

# PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

## EDUCATION

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### **Abstract**

*The study investigated how principals' perceive Entrepreneurship Education (EE) in secondary schools and whether there are constraining factors to the attainment of the objectives of EE with a view to address them. The study, a survey research design, involved a population of 257 public secondary school principals in Anambra State of Nigeria. A 15-item questionnaire called: 'Principals' Perception of Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire' (PPEEQ) was used to collect data for the study. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was 0.86. Two research questions guided the study. Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings among others showed that the principals perceived EE as a veritable means to develop and encourage students to be self-reliant and employers of labour on graduation. Also, inadequate fund provision for EE was found to greatly constrain the attainment of EE objectives. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that government should religiously devote the recommended 26% of her annual budget to education in order to fund EE sufficiently and enhance the attainment of its objectives.*

**Key Words:** Principals, Perception and Entrepreneurship Education

The import of education can never be over emphasized. Education is the bedrock of any meaningful development. This is why Sticht (2009) opined that education is one of the stimulators of the growth and development of any society and it enhances the development of the potentials of human beings making it paramount for every society to give it priority. Ayodele (2014) noted that when people are educated, the nation would not be talking about technology transfer because everyone would be creative and creativity brings about invention, thus leading to development. To Mangvwat & Awuya, (2009), education is the weapon needed for the acquisition of relevant knowledge with skills for all round development. It is the driving force behind socio-economic advancement of any nation. Suffice it to say that in Nigeria, a developing country, being confronted with economic, political, social and educational challenges, Entrepreneurship Education (EE) becomes an imperative.

That is why Nwaka (2009) suggested that EE and skill development of the Nigerian school leavers appear to be the main option for our youths' preparation for future employment, as government is no longer interested in creating job opportunities for them to be absorbed in any of its departments after leaving school. The current economic meltdown syndrome and the consequent negative economic growth calls for all schools and individuals to aspire for self-reliance and self-employment, which is made possible through EE.

### **Concept of Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship education came into limelight when Nigeria was faced with the realistic nature of unemployment and the dynamic economic condition<sup>^</sup> which continues to fluctuate. There was the need to introduce a form of education which will not only encourage self-reliance, but will impact positively on the creative and innovative abilities of the individuals (Oladnjoye & Omemu, 2013). Entrepreneurship, according to European Commission (2008), refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and taking calculated risks, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives; seize opportunities and provide a foundation for entrepreneurs and establishing a social or commercial activity. Entrepreneurship is perceived as a dynamic process of vision and creation, which requires an application of energy and passion towards the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions. From the above discourse, entrepreneurship would be seen as having the will power to put into action an idea created in the mind. It is the willingness to take calculated risks in terms of time and money to formulate an effective business venture.

EE is that aspect of education that develops in the individual such characteristics as entrepreneurship spirit and mind-set, knowledge, attitudes, inspiration, habits and creative skills in order to become successfully self-employed, solve problems, relate to people, take proer decisions and be able to face reality. Similarly, Ahumode and Nwite (2009) saw EE as a specialized training given to students to enable them acquire skills, ideas and managerial abilities and capabilities for self-employment. EE exposes beneficiaries to courses (learning experiences) in negotiation leadership, new product development, creative thinking as well as innovation technology and career options, which are expected to be carefully taught practically to the learner by qualified teachers, potential resource persons (such as those experienced in action and project-based teaching) using appropriate pedagogy, modern facilities, teaching equipment and materials in a learner-friendly environment and fortified with adequate funding and management. To Anyaorah (2006) it enables a person to take financial risks and at the same time utilize the human and material resources available to him/her to achieve the aim of establishing the business. It prepares the learner for occupational fields and for

responsible citizenship as well as a tool for promoting sustainable development and a way of alleviating poverty, (Nwaka, 2009).

### **The Relevance of Entrepreneurship Education**

EE when well implemented injects functionality in the graduate, who will be able to make use of his hands, head and the heart (the 3Hs of education), which can effectively be achieved when the graduate effectively learns to learn; learns to do; learns to live together; learns to be and also learns to transform oneself and the society (UNESCO, 2008). In other words, EE acquaints individuals with the relevant functional skills needed for job creation, poverty eradication and wealth creation and be strengthened with ethical, moral and civic values as well as the mind-set of becoming self-employed and employer of labour.

