

TEACHERS' AWARENESS OF THE INTEGRATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOL ECONOMICS CURRICULUM FOR SUSTAINABLE SELF-EMPLOYMENT OF YOUTHS IN EBONYI STATE

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Abstract

This study determined the extent of teachers' awareness of the integration of entrepreneurship education in the secondary school Economics curriculum in Ebonyi state, Nigeria. Four research questions were raised to guide the study. The design adopted for this study was descriptive survey research. A sample of 57 Economics teachers was drawn from a population of 143 Economics teachers in all the 221 public secondary schools in Ebonyi state. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire that three experts validated. The internal consistency aspect of the instrument's reliability was determined using Cronbach alpha statistics which yielded an overall index of 0.89, adjudged reliable. Data were

analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The findings revealed that the integration of the various components of entrepreneurial education such as entrepreneurship awareness education, education for start-ups, entrepreneurial dynamism and continuing education into the secondary school Economics curriculum would influence to a great extent, the sustainable self-employment of youths. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that the curriculum planners in Nigeria review the current senior secondary schools Economics curriculum to incorporate entrepreneurship education for enhanced self-employment of youths after school.

Keywords: Curriculum, Economics, Entrepreneurship Education, Integration, Self-employment

Introduction

Economics is one of the elective subjects studied at the senior secondary school level as prescribed by the National policy in Education (NPE). Its curriculum was first developed in 1985 by the Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Center (CESAC) and reviewed by the National Education Research Center (NERDC) in 2008 (Ede & Akarowhe 2020). The objectives of the curriculum include enabling students to:

understand basic Economics principles and concepts as well as the tools for sound economic analysis; contribute intelligently to discourse on economic reforms and development as it affects the generality of Nigerians; understand the structure and functioning of economic institutions; appreciate the role of public policies on the national economy; develop the skills and also appreciate the basis for rational economic decisions; become sensitized to participate actively in national economic advancement through entrepreneurship and capital market; understand the role and status of Nigeria and other African countries in international economic relationships as well as appreciate the problems encountered by developing countries in their effort towards economic development (NERDC, 2008, iii).

Although the above objectives of the curriculum were summarily aimed at equipping senior secondary school graduates with the basic knowledge and skills to appreciate the nature of economic problems in any society and adequately prepare them for challenges in the

Nigerian economy. The recent review of the Economics curriculum, which is declared innovative, accommodates some emerging issues like value reorientation, peace and dialogue, human rights education, family life/HIV/AIDS education and entrepreneurial skills. It equally addresses contemporary socio-economic challenges like poverty and unemployment. Regrettably, it has no consideration for entrepreneurship education which could serve as an apparatus for achieving the stated objectives. No wonder, despite the exquisite objectives explicitly spelt in the reviewed curriculum and implemented by teachers of Economics in the classroom, the problem of unemployment and its concomitants, especially among secondary school graduates, still lingers; and hitherto assumed an upward surge in our society. For instance, Peter (2021) noted that Nigeria is currently the third country with the highest number of unemployed people as the unemployment rate in the country rose from 27.1 percent to 33.3 percent from December 2020 to March 2021. Also, Peter specifically reported that the unemployment rate of young people aged 15 to 34, to which the youth belongs, increased from 34.9% to 42.5% in the second quarter of 2020.

It is argued that introducing some entrepreneurial content such as subjects like Fishery, Marketing, Animal husbandry, Catering and Craft Practice and so on in the secondary school curriculum has not in any way solved the unemployment problem. Most of the graduates still have challenges with identifying viable business opportunities, getting a business idea, scanning the business opportunity, drafting the business plan, and conducting feasibility studies to determine the possibility of making a profit from it. This scenario, however, demands that a more dynamic and pervasive approach be adopted in enhancing entrepreneurship education for self-employment and curbing unemployment.

