions to the challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a Descriptive Survey Research Design. Its population comprised all forty-five (45) Business Education lecturers in universities in Rivers State. A Census Sampling technique was adopted to sample the entire population for the study, representing 100% of the population. The data for the study was collected using a twenty (20) items self-structured close-ended questionnaire titled Exploring Service-based Business Opportunities Questionnaire (ESBOQ). The questionnaire items were constructed using a Modified 4-point Likert Scale, having Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The instrument (Questionnaire) was subjected to a validity assessment by presenting the instrument to two (2) lecturers with high competence in educational research methods and statistics, as well as test and measurement, most especially from Business Education. It was also subjected to a reliability test by adopting the test-retest method of determining reliability. The result, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC), showed that the instrument was highly reliable, with a coefficient of stability of 0.85. Mean and Percentage were adopted as descriptive statistical tools to analyse the respondents' responses in order to give answers to the research questions, while Independent Samples t-Test was adopted as an inferential statistical tool to test the null hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05 (5%).

RESULTS

Research Question One: What are the service-based business opportunities that can serve as alternative sources of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean Responses and Percentage of Respondents' Responses on Service-based Business Opportunities that can serve as Alternative Sources of Fund for Business Education Students in Universities in Rivers State

S/N	Service-based Business Opportunities	\bar{x}	%a	%d	Remark
1	Laundry service is a service-based business opportunity that can serve as alternative source of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State.	3.51	100	0	Agree
2	Event management service is a service-based business opportunity that can serve as alternative source of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State.	3.60	100	0	Agree
3	Consultancy service is a service-based business opportunity that can serve as alternative source of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State.	3.33	100	0	Agree
4	Delivery service is a service-based business opportunity that can serve as alternative source of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State.	3.31	100	0	Agree
5	Cleaning service is a service-based business opportunity that can serve as alternative source of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State.	3.36	100	0	Agree
Aggregate		3.42	100	0	Agree

From table 1, it is seen that 100% of the respondents agreed with the questionnaire items. This is as items 1-5 have means of 3.51, 3.60, 3.33, 3.31, and 3.36 respectively, which are above the criterion mean of 2.50, thereby giving an aggregate mean of 3.42. It, therefore, implies that there are service-based business opportunities that can serve as alternative sources of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State. Amongst these opportunities are: Laundry, Event Management, Consultancy, Delivery, and Cleaning services.

Research Question Two: What are the factors to be considered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?

It can be seen from Table 2 that 100% of the respondents agreed to all the questionnaire items. This is supported with items 6-10 which have means of 3.0, 4.0, 3.49, 3.58, and 3.53 respectively, which are above the criterion mean of 2.50, and have an aggregate mean of 3.52 as shown on the table, thereby implying acceptance. Thus, although there are service-based business opportunities that can serve as alternative sources of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State, there are factors which are to be considered when choosing any of the service-based business opportunities. These factors as agreed by the respondents are the student's time of study, expertise and location, as well as market demand and availability of resources. These factors, therefore, will determine the choice of opportunity.

Table 2: Mean Responses and Percentage of Respondents' Responses on Factors to be considered by Business Education Students in Universities in Rivers State when choosing any Service-based Business Opportunity as Alternative Source of Fund

S/N	Factors to be considered when choosing any Service-based Business Opportunity	\bar{x}	%a	%d	Remark
6	The student's time of study is a factor to be considered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	3.0	100	0	Agree
7	The student's expertise is a factor to be considered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	4.0	100	0	Agree
8	The student's location is a factor to be considered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	3.49	100	0	Agree
9	Market demand is a factor to be considered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	3.58	100	0	Agree
10	Availability of resources is a factor to be considered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	3.53	100	0	Agree
Aggregate		3.52	100	0	Agree

Research Question Three: What are the challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?

Table 3: Mean Responses and Percentage of Respondents' Responses on Challenges that may be encountered by Business Education Students in Universities in Rivers State when venturing into any Service-based Business Opportunity as Alternative Source of Fund

S/N	Challenges that may be encountered when venturing into any Service-based Business Opportunity	\bar{x}	%a	%d	Remark
11	The student's time of study is a challenge that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	3.11	100	0	Agree
12	The student's expertise is a challenge that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	3.62	100	0	Agree
13	The student's location is a challenge that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	2.76	75.6	24.4	Agree
14	Low market demand is a challenge that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	3.96	100	0	Agree
15	Unavailability of resources is a challenge that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	3.82	100	0	Agree
Aggregate		3.45	95.12	4.88	Agree

