

PERCEPTIONS OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS ON THE RELEVANCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AT THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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The researchers empirically investigated the perceptions of Business Education Students on the relevance of Entrepreneurship Education at the Colleges of Education in Edo State, Nigeria. The main purpose of this research was to find out the perceptions of Business Education students on the relevance of Entrepreneurship Education. In order to empirically investigate this study, the researchers raised three (3) research questions and one (1) hypothesis. Related literatures were reviewed and the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) developed by Shapero and Sokol in 1982 was adapted as the conceptual framework for the study. The framework showed at a glance the various stages and processes that eventually climaxed into business formation. The survey design was used in the study. Eight hundred and ten (810) Business Education students from both Colleges of Education in the state formed the population of the study out of which a sample size of one hundred and sixty two (162) students was selected using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used was the questionnaire titled: Business Education Students' Perceptions of Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire (BESPEEQ) and it was divided into two sections – A and B. Section A consisted of the demographic information of the respondents while section B consisted of thirteen (13) opinion statements structured in 4-point rating scale. The instrument was validated by three (3) experts and the test re-test method of reliability was used in obtaining reliability coefficient of 0.78. The instrument was administered to the respondents with the help of research assistants and the data collated was subjected to statistical analyses. The descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used in analyzing the data. The findings revealed that entrepreneurship education has relevance in entrepreneurship. It also revealed that skills and Entrepreneurship Education have influence on economic development; and that there was no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female business education students on the relevance of entrepreneurship education. One of the recommendations advanced by the researchers was that there should be conscious efforts by educators to properly transmit the entrepreneurial skills to the learners with ease.

Keywords: *Perceptions, Business Education, Entrepreneurship.*

INTRODUCTION

The teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions is of paramount interest to all stakeholders. The National Policy on Education describes education as an instrument 'par excellence' for effecting national development

(FRN, 2004). It is conceived that education is capable of bringing about the desired socio-economic and political changes in the country. The recent call for the inclusion of Entrepreneurship Education in tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria is an indication of its importance to

employment creation; as Nigeria continues to churn out graduates from various institutions that are hardly self-reliant but solely dependent on white collar jobs for sustenance because they lack adequate skills that will make them function effectively and efficiently towards the development of the economy.

In the western world, the need to recognizing entrepreneurship education started to gain prominence immediately after the Second World War. After the World War II that lasted for a period of six (6) years (1939 - 1945), there was evidence of collapse of most of the structures of the economy thereby making it impossible for the Government to fully absorb all the graduates of the educational system. Though the situation during those periods were not the same with what was obtainable in developing countries like Nigeria. The discovery of crude oil at Oloibiri in the 1950s subsequently led to oil boom in the country and there were enough funds in the Government treasury to fully absorb all the graduates of the educational system at various levels. The collapse of the oil boom thereby leading to economic recession in the country with its accompanying problems – unemployment, poverty and social vices redirected the focus of Nigerians. The increasing level of unemployment in the country was what informed the introduction of Entrepreneurship Education in 2006 by the Federal Government to remedy the problems of unemployment, poverty and unrest in the country (Ediagbonya, 2013; Imeokparia & Ediagbonya, 2013).

The Federal Government made the programme compulsory for students of higher education institutions irrespective of area of specialization and in most tertiary institutions, Entrepreneurship Education has been adopted as a compulsory general studies course for students. “The overall objective is to continuously foster entrepreneurship culture and spirit amongst students and faculty with a view to educating them as well as supporting graduates of the system towards establishing and also maintaining sustainable business ventures (Urbano, Aponte & Toledano, 2008). The Minister of education stressed that the National Universities Commission (NUC) was given presidential directives by the Ministry of Education to supervise and coordinate the programme of introducing Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian institutions of higher learning and collaboration with all regulatory bodies of higher institutions - the National Board for Technical Education

(NBTE), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) to be handled by the committee set up by the Federal Government (<http://www.thenigerianvoice.com/nvnews/45849/1/why-we-set-up-entrepreneurship-studies-in-varsities.html>).

