

PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ON ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION AS A PANACEA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The perennial problems of increased poverty, youth and graduate unemployment; overdependence on foreign goods and technology; among others have become worrisome to the government. Entrepreneurship education as a highly potent developmental strategy can therefore be used to equip the youths with the necessary skills to be self-reliant. However, refocusing school curriculum towards this direction provides necessary impetus for increasing innovation, employment and boosting national productivity. Hence, this study was carried out to examine the relevance of an entrepreneurship based curriculum as a panacea for alleviating poverty among Nigeria Senior Secondary Schools (SSS) students as perceived by teachers and their students. The cross-sectional survey method was adopted for the study. Researcher- designed instruments were used. Mean ratings and t-test inferential statistics were used to analyse results. Findings of the study revealed that teachers and their students had a positive perception towards the introduction of entrepreneurship- oriented curriculum for the SSS programmes and strongly posited that this proposed curriculum innovation could develop the spirit and culture of entrepreneurship and arrest unemployment problems. It was recommended that the government should create an entrepreneurially supportive environment that could help to develop an enterprise culture among students.

Keyword: Entrepreneurship Education, Vocational Training, Poverty Eradication, Self-employment.

Introduction

The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical, social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society is a core educational goal in Nigeria (Gana, 2001). This integral part of the National Policy on Education is also in harmony with the position of Ojeifo (2013) who opines that the essence of any educational programme is to ensure that the products of the system are equipped with the relevant knowledge, skills and attitude needed to contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the nation. The inability of the graduates of the educational system to contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the nation by being self-employed was what informed the introduction of

Entrepreneurship education in schools. However, the call for the introduction of Entrepreneurship education in schools is an indication of its importance in economic empowerment and creation in particular.

Olaitan (1996) observed that Nigerian graduates can only be self-employed and marketable if they acquire relevant skills and knowledge for successful establishment in occupation and gainful employment. It was also observed by Williams (2002) that, the training programmes in the country both at the secondary and tertiary levels have concentrated more on teaching knowledge and skills in principles devoid of practical experiences in related fields. Parking (1994) suggested that teaching and learning should emphasize the development of favourable skills and competencies in specific disciplines that can be utilized in real life situations. Chimuwaza and Obanya (1989) stressed that, for favourable skills and competencies to be developed in the learners, the strategies adopted should expose the learners to the acquisition of specific skills, knowledge and values.

The entrepreneurship education presently given seems to lack good management and acceptable content (Yahaya, 2011). According to him, many students seem not to have grasped the importance of the course as they see the course as one of those unnecessary courses imposed on them to fulfil graduation requirements. The content and delivery of the course lack proper knowledge, preparation and attainment of its objectives. This is because the efforts of successive governments have not yielded the desired results as past curricula did not prepare the youths for self-reliance. Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in economic emancipation through creation of utilities and generation of employment within a short period (Raimi, 2010). Suleiman (2010) defined entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment, and be able to establish and run as an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities.

The move by the government through the Federal Ministry of Education to make entrepreneurship education one of the compulsory general studies for students across all levels of schooling in the country should be seen as a positive step in the right direction. This is to inculcate in the youths the spirit of self-reliance. This development will not only address the problem of unemployment and underemployment but will put the country on the path to join communities of nations that have fought poverty through strengthening of small scale businesses. The concept of sustainable development requires balancing environmental, societal and economic considerations in the pursuit of development and an improved quality of life. Sustainability includes intergenerational equity, gender equity, just and peaceful societies, environmental preservation and restoration, poverty alleviation and natural resource conservation. The major essential tool for achieving sustainable development includes improving the quality of basic education. The Nigerian government seems to have woken up to the reality that the country needs to break away from the vicious cycle of poverty, infrastructural neglect, corruption and other social problems.

