

Principals' Perception of Entrepreneurship Education as a Management Strategy for Economic Security in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study x-rayed the perception of principals of public senior secondary schools on the role of Entrepreneurship education as a strategy for economic security in Rivers State. Three research questions were utilized for the study while the design of the study was descriptive survey design. Data was analyzed with mean and rank order. Findings revealed that entrepreneurship education is a strategy for economic security, However, findings revealed that although there are many challenges facing entrepreneurship education there were prospects. The study finally recommended that government should improve funding among others.

Key words: Entrepreneurship Education, Management Strategy; Economic Security.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

Education has been acknowledged as one of the powerful tools for changing the world. It opens the door for individuals to participate and contribute to economic development and self sufficiency. The participation of the individual in creating wealth and contributing to economic development is a gate way to the individual's economic security, Etuk and Ekpo (2008) stated that "when people are denied educational opportunities, they are excluded from the development process". The resultant effect of this exclusion is insecurity.

Nwogu and Nnorom (2013) submitted that security is an important aspect of the corporate existence, health and happiness of an individual or nation. To be secured, an individual or a nation is economically free to follow choice of policies to develop his or her economy.

In another dimension, Sunstein (2000) corroborated the submissions of Roosevelt, who argued that security "means not only physical security which provides safety from attacks by aggressors" but economic security, social security, moral security" and concluded that "freedom from fear is eternally linked with freedom from want". In view of this, Sunstein (2000) posited that:

The right to good education is the most obvious example. By elevating a good education to the status of a right, Roosevelt meant to emphasize several points: that in many domains, education is indispensable to decent prospects in life; that it is a basic safe guard of individual security; that those who are well-educated are less likely to fall, and, if they do, are more likely to pick themselves up; and education is necessary for citizenship itself....

(p. 2).

Therefore economic security as defined by the International Labour Organization (Ilo) "is composed of basic security defined by access to basic needs, infrastructure pertaining to health, education, dwelling, information and social protection as well as work related security". It includes income security representation security, labour market security, employment security, job security, work security and skill reproduction security. (Ilo 2013)

The national policy on education aptly recognized the relevance of education to the development of the individual and nation and endorsed that Nigeria's policy thrust for education will be geared towards using education as an instrument for achieving:

- A. a free and democratic society
- B. a just and egalitarian society
- C. a united, strong and self reliant nation
- D. a great and dynamic economy
- E. a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens. (FRN. 2004)

In order to achieve these, the policy articulated "the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society" (FRN. 2004).

The acquisition and inculcation of these appropriate skills calls for a shift from the grammar and theoretical oriented education to entrepreneurial education.

2. Role of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education according to Akinseinde (2011) “is the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize business opportunities and the insight, self esteem, knowledge and skills to act on them”. It involves the translation and transforming of an idea into reality. This implies that the initiative, drive and ability to become an entrepreneur is dormant in all humans but awaits reactivation.

This perception was acknowledged by traditional African education for as Fafunwa (2004) rightly observed:

One very significant point that should be mentioned about the traditional African education is the training of the handicapped person in order to make him a contributing member of society. The lame and hunch back, for example are taught sedentary occupations such as weaving, or carving, or blacksmithery. Such persons are also often trained as priests, barbers, native doctors and the like particularly among the Yoruba(p22).

In view of the above, Mamman (2011), Affanga, Egwuasi and Mfon (2011) and Ighalo (2011) summarized the roles of entrepreneurship education to include job creation, identification of individual skills, maintenance of free enterprise, promotion of healthy competition, general wealth and the spreading of general prosperity. Other roles identified include, ensuring innovation and creativity, encouraging grass root development social progress and growth.

Furthermore, Effanga, Egwuasi and Mfon (2011) added that entrepreneurship education will further enable individuals to find sustainable solutions to overcoming the injustices of poverty as evidenced by malnutrition, low-life expectancy, poor educational attainment, poor access to water, in adequate health care and exclusion from the benefits of economic and technological progress.

3. Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education

Life is full of challenges and entrepreneurship education is not left out. Economic security involves the ability of an individual or nation to have and sustain stable standard of living which enables an individual or state to have access to an economically, politically, socially and cultural comfort in his environment.

This comfort involves the ability to have access to food, shelter, clothing as well as other necessities of life .The challenge of entrepreneurship education to actualize these are enormous.

Alumode and Nwite (2011) observed that the challenges of entrepreneurship education include irrelevant curriculum, lack of finance, and inconsistent government policies. Ighalo (2011) , Salami (2011) and Abraham and Nwogu (2009) further identified lack of information on areas of business, lack of infrastructure and facilities, lack of manpower, poor conditions of service, lack of motivation, time pressures, monopoly, patent inhibitions amongst others as some of the challenges of entrepreneurship education.

4. Prospects of Entrepreneurship Education

Effective management of entrepreneurship education helps in the preparation of graduates for self employment. Adeogun (2003) submitted that education achieves this purpose by promoting technical changes, productivity and incomes through the acquisition of skills; it also ensures social and economic mobility of its recipients thereby creating social cohesion, stability and democratic values.