As a nation, Nigeria has been working tirelessly since the collapse of oil boom to achieve youth independence, poverty eradication and improved economic status through several reforms and program initiatives such as the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), National Directorate of Employment (NDE) among others. Regrettably, however these programme initiatives aimed at capacity building and utilization may seem, they have not helped in any way to equip young school leavers (Youths) with appropriate skills that will empower them after graduation from school (Okolocha & Okolocha, 2012).

Despite strong economic growth, youth's full-time unemployment rate for 2006-2008 in Nigeria was put at 55.9%. Till today, youth unemployment has continued to be on the increase. Countries like Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, China, India, Korea, to mention but a few, have joined the community of industrialized nations by strengthening their small scale industries, Nigeria is equally trying to join other industrialized countries. It is in a bid to bridge the gap between youth unemployment and job creation that the Federal Ministry of Education made entrepreneurship education one of the compulsory general studies for students in tertiary institutions across the country to inculcate in the youths the spirit of self-reliance, which has become essential for national economic growth and development. The essence of entrepreneurship education is to build in the students entrepreneurship spirit and culture (Akpomi, 2009; Adejimiola & Olufunmilayo, 2009). Entrepreneurship education has emphasis on education for self-employment rather than “education for paid employment”. This kind of education has become so important in Nigeria owing to the high level of unemployment coupled with its accompanying social vices and unrest. It is believed that this kind of education is capable of meaningfully engaging the individuals and making them more productive and useful to themselves and the country at large.

The growth and development of the economy depends largely on the kind of skills that the

graduates of our educational institutions are equipped with. According to Ihebereme (2010), skill acquisition is the process of acquiring or gaining effective and ready knowledge in developing ones aptitude and ability in a particular field. Skill acquisition is one among the policies embarked upon in Nigeria with the sole aim to alleviate poverty, youth restiveness, sophisticated crime and corruption rate; rural – urban drift, unemployment and other social vices. Skill acquisition in Nigerian tertiary education level is meant to equip our students with more practical and less theoretical knowledge on income generating skills. Mbionwu (2008) noted that when youths are given adequate training in skills, they can be self-employed after schooling; hence they become active partners in both community and nation development. The possession of skill is important in preventing youths from becoming social misfit. Ihebereme (2008) opined that skill acquisition (Entrepreneurship) education in Nigerian educational system acts as a rehabilitator, re-orientator, motivator and empowered to the under-privileged (students of poor parents). These skills are described as Entrepreneurial skills (Akudolu, 2010).

Okolocha and Okolocha (2012) described entrepreneurship skills as business skills which one acquires to function effectively in the turbulent business environment as an independent or self-employed person in order to improve one's economic status and the society at large. The result of the study carried out by Okebukola (2006) confirmed that most Nigerian graduates are deficient in self-reliance and entrepreneurial skills. In a similar vein, Anyakoha (1997) as cited by Olumese and Clark (2011) stressed that training for entrepreneurship skill development is not currently well articulated by Nigerian universities. The importance of entrepreneurial skill cannot be over-emphasized since appropriate skill acquisition through entrepreneurship will help to make young school leavers to be self-reliant and boost their economic states. Isike (2008) stated that entrepreneurship has been identified globally and nationally as a tool for generating a sustainable economy which is the core value of the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS). Uloko and Ejinkonye (2010) remarked that when youths are empowered through the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills, there is the possibility that they will use the skills to create new avenues for wealth. Empowering the youths to set up businesses involves proper acquisition of skills

