

ACQUISITION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

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Abstract

Skill acquisition has become the order of time given its importance in advancing global economy. This study examined the role of entrepreneurial skills' acquisition in alleviating poverty. It is a descriptive survey design that permits holistic representation of variables engaged. Population of the study covers the entire NCE students of the Department of Business Education, Kwara State College of Education Oro, from which a sample size of 120 stratifiedly selected samples were selected. A well-structured questionnaire was adopted as the research instrument, which was validated by three Business Professors of the Kwara state University, Malete. Croribach Alpha formulae were used to test for the result reliability. Data collected were analyzed through Mean and Standard Deviation measurements. The study revealed that acquisition of entrepreneurial skills correlates and positively impacts poverty alleviation going by the mean statistical value evidence of 21.4%. In general, the study recommends that since acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is a function of poverty alleviation, the Nigerian government should embed into the existing institutional entrepreneurial projects, training programmes and the mechanisms to monitor and adjust them as trend may demand. Also, government should ensure the provision and sustainability of all required entrepreneurial training facilities in public schools (especially higher institutions) for this will assist government in redirecting the vision and interest of our youth towards jobs creation, self-reliance and nation building.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, Skills Acquisition, Poverty Alleviation, and Education.

Introduction

In the last decade, entrepreneurial education has become major part of the total educational system that encourages acquisition of skills, resource management and ability to survive in a highly challenging business environment. Going by this standard, it therefore becomes important to embrace this type of education in order to ameliorate some of the socio-economic challenges, confronting most African countries, especially in the aspect of poverty management and higher rate of human resource underemployment (Babayemi, Egbeyemi, & Enilolobo, 2023).

It should be noted that Poverty as an index of unemployment is one of the most critical challenges facing contemporary Nigerian and other African society and, to alleviate it in our society of today, it calls for understanding of the economic trend and what economic analysts refers to as: economic indicators. These are indispensable economic factors that needed to be understood if economic and industrial policies are going to be effective towards actualizing national goals and ensuring a sustainable economic growth (Ogundele, 2020).

In Nigeria and other African countries, poverty alleviation measures has not been effective on the citizens as everyone can perceive how terrible the standard of living of people has been. Deficiencies in this area have sparked debate amongst Scholars and their submissions pointed at notable lack-luster attitude of our economic managers who on other hand blamed it

on the entitlement mentality of the citizens. In an emphatic statement from the submission of Hussain (2019), that unrealistic and instability of political and governmental policies, poor project sustainability, lack of administrative transparency and accountability, amongst other vices responsible for poverty in Nigeria (Arogundade, Adebisi, & Ogunro 2018). Despite the colossal amount of resources committed to ameliorate this, the state of African poverty aggravates (Ajegi, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

The alarming level of unemployment and poverty level poses greater threat to her growth and peaceful co-existence. This was why most scholars argued that in time to come, the depth and extent of global poverty if not carefully addressed, would be far greater, especially if entrepreneurial activities are not prioritized (Singer, 2019). Given the fact that it now becomes worrisome, seeing African youths roaming about streets in search of a white collar job(s) at the expense of them creating jobs and the poor usage of the available material and human resources that extant studies have shown to be of high quality and quantity, has led this particular study to examine if truly as posited in the theories, acquiring entrepreneurial skills could assist in alleviating societal poverty in Nigeria, which is the quest of this study to assist rescue the future of the nation through its youths' mentality reconditioning. It is therefore on this premises that this study sought to actualize its goal through the examination of business students undergoing the process of acquiring the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE).

Research Question

In accordance to the problems discussed above, this solitary question raised here is:

1. What role does the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills' plays in alleviating poverty?

Research Objective

This study aimed at:

1. Ascertaining the role of entrepreneurial skills in alleviating poverty.

Research Hypothesis

This null Hypothesis was raised:

H0₁: Acquisition of entrepreneurial skills' plays no role in alleviating poverty.

Literature Review

Existing literature in education and other areas of skill acquisition have established some facts that are deemed quite useful and upon which other new studies were based. However, they failed to address some challenges and areas of importance like this study is doing, given the supposed implication of unemployment/underutilization of a nation's labour force, which could aggravate poverty. Kijima and Lanjouw (2020) define poverty as lack of valuables or necessities to survive. In another submission, Opaleke, (2023) describes poverty as inability of an individual or people of a society, to make ends meet. In all of these definitions, poverty implies poor state of mind due to unavailability of financial resources' strengths upon which human survival lies. In this study, poverty implies all the definitions provided above but viewed it from a national angle in order to address the current state of the nation (Nigeria), regarding the unemployment of labour and in some cases, its underutilization that allegedly propels poverty.

