

Assessment of the Functionality of Entrepreneurship Education in Secondary Schools in Aguata Education Zone: Students' Perception



Education

KEYWORDS : Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship education, Functionality, students' perception

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship education is of current interest in many secondary schools. This offering is imperative in preparing learners to be job creators instead of being job seekers. This paper aims to assess the state of entrepreneurship at the secondary schools in Aguata education zone and to evaluate students' perception of entrepreneurship education in the context of giving a good grounding for starting own businesses after graduation. The study was a survey with a total sample of 272 male and female students randomly drawn from 650 junior secondary school students from four schools in Aguata education zone. The Students' Perception of the Effectiveness Functioning of Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire (SPEFEEQ) developed by the researchers was used to collect data. Research question was answered using means and standard deviation while z-test statistics was used to analyze the null hypothesis. The results showed that entrepreneurial education is not functioning effectively due to the fact that teaching of the skills is more of theoretical than practical. The strategies used seem not to be aligned with the current trend of teaching entrepreneurship education. This paper provides valuable insight on the appropriateness of the teaching strategies used.

Introduction

One of the school aims is to provide an excellent academic education through which academic students, (those in the academic setting; example primary, secondary, and tertiary institution students) and non-academic students (those in apprenticeship setting; example hair-dressers, dress-makers, soap makers) can achieve their personal best. However, it seems not all students can achieve levels of excellence due to ones attitudes, abilities and cognitive skills which play major role in how one perceives situations and how one behaves in response to different situations. All students can and should achieve their personal best that will allow them to access the best possible, self-reliant job/employment opportunities if they are sensitized on the capabilities, initiative, creativity and the skills needed to achieve that height. This can be done through the type of education one is exposed to.

Education trains one to become functional individual. A good education makes for creativity – an ability to sit down and think out something; what problem exists and how to solve it. It is expected that students be exposed to education that will help them setup a business of their own on leaving school. Educational restructuring policy based on a kind of logic of competition and market-driven reform, have swept across the world in the light of globalization (Ball, Goodson & Maguire, 2007). Entrepreneurship is a part of this new policy of education. Entrepreneurship is known as the capacity and attitude of a person or group of persons to undertake ventures with the probability of success or failures (Onwubiko, 2008). Entrepreneurship could also be defined as the capacity and attitude of an individual to undertake risk ventures. It demands that the individual should be prepared to assume a reasonable degree of risks, be a good leader in addition to being highly innovative. One may not acquire this quality if not exposed to entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship education as defined by Sherpherd and Douglas in Lekoko, Rankhumise, and Ras (2012), is the ability to envision and chart a course for a new business venture by combining information from the functional disciplines and the external environment in the context of extraordinary uncertainty and ambiguity which faces a new business venture. This manifests itself in creative strategies, innovative tactics, and uncanny perception of trends, market move changes, and courageous leadership when the way forward is not obvious. Iloeje in Onye and Chikwendu (2011) see entrepreneurship education as a form of education that instills in the learner the ability to coordinate, make decision, risk bearing and being able to manage, become an innovator, organizer and initiator. Entrepreneurship education for this study is teaching and learning whereby students are exposed to skills and ability to identify a need and provide

solution to the need; ability and skills to organize a business venture and be determined to take the risk that follows it. What is taught in entrepreneurship classes should serve to instill and enhance these skills and abilities.

Cooper, Bottomley & Gordon, (2004) listed some common features in teaching entrepreneurship education to include students' activities, (doing) which are regarded not only as the best way of learning entrepreneurship but also as a way of changing their attitudes and values. The ideal teaching is that the students should 'see, touch and feel' entrepreneurship. This education recognizes not only the students but also ordinary people from peasant farmers, palm wine tapping, oil milling to estate business men and women in small business and agricultural enterprise with modern and sophisticated technology (Iloeje in Onye and Chikwendu, 2011). Unfortunately, teachers seem to be more theoretical than practical in their teaching. Students are no longer taught crafts, creativity, gardening, farming, basket making in school despite its inclusion in the curriculum. This in turn seems to make students lose interest in practical work which includes creativity and innovation that will help them startup their own business on leaving school.