through education and training. In a study carried out by Egwanyenga and Ranor (2012), the authors concluded that the entrepreneurial skills are: managerial skills, accounting and financial competency skills, marketing and sales, general business and human relations skills. The entrepreneurial skills possessed by graduates are perceived in different ways by stakeholders.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Entrepreneurship education which is a sort of intervention programme which was introduced into Nigeria's tertiary education sub-sector in 2006 to remedy the unemployment challenge; and redirect the attention of our youths/graduates towards job creation by instilling in them relevant entrepreneurial skills that will positively grow and develop the economy. The goals and objectives of the programme seem laudable and for these goals and objectives to be achieved, machinery has to be put in place. The relevance of this programme in the curriculum of all tertiary institutions in Nigeria is geared at creating an entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurial spirits in the students. Since the introduction of this programme, there seems to be increase in graduates' unemployment. For instance, the unemployment rate as at 2006 was 5.3 percent but as at 2011, it has risen up to 23.9 percent. Many graduates seem to be roaming the streets in search for white collar jobs. The rate of poverty, corruption and so many other social vices has become worrisome to the government and to every well meaning citizen despite the introduction of entrepreneurship education. This state of affair is of great concern to the researchers and if this trend continues, it will leave no one in doubt to question the relevance of Entrepreneurship Education in the school curriculum.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this research work was to find out the perceptions of Business Education students on the relevance of Entrepreneurship Education. The specific purposes included the following:

- (i) the extent to which entrepreneurial skills acquired have relevance in starting up a business venture;
- (ii) the extent to which entrepreneurship education has relevance on economic development;
- (iii) if there is a significant difference between the perceptions of male and female Business Education students on

the relevance of Entrepreneurship Education.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- (i) to what extent is the entrepreneurial skills acquired have relevance in starting up a business venture?
- (ii) to what extent does Entrepreneurship Education have relevance on economic development?
- (iii) is there a significant difference between the perceptions of male and female Business Education students on the relevance of Entrepreneurship Education?

HYPOTHESIS

Research questions (i) – (v) were answered with descriptive statistics, while research question (vi) was hypothesized. The hypothesis formulated was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female Business Education students on the relevance of Entrepreneurship Education.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this empirical investigation will likely be of great importance to all the stakeholders in the field of education and entrepreneurship education in particular. Some of the stakeholders to benefit from the results of this empirical investigation includes: Government, Researchers, Entrepreneurship Educators/teachers, students, employers of labour, and business consultants.

METHODOLOGY

This section dealt with the methods and procedures the researchers adopted in carrying out this empirical investigation and they were organized under the following sub-headings. This study adopted survey design since it was basically an enquiry into the perceptions of Business Education students' on the relevance of Entrepreneurship Education in Colleges of Education in Edo State. This is in agreement with Nworgu (1991) as cited in Omoroguiwa (2006) that a research survey is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collection and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire population.

The population of this study consisted of all year three Business Education students that offered Entrepreneurship Education in the Colleges of Education in Edo State. The total population was 810 students. The sample size for the study was 162 students representing 20% of the population. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used in drawing up the sample from the entire population and which is considered to be representative of the whole population.

Table 1
Distribution of Population and Sample of Business Education Students in Colleges of Education-Ekiadolor and College of Education-Igubeben

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Population of Business Education Students</i>	<i>Sample Size of Business Education Students</i>	<i>Proportion (%)</i>
College of Education, Ekiadolor	310	62	20
College of Education, Igubeben	500	100	20
Total	810	162	

Source: The Institutions' Admission Officers

The instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was used in eliciting information from the respondents and it was titled: *Business Education Students' Perceptions of Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire (BESPEEQ)*. It was divided into two parts – A and B. Part A consisted of the demographic variables of the respondent while part B consisted of five (5) sections with twenty six (26) opinion statements designed in a 4-Point Rating Scale showing Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD).

The instrument was subjected to content and face validity by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation and Business Education in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin (UNIBEN) and their inputs to the draft instrument were incorporated into the final questionnaire.

A test – re – test method was used in establishing the reliability of the questionnaire. The instrument was administered to twenty (20) respondents in the population who were not part of the sample. It was re-administered after two weeks on the same subject/respondents.

The two scores were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation co-efficient (r) formula and the reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained.

The researchers utilized the face to face method of data collection. The researchers engaged the services of two (2) research assistants who were exposed to a short training on how to go about the data collection in the institutions for the study; the questionnaires were thereafter collated by the researchers.

The descriptive statistics used included; frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation and they were used in answering all the research questions, while t – test was used to analyze the hypothesis formulated for the study at 0.05 level of significance. Any mean value of 2.50 and above was considered as accepted while below 2.50 was considered as rejected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Analysis of Demographic Data

This section was concerned with the presentation and analysis of the demographic variable of the respondents and it was presented in tables. The descriptive statistic adopted in analyzing the demographic variable was the simple percentage (%).

