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Assessing Attitude to and Knowledge of Entrepreneurship among Students with Hearing Impairment in Nigeria

Oyewumi, A. - Department of Special Education, University of Ibadan
E-mail: oyedebomi@yahoo.com

&

Adeniyi, Sam Olufemi - Department of Educational Psychology,
Federal College of Education (Tech) Akoka, Lagos
E-mail: safeadeniyi@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study investigated attitude and knowledge of secondary students with hearing impairment towards entrepreneurship. The main goal was to know the depth of their knowledge and attitude in becoming entrepreneurial in line with millennium development goals. A sample of 124 students with hearing impairment was selected through purposive sampling from Ijokodo High School and Methodist Grammar School in Ibadan. Three research questions and one hypothesis were raised and tested. A questionnaire tagged Entrepreneurial Inventory (EI) was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics and chi-square were the major statistical tools employed in data analysis. The findings revealed high entrepreneur knowledge and positive

attitude among the participants, no significant influence of knowledge on attitude of the participants and no significant difference in entrepreneurship knowledge and attitude of students with hearing impairment to entrepreneurship. The findings showed that people with hearing impairment in Nigeria have started changing the age long orientation of total dependence to independent living. Based on the findings from the study, it was recommended that disabled micro-credit facility should be established to take care of their financial needs. They should be encouraged if exceptional performance in small scale business has been demonstrated over time. Entrepreneurship education should be made a core curriculum for people with special needs as these will further encourage their economic independence.

Key words: Attitude, Knowledge, Students, Hearing impairment, Entrepreneurship

Introduction

Background to the Study

The global economic downturn in the past few years has inevitably driven nations in the world towards deepening entrepreneurship skills in individuals. Arguably, entrepreneurship skills enhance the capability to lead new venture creation, creative mind, self-dependent and economic development of any nation.

In Nigeria in particular, government is leaving no stone unturned in a bid to see that all citizens irrespective of their status are economically empowered through entrepreneur programmes. This is because there are few government jobs for potential graduates and the array of unemployed individuals. Entrepreneur is widely believed to be a vehicle for self-dependence, poverty reduction and economic empowerment. It has been variously defined by different authors. For example, Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (2004) conceives it as a form of education that seeks to prepare people especially youths to be responsible enterprising individuals, who become entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial thinkers and contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. According to Sobel (2008) entrepreneurship is considered as the process of discovering new ways of combining resources. Nafukho (2005) is of the opinion that entrepreneurship education is like catalyst for business formation, it teaches students and youths on how to start and run their own businesses, play the stock market

roles and balance personal life. All the definitions point to developing individuals, realising their potentials and maximising opportunities for self-empowerment and economic growth.

The bane of students with hearing impairment is how to discover self, realise potentials and take advantage of opportunities. This stems out of societal perception and lack of respect for fundamental human rights of people with special needs. Adeniyi (2000) and Ademokoya (2001) observe that special needs youths who graduated from different institutions and qualified to fill vacant positions could not get jobs because of their conditions and the attitude of employers of labour. This makes unemployment among people with special needs especially those with hearing problems to be very high. The focus now is not unemployment among people with hearing impairment because it is a global problem but the issue is making them realise their potentials and how they can contribute to the society.

In view of this, acquiring entrepreneurship skills has become the best option for students with hearing impairment. Entrepreneurship is important for every individual because it contributes a variety of benefits and functions that change the individual's life (Abdul-Rahaman, 2000; Sidek, 2006) learning entrepreneurship are growing fast due to the fact that they can offer endless opportunities (Mohd-Salleh, 2002). It must be noted that the process of choosing a career by individual is generally influenced by several factors such as gender, interest, parents direct and indirect influence, environment, status and societal perception, monetary return, ability and capability. Davidson (1995), Kuratko and Hodgetts (2004), Kangas and Tervo (2002) show that choosing career depends on factors like demographic variable, family status, education, motivation shown by people around.