The study by Cooper as cited in Lekoko, Rankhumise, and Ras, (2012) revealed that less traditional, but more interactive methods, such as a case study, invited guest speakers and interaction with successful entrepreneurs were much less employed in entrepreneurship teaching. Suffice it to say that the functionality of entrepreneurship education in these secondary schools has been put to question since students could not access the knowledge or the skills involved. When something is said to be functional, it means it is effective and useful. That is to say, it is fulfilling the purpose for which it is meant for. This non-functionality of entrepreneurship education in these secondary schools could lead to students becoming more job seekers than creators notwithstanding the fact that entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. Ball (2003) and Rodrigues (2007) opined that variations of entrepreneurship education are offered at all levels of schooling from primary or secondary schools through graduate programs.

Accordingly, the discursive interventions into the public sector they bring into play, and interest in entrepreneurship education has flourished in recent years (Ball, 2003; Rodrigues, 2007). This development could not be said to be different from Nigerian situation because, entrepreneurship education as a mean of generating business start-ups and, in turn, economic growth, has attracted increasingly great political interest. Personal observation in this area of study shows that teachers' use this op-

portunity to flourish their private business. The assignments they give to students (example; creative arts, basket making, and knitting works and so on) are not supervised. Students therefore buy the finished products from the market, submit and earn their marks. This affects the teaching of entrepreneurship skills in the schools as well as establishment of self employment after school. This seems to contribute to the weakening and sidelining of educators, educational researchers and Ministries of Education when it comes to educational policy and reform agendas.

Consequently, secondary school students resort to different crimes since Nigerian education graduates could no longer establish themselves an artisanal job after leaving school. The applicability of Nigerian education for the past few decades has been put to question since the products of Nigerian educational system are becoming more and more job seekers than job creators. The flaw in the quality of the products of Nigerian education system was so apparent that it is very difficult for Nigerian graduates to secure a job in any establishment in the country or even start up a business of their own. Education as a cultural heritage of any society appears not to be fulfilling its purpose as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (2004) - the inculcation of right knowledge, skills, evaluation and attitudes that will make one self-reliant. One then wonders whether students are exposed to entrepreneurship education in their different schools.

Research has theorized that the supply of entrepreneurs can be increased by developing a positive perception about the feasibility and desirability of entrepreneurship through educational preparation at an early age (Kourilsky, in Rasheed, 2000). When rooted in solid learning theory, entrepreneurial education develops entrepreneurs, by increasing business knowledge and promoting psychological attributes associated with entrepreneurs (Kruegar & Brazeal; Kourilsky & Walstad; Walstad & Kourilsky, in Rasheed, 2000). A number of studies have argued that education facilitates entrepreneurial success by providing for the nourishment of competencies such as innovativeness and ability to acquire resources. These competencies are regarded as imperatives to success in many entrepreneurial ventures (Henry, Hill & Leitch, (2003). Lekoko, Rankhumise, and Ras (2012) in their study "entrepreneurship education: survey of two universities" found out that lectures, use of group and individual project and summative assessments constitute the primary teaching/learning methods that are used to teach entrepreneurship courses in the universities. This according to them point to deficiency in the teaching of entrepreneurship skills. Emesini (2011) in her study "assessment of entrepreneurship skills acquisition by student teachers" found that students in business education, home economics and vocational technical education acquire entrepreneurial skills through practical training. Irrespective of what model of entrepreneurship education is dealt with, the literature on this area is characterized by a positive attitude to entrepreneurship (Henry, Hill & Leitch, 2003).

One consequence of the positive attitude is that a great number of presumed favorable effects of entrepreneurship education are emphasized. It therefore seems desirable to broaden the economic argumentation for entrepreneurship education to include more personal qualities of human benefit, such as creativity and innovativeness which are described as a kind of nec-

essary civil competence applicable in all situations of life. Entrepreneurship education is thereby given a general value, beyond the economic sphere, as something that is good for everybody (Formica, 2002). Since entrepreneurship education is thereby considered to benefit both society and individuals, it is regarded as both necessary and reasonable that everybody should have access to it. But this appears not to be functional in schools in Aguata local government area of Anambra state. This may be that teachers lack the knowledge and competencies, lack of infrastructural facilities and equipment needed to inculcate the skills in students.

