



Assessment of Entrepreneurial Education and Diversity Management: A Gateway to Sustainable Development in Nigeria



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Abstract

The study assessed the contributions of entrepreneurship Education course in enhancing management/ entrepreneurial skills of informal entrepreneurs and diversity management. Informal entrepreneurs are those who passed through the technical/vocational schools and have certificates with which they are carrying out their entrepreneurship as a result of the fact that they are not able to move forward academically. Two research questions guided the study. The population, which was used as the sample for the study because of its small size, was 41 informal entrepreneurs in Delta North Senatorial District of Delta State. The instruments for data collection were a 140 item questionnaire. The mean was used for data analysis. Results showed that the entrepreneurship knowledge given to these informal entrepreneurs were adequate but are not reinforced and some of the trade areas get less of what they are supposed to get. Attention also should be given to the technical aspect. The informal entrepreneurs in their fields of business have seen the entrepreneurship education as very important. Based on these, recommendations were made.

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1. Introduction

Poverty level characterized by a large number of unemployed youths is generally high in Africa. In this 21st century, unemployment of youth is one of the major challenges. In Nigeria, there are thousands of technical college graduates who acquire their certificates but due to the prevailing unemployment crises, they cannot find employment. As a coping

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mechanism, the informal sector has turned out to be one alternative. Technical college graduates end up joining informal sectors to start a small business and become entrepreneurs, so as to support themselves and their families financially. In order to develop an entrepreneurial culture in all technical, industrial and vocational colleges, entrepreneurship education is taught in the formal, informal and non-formal way. Entrepreneurship education is designed to support graduates-existing and potential entrepreneurs to create and run their own businesses rather than expecting employment from the government, private or non-governmental organization (NGOs). Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is targeted at producing entrepreneurs who are able to create own jobs rather than seeking employment in any organization. That is why entrepreneurship training is incorporated in the technical/vocational training curriculum. However, graduates who are involved in entrepreneurial activities in the informal sector face many challenges; which include a lack of knowledge in accounting, administration, and management. Their success in business in the informal sector greatly depends on entrepreneurial management skills they gained in college through the entrepreneurial subject. The aim of this study, therefore, was to assess the contributions of entrepreneurship education as a gateway to sustainable development using technical/vocational education management skills of informal sector entrepreneurship programs.

Sexton and Smilor (2004) define entrepreneurship education as a formal structural instruction which conveys entrepreneurial knowledge and developed in students, focusing awareness relating to opportunity recognition and the creation of new ventures. Mauchi, Karambakwa, Cropo, Kemas, mangwande and Gomarume (2011) cited in Jone and English (2004) of entrepreneurship education as the process of priming individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the knowledge skills and attitudes to act on them. Therefore, it can be seen as the process of imparting learners with entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and attitude through a formally structured instruction. A formally structured instruction is usually guided by well-defined aims, goals, and objectives of a specific program. Entrepreneurship education and training programs are aimed at stimulating entrepreneurship which may be seen as independent small business ownership or the development of opportunity seeking managers within firms (Cotton, 2000).

The major objectives of enterprise education are to develop enterprising people and inculcate an attitude of self-reliance using appropriate learning process, Strauss & Corbin (2000). The following are the commonly cited objectives of entrepreneurship education and training program:

- a) To acquire knowledge of entrepreneurship
- b) To acquire skills in the use of techniques, in the analysis of business situations and in the synthesis of the action plan.
- c) To identify and stimulate entrepreneurial driven talent and skills
- d) To undo the risk-averse bias of many attitudes towards change.
- e) To change new start-ups and other entrepreneurial venture (Thomas & Barra, 2004).

It can be seen that these objectives underscore the fact that entrepreneurship education should reflect carefully on the acquisition of business skills and ways of enhancing the probability of success.

The objectives of entrepreneurship education are mainly focused on starting and subsequently, the sustainability of the business. Thus, entrepreneurs are characterized by innovative behavior and employ strategic skills and management practices with the aim of making profit and growth.

