

**ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS REQUIRED BY SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL
LEAVERS FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT IN OYO STATE
BY**

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Abstract

The study examined the entrepreneurial skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population comprised 120 senior secondary schools teachers of entrepreneurial skill subjects and secondary school entrepreneurs in Iseyin Local Government Area of Oyo State. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire which was validated by two experts in vocational and technical education. Data collected was analyzed using mean and t-test statistics. The results revealed that management skills, business skills and human relation skills are required by secondary school students for self employment. Based on the findings, it was recommended that conferences, workshops and seminars should be organized by educational bodies and they should focus on business skills required for self-reliance and job creation. Vocational subject teachers should ensure that innovation in management skills, business skills and human relations skills are taught often through demonstration and practical methods to ensure that students graduate with relevant skills required for setting up a business enterprise and managing it effectively and also Government should sponsor the training and retraining of Vocational subject teachers to acquire current entrepreneurship knowledge and skills for self-employment of their students.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial skills and Secondary School*

Introduction

Secondary school education is a form of education that children receive after primary education and before the tertiary institution stage. One of the objectives of secondary education, as stated in the National Policy of Education (2004), is to equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology. Secondary school education also aimed at preparing youths for useful living within the society, for those who are able and willing, and the preparation for higher education (Abdul-Salam, 2007). To achieve the stated objectives, vocational subjects that will enable students to acquire further competencies and develop skills were introduced into the secondary school education programme. However, these subjects expose students to skills and competence that will enable them to be self-reliant. It is a six years course and it is in two stages of three years each, called the junior and senior stages of schools respectively. The Federal Government funds 60% secondary schools and the rest are funded by state governments. The education that is offered at this level has two purposes according to National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004): preparing pupils to exit school with the necessary skills to find jobs and preparing students to continue with academic careers in higher education. Oladipo (2005) observed that if the Nigerian educational system were able to expose the students to subjects in business skills particularly through entrepreneurship education, the students would be able to acquire the entrepreneurial skills for job creation.

Secondary education was designed to offer academic research and community services; it has also been expanded in recent times to incorporate entrepreneurship activities. In this sense, the dynamism of entrepreneurship education needs to be studied to provide useful insights for both the theory and

practice of its pedagogy. In this research, the idea of evaluating the entrepreneurial skills in the secondary school programme is important. Entrepreneurship education is gaining international, national and local recognition as an established field of study, growing in parallel with the interest of policymakers and general students (Küttim, 2014; McLarty, 2005). It represents both academic education and formal training interventions that share a broad objective of providing individuals with the entrepreneurial mindset and skills to support participation and performance of school leavers and the entire citizenry in a wide range of entrepreneurial activities. Nigerian secondary educational system was hitherto designed to produce graduates that depended on the government for employment after graduation. This is in contrast to a system that could equip its beneficiaries with entrepreneurial skills; making them self-reliant, self-confident and employers of labour (Luthje&Franke, 2003). This study is timely; given that the majority of secondary school graduates do not progress to higher education. Also, it is expected that the secondary school programme will be adequately designed to embed entrepreneurial skills through activities and programmes that can help students to develop such skills.

Entrepreneurship is often seen as a way of life because of the ability to make an informed decision and take responsibility for the consequences of the action emanating from that decision. Agomuo (2002) indicated that entrepreneurship is the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas, combining them with management and organization skills to combine people, money, and resources to meet an identified need and thereby create wealth. In the same vein, Akpotowoh and Amahi (2006) opined that skills and competencies acquired in any area of business education promote training in entrepreneurship as well as equip business education students with requisite competencies and skills to establish and run small businesses of their own. Skills, on the other hand, are regarded as knowledge, behaviours and attitudes required to perform a role effectively, most especially in the area of business operation. Business Dictionary (2014) defined competency as a cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge, and skills that enable a person or an organization to act effectively in a job or situation. Competency, according to Iwu (2005) is the performance of discrete tasks identified by functional analysis of task roles. Therefore, it could be inferred that there is a need for proper integration of entrepreneurial skills into the secondary school programme to enable the senior secondary school students acquire basic entrepreneurial skills for better and efficient business performance. Such skills include managerial skills, business skills, and human relation skills. It is clear that from the events of today's business environment, entrepreneurial skills should be integrated into the secondary school programme in order to prepare graduates for future challenges in their respective business enterprises. It is with this view that this study examines the entrepreneurial skills that should be embedded into the secondary school programme for the entrepreneurial development of senior secondary school students.

