
Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition for Economic Development among Secondary School Students in South-South Nigeria

By

DR. NANIGHE BALDWIN MAJOR

*Department of Foundations,
Niger Delta University,
Wilberforce Island.*

And

DR. IBEBIETEI TEMPLE OFFOR

*Department of Foundations,
Niger Delta University,
Wilberforce Island.*

Abstract

The study examined the entrepreneurship skills acquired by students in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample of 2,753 students was drawn using the multi-stage sampling technique. The data collection instrument was a researchers developed “Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition Questionnaire (ESAQ)” structured in 4- point Likert type. The Pearson Product Moment technique was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.69. The findings revealed that among the six entrepreneurship skills measured-business managerial, farming, electrical works, home economics, fine arts and computer s kills, only farming and home economics skills were acquired by secondary school students in south-south Nigeria. The tested hypotheses also revealed a significant difference in mean rating of male and female students in the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills with a t-calculated value of 8.44. It was therefore recommended that comprehensive and collaborative approaches be used by government and all stake holders to ensure that students adequately acquire entrepreneurship skills in secondary schools in south south Nigeria.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, skills acquisition, economic development, secondary school and south-south Nigeria

Developed nations of the world especially the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and most of Western Europe have strategically repositioned and project entrepreneurship activities as major drivers and key determinants of economic growth and development. This was as a result of the realization that small and medium scale enterprises have ability to sustain economic growth and development. These nations have gone ahead to comprehensively include entrepreneurship education into different aspects of formal education curricular. According to Alarape (2008:56), the reasons for the global interests in entrepreneurship education were:

... The growing rate of unemployment and poverty that became obvious after the economic depression of the 1990s; the recession in the agricultural market; and the realization of the ability of small and medium size enterprises to create widespread employment opportunities, thereby militating against unemployment and poverty...

Research increasingly show that those who undergo entrepreneurship education could think creatively and generate opportunities. Mckone Sweet et al (2011) in Omede (2012) found of college graduates and reported that more than 80% were confident of their ability to think creatively while 66% were highly confident of their ability to identify and create new business opportunities using their entrepreneurship abilities Bruyet and Julien (2000) saw entrepreneurship as the process of being self employed by owning a small business and its management for growth, and concluded that entrepreneurship education has come to stay. This is because the world has come to generally accept it as part of the vital solutions to unemployment and the agent for economic prosperity and development of nations. The most commonly cited objectives of entrepreneurship education and training programmes according to Garavan & O'Conneide (1994:47) include the following:

- i. To acquire knowledge germane to entrepreneurship;
- ii. To acquire skills in the use of techniques in the analysis of business situations and in the synthesis of action plans.
- iii. To identify and stimulate entrepreneurial drive, talent and skills,
- iv. To develop empathy and support for all unique aspects of entrepreneurship
- v. To encourage and devise attitude towards change
- vi. To encourage new start-ups and other entrepreneurial ventures.

In Nigeria the emergence of entrepreneurship education on formal curricular of schools was as a result of the recommendations of the Ashby commission Report of 1960. It recommended that skills – based subjects (technical and vocational) should be

made available to most young people as a basis for stimulating national growth. Borrowing from the experiences of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and most of developed Western Europe, the Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) adopted education as an instrument for national integration, socio-economic development and technological growth. As following up, several measures were put in place to address the issues of growth and development from different fronts. The introduction of entrepreneurship education into the secondary school curricula was part of such measures aimed at deliberately stimulating the teaching and learning of skill based subjects. These were believed would build capacity in the youths and empower them to participate actively in solving the socio-economic problems associated with poverty and unemployment (Obiyai & Ehimen 2012).

The goals of entrepreneurship education as stated in the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004:30-31) include:

- i. To provide trained manpower in applied sciences, technology and business particularly at the craft, advanced craft and technical level.
- ii. To give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically
- iii. The production of skilled, self-reliant and enterprising craftsmen and technicians who can apply their technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for solving industrial, agricultural and economic problems of the nation.

The National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004) outlined the following as skills based entrepreneurship subjects.

