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Entrepreneurship Skills in Tertiary Institutions and Poverty Debasement in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study established a link between entrepreneurship prowess and Nigerian poverty debasement. To direct this study, four research aims and four hypotheses were developed. A correlational research design was used for the study. 137 Heads of Department from the three universities in Rivers State made up the study population. 100 HODs in total took part in the study. Out of the seven higher education institutions in Rivers State, UNIPOT, RSU, and IAUE were chosen using the purposive sampling technique. To ensure that all HODs had an equal chance of being chosen, 100 HODs were chosen at random from each of the three universities using the stratified random sampling technique. There were two tools used to collect data. A 20-item questionnaire created by the researcher was used to gather data on entrepreneurship education (Entrepreneurship Education Skills Questionnaire, EESQ), and a different 5-item instrument was used to gauge poverty reduction (Poverty Reduction Questionnaire, PRQ). The instrument's dependability was evaluated using the Cronbach Alpha method. The indices were calculated using the Cronbach Alpha formula, yielding values of 0.81 and 0.82 for the EESQ and PRQ, respectively. At a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$, the Pearson Product Moment correlation statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses. According to the study, entrepreneurship skills in Nigerian agriculture, furniture/woodworking, computer services, and food/drink/bakery have a strong and positive correlation with poverty reduction. It was finally recommended that the Nigerian government should take the task of providing our educational institutions with the necessary skill acquisition tools so that our youths can be trained in entrepreneurship skills, which will in turn promote economic growth and lessen poverty.

Keyword: debasement, entrepreneurship, poverty, skills, tertiary institution

INTRODUCTION

Education is the act or process of acquiring or imparting general knowledge, growing one's capacity for logic and judgment, and intellectually preparing oneself or others for adult life. Typically, academic institutions like universities and public schools are used to manage education. Different people have responded to this question in different ways, but (Okorosaye-Orubile, 2005) sees education as the growth of man that enables him to create and recreate himself. The pursuit of a broad range of activities planned and managed for the benefit of society and its members is how (Audu, 2004) defines it. Education is "the transmission from one generation to another, the accumulated wisdom, knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes of the society," according to Nduka (2006)."

In Nigeria, poverty has many different faces, dimensions, and disciplines. Oil is the primary driver of Nigeria's economy, accounting for 95% of export earnings, 76% of government receipts, and about a third of GDP (GDP). With its abundant natural and human resources, Nigeria has the capacity to create a thriving economy, significantly reduce poverty, and offer infrastructure, health, and education services to its thronging population. Despite the relative oil wealth of the nation, the majority of its people live in extreme poverty. According to CBN (1999), structural, economic, social, and cultural deprivations are the main characteristics of poverty. These aspects of poverty display a vicious cycle and are what cause poverty to recur on a decimal scale. Numerous successive governments have implemented one or more programs intended to reduce the scourge of poverty among Nigerians in recognition of the dehumanizing nature of poverty and all the accompanying social problems associated with it.

The notion of entrepreneurship as an alternative to conventional economic development strategies and policies is growing. Entrepreneurial development, according to proponents of entrepreneurship-based policies, generates greater returns for the public than alternative strategies like industrial recruitment, retention, and expansion. Building institutional and human capacities that will

encourage and support the development of rural dwellers is a key strategy for reducing poverty, creating income and employment opportunities, and promoting better business environments.

The private sector's contribution to the development of industry has been crucial for the majority of nations. In this regard, entrepreneurship has been extremely important. According to Ogundele (2007), encouraging and growing entrepreneurial endeavors would help disperse and diversify economic activities, as well as spur overall development in a nation. The Federal government has started a number of measures and policies to reduce the level of poverty among the masses because it is crucial for developing countries to create jobs and reduce poverty if development is to be sustained. One strategy the government has adopted to combat widespread poverty and unemployment in the nation is entrepreneurship. According to Osuagwu (2002), Nigerian entrepreneurial development should be seen as a catalyst for accelerating economic growth, creating jobs, cutting back on the import of manufactured goods, and reducing the trade deficit that these imports cause. According to Ogundele and Olayemi (2004), such entrepreneurship development will give people the skills they need to continuously innovate and improve their work. Therefore, it is widely acknowledged that entrepreneurship plays a key role in promoting economic growth, eradicating poverty, and fostering sustainable development.