Entrepreneurship is all about self-development, and self-reliance that will generate employment opportunities. Gana (2001) sees entrepreneurship as an ability to seek investment opportunities and establish an enterprise based on identified opportunities. While, Robert (1985), cited in Baba (2013) defined entrepreneurship as the process of creating something different with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, and social risk and receiving monetary and personal satisfaction. Also, Suleiman (2006) looked at entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities, establish and run it successfully. Furthermore, Evans-Obinna (2016) viewed entrepreneurship education as the ability to perceive and undertake business opportunities, taking advantage of scarce resources utilization. Therefore,, entrepreneurship can be viewed as, how to plan, organize, manage and take the risk of establishing a new business. Unachukwu (2009) paraphrased the concept of entrepreneurship to be associated with a number of activities including the following: (i) the ability to create and build something from nothing, (ii) the ability of having a vision matched with focus and determination of building an enterprise, (iii) the skills of seeing an opportunity where others fail to do so, (iv) the ability to build working teams to complement your own talents and effort, (v) the ability to aggregate, marshal and control resources judiciously, (vi) the willingness and ability of

innovativeness and creativity, (vii) the willingness to undertake personal and financial risk, (viii) the ability to engage in activities despite all odds and in fact surmounting these odds and possibly turning them into your own favour. From these entire points, one can conclude that entrepreneurship is an act of creating ideas and translating them into reality through innovation and creativity.

Nwangwu (2007) viewed entrepreneurship education as that aspect of education that equips an individual and creates in the person the mindset to undertake the risk of venturing into something new by applying the knowledge and skills acquired in school. Similarly, Kautonen, Down and Minniti (2014) define entrepreneurship education as the structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurship competencies which in turn refers to the concept, skills and mental awareness used by individuals during the process of starting and developing their growth-oriented ventures. Furthermore, Erikson (2002) stated that entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people particularly the youths: to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by immersing them in real learning experience where they can take a risk, manage results and learn from the outcome. While Mwasalwiba et al., (2012) expressed that entrepreneurship education is the training that emphasizes the acquisition and development of appropriate knowledge and skills that will enable an individual to maximize the resources around him and within the limits of his capability. In the words of Luthje and Franke (2003), entrepreneurship education is the systematic development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for an individual to perform adequately in a given business or occupational oriented opportunities for improved performance of a country's economy. Therefore, entrepreneurship education can be seen as an education that inculcates the learners with the right attitudes, skills, creativity, innovation, and risk-bearing in establishing and managing a business venture.

Currently, entrepreneurship education is being offered as compulsory subjects in secondary schools and this introduction of entrepreneurship subject in the secondary school programme is to orient the students on how to be self-reliant, by preparing them with the necessary skills, abilities and ideas on how to establish and manage small business ventures, so that the problem of unemployment in the country will be reduced if not eliminated. The objective of entrepreneurship education as explained by Man, Lau, and Chan (2002) include: provision of meaningful education for youth which will make them self-reliant and subsequently encourage them to derive profit and be self-independent, providing graduates with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium-sized businesses, providing graduates with training skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society, providing graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty bearing possible and easy, stimulating industrial and economic growth of the rural and less developed areas, providing graduates enough training that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities and providing small and medium-sized companies with the opportunity to recruit qualified graduates who will receive training and tutoring in the skills relevant to the management of a business center.

From the above objectives, entrepreneurship education is a kind of education which when fully implemented will provide the students with appropriate skills, knowledge, creativity, ideas, innovation, and ability to be self-dependent if not an employer of labor, which will reduce the rate of unemployment among the youths and eradicate poverty in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Efforts to improve the standard and quality of acquisition of practical skills inherent in vocational education subjects to a maximum level seem to be slowed down by a number of factors such as students' poor attitude, inadequate personnel, inadequate facilities and equipment for teaching and learning of the skills..The above said problems resulted into unemployment and its consequences such as increase in crime rate, insurgency, unfulfilled dreams and suicide bombing. Also, the challenges of

lack of skills for self-employment among secondary school leavers have become worrisome to vocational education teachers. This situation poses a great set back not only to the secondary school leavers but has retarded the growth of the economy of the country as the skills for self-employment is lacking. Hence, the study seeks to examine the entrepreneurial skills that are required by the secondary school students to create jobs for them after graduation.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the entrepreneurial skills required by secondary school leavers for self-employment. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. Managerial skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment.
2. Business skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment.
3. Human relations skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment.

Research Questions

The following questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the managerial skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment?
2. What are the business skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment?
3. What are the human relations skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment?