Baiyelo (2011) further lends credence to the role of education for self reliance when he stated that “a major foundation for self reliance and life coping skills is science and technology and mathematics (STM) teaching and learning”. To him this is the basis for an appropriate education which prepares the students for the future. In realization of this fact, Babalola (2011) as a way of giving hope to the prospects of entrepreneurship education observed that “it is now a policy of the National Universities Commission (NUC) to encourage Nigerian Universities to provide entrepreneurship education for under graduates so that they can be self employable after graduation”. In other to actualize this, steps have been taken to redesign curriculum so that there can be a good balance between theory and practice. There is a massive improvement by all stakeholders in investment in entrepreneurship education because of the rising threats of unemployment which according to Alumode and Onuma (2011) has increased the incidence of terrorism, armed robbery, political thurggery, petty stealing, drug peddling and a host of other vices. This is true because Burchi (2013) submitted that:

basic education, and not training or vocational education, can improve the capacity of individuals to live a decent life and to escape from the hunger trap. The basic idea is that being educated improves rural people’s capacity to diversity of assets and activities, to access information on health and sanitation, to enhance human agency in addition to increasing productivity.... (P 1).

5. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study is centered on Maslows (1970) motivation theory. Maslows need hierarchy is based on three postulations. He contends that human needs are universal and are arranged in

hierarchy. That unfulfilled needs act as motivators and that lower order needs must be satisfied before a craving for higher order need.

According to Maslow, the most important needs are the basic needs which include physiological needs (food, shelter and clothing), security needs (protection from danger and threat, freedom from fear, anxiety, chaos, need for structure, order, law, limits and stability). Other needs like love, self esteem and self actualization are needed when the lower order needs are satisfied.

In view of this, the study relates to this theory because an individual who does not have economic security cannot crave for other needs.

6. Statement of the problem

Education is one of the basic foundations for economic development of the individual and society while entrepreneurship education acts as the driver because of its emphasis on skill acquisition, attitudes and behaviours. Unfortunately, the increasing number of unemployed graduates from the nation's institutions has created economic, social, political and security challenges in Nigeria. Many stakeholders have been agitated on the type of education received by the graduates since education has been established as an instrument for economic mobility and security.

As a response to this situation, there is an increasing emphasis on entrepreneurship education, the research therefore bothers on the role of entrepreneurship education as a management strategy for economic security, the challenges and prospects.

7. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the perception of principals on entrepreneurship education as a strategy for economic security in Rivers State. Principally, the study was centered on:

- (1) The role of entrepreneurship education in economic security in Rivers State.
- (2) The challenges facing entrepreneurship education.
- (3) The prospects of entrepreneurship education.

8. Research Questions

Based on the above purposes, the following research questions were formulated.

- (1) What are the perceptions of principals of public senior secondary schools on the role of entrepreneurship education as a strategy for economic security in Rivers State?
- (2) What are the perceptions of principals of public senior secondary schools on the challenges facing entrepreneurship education as a strategy for economic security in Rivers State?
- (3) What are the perceptions of principals of public senior secondary schools on the prospects of entrepreneurship education as a strategy for economic security in Rivers State?

9. Delimitation

The study was delimited to the perception of principals on entrepreneurship education as a strategy for economic security in Rivers State. It was delimited to the role, challenges and prospects.

10. Methodology

10.1 Design: The design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey design.

10.2 Population The population of the study comprised 236 public senior secondary school principals in Rivers State.

10.3. Sample and sampling technique

Out of the 236 public senior secondary school principals, a sample of 120 representing 50.85% served as study participants, the respondents were drawn through stratified random sampling technique.

10.4. Instrumentation

A self designed instrument tagged Principals' Perception of Entrepreneurship Education Strategy" Questionnaire (PPEESQ) containing 28 items structured using 4 Point likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree with the ratings of 4, 3, 2, and 1 was used for the study.

10.5 Method of Data Analysis:

Data were analyzed with mean and rank order. A criterion mean of 2.5 was used for decision rule.

11. Result:

Based on the findings the following results were obtained.

Research Question 1:

What are the perceptions of principals of public senior secondary schools on the role of entrepreneurship

education as a strategy for economic security in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and rank order results on the role of entrepreneurship education on economic security.

S/N	Statement	X	Rank order	Remarks
1	Entrepreneurship education provides employment for individuals.	3.65	2 nd	Agreed
2	It equips individuals with skills	3.05	5 th	Agreed
3	It makes people to recognize business opportunities	2.68	8 th	Agreed
4	It promote healthy competition	2.47	10 th	Disagreed
5	It encourages innovation	2.70	7 th	Agreed
6	It helps to promote general prosperity	2.52	9 th	Agreed
7	Helps individuals to find sustainable solution to injustice	3.01	6 th	Agreed
8	It provides economic security	3.81	1 st	Agreed
9	The training provided helps recipients to help others to stand on their own	3.07	4 th	Agreed
10	It is training for self-reliance	3.22	3 rd	Agreed

Table 1: shows that the respondents agreed that entrepreneurship education is a strategy for economic security with the mean scores as shown above. Only item 4 with mean score of 2.47 was not accepted.