The integration of entrepreneurship education is very important in the overall socio-economic development of any nation. It offers a viable option out of the hydra-headed problems of unemployment and poverty ravaging most countries of the world. According to Opera-kings (2008), Entrepreneurial education is designed to fit the youth for gainful employment and industrial development and integration tendencies. Its objectives, among others, include providing graduates with skills that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new opportunities. It also includes providing graduates with enough risk management training to prepare them to handle uncertainties and to give young ones training to establish a career as small and medium-scale entrepreneurs. It helps in acquiring knowledge, attitude and psycho-productive skills for self-reliance, job creation and other forms of independent living in the absence of paid employment (Asodike, 2011). Entrepreneurial education equips individuals with creative, problem-solving and innovative skills to identify business opportunities and establish and manage the business effectively.

On the other hand, Alkali and Musa (2020) added that entrepreneurship education prepares people, particularly the youths, to be responsible and enterprising. Become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by immersing themselves in real-life learning experiences where they can take risks, manage results and learn from the outcome. The roles mentioned above and the importance of Entrepreneurship education in the sustainable development of individuals and the nation at large necessitated its integration into the secondary school Economics curriculum.

Entrepreneurial education is versed and has some components. According to Lina in Asodike (2011), entrepreneurship education could be classified into entrepreneurship awareness education, education for the start-up, education for entrepreneurial dynamism and continuing education for entrepreneurship. According to Badal and Streur (2012), self-awareness is a conscious knowledge of one's character, feelings, motives, and desires that contributes extensively to the success of an entrepreneurial business. Self-awareness enables an individual to develop an authentic personal brand; improved decision-making through a better understanding of oneself. On the other hand, a lack of entrepreneurship awareness often leads to the business's mismanagement, poor decision making and, ultimately, the inability to keep the business sustainable (Badal & Streur, 2012). Similarly, Asodike (2011) declared that entrepreneurship awareness education is designed to increase entrepreneurship consciousness in students and stimulate economic attitudes that would promote positive goals. Self-aware entrepreneurs can perceive others accurately and align their team's strengths to the business. Entrepreneurship education focuses mainly on soft skills, including entrepreneurship awareness and developing entrepreneurial behaviours such as risk-taking, teamwork skills and opportunity seeking. Entrepreneurship awareness education provides students with serious business ideas, usually innovative and pioneering, for identifying business opportunities and creating jobs (Asodike, 2011). To start up effectively, entrepreneurship awareness education was integrated into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths. Students need to be taught how to identify lucrative business opportunities, develop a good business plan and feasibility studies for self-employment as part of career development, and mentoring about their choices.

Education for a start-up is a programme designed mostly for students who already have an entrepreneurial idea and need to solve practical challenges and problems associated with being self-employed. Mutalimov, Volkovitchkaia, Buymov, Syzdykov, & Stepanova (2020) opined that Start-ups could be a tool for actualising students' professional competencies, but for this, it is necessary to observe several conditions. These include that the school should take the initiative to create a regional start-up ecosystem, create a school entrepreneurial network that provides for students and graduates, open its crowdfunding platform, and launch a start-up factory. They opined that their method of actualising students' professional competencies is based on modelling the start-up processes, identifying key stages of start-up implementation, and clarifying the conditions for the transition from one stage to another. Clarifying the requirements for transition allows entrepreneurs to create a comprehensive picture of the set of entrepreneurial skills that a student must master during entrepreneurial education. These no doubt allow the students who went through the integrated entrepreneurship education start-up programs to be self-employed and contribute effectively to the sustainable development of their immediate society.