Nigeria, like most developing nations of the world is faced with myriads of problems and harsh which include poverty, unemployment, conflicts and diseases (Lawal, 2014). These situations pose great challenges to the very existence of individuals in most developing nations thereby calling for the training of educated generation who can function effectively in the society in which they live in. In Nigeria, more than half of the Nigerian populations are under the age of 30 according to the National Population Commission (2001). Therefore it can be assented that the economy of Nigeria is a youth economy. This reality leaves them without any meaningful means of sustenance livelihood. To make ends meet, they simply indulge in armed robbery, kidnapping and so on. The country wants to increasingly globalize education through information and communication technology, and entrepreneurship. This is why the former President, Obasanjo, mandated that all students in Nigeria, regardless of their major, should study. Entrepreneurship (Ewhrudjapor 2008). This rate of poverty is, however, accentuated by the increasing rate of unemployment, high level of illiteracy, corruption and bad governance. Therefore, as a panacea to ease the effects of these challenges, entrepreneurship has been identified as a means of providing employment and income generation in the country.

Isaac (2010) emphasized that one of the major ways to get out of poverty is through a functional education that will enable the present generation to compete favourably with their counterparts in other countries. To have a healthy society, the youth sector of the population needs to be rediscovered and reintegrated into the mainstream. However, finding productive engagement for the youths is the only answer to the vast development needs and the attempt to make entrepreneurship compulsory for all students will be a worthwhile alternative. It behaves students in various institutions of higher learning to acquire skills and capacity to be self-reliant as they complete their respective areas of specialization specialization (Raimi, 2010). Hence, this study tends to find out perception of teachers and students on entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development in Kwara State, Nigeria.

The main purpose of this study was to examine the perception of teachers and students on entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

1. find out whether 'the teachers' perception on entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development differ on the basis of age.
2. find out whether the students' perceptions on entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development differ on the basis of gender.
3. Compare the teachers and students' perceptions on the influence of entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development

Research Questions

1. Is there any significant difference between the teachers' perceived influences of entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development on the basis of age?
2. Is there any significant difference between the perception of male and female students on the influence of entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development?
3. Is there any significant difference between the perception of SSS students and their teachers on the influence of entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. Perception of teachers on the influence of entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development does not depend on their age
2. Male and female students are not different in their perceived influence of entrepreneurship-oriented curriculum on poverty eradication
3. There is no significant difference between the perception of SSS students and their teachers on the influence of entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development

Methodology

Descriptive survey method was adopted in this study. The population of the study consisted of all the SSS 3 teachers and students. A total of 918 respondents (Teachers 108 & Students=810) were drawn from the three senatorial zones (Kwara North, South and Central) of Kwara State. Specifically, four teachers and 30 students were randomly selected from each of the nine schools in each of the three senatorial zones. Simple random sampling techniques was employed. A researcher-designed questionnaire known as Entrepreneurship-based Curriculum and Poverty Eradication Questionnaire (ECPEQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts from Social Science Education Department, University of Ilorin. Internal consistency reliability of the instrument was checked using Cronbach Alpha. The instrument was a four point likert scale coded 4,3,2,1; and containing 10 items with option of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. While section A deals with personal information of the respondents, section B focuses specifically on the relevance of Entrepreneurship Education as a panacea for alleviating poverty. While simple percentage was used to analyze the personal variables of the respondents, One-way ANOVA was used to test hypothesis one and t-test was used to test hypotheses two and three. It is to be noted that hypothesis three was further supported by item-by-item analysis using mean ratings. Mean scores below 2.50 were not accepted as perceived, whereas mean scores of 2.50 and above were considered as perceived. In testing the hypotheses, if the calculated value is less than the critical value, the hypothesis is accepted but if the

reverse is the case the hypothesis is rejected. It is to be noted that, out of 918 copies of the questionnaire administered, 910 were returned but only 900 copies were found useful and analysed in this study.