Hypotheses

The following two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of entrepreneurial skill subject teachers and entrepreneurs on the managerial skills required by the senior secondary school leavers for self-employment.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of entrepreneurial skill subject teachers and entrepreneurs on the business skills required by the senior secondary school leavers for self-employment.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was used in carrying out the study. Descriptive survey design is a method of obtaining information from various groups or persons through a questionnaire or personal views. This design was utilized in this study by collecting data from both secondary school entrepreneurial skill subject teachers and entrepreneurs on the entrepreneurial skills required by the senior secondary school leavers for self-employment. The study was conducted in Iseyin Local Government Area of Oyo State. The population for the study comprised 125 entrepreneurial skill subject teachers and 150 entrepreneurs whose businesses were registered with Oyo State Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a total of sixty 60 entrepreneurial skill subject teachers and seventy 70 entrepreneurs. In this study, entrepreneurial skill subject teachers include teachers and instructors that teach Business subjects, Agricultural Science, Home Economics, Technical subjects, etc. Entrepreneurs are business men and women who are engaged in their private businesses as a means of livelihood and for job creation. The researchers developed a questionnaire titled 'Entrepreneurial Skills required for Self-Employment (ESSE)' which was used for data collection. The first section of the instrument contained three items on personal information of the respondents while the second section comprised 30 items on the study objectives. These items were structured on a 4-point rating scale of highly required (4), Required (3), Fairly Required (2), and Not Required (1). Two experts from the vocational and technical education department validated the instrument. The experts were requested to assess the items of the instrument in terms of clarity and appropriateness in addressing the problem of the study and research questions under investigation. Their comments and corrections were used to restructure the final draft of the instrument of this study.

The Cronbach alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded a value of 0.67. Therefore, the instrument was considered reliable. A total of 120 copies of the questionnaire were received from the respondents by the researchers with the aid of two research assistants. The data generated from the instrument were analyzed using mean to answer each of the three research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. If the calculated t-value is less than the table-value for a given degree of freedom (df), the null hypothesis will not be accepted, but rejected. Any skill statement with a mean rating of 2.50 and above was considered needed and items with mean ratings below 2.50 were considered not needed.

Results

The results of the study are presented based on the research questions and the hypotheses formulated for the study.

Table 1: Mean rating of the responses of the respondents on the managerial skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1.	Good planning skills	2.86	Required
2.	Implementation plans skill for goal attainment	2.63	Required
3.	Coordinating skills for operational efficiency	2.52	Required
4.	Influential skills	2.69	Required
5.	Cooperating skills	2.58	Required
6.	Evaluating skills	2.54	Required
7.	Directing skills	2.71	Required
8.	Time management skills	2.56	Required
9.	Computer application skills	2.67	Required
10.	Inventory control and turnover skills	2.71	Required

Table 1 shows the mean rating of respondents on the managerial skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment. The mean ranges from 2.52 to 2.86. This shows that all the managerial skills are required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment.

Table 2: Mean rating of responses of the respondents on the business skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment

S/N	Items statement	Mean	Decision
1.	Industry / market opportunity recognition skills	2.80	Required
2.	Risk taking skills	2.59	Required
3.	Creativity skills	2.65	Required
4.	Innovative skills	2.63	Required
5.	Gathering of resources skills	2.62	Required
6.	Problem-solving skills	2.60	Required
7.	Networking skills	2.55	Required
8.	Decision-making skills	2.66	Required
9.	Self-Efficacy	2.73	Required
10.	Persistence skills	2.50	Required

Table 2 revealed that the mean rating of respondents on the business skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment falls within the range of 2.50 to 2.80. This shows that all the business skills are required by the senior secondary school leavers for self-employment.

Table 3: Mean rating of the responses of the respondents on the human relations skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment

S/N	Indicate the adequacy level of the following skills:	Mean	Decision
1.	Leadership skills	2.89	Required
2.	Inner control skills	2.53	Required
3.	Motivation and commitment skills	2.55	Required
4.	Courtesy skills	2.54	Required
5.	Ability to learn skills	2.68	Required
6.	Staffing skills	2.73	Required
7.	Office management skills	2.53	Required
8.	Conflict and crisis management skills	2.62	Required
9.	Industrial relations skills	2.51	Required
10.	Listening skills	2.52	Required

Table 3 shows the mean ratings of respondents on the human relations skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment range from 2.53 to 2.89. This shows that human relations skills are required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment.

Table 4: *t*-test analysis on the responses of entrepreneurial skill subject teachers and entrepreneurs on the managerial skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment

Sources of variations	No	Mean	SD	Lev. of Sig	Df	t-cal.	t-crit.	decision
Teachers	56	4.00	1.09	0.05	118	0.15	1.96	accepted
Entrepreneurs	64	4.11	1.20					

Table 4 revealed that at 0.05 level of significance and 118 df, the t-calculated 0.15 is less than the t-critical 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. The researchers therefore concluded that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of entrepreneurial skills subject teachers and entrepreneurs on the management skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment.