Entrepreneurial dynamism is another aspect of entrepreneurship education. It focuses on students who are already entrepreneurs and want to promote energetic behaviours after the start-up phase of their businesses (Lina. 2011:35). It refers to the process of adaptation to market changes through firms' entry and exit. It involves reallocating resources from less productive activities to more productive ones through the rise and fall of firms (McMillan, 2004). The entrepreneurial process starts with perceiving such opportunities and encouraging the entrepreneur to develop ideas to pursue them (Afolabi, Kareem, Okubanjo, Ogunbanjo,

&Aninkan 2017). The basis of entrepreneurship is the capacity and willingness to develop, organize and manage a business venture, assuming its risk. Therefore, the integration of entrepreneurship dynamism into the Secondary school Economics curriculum helps produce youths capable of bringing economic and social changes in their society which is led by the entrepreneurial spirit for innovation and risk-taking, especially when they are self-employed. Continuing education as an aspect of entrepreneurship is seen as a long learning programme for experienced entrepreneurs (Lina, 2011). Continuing education, in the words of Kuratko (2011), is the acquisition or improvement of work-related skills by people already in the workforce, which became increasingly vital throughout the 20th century partially due to technological advances that led many industries to depend on high-tech equipment. Continuing education includes formal and informal training. Workers may earn college degrees through formal programs, concentrate on professional development courses aimed at personal enrichment in informal surroundings, or participate in formal and informal programs (Kuratko, 2011). Generally, continuing education involves classes and seminars that focus on job-related skills and knowledge that benefit businesses and workers. Continuing education allows workers to clarify and understand the purpose and goals of their occupations. In addition, continuing education can help advance various occupations by enabling employees to acquire theoretical and practical occupational knowledge and improve their problem-solving skills (Shane, 2003). Integrating continuing education into the Economics curriculum allows youths to harness those benefits to improve their job effectiveness in the organization where they are employed or an already established enterprise for sustainable development, especially for those who are self-employed.

According to Alkali and Musa (2020), self-employment refers to sustainable economic activity one can engage in to earn a living. Afolabi, Kareem, Okubanjo, Ogunbanjo & Aninkan (2017) described self-employment as a situation where an individual creates, begins and takes control of the business decision rather than working for an employer. It is the act of working for oneself and generating one's income directly from customers, clients or other organizations as opposed to being an employee of a government, a business organisation or a person. Youths or graduates of schools are expected to be gainfully employed by government agencies and business organizations or become self-employed upon graduation if they are well-exposed to the Economics curriculum with integrated entrepreneurship education.

The integration of entrepreneurship education is essential in developing one's potential and the entire society. Several related literatures have been reviewed on entrepreneurship education and youth development. For instance, a study by Alkali and Musa (2020) on the impact of entrepreneurship education on youth development in Nasarawa state discovered that entrepreneurship education significantly impacts youth development. In a similar study by Rasaki, Gbenga, Surajudeen, Joshua and Lateefat (2015) on entrepreneurship education and self-reliance, it was discovered that entrepreneurship education positively impacts self-reliance. Finally, a study by Afolabi, Kareem, Okubanjo, Ogunbanjo, and Aninkan (2017) on the effect of entrepreneurship education on self-employment among Nigerian Science and Technology students showed, among others, that entrepreneurship education has a positive impact on self-employment initiatives.

Based on the reviewed literature on the impact of entrepreneurship education on attaining self-employment and the high rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria. One wonders

if the objective of Economics that spelt out self-employment for the students that studied Economics at the secondary schools could be realized with the integration of entrepreneurship education in the Economics curriculum. Therefore, this paper sought teachers' perception of the importance of the integration of entrepreneurship education in senior secondary school Economics curriculum on sustainable self-employment of youths in Ebonyi State. The following research questions were raised for the study:

- To what extent are teachers aware of the integration of entrepreneurship education into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths in Ebonyi State?
- To what extent are teachers aware of the importance of integrating entrepreneurial education for start-ups into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths in Ebonyi State?
- To what extent are teachers aware of the importance of integrating entrepreneurial dynamism into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths in Ebonyi State?
- To what extent are teachers aware of the importance of integrating continuing Education for entrepreneurship into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths in Ebonyi State?

