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Entrepreneurship Skills Acquired By Senior Secondary School Students For The Establishment Of Small Scale Businesses In Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the entrepreneurship skills acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses in Rivers State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. Two objectives, research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The population for the study consists of 24331 senior secondary school students in Rivers Sate. A sample of 394 respondents was drawn from the study population, using Taro Yamane formula. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher based on the insight gained from the review of related literature. The instrument was designed on a 4-point rating scale and was validated by two experts. A correlation co-efficient of 0.87 was obtained through Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions, and z-test to test the null hypotheses formulated. The study revealed that business opportunity skills and creativity skills are averagely acquired by senior secondary school students for establishment of small scale businesses. Based on the finding, it was recommended among others that secondary school students should be exposed to entrepreneurship skills by their teachers to enhance their acquisition of relevant skills for the establishment of small scale businesses for self-employment and that secondary school teachers should incorporate the relevant entrepreneurship skills into their instructional delivery to prepare students for self-employment.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Skills, and Establishment of Small Scale Business,

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas, combining them with management and organization skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and thereby create wealth. It is also the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run a business or enterprise successfully. Entrepreneurship skills are simply business skills which an individual acquires to enable him function effectively in the turbulent business environment as an entrepreneur. Successful entrepreneurship hinges upon the possession of a set of skills. Skill acquisition is the process of acquiring or gaining effective and ready knowledge in developing one's attitude and ability in a particular field. Entrepreneurship according to Agomuo (2012) is thus a process of learning the skills needed to assume the risk of establishing a business. Akpotowoh and Amahi (2016) opined that the skills acquired in any area of business related programmes or subjects promote training in entrepreneurship as well as equip graduates of formal educational institutions with requisite skills to establish and run small businesses of their own. As reported by World Bank (1999), in

Eze (2015) opined that, entrepreneurship has been acknowledged as one of the most important factors that contribute substantially to the economic growth and development in every country.

According to Folahan and Omoriyi (2016) entrepreneurship skills are simply business skills, which an individual acquires to enable him function effectively in the turbulent business environment as an entrepreneur or self-employed. Agbonifoh (2017) defined entrepreneurship skills as skills relating to identifying business opportunities and receiving a sustainable income from these opportunities. The author added that, acquisition of entrepreneurial skills simply means combining personal characteristics, financial resources within one's environment and taking advantage of them for a rewarding outcome.

Akinola (2012) posited that, it takes special skills to succeed as an entrepreneur. Erhurum (2017) also noted that most entrepreneurial skills come by learning and practicing. Nevertheless, the entrepreneurship skills embedded in secondary schools need to be explored and learned by prospective graduates for them to succeed as later entrepreneurs. Brouwer (2012), opined that acquisition of entrepreneurial skills means possessing the ability to find and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources, initiate appropriate actions to ensure success; and implement actions to take advantage of opportunities for rewarding outcomes.

In line with the above assertion, Shane and Venkataraman (2015) described entrepreneurship as the study of 'how, by whom and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated and exploited. As such business opportunities 'are those situations in which new goods, services, raw materials and organizing methods can be introduced and sold at greater than their costs of production. Similarly, Ossai (2018) opined that, business opportunity identification is ability to exploit business opportunities after careful deliberations. Ossai added that business opportunities are chances to make money through provision of goods or services. They exist as latent supply gaps or latent demand in the economy.

Ability to identify real business opportunity is skill. It comes from intuitive knowledge and sensitivity to economic environment. Business opportunity comes from information and experience (Akpan, 2014).

Research has shown that selection of a potential business opportunity is usually based on the entrepreneur's personal knowledge, experience and education. Eno (2010) posited that an entrepreneur who wishes to go into any business venture must study on different areas of project of interest. This involves pre-visibility and viability studies. The aim of the feasibility study is to provide information in a concise form in which a prospective entrepreneur can base his decision on whether or not to commit his resources to it.