Table 2
Examination of the Demographic Variable

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage (%) of Respondents</i>
Male	47	29.01
Female	115	70.99
Total	162	100

Source: Author's field work

Table 2 showed the examination of the demographic variable of the respondents. Table 1 revealed that a total of 162 students comprising of males and females responded to the questionnaire and a total of forty seven (47) males responded to the questionnaire which represented a total of 29.01% of the sample. A total of one hundred and fifteen (115) females responded to the questionnaire which represented 70.99% of the sample.

Answering of Research Questions

This section was concerned with the analysis and presentation of the data regarding the five questions raised. The descriptive statistics used here were presented in tables and they included mean and standard deviation; and the mean value of 2.50 was used in taking decision.

Research Question One: To what extent is the entrepreneurial skills acquired have relevance in starting up a business venture?

Table 3
Examination of the Relevance of Entrepreneurial skills in Entrepreneurship

<i>S/N Entrepreneurial Skills</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Decision</i>
1. Possession of sound human relations' skills has relevance in setting up entrepreneurial venture.	162	3.33	0.76	Accepted
2. Managerial skills acquired have relevance in ensuring entrepreneurial success.	162	3.43	0.76	Accepted
3. Accounting and financial competency skills acquired have relevance in starting and managing an entrepreneurial venture.	162	3.40	0.71	Accepted
4. Marketing and sales skills possessed as a result of Entrepreneurship Education has relevance in starting and managing a business venture.	162	3.38	0.68	Accepted
5. General business skills possessed as a result of Entrepreneurship Education has relevance in starting and managing a business venture.	162	3.38	0.69	Accepted
Aggregate		3.39	0.72	Accepted

Source: Author's field work

The table 3 showed that all the mean scores are above 2.50 which was the mean score for decision making. The highest mean score of 3.43 was recorded in item 11 while the lowest mean score was recorded in item 10. The aggregate mean and standard deviation are 3.39 and 0.72 respectively.

Since the aggregate mean score is 3.39 and it was above the mean value of 2.50, all the items were therefore accepted which means that entrepreneurial skills has relevance in entrepreneurship.

Table 4
Examination of the Impact of Skills and Entrepreneurship Education on Economic Development

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Influence of skill and Entrepreneurship Education on Economic Development</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Decision</i>
6.	Proper skill acquisition and Entrepreneurship Education programmes can reduce the level of poverty in the country	162	3.42	0.81	Accepted
7.	A well implemented Entrepreneurship Education programmes can create more jobs in the country.	162	3.49	0.76	Accepted
8.	A functional skill acquisition and Entrepreneurship Education programme can reduce the unemployment rate in the country.	162	3.28	0.77	Accepted
9.	A well implemented Entrepreneurship Education programme can reduce the level of insecurity/restiveness resulting from unemployment.	162	3.20	0.73	Accepted
10.	A functional skill acquisition and Entrepreneurship Education programme can accelerate the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).	162	3.43	0.67	Accepted
11.	A well implemented Entrepreneurship Education and skill acquisition programme can reduce the country's dependency on other countries in terms of goods and services.	162	3.38	0.69	Accepted
12.	A well implemented Entrepreneurship Education can boost the per capita income of the country.	162	3.40	0.68	Accepted
13.	A well implemented skill acquisition and Entrepreneurship Education programme can raise the standard of living in the country.	162	3.44	0.77	Accepted
Aggregate			3.38	0.74	Accepted

Source: Author's field work

Research Question Two: To what extent does Entrepreneurship Education have relevance on economic development?

The table 4 showed that all the mean scores are above 2.50 which was the mean score for decision making. The highest mean score of 3.49 was recorded in item 20 while the lowest mean score was recorded in item 22. The aggregate mean and standard deviation are 3.38 and 0.74 respectively. Since the aggregate mean score is 3.38 and it was above the mean value of 2.50, all the items are therefore accepted which means that skills and entrepreneurship education has relevance in Economic development.