According to Haan, (2006) entrepreneurship education programs help develop attitudes favorable to starting one's own business and providing knowledge and skills for running a business example, business law, accounting, and bookkeeping, credit and finance, and marketing. Skills development encompasses a broad range of core skills (entrepreneurial, communication, financial, management and leadership) so that individuals are equipped for production activities and employment opportunities (wage employment, self-employment, and income generation activities). Farshad (2002) researched on entrepreneurship education programmes offered in secondary and tertiary institutions and found that in comparison of graduates of secondary education programmes and those from technical and vocational education programme, the latter group was more likely to start business within a few years of graduation, business graduates from technical and vocational education were equipped with entrepreneurship education and business planning courses. The technical education provided a skill that was hinged on the job an apprenticeship and wage employment before setting out to start a new business.

A survey was done by the Entrepreneurship Development Institute India (EDII) in 2003 showed that young people are afraid to start their own business because they are not confident, not capable and lack knowledge in starting their business (Zhang, 2006). Many people have the opportunity to change jobs or become entrepreneurs if they are properly trained. Moreover, the entrepreneurship courses are similar to the general business courses. However, (Gupta, 2004)

was of the view that management education is not an important driver of entrepreneurial attitudes. The survey showed that there is a demand for entrepreneurship education programs specially designed to expand student's knowledge and experience in entrepreneurship. The contents and teaching method have to be differentiated from the traditional business courses. [Lars and Moen \(1997\)](#) are of the view that those who have taken entrepreneurship education have shown greater interest to become entrepreneurs and these students act more entrepreneurial than others who have not taken such education in taking up the challenge to start up a new business. They suggest that through entrepreneurship may not be developed from education, but to some extent, education had some effect to alter and contribute to the formation of entrepreneurship.

School and educational system play a critical role in identifying and sharpening entrepreneurial traits ([Ibrahim and Soufani, 2002](#)). [Clarke, \(2000\)](#) pointed out earlier that entrepreneurship education especially education that provides technical training is crucial to enhance entrepreneurs innovation skills in an increasingly challenging environment woven into the local learning environment and the macro environment. Thus entrepreneurship education has encouraged schools lower than the tertiary level to think outside traditional patterns of pedagogy and classroom instruction. There should be periods of mandatory work placement being introduced and it should aim at imparting graduates of technical and vocational school graduates with entrepreneurial, communication, financial management, and financial skills which are essential to entrepreneurs with the right entrepreneurship education. The informal sector operators would develop and most of the operators would develop and most of the operators' problems on management skills would be alleviated.

Statement of the Problem

Entrepreneurship education is vital to a nation's sustainable development, considering the high poverty level which is characterized by the unemployment of youths in this 21st century. This has become a major challenge. As a coping mechanism, the informal sector has turned out to be one alternative where graduates from technical and vocational schools end up joining informal sectors to start a small business. Many people have the opportunity to change jobs or become entrepreneurs if they are properly trained but entrepreneurship development institute survey (2003) showed that young people are afraid to start their own business because they are not confident, not capable and lack knowledge in starting a business. This study intends to examine the extent of the contribution of entrepreneurship education as a gateway in changing management skill of informal entrepreneurs for sustainable development.

Purpose of the Study

- a) The purpose of this study was to identify entrepreneurship education involvement in the informal sector which the students of technical/vocational education are exposed to.
- b) To investigate the contributions of entrepreneurship education in technical and vocation schools in enhancing management skills of this sector entrepreneurs

Research Questions

- a) What type of entrepreneurship education is involved in the training of people in the technical and vocational schools?
- b) What are the contributions of this entrepreneurship education in enhancing their management skills?

2. Research Methods

This study was conducted using the graduates of technical and vocational education. From the three technical/vocational schools in Delta North Senatorial District of Delta State. This study was a survey. The population of the study consisted of all the forty-two (42) technical/Vocational college graduates who own business in Delta North Senatorial District where they attended the technical schools.

Sample

The population was taken as a sample because it was small. In other words a complete enumeration. The forty-two technical/vocational school graduates were taken as a sample.