Methods

The design adopted by the study is a descriptive survey research design. A sample of 57 Economics teachers was drawn from a population of 143 Economics teachers in all the 221 public senior secondary schools in Ebonyi state. The sample, 40% of the target population, was drawn using a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. This sampling is in line with Nwana (1981), who stated that 40% would be used as a sample size for a population of a few hundred. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire tagged: Extent of Teachers' Awareness of the Importance of the Integration of Entrepreneurship Education in Secondary School Economics Curriculum for Sustainable Self-employment of Youth Questionnaire (ETAIIEESSECSSYQ). The instrument sought information on the extent of teachers' awareness of the importance of integrating different components of entrepreneurship education in secondary school Economics Curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths in Ebonyi State. It has four clusters with four-point rating scales of Very High Extent (VHE) =4, High Extent (HE) =3, Low Extent (L.E.) =2, and Very Low Extent (VLE) =1. Cluster A has seven items that address the extent of teachers' awareness of the integration of entrepreneurship education into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths. Cluster B, with seven items, addressed the extent of teachers' awareness of the importance of integrating entrepreneurship education for start-ups into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths. Cluster C has seven items that address the extent of teachers' awareness of the importance of integrating entrepreneurial dynamism into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths. Lastly, Cluster D has five items that address the extent of teachers' awareness of the importance of integrating continuing education for entrepreneurship into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths. Three experts validated the instrument, one each of Economics teacher, Curriculum studies and measurement and evaluation all in Michael Okpara University of

Agriculture, Umudike Abia State. The internal consistency aspect of the instrument's reliability was determined by administering the copies of the questionnaire to 20 Economics teachers from secondary schools in Enugu state, which was not part of the study area. Data collected were analysed using Cronbach alpha statistics which yielded indices of 0.81, 0.87, 0.83 and 0.88 for clusters A, B, C and D, respectively. The overall index for the instrument was 0.89, which was adjudged highly reliable for data collection. Two well-briefed research assistants were used to administer and collect the copies of the questionnaire from the respondents' teachers. Out of the 57 copies distributed, 55 copies representing a 96 percent return rate were collected and used for data analysis. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The real limit of numbers which is 0.00-1.49 Very Low Extent, 1.50-2.49 Low Extent, 2.50-3.49 High Extent, 3.50-4.00 Very High Extent, was used for decision-making.

Results

Data collected were presented and analyzed based on the research questions that guided the study.

Research Question One

To what extent are teachers aware of the integration of entrepreneurship education into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths in Ebonyi State?

Table 1: Extent of Teachers' Awareness of the Integration of Entrepreneurship Education into Economics Curriculum for Sustainable Self-Employment of Youths

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	Std.	Remark
1.	Entrepreneurship awareness education enhances the acquisition of pioneering business ideas for self-employment youths	.17	.77	High Extent
2.	Entrepreneurship awareness education inculcates creative thinking into the youths for self-employment	33	67	High Extent
3.	Entrepreneurship awareness education instils problem identification skills in the youth for self-employment	29	77	High Extent
4.	Entrepreneurship awareness education inculcates problem-solving skills for self-employment.	11	83	High Extent
5	It enhances the acquisition of skills for identifying business opportunities for self-employment	20	70	High Extent
6	enhances the acquisition of skills for generating business ideas for self-employment.	15	78	High Extent
7	increases awareness of various trades to learn for self-employment	38	82	High Extent
	Pooled Mean	.23	.76	High Extent

The results in Table1 show that all the items (1-7) had mean responses that ranged between 3.11-3.38, which falls within the real limit of number range of 2.50-3.49, indicating a high

extent of mean responses. The pooled mean of 3.23, which also falls within the real limit of the number range of 2.50-3.49, affirmed that the respondents (teachers) are greatly aware of the integration of entrepreneurship education into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths. The pooled standard deviation of 0.76 showed that the respondents' mean was very close to each other.

Research Question Two

To what extent are teachers aware of the importance of integrating entrepreneurial education for start-ups into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths in Ebonyi State?