Testing of Hypothesis

This section was concerned with the analysis and presentation of the data regarding the hypothesis. The independent t-test was used in the analysis of the hypothesis with respect to the two samples. The level of significance was 0.05 and any calculated t-value less than the critical t-value led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis and vice versa.

Hypothesis : There is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female Business Education students on the relevance of Entrepreneurship Education.

The table 5 showed the t-test analysis of the data collated. The mean value for females and

Table 5
Examination of the Perceptions of Male and Female Business Education Students on the Relevance of Entrepreneurship Education

<i>Sex</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Level of significance</i>	<i>Degree of Freedom</i>	<i>t-test calculated</i>	<i>Critical t</i>	<i>Decision</i>
Female	115	81.90	0.05	160	-0.1429	1.960	Not Significant (NS)
Male	47 162	85.34					

males was 81.90 and 85.34 respectively and the calculated value of t is -0.1429. The critical value of t at 0.05 level of significance and 160 degree of freedom is 1.960. Since the calculated value of -0.1429 was less than the critical value of 1.960, the null hypothesis (H_0) was therefore accepted. That is, there is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female Business Education students on the relevance of Entrepreneurship education at the colleges of education.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis of the research questions raised in the study and the hypothesis have revealed some interesting findings that are worth considering and discussing based on some relevant literature to either corroborate or contradict the findings. They are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The analysis of research question one revealed that entrepreneurial skills have relevance in entrepreneurship. It showed that the possession of human relations, managerial and accounting skills acquired have relevance in starting and managing an entrepreneurial venture. The findings also stressed that the possession of marketing/sales skills and general business skills possessed as a result of entrepreneurship education have relevance in starting up and managing a business venture; and ensuring entrepreneurial success. This finding is in agreement with Ewubare (2010) where the author stressed that entrepreneurial skills have relevance in creating and developing enterprises in various areas. The finding is also widely supported by Akudolu (2010).

The analysis of research question two revealed that skills and entrepreneurship education have influence on economic development. The findings revealed great positive influence that a well-implemented and functional entrepreneurship education can enhance economic development.. The findings showed that proper skill acquisition and entrepreneurship education programmes can reduce the level of poverty in the economy. This is in support of Ewubare (2011), Akpomi (2009), Kalirajan (2009) and Ewhrudjakpor (2008). The authors stressed that entrepreneurship education can help in addressing the level of poverty in the country by actively engaging and empowering the graduates of educational system. In support of this finding, Uloko and Ejinkonye (2010) remarked that when youths are empowered through the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills, there is the possibility that they will use the skills to create new

avenues for wealth. The finding also showed that entrepreneurship education has influence in creating more jobs thereby reducing the level of unemployment in the country. This finding is in support of Akpomi (2009), Adejimola and Olufunmilayo (2009). Akpomi (2006) in support of this finding stressed that the essence of entrepreneurship education is to build in the students entrepreneurship spirit and culture in order to bridge the gap between youth unemployment and job creation. This finding also support Mbionwu (2008) where the author stressed that when youths are given adequate training in skills, they can be self-employed after schooling, hence they become active partners in both community and national development. Another finding worth mentioning is that a well implemented entrepreneurship education can reduce youth/restiveness resulting from unemployment. This finding is in line with Babalola (2010) where the author stressed that the insecurity is a fall-out of poor skill acquisition and entrepreneurship education programme.

The analysis of the hypothesis clearly showed that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female Business Education students on the relevance of Entrepreneurship Education. This finding may be as a result of the age level of the respondents or because of the fact that they are all exposed to same teachings and orientation on Entrepreneurship Education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings the following recommendations are therefore made:

- (i) Government should provide accessible and affordable loan facilities for graduates of the entrepreneurship programme;
- (ii) There should be conscious efforts by educators to properly transmit the entrepreneurial skills to the learners with ease;
- (iii) All bodies and stakeholders should ensure that there is proper implementation of entrepreneurship education in order to achieve its goals;
- (iv) There should be proper mentoring relationship between successful entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs so as to get necessary assistance from the mentor; and

- (v) The learners should be given the needed support and encouragement to produce goods and services in order to reduce over dependency ratio.

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