Existing studies have shown that significant numbers of Nigerian youth are poor, given their incapability to maintain "normal" lives. Ajegi (2020) observed that the poverty situation in Nigeria has indeed assumed a crisis dimension. His study revealed that 70% of Nigerians

consume less than 1/3 of the minimum vitamins and protein intake due to their inability to afford them. Studies shows how very hard working, the Nigerian people are and their ability to adapt to changes. However, most Nigerian youth lacks opportunities to work and earn well while majority prefers, employable white-collar jobs because of income security due to high risk of financial insecurity in venturing into self-owned jobs. Manaf and Ibrahim (2019) also revealed that records obtained from the Bureau of Statistics shows that 67% of Nigerians live below the poverty-safety line and that only 38% can avail themselves of primary health care. In all of these evidences, it is clear that the level of poverty amongst dwellers (citizens and aliens) of Nigeria is alarming and calls for managerial attention. This could be the logic for Murphy and Trailer (2020) necessity for the growing literature in entrepreneurship as a mechanism for labour employment and poverty alleviation, which yielded positive responses from scholars across International boundaries. It is on this basis that this study stands.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a population size of two hundred (200) NCE students from the Department of Business Education, Kwara State College of Education Oro and the sample size is of a hundred and twenty (120) stratified selected respondents from that population. A well-structured questionnaire was the research instrument adopted by the study, which was validated by three (3) experts in Business Education from the renowned Kwara State University, Malete. The outcome of this exercise was so impressive and positive, with coefficient of 0.78 that was obtained, using the Croribach Alpha formula to verify the reliability coefficient. The data collected were scientifically analyzed through the use of Mean and Standard Deviation. Decision rule for the research questions was determined as follow: $4+3+2+1 = 10/4 = 2.50$, by implication, any item with a mean value of 2.50 and above is therefore rated agreed, while any other with the mean value below the rule of thumb of 2.50 is rated disagreed.

Results from Data Analysis

Table-1

Impact of Entrepreneurial Skills' Acquisition on Poverty Alleviation

S/N	Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
1.	Entrepreneurial skill acquisition provides employment opportunities.	2.58	0.73	Agree
2.	Entrepreneurial training and skill acquisition reduces social vices in the society.	2.57	0.75	Agree
3.	Entrepreneurial skill acquisition helps to reduce poverty.	2.92	0.63	Agree
4.	Entrepreneurial training promotes self reliant.	2.50	0.78	Agree
5.	The skills acquired from entrepreneurial training increases the standard of living of African people.	2.22	0.83	Disagree
6.	Entrepreneur assists young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and	2.35	0.89	Disagree
7.	Entrepreneurial skills promote spirit of perseverance in the youth and adults which will enable them to persist in any	2.65	0.69	Agree

8.	Entrepreneurship education serves as a catalyst for economic growth and development	2.76	0.95	Agree
9.	Entrepreneurial skills provide young graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in	2.79	0.70	Agree
10.	Entrepreneurial skills reduce rule of poverty among final year students	2.63	0.86	Agree

N = 120, Decision Rule = 2.50, Weighted Mean = 2.60, SD = 0.78

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2025).

Table Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

The results in the table above revealed items 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10 possess mean values of: 2.58, 2.57, 2.92, 2.50, 2.65, 2.76, 2.79 and 2.63 to imply an accumulated total of 21.4% in contrast to items 5 and 6 that poses mean values of 2.22 and 2.35 respectively. This also implies an accumulated total of 4.57%. Since the decision rule is 2.50 and all respondents agreed on 8 items that met and even surpasses the set standard but only disagreed on 2 items that couldn't meet up the set standard, it can be said that the cumulative mean value of 21.4 surpasses the mean value of 4.57 while the standard deviation is in tandem to corresponding mean values. Going by these statistical evidences, it can be established that entrepreneurial skills' acquisition plays significant role in alleviating poverty and that is a testament to Babayemi et al. (2023) and Abubakar (2019) empirical evidence that posit positive and significant relationship between Entrepreneurship and Poverty alleviation.

Conclusion

Going by the outcome of this study, the study concludes that:

- a. Entrepreneurial skills' acquisition is a function of poverty alleviation.
- b. Acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills plays significant and positive role in alleviating poverty.

Recommendations

Following the findings of this study and its conclusion, the study recommends that: The Nigerian government should embed into the existing institutional entrepreneurial projects, training programmes and the mechanisms to monitor and adjust them as trend may demand. Also, government should ensure the provision and sustainability of all required entrepreneurial training facilities in public schools (especially higher institutions) for this will assist government in redirecting the vision and interest of our youth towards idea of job creation, self-reliance and nation building.

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