As there are factors to be considered (Table 2), so there are challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-

based business opportunity as alternative source of fund. This is so as it is seen from table 3 that a larger percentage of the respondents which is about 95.12% agreed to the questionnaire items with only about 4.88% disagreeing. Also, as items 11-15 have means of 3.11, 3.62, 2.76, 3.96, and 3.82 respectively, which are above the criterion mean of 2.50, and having an aggregate mean of 3.45, implying acceptance. As shown on the table, only questionnaire item 13 that is concerned with student's location was disagreed by about 24.4% of the respondents. However, about 75.6% of the respondents agreed that the student's location is a challenge that may be encountered when choosing any service-based business opportunity, implying acceptance of the questionnaire item. Therefore, the challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund as agreed by the respondents are the student's time of study, expertise and location, as well as low market demand and unavailability of resources.

Research Question Four: What are the solutions to the challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?

Table 4: Mean Responses and Percentage of Respondents' Responses on Solutions to the challenges that may be encountered by Business Education Students in Universities in Rivers State when venturing into any Service-based Business Opportunity as Alternative Source of Fund

S/N	Solutions to the challenges that may be encountered when venturing into any Service-based Business Opportunity	\bar{x}	%a	%d	Remark
16	Choosing a flexible business opportunity is the solution to the challenge of the student's time of study which may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	4.0	100	0	Agree
17	Choosing a business opportunity that the student has the requisite expertise is the solution to the challenge of the student's expertise which may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	3.62	100	0	Agree
18	Choosing a business opportunity that has nothing to do with the student's location is the solution to the challenge of the student's location which may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	2.91	62.2	37.8	Agree
19	Choosing a business opportunity that is in high demand is the solution to the challenge of low market demand which may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	3.0	100	0	Agree
20	Choosing a business opportunity in line with the available resources is the solution to the challenge of unavailability of resources which may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund?	3.47	73.3	26.7	Agree
Aggregate		3.40	87.1	12.9	Agree

As seen from table 4, a large percentage of the respondents, which is about 87.1%, agreed to the questionnaire items. Only about 12.9% of the respondents disagreed. However, the aggregate mean of the responses is given at 3.40, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, because items 16-20 have means of 4.0, 3.62, 2.91, 3.0, and 3.47 respectively, thereby implying acceptance of the questionnaire items. Nevertheless, questionnaire items 18 and 20 which are choosing a business opportunity that has nothing to do with the student's location, and choosing a business opportunity in line with the available resources respectively, were disagreed by 37.8% and 26.7% of the respondents respectively. That notwithstanding, 62.2% and 73.3% of the respondents respectively agreed to the questionnaire items, which implies acceptance of the questionnaire items by majority of the respondents. It therefore, implies that choosing a flexible business opportunity, choosing a business opportunity that the student has the requisite expertise, choosing a business opportunity that has nothing to do with the student's location, choosing a business opportunity that is in high demand, and choosing a business opportunity in line with the available resources are solutions to the challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on service-based business opportunities that can serve as alternative sources of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State.

Table 5: t-test result of the difference between the mean responses of male and female business education lecturers on service-based business opportunities that can serve as alternative sources of fund for business education students in universities in Rivers State

Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	Decision
Male	29	3.35	0.33	43	-1.709	2.0167	Accept
Female	16	3.55	0.40				

$p \leq 0.05$

As seen from table 5, the null hypothesis is accepted. This is because the calculated value of t_{cal} is -1.709, whereas the critical value of t_{crit} at a degree of freedom (df) of 43 and significance level (two-tailed) of 0.05, is given at ± 2.0167 . Thus, based on the rule that the null hypothesis is accepted if the calculated t value falls between -2.0167 and 2.0167 (i.e., less than 2.0167 and greater than -2.0167), and rejected if the reverse is the case, the null hypothesis is accepted as t_{cal} of -1.709 is less than 2.0167, but greater than -2.0167 ($t_{cal} < t_{crit}$).

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on the factors to be considered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund.

Table 6: t-test result of the difference between the mean responses of male and female business education lecturers on factors to be considered by business education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund

Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	Decision
Male	29	3.60	0.42	43	0.079	2.0167	Accept
Female	16	3.59	0.40				

$p \leq 0.05$

As seen from table 6, the null hypothesis is accepted. This is because the calculated value of t (t_{cal}) is 0.079, whereas the critical value of t (t_{crit}) at a degree of freedom (df) of 43 and significance level (two-tailed) of 0.05, is given at ± 2.0167 . Thus, based on the rule that the null hypothesis is accepted if the calculated t value falls between -2.0167 and 2.0167 (i.e., less than 2.0167 and greater than -2.0167), and rejected if the reverse is the case, the null hypothesis is accepted as t_{cal} of 0.079 is less than 2.0167, but greater than -2.0167 ($t_{cal} < t_{crit}$).