Morato (2012) affirmed that the entrepreneur's commitment and passion to pursue a particular business opportunity are the most critical factors in the successful translation of that opportunity into a thriving enterprise. Even a mediocre opportunity can succeed if the entrepreneur is inspired to brave hell and high water to make a go at it. However, he maintained that the best opportunity is bound to fail if the entrepreneur is half-hearted and unenthusiastic about it. The entrepreneur must ask three important questions of himself or herself before plunging into a business opportunity. Morato (2012), outlined: Do I have the dive and tenacity to pursue this business to the end? Will I spend all my time, effort and money to make the business work? Will I sacrifice my existing lifestyle, endure emotional turmoil and forego my usual creative comforts to succeed in this business? Morato (2012) further buttressed that if the answers to the three important questions are in the affirmative, the entrepreneur can begin to apply more rigorous opportunity screens.

Shane, (2013) opined that once opportunities have been discovered and deemed worthwhile, the entrepreneur undertakes a series of exploitation activities. These include raising financial and other resources, protecting formation about opportunity from competitors, and designing appropriate organisations and models. Shane further stated that the world is unpredictable with respect to technology, market and competitors. Competitors will often craft strategies to deal with these uncertainties by introducing slack, identifying niche markets and forming strategic alliances. Delmar and Shane (2014) opined that crafting a solid business plan helps the venture by evaluating conjectures about future events, focusing attention on bottlenecks and additional requirements. Also, clarifying goals and objectives and facilitating communication and increasing legitimacy in interaction with external shareholders.

Supporting the above assertion, Agarwal, Raj-Echambadi and Sarkar, (2014) affirmed that business opportunities exist and individuals just need to recognize them and if they have the will power and decide to exploit an existing opportunity, this will lead to economic growth. There are at least two arguments which indicate the relationship between opportunities, entrepreneurship and economic growth is more complicated. Firstly, opportunities do not fall from heaven like manna- they need to be created. Secondly, an individual needs to make the decision about whether or not to exploit an opportunity. Demographic and psychological characteristics are also a powerful influence on the individual decision. Business opportunities particularly arise if existing organizations do not capitalize knowledge to the full extent. Firms with abundant unexploited knowledge are a breeding ground for business opportunities.

According to Holcombe (2015), when business opportunities arise, they are not plainly visible for all to see. Rather, all individuals have some knowledge specific to time and place that is not available to others. In many cases, that knowledge may not be easily transferable to others, it may be the ability to reorganize certain patterns in market behaviour (a simple example will be seasonal patterns), subtle differences in quality of goods or ways to identify whether resources are been used efficiently. Holcombe stated further that such knowledge might be acquired by experience and may be difficult to articulate to others. Thus, certain entrepreneurial opportunities will be more available to some people while a different set of opportunities will be more available to others.

Correspondingly, Yosuf (2018) posited that identifying or selecting the right opportunities for new businesses is among the most important abilities of a successful entrepreneur. Researchers have shown that the willingness of people to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities depends on such things as opportunity cost, stocks of financial capital, social ties to investors, career experience. Indeed the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities involve the mastery of a wider range of skills and the shouldering of heavier managerial responsibilities compared to only the identification of an business opportunity.

Shane (2013), envisaged that creativity is one of the entrepreneurship skill acquired by secondary school students for establishment of a small scale businesses Shane added that entrepreneurial creativity has been defined as the generation and implementation of novel, appropriate ideas to establish a new venture. This sits alongside much entrepreneurship literature on new venture formation, but fails to follow the growth of the business over time. Shane observed that entrepreneurial creativity however exists before, during and after the lifetime of a particular business since it is shaped in part by the social world and the individual decision maker. Furthermore, an entrepreneur often has to make decisions which are influenced by the organization's resources irrespective of the resources available via the process of intuition.

According to Onuekwa (2014), the place of asking the right question in the thinking process cannot be overemphasized. Questions remain the string tool to provoke the mind to respond to issues and discover new things. Creative thinking must therefore lead to the articulation of a strategy. A strategy is a way of organizing available resources to achieve results, what to do, what steps to take, the approach, the timing, positioning all come to play when developing strategy. It is a common knowledge that successful entrepreneurs emerge not by strength of force, but by superior strategy through creative thinking. Creative thinking as described by Obi (2016) is the act of generating solutions to problems by the forces of imagination and reasoning. It is an activity of the mind seeking to find answers to some life's questions. In a dynamic and changing world, the challenges of small scale businesses are not static. They take on new form and require a deep creative thinking approach. Obi further more stated that every idea is a product of thinking and every product is the manifestation of idea naked in a thinker's' mind. Obi (2016) noted that there are great business opportunities in applying creative thinking to solving mankind's crying need for basic products and basic support services- better homes, better jobs and a better way of life. There are going to be tremendous opportunities in education because we need fundamental and radical changes in Nigeria if we are going to be competitive with other countries. However, being able to adapt ideas is what makes the entrepreneur successful. There is nothing wrong with learning from other ideas. Creativity comes in when you expand upon it, when you take on idea and make it move. The only way forward is to make our education to be adaptive and qualitative at all levels.