1. Agricultural science
2. Applied electricity
3. Auto- mechanic
4. Book keeping & accounting
5. Building construction
6. Commerce
7. Computer Education
8. Electronics
9. Clothing and textiles
10. Food and nutrition
11. Home management
12. Metal work
13. Technical drawing
14. Wood work

15. Typewriting
16. Fine art
17. Music

The benefits of entrepreneurship education have direct bearing with the acquisition of skills that could be used in the resolution of the country's unemployment and poverty related issued. Omede (2012:56) specifically listed some of the benefits of entrepreneurship education to include:

- i. Entrepreneurship education has the potential of increasing the problem solving abilities of trainees and thereby boosting their capacity to man different environmental changes on daily basis.
- ii. Good decision-making abilities are enhanced through entrepreneurship education. Trainees privileged to pass through entrepreneurship education are equipped with different managerial knowledge, and models for taking wise decisions that would take their businesses to enviable levels.
- iii. Entrepreneurship education inculcates in the learners/ trainees high level of social psychological development. When unemployed youth are empowered, their level of self esteem is enhance.

Trained entrepreneurs always are empowered to tap from local phenomenon that has been demonstrated in India, China, Japan and other emerging economics of the world.

- v. Entrepreneurship equips people with traits of creativity, innovation, independence and fore sight for promoting local technology ... provide platform for people to appreciate local technology.

It must be recognized that the Nigerian students of today are the leaders of tomorrow. In their training and education, they need to aggressively know, understand and apply entrepreneurship thought and action in the resolution of societal problems. These have capacity to stimulate in them ambidextrous thinking, with the ability of using both creative and predictive approaches in their work endeavours, whether or not they own their businesses of work for others. Students must learn how to use their acquired entrepreneurship skills, abilities and competencies in identifying and creating economic opportunities, acquire resources, improve on their human relations skills, locate information, have ability in managing resources both human and material, plan finances, build a team and create something of social or economic value.

In south-south Nigeria, as government deliberately expands access to secondary education to accommodate hitherto excluded groups, entrepreneurship subjects are taught even in the rural and remote secondary schools although not without challenges. Several research findings including Nwachukwu (2007) have questioned the implementation of the well articulated and structured National Policy on Education with a robust and comprehensive content. The overt lack of basic infrastructure, inadequate specialist teachers and other technical staff, the relative absence of effort to blend theory and practice and the methods adopted in the teaching and learning process have generally been identified as limiting factors. Research findings have also continued to show a positive correlation between resources availability (both human and material) and learning outcomes (Fajemirokan, 1999, Edobor, 2007 and Bane, 2007).

Regrettably, it could be lamented that although schools teach subjects that could aid in the development and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills, the unemployment and poverty among youths seem to be very high within the region. The absence of these skills make youths unemployable and at the same time make it almost impossible for them to set up businesses for themselves and contribute to the economic growth and development of their country. The high level of youth involvement anti-social behaviours within the zone could attest to this fact. It is worrisome that south-south Nigeria is frequently engulfed in youth militancy, gun violence, cult activities, kidnapping, drug addition and even prostitution. The perpetrators of these activities are basically youth who should have engaged themselves in meaningful and productive ventures that would contribute to economic growth and development. These youths are therefore not meeting their individual needs and development aspirations of the nation. There is therefore the urgent need to carry out a critical appraisal of the kinds of entrepreneurship skills that are developed in students based on the subjects taught in secondary schools in the south-south Nigeria. The urgency in the critical appraisal of the extent to which entrepreneurship skill, and competencies are developed in secondary school students necessitated this study.

The Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Several writers have variously conceptualized entrepreneurship education based on their view points. Garavan & O’Cinneide (1994) agreed with Gibb (1993) the reasonable existence of confusion in the use of the terms entrepreneurship education and enterprise education, although both have links and now interchangeably used in literature and practice. The term enterprise education mostly used in Europe is geared towards the development of personal attributes, with the major objectives of developing enterprising people and inculcate an attitude of self-reliance using appropriate learning processes. Entrepreneurship education directly aims at stimulating entrepreneurship

which could be defined as independent small business ownership or the development of opportunity-seeking managers within business.

According to Omede (2012) entrepreneurship education is part of life-long learning where entrepreneurial skills are developed and supplemented throughout the stages of life. It is a question of life management, interaction, self guided action, capacity for innovation to involve training that is capable to grant the individual a hedge in the development and use of creative abilities and at the same time take initiatives responsibility and risk. The conceptualization of Adidu & Olannye (2006) holds that entrepreneurship education is the persistent pursuit of opportunities for the purpose of creating wealth through the innovative creation of products and services that meet customers' needs. It also involves the application of prudence in the use of available resources that promote the growth of an enterprise that satisfies the expectation of stake holders, who work to keep the business alive.