Results

Hypothesis One: Perception of teachers on the influence of entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development does not depend on their age

Table 1: The One-way ANOVA Summary of Teachers' Age Category and their Perception of Entrepreneurship—oriented Curriculum

	Sum of square	df	Means square	f. cal.	Sig.	Decision
Between Group	391.034	2	195.52			
Within group	10222.532	98	52.97	3.69	0.03	Rejected
Total	10613.566	100				

Table 1 reveals that $F(2; 98) = 3.69$, $p = 0.03 < 0.05$. The null hypothesis is thus rejected. In other words, lecturers' age significantly influenced their identification of students' entrepreneurship needs. Scheffe's Post-Hoc analysis was therefore carried out to locate the direction of the differences in the age of the teachers. This was to establish whether there was a difference in teachers' perception on the influence of entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development.

Table 2: Scheffe's Post-Hoc Analysis of Significant Difference in the Perception of Entrepreneurship – oriented Curriculum by the SSS Teachers based on their Age

Age (years)		Means Differences	Std. Error	Sig.
Below 25	40 & above	2.76700	1.15889	.060
	25 and above	4.81370	2.39674	.133
40 & above	Below 25	-2.76700	1.15889	.060
	25+	2.070670	2.28669	.663
25 & above	Below 25	-4.84370	2.39674	.133
	40+	-2.07670	2.28669	.663

The mean difference significance at 0.05 level.

Table 2 reveals that mean difference between teachers' categories of age and their perception of students' entrepreneurship needs is statistically significant at 0.05 alpha level with teachers within 25-40 years having a significantly higher perception.

Hypothesis Two: Male and female students are not different in their perceived influence of entrepreneurship-oriented curriculum on poverty eradication

Table 3: Students' Perception on Entrepreneurship - oriented curriculum by Male and Female students

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	T	Sig.	Decision
Male	432	94.92	12.17	798	3.84	0.00	Rejected
Female	368	92.33	11.38				

Table 3 indicates that Male students had a higher mean (94.92 ± 12.17) than Female (92.33 ± 11.38) in their perceived entrepreneurship-oriented curriculum, which showed significant difference $t(798)=3.84, p=0.00$. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that Male and Female students were not significantly different in their perceived influence of entrepreneurship-oriented curriculum on poverty eradication was rejected.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference between the perception of SSS students and their teachers on the influence of entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development

Table 4: Entrepreneurship-oriented Curriculum and its influence on Poverty Eradication among Nigerian Students.

o	Items	Mean Rating	Teachers(100)	Students(800)	Rating
			Decision	Mean	
	Introducing entrepreneurship education into the SSS curriculum is necessary and desirable	1.68	P	1.75	P
	Entrepreneurship content in the SSS curriculum is adequate to facilitate self - employment	0.68	NP	1.00	NP
	The school has done enough to create awareness of entrepreneurship as a potential career option for students	1.33	P	0.96	NP
	Entrepreneurship education should be inculcated into the NCE curriculum to facilitate self-reliant	1.88	P	1.61	P
	Entrepreneurship education is a panacea to poverty reduction in Nigeria	1.74	P	1.55	P
	The SSS curriculum should be enriched to incorporate more vocational and technical training.	1.94	P	1.81	P
	Entrepreneurship courses should be made compulsory in order to stimulate entrepreneurial spirit in Nigeria schools	1.84	P	1.56	P
	Entrepreneurship education is not a prerogative of some set of students in some schools but an education that should be open to all	1.80	P	1.58	P
	Social vices can be reduced in our society by engaging Nigerian youths with adequate vocational and technical skills that would make them self - employed.	1.65	P	1.51	P
)	There should be enough incentives for students of vocational and technical schools. This motivates them to establish their businesses after school.	1.70	P	1.46	P