Ho₃: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on the challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund.

Table 7: t-test result of the difference between the mean responses of male and female business education lecturers on challenges that may be encountered by business education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund

Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	Decision
Male	29	3.41	0.49	43	-0.710	2.0167	Accept
Female	16	3.53	0.57				

$p \leq 0.05$

As seen from table 7, the null hypothesis is accepted. This is because the calculated value of t (t_{cal}) is -0.710, whereas the critical value of t (t_{crit}) at a degree of freedom (df) of 43 and significance level (two-tailed) of 0.05, is given at ± 2.0167 . Thus, based on the rule that the null hypothesis is accepted if the calculated t value falls between -2.0167 and 2.0167 (i.e., less than 2.0167 and greater than -2.0167), and rejected if the reverse is the case, the null hypothesis is accepted as t_{cal} of -0.710 is less than 2.0167, but greater than -2.0167 ($t_{cal} < t_{crit}$).

Ho₄: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on the solutions to the challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund.

Table 8: t-test result of the difference between the mean responses of male and female business education lecturers on solutions to the challenges that may be encountered by business education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund

Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	Decision
Male	29	3.43	0.43	43	0.596	2.0167	Accept
Female	16	3.34	0.51				

$p \leq 0.05$

As seen from table 8, the null hypothesis is accepted. This is because the calculated value of t (t_{cal}) is 0.596, whereas the critical value of t (t_{crit}) at a degree of freedom (df) of 43 and significance level (two-tailed) of 0.05, is given at ± 2.0167 . Thus, based on the rule that the null hypothesis is accepted if the calculated t value falls between -2.0167 and 2.0167 (i.e., less than 2.0167 and greater than -2.0167), and rejected if the reverse is the case, the null hypothesis is accepted as t_{cal} of 0.596 is less than 2.0167, but greater than -2.0167 ($t_{cal} < t_{crit}$).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that there are service-based business opportunities that can serve as alternative sources of fund for Business Education students in universities in Rivers State. These service-based business opportunities include: Laundry, Event management, Consultancy, Delivery and Cleaning services. This finding is agreed upon by both the male and female respondents (lecturers) as there is no significant difference between their mean responses. Thus, it substantiates that of Muhammad et al. (2022) which revealed that food delivery services drive business financial performance of culinary businesses, thereby implying that an increase in food delivery services will increase the financial performance of culinary businesses. Hence, the opportunity is open for more entrants into the delivery service business, as more delivery services bring about high financial performance. Similarly, in another study, it was revealed that delayed delivery of purchased products affects users' trust and satisfaction on e-commerce services (Afolayan & Ayanwuyi, 2021), implying that if there are more delivery persons or agencies, the delay will be curbed, and users' trust and satisfaction will be enhanced. Therefore, Business Education students in universities in Rivers State can venture into delivery services as the opportunities are abound. More so, Bruhn et al. (2013) in their own study revealed that providing Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with management consulting services will increase their managerial capital and lead to a better performance of the firms. By this, it implies that consultancy services are important and as such needed for the growth of SMEs. To this end, Business Education students in universities in Rivers State can venture into it to generate alternative source of fund for themselves, as the opportunities are abound. Furthermore, Jimenez et al. (n.d) revealed from their study that the monthly income of laundry business ranges from php20,000.00 to php100,000.00, implying that laundry service-based businesses have the capacity to generate alternative fund for Business Education students in all universities in Rivers State.

Also, Toit (2022) revealed that people who live alone, either as a childless couple or in an empty-nest household, use outsourced domestic cleaning services, while those with children rely on personal help for caregiving services but outsource less emotional domestic duties to

domestic cleaning service companies. This finding showed that the service of domestic cleaning remains relevant, and thus the opportunity is open for more entrants into the business. Therefore, Business Education students in universities in Rivers State can venture into cleaning services as alternative source of fund, as the opportunities are abound. The implication of the finding, therefore, is that Business Education students in universities in Rivers State can exploit service-based business opportunities around them, as a way of generating alternative fund for themselves.