Several studies have investigated the influence of attitude towards career aspiration (Bird, 1989; Davidson, 1995; Kolvereid, 1996; Auto *et al* 1997; Shelperd & Douglas, 1997; Krueger, *et al*, 2006). Extensive researches had been done on people's attitude to entrepreneurial skills because attitude is assumed to be a better explanatory factor for a career choice than demographic variables (Robinson, Stimpson, Huefner and Slatter, 1991). This is because attitude influences confidence, enthusiasm, inclination and aspiration towards entrepreneurship. People with hearing impairment believe less in their ability which could have negative influences on their attitudes towards choosing a career (Adeniyi, 2007). This reflection may not promote the right disposition. Oyewumi (2003) stresses that attitude of special needs

individual is negative when it comes to the issue of self-determination.

According to Ajzen (2002), entrepreneurial attitude can be defined as personal perception towards the value, benefit and favourability of entrepreneurship which highly affect their intention to venture into a new business area. Scholars have approached entrepreneurial attitudes in two ways. First, entrepreneurial attitude is individual's feelings, thought and conations towards entrepreneurship (Schultz and Oskamp, 1996; Ajzen, 1991). In this approach, Lope-Phihie and Bagheri (2011) note that entrepreneurial attitude is considered as a function of the value, belief and favourability of entrepreneurship, often a uni-dimensional construct. The second approach defines entrepreneurial attitudes as multi-dimensional concept that encompasses four key personality factors which are "need for achievement", context, entrepreneurial innovation and entrepreneurial esteem. Each of the entrepreneurial attitude components has three dimension, comprising affection (feeling and emotion), cognition (thought and belief) and conations (action and behaviour) (Lope-Phihie and Bagheri, 2011). Therefore, for anybody to succeed in a choosing career, the three dimensions must work together.

With people with hearing impairment, there seems to be a disconnect of the three dimensions. This eventually prompts their negative disposition to skill acquisition and independent life. Mohd-Salleh *et al* (2005) however posit that attitude is needed to assist a person in acquiring and participating in entrepreneurship skills.

On the other hand, the degree of entrepreneurship aspiration is also directly proportional to in-depth knowledge of a choosing a business. This accounts for success and failure on the part of an entrepreneur. Charney and Libecap (2000) contend that there is a positive correlation between knowledge and career aspiration. This implies that before anybody engages in a particular career, there should be in-depth knowledge of such. This is because the previous knowledge provides foundation for careers prosperity. In Oyewumi (2003), Evans and Leighton (2007) and Othman and Ishak (2009) all predict that knowledge contributes to success in career development. Of course, knowledge provides foundation for every career's prosperity.

People with hearing impairment in Nigeria are economically disadvantaged due to lack of acquisition of definite skills and poor education that resulted from negative perception of the general public about potentials in people with special needs coupled with their poor orientation being economically

dependent on others. This has resulted in poverty and lack of meaningful contribution to their society.

This study therefore becomes imperative at a time like this when the global aspiration is on how to reduce the level of poverty through acquisition of entrepreneur skills for people with or without special needs. Therefore, this study investigates attitudes and knowledge of students with hearing impairment to careers in entrepreneurship.

Research questions

1. What is the level of knowledge of students with hearing impairment on entrepreneurship?
2. What is the level of attitude of students with hearing impairment with respect to entrepreneurship skills?
3. Will entrepreneurship knowledge determine the attitude of students with hearing impairment on entrepreneurship skills acquisition?

Hypothesis

HO₁: There will be no significant difference between entrepreneurship knowledge and attitude of students with hearing impairment on acquiring entrepreneurship skills.

Research methodology

Research design

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to investigate knowledge and attitude of students with hearing impairment towards acquiring entrepreneurship skills in Oyo State. It is an ex post facto study in which only existing variables will be investigated without manipulation.

Population

The target population for this study are students with hearing impairment in integrated secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Sample

The sample comprised 124 participants purposively selected from two secondary schools in Ibadan. Sixty-eight (68) of the participants were females while fifty-six (56) were males with average age of 20.5. The

participants were students with hearing impairment from Junior Secondary School to Senior Secondary School (JSS 1 – SSS 3) in the schools used.