Table 2: Extent of Teachers' Awareness of the Importance of the Integration of Entrepreneurial Education for start-up into Economics Curriculum for Sustainable Self-Employment

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	Std.	Remark
8.	entrepreneurship education for start-ups enhances the acquisition of skills for risk-taking and enhances the self-employment of youths	56	82	High Extent
9.	Entrepreneurship education for start-ups inculcates risk management ability into the youths for self-employment	18	79	High Extent
10.	Entrepreneurship education for start-ups instils skills for developing business plans in the youths for self-employment	21	89	High Extent
11.	Entrepreneurship education for start-ups enhances the youth acquisition of skills for conducting feasibility studies for viable businesses.	28	81	High Extent
12.	enhances the acquisition of marketing skills for self-employment of youths	03	82	High Extent
13.	enhances the acquisition of skills for investing in identified business opportunities.	79	89	High Extent
14.	enhances the skills for identifying key stages of the start-up	35	89	High Extent
	Pooled Mean	20	.84	High Extent

Results in Table 2 show that the mean responses in all the items except item 8 ranged from 2.79-3.35, which falls within the real limit of numbers range of 2.50-3.49, indicating a high extent of mean responses. Item 8 had a mean response of 3.55, which falls within the real limit number range of 3.50-4.00, indicating a very high extent mean response. The pooled mean of 3.20, which also fall within the real limit of the number range of 2.50-3.49, affirmed that the teachers, to a great extent, are aware of the importance of integrating entrepreneurship education for start-up into the Economics curriculum for the sustainable self-employment of youths. Also, the pooled standard deviation of 0.84 implies that the respondents' responses were close to the mean and not far from each other.

Research Question Three

To what extent are teachers aware of the importance of integrating entrepreneurial dynamism into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths in Ebonyi State?

Table 3: Extent of Teachers' Awareness of the Importance of the Integration of Entrepreneurial dynamism into Economics Curriculum for Sustainable Self-Employment

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	Std.	Remark
15.	education for entrepreneurship dynamism enhances the acquisition of skills by youths for adaptation to changes in the business environment.	31	84	High Extent
16.	education for entrepreneurship dynamism inculcates skills for increased market share into the youths for self-employment	26	84	High Extent
17.	education for entrepreneurship dynamism instils skills for developing a business plan in the youths for self-employment	17	78	High Extent
18.	education for entrepreneurship dynamism enhances the acquisition of skills by youths for job creation.	10	83	High Extent
19.	It enhances the acquisition of skills for spurring innovation youths for self-employment	06	81	High Extent
20.	enhances the acquisition of skills for speeding up structural changes in the economy.	24	76	High Extent
21.	It enhances the skills for matching up with competitors in the business environment	31	77	High Extent
Pooled Mean		21	77	High Extent

The results in Table 3 revealed that the mean responses of respondents in all the items (15-21) ranged between 3.06-3.31, which falls within the real limit of number range of 2.50-3.49, indicating a high extent of mean responses. The pooled mean of 3.21, which falls within the real limit of the number range of 2.50-3.49, indicates a high extent of mean responses. This, however, implies that the teachers, to a great extent, are aware of the importance of integrating entrepreneurial dynamism into the Economics curriculum for the sustainable self-employment of youths. The pooled standard deviation of 0.77 indicates that the respondents' responses are close to the mean and not far from each other.

Research Question Four

To what extent are teachers aware of the importance of integrating continuing Education for entrepreneurship into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths in Ebonyi State?