Procedure:

A14 – item questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. A4 – point Likert-type rating scale was used as follows: For research question 1, the responses were expected to be:

To a great extent – 4, To some extent – 3, To a little extent – 2, to no extent – 1

For research question 2, The responses needed were

Very relevant – 4, Relevant – 3, Not too relevant – 2, Not relevant – 1

A mean response of 2.5 and above was taken to be a great extent or as in table 3, very relevant. The data collected were analyzed using means

Table 1
Courses available at the technical and vocational schools as given by the informal entrepreneurs

Courses	No of respondents
Business studies	15
Electrical studies	5
Automobile studies	10
Catering/fashion and designing	11
Total	41

The above table shows the distribution of the informal entrepreneurs and their areas of studies.

Research questions 1

To what extent were these entrepreneurship skills imparted in you during your training period?

Table 2
Mean responses of respondents on the extent the entrepreneur's skills were imparted in them

S/N	Items	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	To no extent	\bar{x}	Remark
1	Book keeping/ record keeping	17	5	10	9	2.73	Great extent
2	Commerce skills	16	6	15	4	2.82	Great extent
3	Business management skills	15	5	6	15	2.48	Great extent
4	Consumer education skills	15	8	4	14	2.58	Not extent
5	Communication skills	17	9	5	10	2.80	Great extent
6	Awareness of the business environment	18	4	8	11	2.70	Great extent
7	Human management skill	16	5	6	14	2.56	Great extent

Source: Information from a field study

From table 2 above, it could be seen that all the entrepreneurship were imparted to a great extent, except the business management skill which had a mean of 2.48

Research question 2

What are the contributions of these entrepreneurship education skills in enhancing your business?

Table 3

Mean responses of respondents on the contributions of the entrepreneurship education in enhancing the business

S/N	Items	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	To no extent	\bar{x}	Remark
1	Skill of receiving money and keeping proper records	20 1.4	10 0.11	6 0.42	5 0.35	3.09	Very relevant
2	Identifying environmental needs and taking the opportunity	22	12	3	4	3.26	Very relevant
3	Skills of keeping customers	23	10	4	5	3.19	Very relevant
4	Communication skills	25	12	1	3	3.43	Very relevant
5	Skills or identifying environment laws	15	12	10	4	2.92	Very relevant
6	Skills or keeping these laws	13	10	10	7		Very relevant
7	Employee management skill	20	12	4	4	3.14	Very relevant
	Grand mean					3.09	Very relevant

Source: Information from a field study

From table 3 above it has been revealed that these informal entrepreneurs have come to see these skills very relevant in carrying out their business. This can be seen from their ratings of all the items which gave a grand means of 3.09

3. Results and Analysis

The study identified and confirmed the idea that entrepreneurship education has a lot of potentials in the technical/vocational education graduates who end up working in the informal sector.

The findings show that even though they were taught entrepreneurship education the enforcement was not very strong.

There was a desire to be trained in business management. It was clear that more re-enforcement was on their core trade/craft and not very necessarily how these artisans can forge ahead better using entrepreneurship education. It could be seen that there was a need to run the trade skill side by side with entrepreneurs' skills.

4. Conclusion

Since the graduates of technical/vocational education training are the tradesman, they need a back up with entrepreneurship education to enable them to perform well in their various trades in the informal sector. With this type of education, they are well able to grasp the problems that confront them in their businesses. The main issue here is not the education level but the type of education required. These informal entrepreneurs yearn for more entrepreneurship education if given the opportunity and they long for training in entrepreneurship skills that are in line with their trades and present technology. If these operatives had better re-enforcements in entrepreneurship skills, then the image and outlook of the informal sector would improve. There is a need for educational intervention if the informal sector must develop, at least to help those who could not continue with higher education to benefit and be gainfully employed in this informal sector.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the followings are recommended

- a) Individual trades should be taught side by side with entrepreneurship education.
- b) Schools should teach and train skills which are directly usable in the informal sector.
- c) The government should intermittently organize entrepreneurship education program for those already in the informal sector.

Conflict of interest statement and funding sources

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Statement of authorship

The author(s) have a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The author(s) have approved the final article.




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