Creativity according to Robert Grahim as reported by Okpara, (2017) consists of anticipation and commitment. Anticipation involves having a vision of something that will become important in the future before anybody else has it. Commitment is the belief that keeps one working to realize the vision despite doubts and discouragement. Okpara affirmed that the entrepreneur is primarily concerned with developing new products, processes, or markets, the ability to bring something new person thinks and he is able to produce solutions that fly in the face of established knowledge. Okpara buttressed that entrepreneurs are inclined to be more adaptable and are prepared to consider a range of alternative approaches. They challenge the status quo, which can sometimes bring them into conflicts with their colleagues. They dismiss their detractors and are sometimes regarded as aloof.

As affirmed by Okpara, creative outcomes seldom emerge in an instant a recognized process is involved, even if it appears to be rather chaotic. It begins with recognition of a problem or anticipation of an opportunity. And then through understanding the situation and reflecting on the issues, new linkages are contemplated and possible new combinations of components are aired. From this emerge visible solutions or possibilities that are subjected to valuation, which may be continuous with judgments being suspended and the search process is prolonged in pursuit of genuine newness.

Mason (2017) contended that, creativity appears more important than ever before, with it being seen as a critical success factor for the organizations, the understanding of attitudes towards creativity and promotion of creative thinking within the organization are pre-requisites to facilitating creativity in all employees. Although, effectiveness and efficiency have long been viewed as central organizational requirements, creativity is now been deemed a core success factor with organizational creativity resulting in higher level of quality and customer satisfaction. The nature of the business environment is changing, with more and more turbulent conditions being experienced.

In same vein, Harris (2018) described creativity also as an attitude, the ability to accept change and newness, a willingness to play with ideas and possibilities, a flexibility of outlook, the habit of enjoying the good while looking for ways to improve it, we are socialized into accepting only a small number of permissible or normal things, like chocolate-covered strawberries, for example. The creative person realizes that there are other possibilities like peanut butter and banana sandwiches or chocolate- covered prunes. Harris opined that creativity is also a process. A creative person works hard and continually to improve ideas and solutions by making gradual alterations and refinement to their works. Contrary to the mythology surrounding creativity, very few of creative excellence are produced with a single stroke of brilliance or in a frenzy of rapid activity. Also, much closer to the real truths are the stories of companies which had to take the invention away from the inventor in order to market it because the inventor would have kept on tweaking it and fiddling it, always trying to make it a little better.

Statement of the Problem

With the soaring unemployment rate in Nigeria, self-employment and establishment of small scale businesses are presently high on the country's national agenda, in the hope that they will provide alternative channels of employment. Yearly, thousands of secondary school graduates join the labour market in search of employment. Nwangwu (2017) opined that the challenge is not the inability to tackle the already sizeable unemployed youths but also absorbing the new entrants into the labour market. Underlying this situation is the fact that the training which students receive in secondary schools has not been fully successful in equipping them with desirable skills required for job creation and establishment of small scale businesses on graduation. Nwangwu (2017) opined that the failure of secondary education to inculcate in students' skills needed for self-reliance has led to wastages in human and natural resources that abound in Nigeria. This is because the youths are not equipped with skills with which to exploit the natural resources that abound in Nigeria. Presently, as opined by Digbori-Besmart (2014), the poor state of youth development in Nigeria has remained a source of worry to government and concerned citizens. The looming crises in national development has been considered as the major cause of rural poverty, youth restiveness, armed robbery, prostitution and trafficking, import dependence and low level of industrial development. At the national and community levels, the scarcity of skilled youths and unemployment are areas of greatest concern to the common man. Inadequate entrepreneurship skills have been the major cause of unemployment which occurs mostly among youths and has remained a major