Research instrument

The instrument used for this study is a structured self-reported entrepreneurial inventory by Oyewumi and Adeniyi (2010). The inventory is divided into two sections (A & B). Section A is used to generate demographic data such as sex, class, school, degree and onset of loss while Section B is subdivided into two sections revealing knowledge and attitude to acquiring entrepreneurship skills by the participants. Each of the subdivision consists of ten probing questions. Examples of items under knowledge of entrepreneurship, “Entrepreneur gathers resources to create wealth” and attitude towards entrepreneurship, “I prefer to be self-employed than being employed with government”.

The instrument was given to experts in the field of psychology and test and measurement for content validity while reliability of the instrument was obtained at 0.70 through a trial testing of the instrument using Cronbach alpha. The questionnaire was distributed among the participants and responses were thereafter collected by the researchers.

Procedure for data collection

Before distributing the questionnaire among the participants, permission was sought from the principals of the schools used. Thereafter, the researcher met with the participants to tell them the reasons for the research and explain each section of the questionnaire to them to aid objective response. A total number of 124 questionnaires were distributed and collected through two research assistants who were staff in the schools within two weeks.

Data analysis

The data generated from the study were collated, coded and analysed using frequency count, percentage, mean, standard deviation and chi square. The chi square was used to determine the effect of independent variables on dependent variable.

Result

Research Question 1: *What is the level of knowledge of entrepreneur of students with hearing impairment?*

Table 1: Entrepreneurship Knowledge Level among Students with Hearing Impairment

Item	Yes	No
Entrepreneur creates job	106(85.5%)	18(14.5%)
Entrepreneur means to be self-employed	76(61.3%)	48(38.7%)
Entrepreneur gathers resources to create wealth	66(53.2%)	58(46.8%)
Entrepreneur can make someone to be self-dependent	76(61.3%)	48(38.7%)
Entrepreneur contributes to the economic development	94(75.8%)	30(24.2%)
Entrepreneur is an employer of labour	50(40.3%)	74(59.7%)
Entrepreneur attends social functions to meet business partners.	90(72.5%)	34(27.4%)
Entrepreneur uses his/her creative ability to publicise	84(67.7%)	40(32.3%)
Entrepreneur sees opportunities where others do not see	58(46.8%)	66(53.2%)
Entrepreneur rules the world economy	70(56.5%)	54(43.5%)
TOTAL	770	470

Decision line = 50%

Table one shows that 106(85.5%) of the students with hearing impairment were of the opinion that entrepreneur creates jobs while 18(14.5%) of the respondents held contrary opinion. For item number two, 76(61.3%) of the respondents believed that entrepreneur means being self-employed, 48(38.7%) hold contrary opinion. On item number 3, 66(53.2%) as against 58(46.8%) of the respondents believe that entrepreneur gathers resources to create wealth. Item number four under research question 1 reveals that 76(61.3%) held that entrepreneur can make someone to be self-dependent while 48(38.7%) of the respondents held a contrary notion. Item number five in Table reveals that 94(59.7%) of students with hearing impairment were of the opinion that entrepreneur contributes to economic development while 30(24.2) of the respondents held a contrary view. In item number 6, 74(SD = 59.7%) of students with hearing impairment believe that entrepreneur is not an employer of labour as against 50(SD = 40.3%) of the respondents that held the view that entrepreneur is an employer of labour.

On item number seven, 90(72.5) of students with hearing impairment believe that entrepreneur attends social functions to meet business partners while 34(27.4%) had contrary opinion. Item number 8 shows that 84(67.7%) of the respondents are of the opinion that entrepreneur uses his/her creative ability to publicise while 40(32.3) held contrary view. On item number 9, 58(46.8)

of students with hearing impairment are of the opinion that entrepreneur sees opportunities where others do not while 66(53.2%) held contrary opinion. Item number 10 reveals that 70(56.5%) of students with hearing impairment are of the view that entrepreneur rules the world economy while 54(43.5%) held different opinion. Generally, from the responses of the respondents, it is obvious that the knowledge of students with hearing impairment about entrepreneur is very high.