Table 5: *t*-test analysis on the responses of entrepreneurial skills subject teachers and entrepreneurs on the business skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment

Sources of variations	No	Mean	SD	Lev. Of Sig	Df	t-cal	t-crit	decision
Teachers	56	3.78	1.09	0.05	118	0.23	1.96	accepted
Entrepreneurs	64	4.00	1.15					

Table 5 revealed that at 0.05 level of significance and 118 df, the t-cal. 0.23 is less than the t-table 1.96. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. The researchers concluded that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of entrepreneurial skills subject teachers and entrepreneurs on business skills required by the senior secondary school leavers for self-employment.

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study have shown the perceptions of the respondents on the entrepreneurial skills required by the senior secondary school leavers for self-employment. The results show that all the identified managerial skills, business skills and human relations skills are required to help the school leavers develop entrepreneurial skills, create new businesses or manage existing businesses and to be able to employ others. A possible interpretation of these findings is that the Nigerian secondary school

authorities should endeavour to make adequate efforts toward ensuring that programmes or activities that promote entrepreneurial skills are embedded and included in the secondary school programme. This can help to develop secondary school leavers in creating new jobs and employing others (Emmanuel et al., 2012; Izedonmi & Okafor, 2010).

The results also show that entrepreneurial education requires adequate restructuring for improvement to expose students to real-life business development and creation skills (Fayolle & Gailly, 2006; Clereq & Arenius, 2006). Another possible interpretation of these findings is that many studies have been interested in the overall benefits of entrepreneurship education or activities and programmes in the Nigerian school system with little or no investigations into entrepreneurial skills that are required by the senior secondary school leavers for self-employment. This is the gap that this study covers in the literature.

The respondents agreed that business skills: Industry / market opportunity recognition skills, risk-taking skills, creativity skills, innovative skills, gathering of resources skills, problem-solving skills, networking skills, decision-making skills, self-efficacy and persistence skills are important to senior secondary school leavers for self-employment. A possible interpretation of the instructive finding shows that the entrepreneurship activities can offer senior secondary school students the theoretical knowledge about business start-ups, and help them to go through the processes of starting new businesses on their own. This shows the importance of adopting innovative teaching approaches during secondary school learning to enable students acquire both the theoretical knowledge and practical skills through active experiments (e.g., business plan writing, tutoring, business registration, seminars or workshops) and reflective observation (e.g. theory lectures). Innovative methods of teaching have various strengths of impact on students (Kolb, 1976; Randolph & Posner, 1979).

According to Mbiewa (2004), entrepreneurial skill can turn graduates into job creators instead of job seekers. This assertion together with the findings of this study indicates the need for the Nigerian secondary school system to revise the programme in order to include entrepreneurial activities and programmes that can enhance students' development of business skills, managerial skills and human relations skills required for self-employment.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurial skills required by senior secondary school leavers for self-employment include business skills, managerial skills and human relations skills. In the Nigerian secondary school system, emphasis should be on acquisition of entrepreneurial skills instead of mere certificates. This can help to strengthen secondary school education in Nigeria and to offer students the saleable skills to create jobs after school. Secondary school teachers should endeavor to use student-centered methods of teaching instead of teacher-centered methods in imparting entrepreneurial skills on the students. Effective teaching of vocational subjects requires the use of adequate classroom management style (Pitan, 2017), such that small group class discussions are encouraged and promoted instead of overcrowded classrooms with students struggling to listen to their teachers. To achieve this, the student-to-teacher ratio should be carefully worked on to ensure that every student's attention is captured by the teacher during the teaching and learning process. The avenues for future research are many, for example, more qualitative studies to have an in-depth understanding of why the Nigerian secondary school system has problems with entrepreneurial skill development activities in secondary schools can be carried out. Also, further studies of a more quantitative nature that can measure and generalize results from a larger sample are necessary.

There is a need to emphasize the importance of embedding more activities and programmes that can enhance students' development of entrepreneurial skills into the programme of Nigerian secondary schools. This can help to equip students with useful skills that can prepare them for profitable business

ventures. Also, the inclusion of activities and programmes that improve students' development of entrepreneurial skills in the secondary schools system will go a long way to reduce poverty, idleness and armed robbery among secondary school leavers as the entrepreneurship activities can enable them to develop knowledge, skills, and competencies for better living and to contribute meaningfully to the society in which they live.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. Conferences, workshops and seminars should be organised by Educational bodies and they should focus on business skills required for self-reliance and job creation. Prospective graduates and unemployed youths should be invited to participate in these activities for the acquisition of business skills required in setting up a business.
2. Vocational subject teachers should ensure that innovation in management skills, business skills and human relations skills are taught often through demonstration and practical methods to ensure that students graduate with relevant skills required for setting up a business and managing it effectively.
3. Government should sponsor the training and retraining of Vocational subject teachers to acquire current entrepreneurship knowledge and skills required for self-employment so that they teach students same.

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