Egboh (2009) in Omede (2012) conceptualized entrepreneurship education to involve the perception and identification of business opportunities, the taking of decisions about business location, creatively responding to opportunities, (innovation) bearing all risks and the management of business concern. To Nnadi (2012) entrepreneurship education involves the acquisition of right habits, attitudes, skills and what it takes to survive in the face of unemployment. The aim being to help the learner or student to acquire skills which obviously would transform him to a job creator and provider thereby playing roles in the solutions to unemployment and poverty. There is therefore a strong and positive link between entrepreneurial education and economic growth and development. This nexus between entrepreneurship education and economic development has been severally emphasized and explained. Industrial and commercial development of nations, around the world have always used entrepreneurship education as a key element and most significant driver for economic development in recent business history. (Egboh, 2009; Oviawe, 2010 and Zimmerer & Scarborough, 2005).`

Statement of Problem

As Nigeria policy makers increasingly recognize the role of entrepreneurship skills development as a veritable tool in stimulating economic growth and development, skills based subjects have been introduced into the secondary system. The goal being the development of functional skills that would make youths self-reliant and sufficient in fighting unemployment and poverty, thereby contributing to economic growth and development. Sadly, the past decade ushered in a worrisome trend among Nigerian youths and especially those of the south-south zone, the hub of the hydro-carbon industry which sustains the country's economy. Youth militancy, gun violence caused by the proliferation of arms, kidnapping, robbery, and other social vices have

continued to increase. The calls for an examination of the kind of skills secondary school students acquire in the subjects leading to entrepreneurial skills development. The problem of this study stated in a question is “to what extent do secondary school students acquire entrepreneurial skills that could aid economic growth and development in south-south zone of Nigeria?”

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to find out the entrepreneurship skills acquired by students in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria. In specific terms, the study was carried out to:

1. Determine whether students acquire business managerial skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria.
2. Determine whether students acquire electrical skills in south-south Nigeria
3. Determine whether students acquire farming skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria
4. Determine whether students acquire home economics skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria
5. Determine where students acquire fine arts skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria
6. Determine whether students acquire computer skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria.

Research questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

- 1 Do male and female students acquire business managerial skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria.?
2. Do male and female students acquire skills in electrical works ins secondary schools in the south-south zone of Nigeria?
- .3 Do male and female students acquire farming skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria?
4. Do male and female students acquire home economics skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria?
5. Do male and female students acquire fine arts skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria?.
6. Do male and female students acquire computer skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of statistical significance:

HO₁. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students in the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in secondary school in south-south Nigeria

Methodology

The research design adopted in the study was the descriptive survey as the study collected data from a representative sample of the population from which the findings were generalized. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to draw a sample a sample of 2, 953 secondary school students in south-south Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was a 24-item researcher developed Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition Questionnaire (ESAQ) in a 4-pont Likert type. The instrument was validated by experts in tests and measurement, and those of Vocational Education, all in the Faculty of Education, Niger Delta University. The Pearson Product Moment method was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.69, and the instrument was considered reliable. The data collected was analyzed using the item mean for determining skills acquired or not acquired using a criterion mean of 2.50. The t-test was used in testing the hypothesis.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1

Do male and female students acquire business managerial skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Male and Female Students on Acquisition of Skills Related to Business Managerial Ability

S/N	Items	Male			Female		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
1	Having undergone entrepreneurial subjects you have acquired the skill of: Influencing the behaviour of other people towards achieving a goal	1.20	0.61	Not acquired	2.00	0.70	Not acquired
2.	Planning finance for a business	3.10	0.59	Acquired	2,50	0.69	Acquired
3	Coordinating material resources	3.00	0.61	acquired	2.50	0.61	Acquired
4	Communicating with others	1.50	0.57	Not acquired	2.40	0.62	Not acquired
	Grand mean	2.2	0.59	Not acquired	2.40	0.66	Not acquired

Table 1, pointed out that both male and female students can manage finances and material resources as their mean rating were 3.10 and 2.50 for management of finances and 3.00 and 2.50 for management of material resources for male and female students respectively. However, the remaining managerial skills were not acquired (item 1 and 4) as their mean rating were lower than the criterion mean of 2.50. The grand mean of 2.20 and 2.40 for male and female students respectively which were lower than the criterion mean of 2.50 revealed that managerial skills are not acquired by students in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria.