EE, in the opinions of Iheonunekwu (2013), Nwaka (2010), Akpoma (2009), Onuma (2009), and Osuala (2004) enables learners to acquire basic knowledge, skills, attitudes and ideas, that equip the individual to start a new business, manage it and address any challenges astutely. It is not any wonder that government recognized the import of EE in addressing poor economy and unemployment issues in the country and to that effect, introduced EE recently, in the 2007/2008 academic session precisely, and made it a compulsory course for all students in the tertiary institutions, irrespective of the students' course/area of study. Oghojafor, Kuje, Suleiman & Okonji (2009) appreciated this gesture by saying that it is a bold attempt at awakening the entrepreneurship consciousness of the Nigerian youth. Government is aware that when the individual is entrepreneurially educated, the individual will be empowered with the required knowledge, skills, and attitudes to establish new business, which will generate income for the individual and in turn improve the economic development of the nation. The individual would by implication be self-reliant, independent rather than dependent and contribute to national development.

The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (2008) in her effort to ensure development of entrepreneurial skill which will inform and lead to the emergence of many small scale businesses and to make students become self-reliant, summarized the objectives of the new curriculum at the secondary education level as follows:

- i. Develop individuals to be self-reliant and become employers of labour.
- ii. Develop entrepreneurial skills which will in turn lead to the emergence of many small businesses.
- iii. For self-discovery in order to fast-track technological and economic development.
- iv. Impact creativity and ingenuity skills.
- v. To meet the present need of the community and the nation at large.

Realization of these objectives successfully revolves around proper implementation. The principal of a secondary school has roles to play in order to raise the quality of the services delivered in the school, which consequently boasts his capacity to manage the school and ensures goal achievement (Nwaka, 2011a). The principal by virtue of his position as a manager of secondary school interprets the curriculum, designs and maintains conducive environment to enable the staff working in the school to work as a team towards the realization of EE objectives. His positive roles (efficient and effective mobilization of human and material resources) would enhance attainment of the EE objectives and vice versa. Emphatically, he must ensure that teachers are committed to their work. He ensures this by making sure makes clear policies and assigns work schedules to staff after the group has democratically approved of the schedules. He ensures that through effective supervision, making sure that instructional objectives related to the educational goals, are attainable and are clearly stated, and appropriate for the students, he ensures that learning contents and materials are relevant to the instructional objectives, up-to-date and relevant to the learner and the society. He also, ensures that teaching methods are excellently potent (in terms of improving learning outcomes). The school administrator influences the results to be achieved, the direction to be pursued, and the priorities to be recognized within the organization (Nwaka, 2011b). Be it as it may, it is not clear whether principals perceive EE in the secondary schools as relevant and if there are constraining factors setting back successful attainment of the EE objectives. If any, what would be done to address them in order to fast-track self-reliance and national development in Nigeria?

### **Statement of the Problem**

The imperativeness of EE in Nigeria for self reliance and national development can never be over-emphasized. With the recent introduction of EE in secondary schools and tertiary institutions, the-expectation is that students would be motivated to become creative and innovative; that EE would encourage and improve students ability to work with others in a team; acquire joint- venture initiatives;; introduce students to small business concepts and opportunities, and encourage them to start business ventures and play an important role in job creation among others. It is more than five (5) years since the introduction of EE in schools, although it may be too early to judge; but it is very disturbing that today, social vices are still on the high side. There are still numerous job seekers, armed robbers, prostitutes, kidnappers, fraudsters and touts and other social vices promoters everywhere. According to Mbakwem and Okoro (2010) this implies that they lack entrepreneurial skills in real career world. These have become subjects of serious concern. The Nigerian society has become enraged. The government, the parents, and even education stakeholders are confused because the national development is at stake. The reason for this apparent decay in the society is not clear. One is not sure whether the school principals and teachers, who are supposed to implement the EE in schools are not doing it properly or that the schools lack the

wherewithal for the implementation of EE learning experiences or that the students are not learning the skills because they lack the right mind-set or that the teachers are not committed. The researcher therefore sought to ascertain how principals' perceive the EE as relevant in secondary schools and whether there are constraining factors to the attainment of the objectives of EE with a view to address them.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to investigate how principals' perceive the EE in secondary schools and whether there are constraining factors to the attainment of the objectives of EE with a view to address them. Specifically, the study investigates;

- i. how principals perceive the EE in secondary schools.
- ii. constraining factors to the attainment of the EE objectives.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do principals perceive the EE in secondary schools?
2. Are there any constraining factors to the attainment of the EE objectives?

### **Method**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design which involves the use of questionnaire to investigate how principals perceive the EE in secondary schools and whether there are constraining factors to the attainment of the objectives of EE with a view to address them. According to Akuezuilo and Agu (2003) descriptive survey research design describes and interprets what is, seeks to find out the conditions that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident or trends that are developing. Stressing the effectiveness of survey design, Ogbazi and Okpala (1994) maintained that it involves the use of questionnaire and or intention to determine the opinion, preference, attitudes or perceptions of people about a particular situation. Thus, survey design is appropriate for this study.