More so, there are factors to be considered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund. These factors as revealed from the study are: Student's time, Student's expertise, Student's location, Market demand, and Availability of resources. This finding is agreed upon by both the male and female respondents (lecturers) as there is no significant difference between their mean responses. It supports Podeschi (2020) who revealed that starting and running a student-run venture is admittedly time consuming. Therefore, there is need to consider time in choosing the service-based business opportunity to venture into as a Business Education student. As a matter of fact, education, social and economic environment, access to resources were revealed by Thoti (2023) as contributing to young people's decisions to pursue entrepreneurship. Furthermore, entrepreneurial confidence, entrepreneurial orientation, university support for entrepreneurship, and cultural support for entrepreneurship were revealed as determinants for students to start their own businesses (Pauceanu et al., 2019). Thus, all these go to show that certain factors should be considered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund. Therefore, the implication is that the students should consider their time, expertise, location, the prevailing market demand, and the availability of resources when settling for any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund.

Furthermore, there are challenges that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund. These challenges as revealed from the study include: the student's time, expertise and location; low market demand, and unavailability of resources. This finding is agreed upon by both the male and female respondents (lecturers) as there is no significant difference between their mean responses. It supports Kvedaraite (2014) who revealed that lack of information on starting a business is a challenge to Lithuanian higher education institution students in engaging in business. Podeschi (2020) from his finding revealed that student's time is a challenge to starting and running a student-run enterprise. Similarly, lack of experience, insufficient financial resources amongst others were revealed by Thoti (2023) as issues that confront young entrepreneurs. In same vein, lack of resources, being a student while running a business, lack of knowledge, lack of entrepreneurial and administrative skills amongst others were revealed as difficulties facing student entrepreneurs (Guitoi & Abbas, 2021). Although Bakheet (2018) from his own study revealed that students do not consider inaccessibility of loan, lack of technology, and their inability as hurdles in starting and running a new business, challenges still subsist which Business Education students in universities in Rivers State may encounter when choosing any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund. The finding, therefore, implies that these students should be aware of these challenges and devise measures to surmount them as they choose any service-based business opportunity to venture into.

In addition, there are solutions to the challenges (as already revealed) that may be encountered by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund. These solutions according to the result of the study are: choosing a flexible business opportunity, choosing business opportunity that one has the requisite expertise, choosing business opportunity that has nothing to do with one's location, choosing business opportunity that is in high demand, and choosing business opportunity in line with one's available resources. This finding is agreed upon by both the male and female respondents (lecturers) as there is no significant difference between their mean responses. Hence, it supports the finding of Bakheet (2018) that enterprise education is a requirement for nurturing entrepreneurship among Oman students at program and course levels, thereby solving the problem of low expertise. Thus, entrepreneurial confidence, entrepreneurial orientation, university support for entrepreneurship, and cultural support for entrepreneurship are solutions to the challenges students face in starting their own businesses (Panceanu et al., 2019). The entrepreneurial orientation and confidence will solve the problem of low expertise, university support will solve the problem of time and unavailability of resources, while cultural support will solve the problem of low market demand as well as unavailability of resources. In addition, flexible schedules, personal skills, entrepreneurial capabilities amongst others were revealed by Guitoi and Abbas (2021) as solving the challenges of student entrepreneurs. Therefore, the solutions of: choosing a flexible business opportunity, choosing business opportunity that one has the requisite expertise, choosing business opportunity that has nothing to do with one's location, choosing business opportunity that is high in demand, and choosing business opportunity in line with one's available resources should be adopted by Business Education students in universities in Rivers State in order to surmount the challenges that may be encountered when venturing into any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund. The implication is, therefore, that Business Education students in universities in Rivers State should not be deterred or perturbed by any challenge that may come their way as they choose service-based business opportunities to venture into, but rather adopt the solution as revealed, solve the challenge, venture into the business, and generate alternative sources of fund for themselves.

CONCLUSION

Although there are factors to be considered, and challenges that may be encountered, Business Education students in universities in Rivers State can exploit service-based business opportunities around them, as a way of generating alternative sources of fund for themselves.

Recommendations

- Business Education students in universities in Rivers State should exploit service-based business opportunities as alternative sources of fund.
- Business Education students in universities should consider their time, expertise, and location, as well as the market demand and available resources before choosing to exploit any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund.
- Business Education students in universities in Rivers State should not be deterred or perturbed by any challenge they encounter when choosing to exploit any service-based business opportunity as alternative source of fund.

- Business Education students in universities in Rivers State should choose service-based business opportunities that: are flexible, they have the required expertise, have nothing to do with their location, are high in demand, and are in line with their available resources.

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