The conviction of this potential, that is, of a causal relationship between education and a desired outcome, is a normative standpoint rather than an empirical observation (cf. Peterman & Kennedy, 2003). The active recommendation of entrepreneurship education can therefore, according to Locke & Schöne as cited in Lekoko, Rankhumise, and Ras, (2012), be understood as a manifestation of an ideological conviction of future progress. This ideological conviction might also explain why the arguments for entrepreneurship education are similar, irrespective of which educational model that is advocated. The problem of this study therefore is how functional is entrepreneurship education in schools in Aguata local government area? The study is to determine the perception of students on effective functioning of entrepreneurship education in Aguata local government area.

1.1.1 Research Question

What is students' perception on effective functioning of entrepreneurship education in schools in Aguata local government area?

1.1.2 Hypothesis

The perception of students' on effective functioning of entrepreneurship education is not significant.

1.2 Method

The design of this study is survey. A total of 272 male and female students randomly drawn from a population of 650 junior secondary school students from four schools in Aguata education zone made up the sample. The instrument for the study was a 15 item likert type scale questionnaire structured in such a way to elicit information on the students' perception of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in secondary schools. The questionnaire tagged Students' Perception of the effective functioning of Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire (SPEEEQ) was scaled Strongly Agree (SA 4), Agree (A 3), Disagree (D 2), and Strongly Disagree (SD 1), and was used to collect data. The items in the instrument were structured to describe the level of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education taught in the Nigerian schools. An overall mean score of 2.5 and above shows that the students perceived entrepreneurship education as not effective while below 2.5 shows the students' perception of entrepreneurship education is effective. The research question was answered using mean and standard deviation, while z-test statistics was used to analyze the null hypothesis.

1.3 Result

Research question: What is students' perception on the effective functioning of entrepreneurship education in schools in Aguata local government areas?

Table1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Students' Perception of effective functioning of Entrepreneurship Education.

s/n	N	Mean	Std deviation	Decision
Entrepreneurship is only taught in senior secondary school classes.	272	2.68	1.09	accepted
Junior secondary school is not the best level to begin the teaching of entrepreneurship education.	272	3.08	1.40	accepted
Some teachers lack competence for the teaching of entrepreneurship skills	272	2.20	0,80	rejected

Entrepreneurship education is more theoretical than practical.	272	2.30	1.14	rejected
Students are not taught entrepreneurship skills to help them understand business and be better employee.	272	3.15	2.01	accepted
Secondary school students have entrepreneurship experiences.	272	2.13	0.18	rejected
Entrepreneurship education is available in our schools.	272	2.43	1.20	rejected
There is no equipment for the teaching of entrepreneurship skills.	272	3.45	1.80	rejected
Entrepreneurship education is not well funded by the federal government.	272	2.30	1.58	rejected
Students are not well prepared to become entrepreneurs after graduation.	272	2.30	1.18	rejected
Students are taught entrepreneurship only in tertiary Institutions.	272	2.30	1.18	rejected
Teachers do not use teaching aids in teaching of entrepreneurship education in schools.	272	2.18	0.40	rejected
Students' assignments are not supervised by teachers	272	2.80	1.80	accepted
I feel that entrepreneurship education teaches skills for life (example, problem solving and creative thinking).	272	3.08	1.82	accepted
Entrepreneurship should not be made optional in various educational levels.	272	2.46	1.82	rejected
Overall cluster mean	272	2.58	1.29	

The result in the above Table revealed the overall mean score of students' perception on effective functioning of entrepreneurship education to be 2.58 and standard deviation 1.29. The in-

duction is that entrepreneurship education is not effective and therefore not functional in secondary schools in Aguata local government area of Anambra state.

Table 2

Summary of 2-tailed mean rating of students' perception of effectiveness of entrepreneurship education

Students' Perception	Mean	Std Deviation	N	Degree of Freedom	Standard Error	2-cal	2-crit
Non-functional	3.45	2.03	272				
			270	0.0386	21.2	1.96	
Functional	2.63	1.17	272				

The result in the above Table shows that the calculated value of 21.2 is greater than the critical value of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant perception of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education by students is rejected. This implies that students' perception of entrepreneurship education as not functional is significant. Therefore the null hypothesis of no significant perception is rejected.