The study was conducted in Nigeria, precisely, in Anambra State of Nigeria. The population of this study was all the male and female principals of the 257 public secondary schools in Anambra State. (Post Primary Education Board, Awka, 2014). There was no sampling. This was because the population can be studied conveniently.

The instrument used in collecting the data relevant for answering the research questions was a 15-item questionnaire called: Principals' Perception of Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire (PPEEQ). The questionnaire has two sections. Section A contained the respondents Biodata. Section B consisted of 15 items on principals' perception of entrepreneurship education. The instrument was structured on a 4-point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D)

and Strongly Disagree (SD). The points assigned to the scales were 4, 3, 2 & 1 respectively. The mean of this 4-point scale (2.5) was determined such that  $< 2.5 =$  Strongly Disagree and  $> 2.5 =$  Strongly Agree.

The content and face validity of the instrument were determined by giving the questionnaire to four experts: two in Measurement and Evaluation Department, one in Department of Entrepreneurial Studies and one in Educational Foundations and Administration Department of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. They offered useful comments and suggestions which helped to modify some items of the questionnaire before the final draft was prepared.

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the researcher administered the instrument on twenty principals in Enugu State, who were not part of the target population. Cronbach Alpha Formulae was used to compute the reliability coefficient of the instrument. A Co-efficient Alpha value of 0.86 was obtained, which indicated a high internal consistency. Thus, the instrument was considered reliable for the study.

The face-to-face method was adopted in the administration of the data. With the assistance of six research-assistants, the instrument was administered on the respondents. A 100% return of the copies of the questionnaire fully completed was obtained. The collected data were analyzed using means ( $\bar{x}$ ) and Standard Deviation (SD) and the result was presented on the Tables below.

## **Results**

**Research Question One:** How do principals perceive the EE in secondary schools?

Research question one addressed how principals perceive the EE in secondary schools. Responses of principals on their perception of EE were used to answer research question one. Summary of the mean ratings and standard deviations were shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Mean Ratings of Items on Principals' Perception of EE in Secondary Schools**

S/No	EE is relevant because it	Male Principals		Female Principals	
		X	SD	X	SD
1.	Develops individuals to be self-reliant and become employers of labour	3.65	0.93	3.35	0.83
2.	Develops entrepreneurial skills which will in turn lead to the emergence of many small businesses	3.51	0.86	3.63	0.91
3.	Engenders self-discovery in order to fast-track technological and economic development.	3.47	0.86	3.64	0.93
4.	Impacts creativity and ingenuity skills	3.28	0.74	3.45	0.83
5.	Meets the present needs of the individuals, immediate community and the nation at large	3.45	0.85	3.45	0.83
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>0.86</b>

Data on Table 1 show that the mean ratings of male and female principals for items 1-5 are above the acceptable level of 2.5. This is an indication that the principals strongly agree that EE is relevant in secondary schools.

**Research Question Two:** Are there any constraining factors to the attainment of the EE objectives?

Responses of principals on the constraining factors to the attainment of the EE were used to answer research question two. Summary of the mean ratings and standard deviations were shown in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Mean Ratings of Items on Principals' Perception on the Constraining Factors to Attainment of EE Objectives in Secondary School**

S/No	Constraining factors	Male Principals		Female Principals	
		X	SD	X	SD
1.	Poor policy implementation	3.65	0.93	3.35	0.83
2.	Poor supervision of EE instruction	3.51	0.86	3.63	0.91
3.	Inadequate instructional materials/equipment	3.47	0.86	3.64	0.93
4.	Poor conditions of service for both principals and teachers	3.28	0.74	3.45	0.83
5.	Managerial inexperience and ineptitudes	2.50	0.84	2.78	0.67
6.	Inadequate fund provision for EE	4.00	0.78	4.00	0.86
7.	Lack of ICT facilities	3.96	0.87	3.98	0.76
8.	Lack of formal link between teachers / school s and entrepreneurs / companies to intertwine theory and practice.	3.54	0.74	3.43	0.76
9.	Teachers' poor knowledge of entrepreneurship skills	3.33	0.76	3.54	0.65
10.	Poor teacher development on the new EE curricula	3.45	0.85	3.45	0.83
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>3.18</b>	<b>0.78</b>

In Table 2, the respondents rated all the items 1-10 above the acceptable level of 2.5. This means that they perceived all the listed factors as constraining factors to the attainment of EE objectives in secondary schools. Both male and female principals rated item 6: 'Inadequate fund provision for EE' highest with a mean rating of 4.00, which is an indication that it is the most worrisome factor that constrains attainment of EE objectives.