Table 4: Extent of Teachers' Awareness of the Importance of the Integration of Continuing Education for Entrepreneurship into Economics Curriculum for Sustainable Self-Employment

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Std	Remark
22	Continuing education for entrepreneurship enhances youths' understanding of the purpose and goals of the business.	70	.73	High Extent
23	Continuing Education for Entrepreneurship inculcates skills in youths for job creation	83	.69	High Extent
24	Continuing Education for Entrepreneurship increases youths' skills for poverty eradication.	67	.85	High Extent
25	Continuing Education for Entrepreneurship enhances the youths' acquisition of skills for infrastructural development.	28	.80	High Extent
26	It enhances the acquisition of skills of youths for responding to changes in society.	72	.86	High Extent
	Pooled Mean	84	.79	High Extent

The results in Table 4 show that all the items (22-26) had a mean response range of 2.72-3.28, which falls within the real limit of 2.50-3.49, indicating a high extent of mean responses. The pooled mean of 2.84, which also fall within the real limit of the number range of 2.50-3.49, shows that teachers are aware of the importance of integrating continuing education for entrepreneurship into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment youths. The pooled standard deviation of 0.79 means that the respondents' responses are close to the mean and each other.

Discussion

The results from the study showed that the teachers are, to a great extent, aware that the integration of entrepreneurship awareness education into the Economics curriculum would significantly influence the sustainable self-employment of youths. The results specifically revealed that integrating entrepreneurship awareness education into the Economics curriculum would greatly enhance the acquisition of pioneering business ideas, inculcating creative thinking into the youths, among others. This result agreed with Asodike (2011), who noted that entrepreneurship education provides students with serious business ideas that are usually innovative and pioneering for identifying business opportunities and creating jobs.

The results also showed that teachers, to a great extent, are aware of the importance of integrating entrepreneurship education for start-ups into the Economics curriculum for youths' sustainable self-employment. The results specifically revealed that integrating education for start-ups into the Economics curriculum would greatly enhance the acquisition of skills by the youths for risk-taking, inculcating risk management ability into the youths, and instilling skills for developing a business plan in the youths, among others. This finding was in line with Mutalimov, Volkovitckaia, Buymov, Syzdykov, & Stepanova (2020), who opined that Start-

ups could be used as a tool for actualising students' professional competencies, inculcating risk-taking and management skills.

It was found from the study that teachers, to a great extent, are aware of the importance of integrating entrepreneurial dynamism into the Economics curriculum for the sustainable self-employment of youths. The Economics teachers know that incorporating education for entrepreneurial dynamism into the Economics curriculum would, to a great extent, inculcate skills for increased market share into the youths and instil skills for developing a business plan in the youths, among others. This result confirms McMillan (2004), who declared that entrepreneurial dynamism involves adapting to changes in the market through the entry and exit of firms.

Finally, it was found from the study that teachers, to a great extent, are aware of the importance of integrating continuing education for entrepreneurship into the Economics curriculum for the sustainable self-employment of youths. The teachers know that integrating continuing education for entrepreneurship into the Economics curriculum would greatly enhance the youths' clarification and understanding of purpose and goals, inculcating skills for job creation, among others. This result agreed with Kuratko (2011), who stated that continuing education is beneficial as it sustains a highly skilled and specialized workforce with the skills to perform various tasks or work with cross-functional skills, among others.

Conclusion

From the preceding, it is hitherto evident from the study that teachers are to a great extent aware of the importance of the integration of entrepreneurship education, education for start-ups, education for entrepreneurial dynamism and continuing education for entrepreneurship into the Economics curriculum for sustainable self-employment of youths.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusion, the following was recommended:

1. Since teachers are aware of the integration of entrepreneurship education in the Economics curriculum, they should be encouraged to extend such awareness campaign to the new Economics teachers through mentorship so they will not be left behind.
2. Economics teachers should regularly invite successful Self-employed entrepreneurs to class as resource persons to share their start-up experiences with the students to enhance their understanding of the requisites needed for that.
3. The government and school authorities should motivate the teachers and monitor and strictly supervise the implementation of entrepreneurship education in order not end in "theory" but more or less practically oriented.
4. The students should on their own embrace and fully participate in the various aspects of entrepreneurship education for their sustainable self-employment after school.

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