problem in both urban and rural environments (Ossia, 2018). The situation now is that most secondary school graduates in Nigeria make little or no attempt to establish small scale businesses of their own despite the abundant business opportunities available in the country. Instead, they continue to besiege ministries and government offices in search of jobs that are either extremely few in supply or even non-existent. The question now is what entrepreneurial skills should senior secondary school students acquire for the establishment of small scale businesses in Rivers State?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the entrepreneurship skills acquired by secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the business opportunity skills acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses in Rivers State.
2. Determine the creativity skills acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the business opportunity skills acquired by senior secondary school students in Rivers State for the establishment of small scale businesses?
2. What are the creativity skills acquired by senior secondary school students in Rivers State for the establishment of small scale businesses?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Urban and rural schools on business opportunity skills acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Urban and rural schools on creativity skills acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses.

METHOD

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consists of 24331 senior secondary school students in Rivers State. A breakdown of the figure showed 14599 for Urban and 9732 for rural senior secondary schools respectively. Taro Yamane formular was used to select 394 senior secondary school students' respondents as sampling size for the study. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on the Entrepreneurship Skills Acquired for the Establishment of Small Scale Businesses (QESAESSB)". The instrument has two parts. Part "A" focused on the respondents personal data, while part "B" contains two clusters, B1 and B2 with 16 items covering the research questions. The questionnaire was structured on a 4 point rating scale of Highly Acquired (HA- 4 points); Averagely Acquired (AA-3 points); Acquired (A-2points), and Not Acquired (NA-1 point) respectively. The Validity of the instrument was establishment by two experience Business Educators from the Department of Business Education and another from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, all from Faculty of Education of the Rivers State University. For the purpose of establishing the internal consistency of the instrument, Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.87 which indicates that the instrument was reliable for the study. Out of 394 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 390 were correctly filled and used for the study.

The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A mean rating of equal to or greater than 2.50 were considered agreed while a mean less than 2.50 were considered disagreed. A hypothesis was accepted when the calculated value of z was less than the critical value of z (1.960) while was rejected when the calculated value of z was greater than the critical value of z (1.960).

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What are the opportunity skills acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses in Rivers State?*

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on Opportunity Skills Acquired by Senior Secondary School Students for the Establishment of Small Scale Businesses (N=390)

S/N	Items	X	SD	Remarks
1	Identify the needs of the people	3.56	0.31	Highly Acquired
2	Identify a change in market behavior	3.12	0.29	Averagely Acquired
3	Keeping information about business opportunities	3.14	0.19	Averagely Acquired
4	Select business plans	2.74	0.30	Averagely Acquired
5	Evaluate future events	2.49	0.17	Not Acquired
6	Interact with stakeholder's customers, partners, financiers	2.86	0.32	Averagely Acquired
7	Conceive business ideas	3.01	0.33	Averagely Acquired
8	Take advantage of profit opportunity	2.87	0.17	Averagely Acquired
		23.79	2.08	
	Grand Mean and SD	**2.97**	**0.26**	**Averagely Acquired**

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The data in table 1 show that with a grand mean of 2.97, seven out of eight items are agreed upon by respondents as opportunity skills acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses in Rivers State. This indicates that identifying the needs of the people, identifying a change in pattern of market behaviour, protecting information about opportunity from competitors, drafting business plans, interacting with stakeholders, conceiving business ideas, and taking advantage of profit opportunity were the business opportunity skills acquired by students for establishment of small scale businesses. However, evaluating feature events was not acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: *What are the creativity skills acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses in Rivers State?*

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on Creativity Skills for Senior Secondary School Students for the Establishment of Small- Scale Businesses (N = 390)

S/N	Items	X	SD	Remarks
9	Ability to conceive new solutions to existing local products in the market.	3.31	0.32	Averagely Acquired
10	Ability to reassemble resources to produce new products to replace existing local products	2.95	1.71	Averagely Acquired
11	Ability to add value to existing local product/service.	3.05	0.91	Averagely Acquired
12	Ability to use creative designs in packaging the product for market acceptance.	2.87	0.34	Averagely Acquired
13	Ability to generate new methods of doing things.	2.78	0.72	Averagely Acquired
14	Determine strategies to take in the face of competition.	2.79	0.77	Averagely Acquired
15	Create value for products and services using appropriate strategies	2.72	0.31	Averagely Acquired
16	Implement decisions using appropriate ideas.	2.81	0.29	Averagely Acquired
		23.28	5.37	
	Grand Mean and SD	**2.91**	**0.67**	**Averagely Acquired**

Source: Field Survey 2020

Data in Table 2 reveal that with a grand mean of 2.91, all the items are agreed by respondents as creativity skills acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses in Rivers State. This indicates that generating new ideas for the business applying existing ideas, improving ideas through graduals alterations, recognizing a problem in business, seeking solution to problems, determining strategies in the face of competition, creating values for products and implementing decision are creativity skills acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses in Rivers State.