Research Question 2

Do male and female students acquire skills in electrical works in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Male and Female Students on the Acquisition of Electrical Work Skills

S/N	Items	Male			Female		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
	Having undergone entrepreneurial subjects you have acquired the skill of:						
5	Laying cables	2.00	0.59	Not acquired	2.00	0.64	Not acquired
6	Installing switches	3.10	0.61	Acquired	2.20	0.59	Not acquired
7	Installing fans	1.50	0.62	Not acquired	1.50	0.58	Not acquired
8	Install lamp holders	2.00	0.55	Not acquired	2.30	0.71	Not acquired
	Grand mean	2.42	0.59	Not acquired	2.00	0.63	Not acquired

Table 2, showed that all the skills in items 5, 6, 7, and 8 were not acquired by female students as their mean rating were below the criterion mean of 2.50 while the male students acquire skill of switch installation as item 6 had a mean rating of 3.10 which

was above the criterion mean. However, the grand mean rating of male and female students which were 2.20 and 2.00 respectively indicated that electrical work skills were not acquired in secondary school in south-south Nigeria.

Research Question 3

Do male and female students acquire home management skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Male and Female Student on the Acquisition of Home Economics Skills

S/N	Items	Male			Female		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
	Having undergone entrepreneurial subjects you have acquired the skills						
9	Cutting cloth to size	2.10	0.51	Not acquired	2.00	0.59	Not acquired
10	Stitching different part of cloth together	2.10	0.61	Not acquired	2.20	0.69	Not acquired
11	Baking cakes	3.20	0.62	Acquired	3.50	0.57	Acquired
12	Planning different types of menu	2.50	0.60	Acquired	2.50	0.71	Acquired
	Grand mean	2.50	0.59	Acquired	2.60	0.59	Acquired

Table 3 indicated that both male and female students accepted that they acquire the skills of baking cakes and planning different types of mean (items 11 and 12) as their mean rating were 3.20 and 3.5 and 2.50 for baking of cakes and 2.50 and 2.50 for planning different types of menu for male and female students respectively. The skills in item (9 and 10) were not acquired as their mean ratings were below 2.50. The grand mean of 2.50 and 2.60 indicated that home economics skills are acquired in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria.

Research Question 4

Do male and female students acquire fine arts skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Male and Female Students on the Acquisition of Fine Art Skills

S/N	Items	Male			Female		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
Having undergone entrepreneurial subjects you have acquired the skills of:							
13	Painting	3.50	0.61	Acquired	1.40	0.70	Not acquired
14	Drawing	2.20	0.57	Not acquired	3.00	0.72	Acquired
15	Molding	1.50	0.58	Not acquired	1.50	0.69	Not
16	Mixing colours	2.20	0.59	Not acquired	3.10	0.61	acquired Acquired
Grand mean		2.00	0.56	Not acquired	2.30	0.69	Not acquired

Table 4, indicated that female students accepted they acquired the skills of drawing and mixing colours (items 14 and 16) as their mean rating were 3.00 and 3.10 respectively which were above the criterion mean of 2.50. The remaining skills were not acquired as the mean ratings were below the criterion mean. Male students accepted that they acquired the skills of painting only as the mean rating of items 13 was 3.50, which was above the criterion mean. The grand mean rating of 2.00 and 2.30 indicated that fine art skills were not acquired in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria.