Research Question 2: *What is the level of attitude of students with Hearing Impairment?*

Table 2: Attitude of Students in Acquiring Entrepreneurship Skills

Items	SD	D	A	SA
Working for government is better than seeking help from people.	48(38.7%)	16(12.9%)	30(24.2%)	30(24.2%)
I prefer to be self-employed than being employed with government.	26(21%)	26(21%)	42(33.9%)	30(24.2%)
People will not be interested in working for me	44(35.5%)	12(9.7%)	28(22.6%)	40(32.3%)
My concern is how to get my daily meal	44(35.5%)	18(14.5%)	32(25.8%)	30(24.2%)
I prefer vocational skill to going for further education.	42(33.9%)	22(17.7%)	28(22.6%)	32(25.8%)
After my formal education, I will still go into business.	32(25.8%)	22(17.7%)	30(24.2%)	40(32.3%)
I am not even keen on starting any business	44(35.5%)	14(11.3%)	36(29%)	30(24.2%)
Despite my hearing impairment I want to learn a vocation	32(25.8%)	24(19.4%)	18(14.5%)	50(40.3%)
I want to be a successful businessman	40(32.3%)	10(6.1%)	32(25.8%)	42(33.9%)
Working for government will earn me more	32(25.8%)	24(19.4%)	22(17.7%)	46(37.1%)
Total	20	50	138	80

Decision line = 50%

From Table 2 under research question number two, item one shows that 64(51.6%) respondents had contrary opinion that working for government is better than seeking help from people while 60(48.4%) responded positively and believed that working for government is better than seeking help from people. In item two, 52(24.4%) responded negatively to opinion while 68(54.9%) preferred to be self-employed than working for government. From the foregoing, the percentage of those that preferred being self-employed is

greater than those who prefer to be government employed (58.1% > 42.0%). On item three, 56(45.2%) of the respondents agree with the opinion that people will not be interested in working for them while 68 (54.9%) of the respondents supported the opinion that people will be interested in working for them. On item four, 62(50.0%) of the respondents held contrary opinion while 62(50.0) responded positively to the opinion. This implies that majority supported the notion that their concern is on how to get daily meal. Item five shows 64(51.6%) preferred going for further education than vocational work. On the other hand, 60(48.4%) preferred vocational skill to going for further education. Item six shows that 54(43.5%) of the respondents were of the contrary opinion to going into business after formal education. However, 70 (56.5%) of the respondents agreed with the opinion of going into business after their education.

On item seven, 58(46.8%) of the respondents disagree with the statement “I am not even keen on starting any business”. This means that they are not keen on starting business while 66(53.2%) of the respondents are keen on starting any business. Item eight shows that 56(45.2%) of the respondents disagree with the opinion on item 8, whereas 68(54.8%) positively disposed to the opinion that despite being hearing impaired, they want to learn a vocation. On item nine, 50(40.3%) disagree with the opinion of becoming successful business man. On the other hand, 74(59.7%) agree with the opinion of becoming successful businessman. Item ten shows that 56(45.2%) disagree with the opinion that working for government will earn them more money while 68(54.8) agree with the opinion that working for government will earn them more.

Considering the responses of students with hearing impairment with respect to entrepreneurial scale, it is obvious that their attitude to entrepreneur is very high.

Research Question 3: *Will entrepreneurship knowledge determine the attitude of students with Hearing Impairment on entrepreneurship skills acquisition?*

Table 3: Knowledge of Entrepreneurship on Attitude of Students with Hearing Impairment

Entrepreneurship		Interest				Total
		SD	D	A	SA	
Yes	Freq	12	16	16	8	52
	Percent	9.6%	12.8%	12.8%	6.7%	41.9%
No	Freq	10	28	28	6	72
	Percent	8.1%	22.6%	22.6%	12.9%	58.1%
Total		22	44	44	14	124(100%)

P < 0.05

Note:

SD = Strongly Disagree

D = Disagree

A = Agree

SA – Strongly Agree

From the Table above, it was observed that 30.7% of responses of the respondents did not favour the statement while 35.5% responses favoured the statement. Therefore, it is concluded that entrepreneurship knowledge does not determine the attitude of students with hearing impairment on acquiring entrepreneurship skills.