**Discussion**

In relation to research question one, Data on Table 1 showed that the mean ratings of male and female principals for items 1-5 are above the acceptable level of 2.5. This is an indication that the principals strongly agree that EE is relevant in secondary schools. This is in line with the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (2008), who in their effort to ensure development of entrepreneurial skills which will inform and lead to the emergence of many small scale businesses and also make students become self-reliant summarized the objectives of the new curriculum at the secondary education level as follows: EE develops individuals to be self-reliant and become employers of labour; develops entrepreneurial skills which will in turn lead to the emergence of many small businesses; impacts creativity and ingenuity skills; and meets-the present needs of the individuals, community and the nation at large. From the mean ratings of principals' responses to items 1-5. it means that the principals are aware of the relevance of EE in the life of the students, but it appears that achievement of these objectives is being



challenged by inadequate fund provision, which they rated 4.00 (Strongly Agree). This is understandable because poor funding of education is a recurring decimal, which Nwaka (2014) noted that it contributes in no small measure to the endemic crises in the education system today in Nigeria. It therefore, follows that government should earnestly and adequately fund EE if she hopes to attain its objectives.

In Table' 2, the respondents rated items 1-10 above the acceptable level of 2.5. This means that they perceived all the listed factors as constraining factors to the attainment of EE objectives in secondary schools to a great extent. This is in line with Ikeme (2012), Nzekwe (2012), Onyeachu (2011), Osasert (2010), Oyetunde (2010), McConnel & Brue (2002), and Amaewule (1993) who had earlier noticed myriad of problems militating against EE in this 21<sup>st</sup> century; such as poor funding, lack of ICT facilities, teachers' poor knowledge of entrepreneurship skills, certificate syndrome, poor conditions of service for both principals and teachers, poor teacher appreciation, inadequate instructional materials/equipment among others. The seemingly failure of EE to achieve its goals owing to the above listed factors may not be any wonder. This is because the principals strongly perceived all the items on Table 1 as relevant to EE of the individuals, but were constrained by the foregoing factors. Nobody would have done better. The principals could not have worked with empty hands. They are expected to work in collaboration with the teachers, who translate national goals of education into practical activities in the classrooms towards accomplishing completely the EE goals. Unfortunately, the supposed teachers suffer poor knowledge of entrepreneurship skills as well as poor teacher development on the new EE curricula coupled with inadequate instructional materials/equipment provision, and consequent upon these, EE programme is being poorly implemented. No wonder Vhfrumpn (2014) observed that teachers emphasize theoretical knowledge rather than practical knowledge in the classrooms. The question now is, can one give what one does not have? EE now is at the crossroads with no redress in view, yet Nigerians want certificates at all costs. There is lack of ICT facilities. This is worrisome. There is need to promote ICT capabilities of the youths because it is critical to the acquisition of EE skills in creating employment opportunities; wealth generation and creation, as well as the reduction of poverty and unemployment crisis.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, Nigeria, more than ever before, needs stronger educational system to take EE more seriously to ensure it becomes operational in order to prepare the entrepreneurial mind-set of her citizens and consequently, equip them with the required knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to face the more complex inter-linked and fast changing nature of current and future challenges and after all succeed and be able to help others. At the turn of this century, it became obvious that for Nigeria to keep pace with the rest of the world as well as develop progressively, EE

must be placed on the front burner. EE is a key driver in any economy (Nwagbara, 2012). If EE is effectively planned, adequately funded and properly implemented, personal and national development would be attained.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made as the way forward;

1. Government should show commitment in the implementation of designed policies. This can best be done through proper provision of the right number of qualified and EE skilled human resources armed with the relevant material resources,
2. Government should religiously devote the recommended 26% of her annual budget to education in order to fund EE sufficiently and enhance the attainment of its objectives.
3. Principals should adequately and regularly supervise EE activities in the schools.
4. Principals should efficiently and effectively manage the provided resources in the schools.
5. Government should earnestly provide good conditions of service for teachers as well as support and sponsor teacher development programmes to enable them acquire the relevant EE knowledge, skills and attitudes.

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*Principals' Perception Of Entrepreneurship Educaiton In Secondary Schools In Nigeria Education- Dr. Gladys Uzoechina*

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*Principals' Perception Of Entrepreneurship Educaiton In Secondary Schools In Nigeria Education-* Dr. Gladys Uzoechina

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