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of principals of public senior secondary schools on the challenges facing entrepreneurship education as a strategy for economic security in Rivers state?

Table 2: Mean and rank order scores on the challenges of entrepreneurship education.

S/N	Statement	X	Rank order	Remarks
11	Lack of finance	3.85	2 nd	Agreed
12	Irrelevant curriculum	2.55	8 th	Agreed
13	Inconsistent government policies	3.04	5 th	Agreed
14	Lack of information	2.81	7 th	Agreed
15	Lack of infrastructure	3.71	3 rd	Agreed
16	Lack of constant power supply	3.88	1 st	Agreed
17	Lack of qualified manpower	2.44	10 th	Disagreed
18	Poor condition of service	2.48	9 th	Disagreed
19	Lack of motivation	3.02	6 th	Agreed
20	Monopoly by other entrepreneurs	3.61	4 th	Agreed

Table 2 reveals that all the items except 17 and 18 constitute the challenges to entrepreneurship education as a strategy for economic prosperity.

Research Questions 3: What are the perceptions of public senior secondary schools on the prospects of entrepreneurship education as a strategy for economic security in Rivers state?

Table 3: Mean and Rank order of principals on the prospects of entrepreneurship education.

S/N	Statement	X	Rank order	Remarks
21	There is greater emphasis on entrepreneurship	3.56	1 st	Agreed
22	There are steps to redesign curriculum	2.83	2 nd	Agreed
23	Entrepreneurship education is now compulsory in schools	2.56	4 th	Agreed
24	There is greater investment in entrepreneurship education	2.32	6 th	Disagreed
25	More trainers have been remitted	2.61	3 rd	Agreed
26	There is early emphasis on vocational education	2.54	5 th	Agreed
27	There are prospects for entrepreneurship education	2.05	7 th	Disagreed
28	Government is increasing the political will to fund education	2.01	8 th	Disagreed

Table 3 shows that the respondents agreed with items 21, 22, 23, 25, 26 but disagreed with items 24, 27 and 28 as prospects for entrepreneurship education for economic security.

12. Discussions

Findings as shown on table 1 revealed that provision of economic security, provision of Employment, provision of training for self employment, helping others to own a business, equipment of individuals with skills, helping individuals to find solution to injustice, encouraging innovation, helping people to recognize business opportunities and promoting general prosperity are some of the roles of entrepreneurship education as a strategy for economic security in Rivers State. However, promotion of healthy competition was not accepted as one of the roles. The finding above is in line with the views of Mamman (2011), Effanga, Egwuasi and Mfon (2011),

Abraham and Nwogu (2009) and Osakwe (2011) who contended that entrepreneurship education is an instrument for self-reliance.

Furthermore, findings from table 2 revealed that the challenges of entrepreneurship education as a strategy for economic security include lack of constant power supply, lack of finance, lack of infrastructure, monopoly by other entrepreneurs, inconsistent government policies, lack of motivation, lack of information and irrelevant curriculum. The finding further showed that lack of qualified manpower and poor condition of service do not constitute challenges to the programme. The finding is also consistent with Idiaghe (2011), Alumode and Nwite (2011), and Salami (2011) who also identified lack of viable concept, lack of market familiarity, lack of technical skills, monopoly, patent inhibitions among others as some of the challenges of entrepreneurship education for economic security.

Finally, the findings as shown on table 3 revealed greater emphasis on entrepreneurship education, attempts to redesign curriculum, recruitment of more trainers, inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the school curriculum and early emphasis on vocational education as some of the prospects. However, the result revealed that government has not increased investment in entrepreneurship education and also has not shown enough political will to invest and implement the policies. On the whole therefore, item 27 was rejected showing that there are no prospects, this finding can be justified since as at 2013, Nigeria budgeted only 8% of her yearly budget to education which is less than 26% as recommended by UNESCO.

13. Conclusion

Based on the results the study, it is concluded that despite government inability and political will to invest in functional education, entrepreneurship education is still acknowledged as a strategy for economic security.

14. Recommendations

Based on the results and discussions the following recommendations were made:

1. Entrepreneurship education should be encouraged as a strategy for economic security.
2. Government and private investors should provide enough capital for funding entrepreneurship education.
3. Graduates should be motivated through financial support in the form of loans and employment.
4. Government should ensure that there is provision of constant power supply in the state.
5. There should be a redesign of the curriculum to reflect entrepreneurial skills.
6. Government should be consistent with educational policies.
7. Information should be made available to all (both rural and urban) on entrepreneurship.
8. Students should be exposed early enough to entrepreneurship skills.
9. Guidance and counseling services on career choice should be provided.

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