Note: The benchmark is 1.25; P= Perceived and NP = Not Perceived

As shown in table 4, the teachers agreed with nine out of the 10 items revolving around the influence of an entrepreneurship-oriented curriculum as a panacea to alleviate poverty among Nigerian students, while the students agreed on eight items. However, it was particularly noted that the two stakeholders had a consensus opinions on nine items only. From this finding, SSS teachers and students perceived the inculcation of entrepreneurship education into the SSS curriculum as necessary and desirable. They equally perceived that the schools had not created enough awareness of entrepreneurship as a potential career option for the students. They finally perceived that the inculcation of entrepreneurship education into the SSS curriculum would facilitate self- employment and reduce poverty in Nigeria

Table 5: t-test summary of the difference between the perception of SSS students and their teachers on the influence of entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development

Stakeholder	N	Mean \bar{X}	SD	p- value	df	Remark
Teachers	100	36.87	3.35	0.003	898	Significant
Students	800	31.35	3.54			

Table 5 shows the result of t-test that was conducted to find out the difference between the perception of SSS students and their teachers on the influence of entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development. The p-value was 0.003, degree of freedom 898 at 0.05 level of significance. The decision is to reject the null hypotheses when the p-value is lesser than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected which shows that there is significant difference between the perception of SSS students and their teachers on the influence of entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development which is in favour of the teachers.

Discussion of Findings

Findings confirmed that teachers' age significantly influenced their perception on entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development, with teachers within 25-40 years having a higher perception. The positive perception of middle-aged teachers was because they are likely to be more conversant with entrepreneurship and its contemporary relevance in instilling employability skills into students' learning in order to make them self-sufficient and highly productive. This outcome is in line with an earlier finding of Adegboye (2009) who found a positive relationship between teachers' age and their assessment of curriculum components.

On the influence of gender on perception, the results indicated that students' gender had a significant influence on their perceived influence of entrepreneurship-oriented curriculum on poverty eradication, with the male students having the higher level of perception. Reasons for this significant difference may be difficult to surmise but it was however observed that male students were calmer and showed keen interest in the subject. Salimanu (2015) opined that the differences between men and women are not only biological but also in terms of fundamental values and vision on certain issues. Daramola (1995) equally maintained that men present more issues concerning social life in the society, while women tend to be subjective on similar issues. It could therefore be deduced that the differences in the perceptions of male and female tend to affect the level of attention they give to social issues. There is tendency that such differences will affect their perceptions of similar issues.

Findings further showed that there was a significant difference in the perceptions of teachers and students on the influence of entrepreneurship- oriented curriculum on poverty eradication, with the teachers having the higher level of perception. It could be assumed that the difference between the perception of teachers and those of the students may be due to gap or the difference in the intellectual level, professional experience and exposure. Students are certainly still under training and cannot possibly have the same level of education, experience and exposure as their teachers. To further explain the divergence in the perception of teachers and the students. Okunloye (2001) identified five factors determining individual perception and preference. These include the past or previous learning of perceiver, personality and interest of the perceiver, needs of the perceiver and culture and values of the perceiver.

Conclusions

Base on the findings, the respondents (teachers and students) perceived the inculcation of entrepreneurship-oriented contents into the SSS curriculum as necessary and desirable. It may also be concluded that entrepreneurial education as a panacea for sustainable development would enable the students to see the inherent entrepreneurial talents within them and enable them to spot and exploit business opportunities.

Recommendations

Base on the study findings and conclusions, the paper recommends that youths should be exposed to training in technology, especially new discoveries from time to time. Also venture capital should be provided through micro-finance banks and other specialized agencies to adequately empower young entrepreneurs. Lastly, the present method of teaching entrepreneurship as a subject should be replaced with teaching entrepreneurship as an activity. As subject, abstract concepts of entrepreneurship are taught to students without practical supplements, while entrepreneurship activity combines teaching with experimental exercises. The implication of this study is that it continuously fosters entrepreneurship culture amongst students with a view to, not only educating them but to also, supporting graduates of the system towards establishing and maintaining sustainable business ventures. This reduces unemployment ensures sustainable development in the country

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