Research Hypothesis 1

Ho: *There will be no significant difference between entrepreneurship knowledge and attitude of students with hearing impairment.*

Table 4: Result of Entrepreneur Knowledge and Attitude

Entrepreneur		Interest					χ^2 Cal	χ^2 Crit	Df	Sig(2tail)
		SD	D	A	SA	Total				
Yes	Obs	12	16	16	8	52	3.888	7.81	3	0.274
	Exp	9.2	18.5	18.5	5.9	52.0				
No	Obs	10	28	28	6	72				
	Exp	12.8	25.5	25.5	8.1	72.0				
Total		22	44	44	14	124				

P < 0.05 level of significance

Since the calculated value of 3.88 is lesser than the Critical value of 7.81 at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (Ho) is not rejected.

χ^2 Calculated = 3.888 greater than χ^2 Critical = 7.81 at df 3, P=0.274>0.05.

We therefore conclude that there will be no significant difference between entrepreneurship knowledge and interest of students with hearing impairment

Discussion

The major aim of this study is to investigate attitude and knowledge of students with hearing impairment to acquiring entrepreneurship skills at time when the quest of all stakeholders world over is on empowerment via small business. From the research questions one, the outcome reveals that the level of entrepreneur knowledge of students with hearing impairment is very high. This can be adduced to the fact that the orientation of people with hearing impairment has changed due to various teaching and re-orientation that has been going on pertaining to issue of independent living and self-empowerment. This study corroborates Okon (1990) and Hayfold (2006) that contend that young adults are willing to establish and own business of their own because of the rate of unemployment occasioned by economic down turn, and teaching of entrepreneurship in various schools and institutions.

Research question two reveals that attitude to entrepreneurship among students with hearing impairment is high. The positive attitude demonstrated to acquiring entrepreneurship skills can be linked to high awareness in entrepreneurship education. This is because of entrepreneurship education and training going on among young and adults in Nigeria schools and/or by corporate organisations. This result is in line with the report of Gibb (1993) that positive attitude to entrepreneur among students could be attributed to high awareness in entrepreneurship education.

Answer to research question three reveals that knowledge in entrepreneurship does not determine the attitude of students with hearing impairment to acquiring entrepreneurship skills. The possible explanation for this finding is that knowledge about a particular concept may not automatically facilitate positive attitude to it. However, Lûthje and Frank (2002), Charney and Libecap (2000) and Robinson and Sexton (1994) all contend that a positive correlation exists between education (knowledge), attitude and business creation. This is contrary to the outcome of this study.

Results on hypothesis one which that states there is no significant difference between entrepreneurship knowledge and interest of students with hearing impairment reveals that the null hypothesis is accepted indicating no significant difference between entrepreneurship knowledge and interest of the participants. There is indication that the participants did not differ in their

disposition to acquiring pertinent skills in entrepreneurship. The finding corroborates the study of Lee (2006) who notes that entrepreneurship is not a male dominated activity and that unemployment is a syndrome experienced by male and female, with or without special needs.

Conclusion

Arguably, economic empowerment of every citizen is the solution to widespread poverty, unemployment, and global economic downturn. Practically, there is no other means to achieving this than through re-orientation of all citizens towards acquiring entrepreneurship skills. From the findings, it is observed that students with hearing impairment have positive attitude to and high knowledge on entrepreneurship. However, their knowledge and attitude do not influence their attitude to acquiring entrepreneur skills as both male and female students with hearing impairment have different dispositions to acquiring entrepreneurial skills and related activities.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the findings above, it is clear that there is positive attitude to and high knowledge on entrepreneurship among students with hearing impairment which is viewed to be internally motivated. The authors recommend the following:

- Encouragement should be given to persons with hearing impairment who demonstrate exceptional performance in private business as this will over time, motivate others who are not willing to embark on self-employed work to do so with vigour.
- School for people with special needs should make entrepreneurship teaching and training a core curriculum and this should be properly monitored by appropriate agency of government to determine progress and shortcomings. With this, skills in entrepreneurship will be built in line with their education.
- Encouragement should be given to persons with special needs in form of micro-credit facilities which should be tagged “special needs micro-credit facility” so as to ease the problem being encountered when accessing loan. This will further motivate them and also encourage others who are not willing to change their attitudes.

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