Testing Of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at of 0.05 level of significance

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Urban and rural schools on business opportunity skills acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses.

Table 3: z-test Analysis of the Urban and Rural School on Business Opportunity Skills Acquired by Senior Secondary School Students for the Establishment of Small Scale Businesses in Rivers State

Respondents	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	DF	z-cal	z-crit	α	Decision
Urban	234	2.14	0.21	388	–58.5	1.960	0.05	Averagely Acquired
Rural	156	3.80	0.31					

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The data in table 3 reveal that the calculated z-value of-58.5 is less than the z-value of 1.960 at 388 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, null hypothesis one is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Urban and rural schools on business opportunity skills acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses.

Table 4: z-test Analysis of the Urban and Rural Schools on Creativity Skills Acquired by Senior Secondary School Students for the Establishment of Small Scale Businesses in Rivers State

Respondents	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	DF	z-cal	z-crit	α	Decision
Urban	234	2.21	0.53	388	–17.6	1.960	0.05	Averagely Acquired
Rural	156	3.51	0.81					

Data in Table 4 show that the calculated z-value of -17.6 was less than the critical value of 1.960 at 388 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Urban and rural schools on creativity skills acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Business Opportunity Skills Acquired by Senior Secondary School Students Establishment of Small Scale Businesses in Rivers State

The findings of the study reveal that business opportunity skills are acquired by senior Secondary School Students for the Establishment of Small Scale Businesses. Supporting these findings, Akpan (2014) maintained that, business opportunity is the ability to exploit business opportunities after careful deliberation. Ardichivili Cardozo and Ray (2013), maintained that business opportunities involved willingness of people to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. The researcher wishes to observe that

business opportunity is a critical entrepreneurship skills acquired by senior Secondary School Students for the Establishment of Small Scale Businesses.

This is because the acquisition of business opportunity skills would assist the entrepreneur to undertake series of business exploitation activities such as raising financial resources, gathering information about the business opportunity, designing appropriate business transaction model and effective budgeting.

However, there was no significant difference in the mean rating of urban and rural schools on business opportunity skills acquired by senior secondary school students for the establishment of small scale businesses in Rivers State.

Creativity Skills Acquired by Senior Secondary School Students for the Establishment of Small Scale Businesses in Rivers State

The findings of the study revealed that senior secondary school student acquired creativity skills for the establishment of small scale business. Okpara (2017), supported the findings of this study and maintained that creativity skill means the ability to invent ideas and new forms through imaginative skills that bring into existence new business venture. The researcher wishes to observe that creativity skill is an attitude and ability to accept changes and newness. It is also the willingness to experiment with possibilities, new opportunities and flexible disposition. It should be noted that senior secondary school students' willingness to show anticipation and commitment to new business opportunities and environment is necessary for the establishment of small scale business. Also, the null hypothesis tested showed that urban and rural senior secondary school students did not differ significantly in their mean rating on creativity skills acquired for the establishment of small scale businesses in Rivers State.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, it was concluded that the entrepreneurship skills such as business opportunity skills, and creativity skills acquired by Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers State would enhance and enable them establish small scale business on or before graduation. It would also help to curtail the high rate of unemployment, youth restiveness, crimes and other social vices carried out by some teenagers and youths in the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. Secondary school teachers should incorporate the relevant entrepreneurship skills into their instructional delivery to prepare students for self-employment.
2. State Secondary Education Board (SSEB) should organise seminars and workshop for teachers of Rivers State on the application of entrepreneurship for self-employment.
3. The State Ministry of Education should train and retrain secondary school teachers on the use of various entrepreneurship skills in their instructional delivery to ensure students' acquisition of these skills for establishment of small scale businesses.

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