1.4 Discussion

The findings of this study show that students perceived entrepreneurship education as not functional in secondary schools in Aguata local government area. In spite of the fact that entrepreneurship education is included in the curriculum of secondary schools in Aguata local government area, its functionality is questionable. This finding is in consonant with the findings of Emesini (2011) which revealed that students' acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in business education, home economics and vocational technical education is as a result of practical training and interactive learning. Irrespective of what model of entrepreneurship education is dealt with, the literature on this area is characterized by a positive attitude to entrepreneurship (Henry, Hill & Leitch, 2003). Education facilitates entrepreneurial success when it is functional. The inculcation of different skills that helps one notice viable entrepreneurship opportunities that exist and take advantage of them is as a result of functional education. Provision of competencies such as innovative-

ness and ability to acquire resources is as a result of effective entrepreneurship education. Unemployment is more in Nigeria today because, students are no longer taught skills of entrepreneurship in secondary schools. The wealth of a nation depends on her economic development while the development of a nation is dependable on the intelligence, creativity, innovativeness and foresight of her youths. When youths are well prepared and backed with entrepreneurial skills through entrepreneurship education, they will no longer seek for employment rather they will become employers. Since entrepreneurship education is thereby considered to benefit both society and individuals, it is regarded as both necessary and reasonable that everybody should have access to it.

Students' perception of entrepreneurship education in secondary schools as nonfunctional may be the reason behind their studying to secure a white-collar job instead of being self-employed. The interpretation of the findings of this study is also consistent with the findings of other studies of entrepreneurship education. Lekoko, Rankhumise, and Ras, (2012) have it that the use of group and individual projects and summative assessments constitute the primary teaching/learning methods that are used to teach entrepreneurship course. This according to them points to a deficiency in the teaching of entrepreneurship. The findings of the study of Cooper as cited in Lekoko, Rankhumise, and Ras, (2012) revealed that less traditional, but

more interactive methods, such as a case study, invited guest speakers and interaction with successful entrepreneurs were much less employed. Although the methods used in teaching entrepreneurship skills were not investigated specifically in this study, there is a link. The non functionality of entrepreneurship education in those schools could be linked to the teaching methods used in those schools.

1.5 Implications

The findings of this study have implications for teachers, government and Nigerian graduates employment opportunities. The non-functionality of entrepreneurship education in schools in Aguata LGA implies that teachers are deficient in competencies and skills needed for the teaching of entrepreneurship skills. Teachers' wide knowledge and competence in entrepreneurship education is a good quality for students' learning and development of entrepreneurial skills. This cannot be possible without government backing. Therefore, fund is very necessary to provide the needed equipments and support to graduates who want to establish their own business at all level. This implies that unemployment will reduce because; students will no longer rely so much on white-collar jobs.

1.6 Conclusion

The study assessed students' perception of the functionality of entrepreneurship. Survey design was used on the sample size of 272 students in Aguata education zone. The findings of the study revealed that entrepreneurship education is not functional in secondary schools in Aguata education zone despite its inclusion in the curriculum.

1.7 Recommendation

From the result of the study, it is recommended that entrepreneurship education should be strengthened in secondary schools to create a sense of innovation and creativity by giving students the skills needed to plan and make strategic about their careers and creation of jobs. Teachers should be encouraged to widening their experience in entrepreneurial skills and inculcate same in their students. Teachers should be exposed to good knowledge of entrepreneurship skills to enable them practicalize what they teach to students. Resource persons should be invited to teach students different skills in regular basis. Entrepreneurial education should be made compulsory at all levels of education, and steps should be taken to make the programme functional through teacher capacity building. There should also be provision of infrastructural facilities and equipment.

Students' Perception of the effective Functioning of Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire (SPEEEQ)

	Items	S	A	D	S D
1	Entrepreneurship is only taught in senior secondary school classes				
2	Junior secondary school is the best level to begin the teaching of entrepreneurship education.				
3	Some teachers lack competencies for the teaching of entrepreneurship skills.				
4	Entrepreneurship education is more theoretical than practical.				
5	Students are not taught entrepreneurship skills to help them understand business and be better employee.				
6	Secondary school students have entrepreneurship experiences.				
7	Entrepreneurship education is available in our schools.				
8	There is no equipment for the teaching of entrepreneurship skills.				
9	Entrepreneurship education is not well funded by the federal government.				
10	Students are not well prepared to become entrepreneurs after graduation.				
11	Students are taught entrepreneurship only in tertiary institutions.				
12	Teachers do not use teaching aids in teaching of entrepreneurship education in schools.				
13	Students' assignments on creativity are not supervised by teachers				
14	I feel that entrepreneurship education teaches skills for life (example, problem solving and creative thinking).				
15	Entrepreneurship should not be made optional in various educational levels.				

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