Research Question 5

Do males and female students acquire farming skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Male and Female Students on the Acquisition of Farm Skills

S/N	Items	Male			Female		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
	Having undergone entrepreneurial subject you have acquired the skills of:						
17	Livestock farming	2.00	0.59	Not acquired	2.50	0.51	Acquired
18	Fish farming	2.00	0.61	Not acquired	2.10	0.49	Not acquired
19	Crop farming	3.00	0.70	Acquired	3.00	0.69	Acquired
20	Applying different types of fertilizers	3.00	0.58	Acquired	3.10	0.61	Acquired
	Grand mean	2.50	0.62	Acquired	2.70	0.60	Acquired

Table 5 indicated that item 17, 19 and 20 were accepted as skills acquired by female students as their mean scores were 2.50, 3.00 and 3.10 respectively while male students accepted that items 19 and 20 were the skills acquired as their mean scores were 3.00 respectively, which were above the criterion mean. The grand mean of 2.50 and 2.70 for male and female students indicated that farming skills were acquired in secondary schools in South-South Nigeria.

Research Question 6

Do male and female students acquire computer skills in secondary schools in South-South Nigeria?

Table 6: Mean and Standard of Deviation of Male and Female Student An Acquisition of Computer Skills

S/N	Items	Male			Female		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
	Having undergone entrepreneurial subjects you have acquire the skills of:						
21	Typing	1.00	0.69	Not acquired	1.50	0.81	Not acquired
22	Browsing information	2.20	0.60	Not acquired	2.30	0.71	Not acquired
23	Sending mail	2.30	0.58	Not acquired	2,40	0.58	Not acquired
24	Opening mail	2.40	0.49	Not acquire	2,10	0.49	Not acquired
	Grand mean	2.20	0,59	Not acquired	2,10	0.65	Not acquired

Table 6 revealed that both male and female students did not acquire computer skills in secondary school in south-south Nigeria as item means of items 21, 22,23 and 24 for both male and female students were below 2.50, which was the criterion mean for determining the skills that were acquired or not acquired by the students.

Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female students in the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria.

Table 7: t-test Analysis of Male and Female Students Mean Rating on the Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Skills in Secondary Schools

Respondents	N	X̄	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	1,553	2.20	0.57	2,751	8.44	1.96	*
Female	1,200	2.40	0.65				

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 7 showed that when the mean rating of male and female students on the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria were subject to t-test analysis, a t-calculated value of 8.44 was obtained which was higher than the t-critical. It therefore implies that the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female students on the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills in secondary schools was rejected. There is therefore a significant difference in the mean rating of male and female students on the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills in secondary schools in South-South Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that secondary school students in south-south Nigeria acquired farming skills which were acquired from agriculture and home economics skills. It was also found that business managerial skills, electrical skills, arts skills and computer skills were not adequately acquired by students in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria.

It therefore Implies that students and the youths a level of have abilities in farming and home economics and could contribute to economic development if well guided. The above finding disagreed to some extent with the general assumption stated in the background as some youths have acquired minimal useful skills that could support economic development.

However, business management skills, electrical skills, fine arts and computer skill were not acquired. These skills are considered vital for students in contributing to national development. For example, the survival of individuals and nations in this knowledge economy require diverse skills and abilities to effectively handle information via the internet. The lack of appropriate computer skills in youths is likely to negatively impact their contribution to national development. Entrepreneurship requires appropriate skills in identifying and creating business opportunities, setting such up and managing ventures in such ways that would be efficient and effective. Entrepreneurship holds the key to economic developments of nations in this high-tech era. Alarape (2008), Garavan & O’Cinniede (1994) and Gibb (1993) all agree that

entrepreneurship is a key driver of modern economy of the world such as the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and developed Western Europe.

Conclusion

The study was carried out to investigate entrepreneurship skills acquired by secondary school students in south-south Nigeria. The findings revealed that students acquired farming and home economies skills while business managerial, electrical, fine arts and computer skills were not acquired by the students in secondary schools in south-south Nigeria. This low level of practical skills acquisition would mean that youths may not be actively involved in the identification and creation of business opportunities and manage same that could make them contribute to economic development. This has become worrisome since the youths of today are expected to take over and become leaders of tomorrow.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Government agencies, the organized private sector, multinational corporations, public spirited individuals and non-governmental organizations must collaborate and adopt a comprehensive strategies that would lead to the acquisition of appropriate entrepreneurship skill in technical and vocational education that are likely to stimulate economic growth.
- ii. Skills acquisition centres should be established in every secondary school for the further development of entrepreneurship skills in all students.
- iii. Adequate resources, both human and material be provided for secondary schools for effective learning of entrepreneurship skills.
- iv. Up to date training and retraining should be provided for teachers and support staff in the areas of entrepreneurship education.

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