In Nigeria, entrepreneurship is not a recent phenomenon. It has existed for as long as Nigeria. It began when people in the country's rural areas or hinterland began producing more goods than they needed. Until the invention of money, these required the exchange of goods for goods. Producers were able to specialize as a result of exchange, and communities realized they could focus production on the areas in which they were most qualified. As a result, Nigeria developed a culture of entrepreneurship (Nick, 2008; Rami & Towobola, 2011).

Global recognition for entrepreneurship education has grown, particularly in the fields of unemployment and national development. It is a fact that it contributes to national wealth because it opens up new market opportunities, fosters industrialization, and raises individual productivity (Jahanshashi et al., 2011). Nigeria decided to support development programs like the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Poverty Eradication Programmes (NAPEP), and Youth With Innovation (YOUWIN) to support poverty alleviation and youth employment in light of the advantages mentioned above, such as the provision of entrepreneurship education. Even with these gestures, unemployment continues to plague the nation as a whole and Rivers State in particular. In order to improve entrepreneurship education in universities, the National University Commission (NUC) developed intervention strategies in 2006; however, unemployment is rising.

Similar to other nations around the world, entrepreneurship education in Nigeria gives students in tertiary institutions the abilities, information, and inspiration to engage in entrepreneur activities in a variety of ventures. As a result, entrepreneurship education is provided at all levels, from primary to graduate university programs, in many Nigerian and Rivers State institutions of higher learning. This procedure aims to increase school-leavers' self-reliance.

Given this, the Federal Ministry of Education's decision to require students to take entrepreneurship education as one of their required courses in universities is viewed as a positive step in the right direction (NPE, 2014). The action will foster a spirit of independence in young people. In addition to ensuring human capacity development for national development, it will reduce unemployment. It will significantly reduce the alarming unemployment rate, especially in the Rivers State where it is reportedly worse than in other states across the country.

Aim and Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine how entrepreneurship skills in tertiary institutions relate to poverty debasement in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine how entrepreneurship skills in agriculture relate to poverty reduction in Nigeria.
2. Ascertain how entrepreneurship skills in furniture/wood works relate to poverty reduction in Nigeria.
3. Investigate how entrepreneurial skills in computer services relate to poverty reduction in Nigeria.
4. Examine how entrepreneurial skills in food/drink/bakery relate to poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Hypotheses

Four (4) hypotheses were formulated to guide the study, they are:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship skills in agriculture and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship skills in furniture/wood works and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills in computer services and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills in food/drink/bakery and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Design: Correlational research was used in the Research design. This research design was chosen because the goal of the study is to determine the relationship between the predictors and the response variables. The study's dependent variable was poverty reduction, while entrepreneurship education was its independent variable.

Population of the Study: 137 Heads of Department from the three universities in Rivers State make up the study population. The Heads of Department were used for the study because they are in a better position to explain how entrepreneurship skills in agriculture, furniture/wood works, computer services, and food/drink/bakery in Nigeria can be used to reduce poverty.

Sample of the Study: The study included 100 HODs in total. This is suitable for the target audience (Israel, 2003). Out of the seven higher education institutions in Rivers State, UNIPOT, RSU, and IAUE were chosen using the purposive sampling technique.

Sampling Method: To ensure that all HODs had an equal chance of being chosen, 100 HODs were chosen at random from each of the three universities using the stratified random sampling method.

Instrumentation: Data were gathered using two instruments. A 20-item questionnaire created by a researcher was used to gather data on entrepreneurship education (Entrepreneurship Education Skills Questionnaire, EESQ), and a different 5-item instrument was used to gauge poverty reduction (Poverty Reduction Questionnaire, PRQ). Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree on a modified 4-point Likert scale were used as the measurement units.

Validity: Measurement, evaluation, and education experts validated the instruments.

Reliability of the Tool: The Cronbach Alpha method was used to assess the reliability of the EESQ and PRQ. To accomplish this, copies of the EESQ and PRQ were given to a sample of 20 HODs who were not involved in the primary study. The instruments were then retrieved, scored, and coded for data analysis after filling. The indices were calculated using the Cronbach Alpha formula, yielding values of 0.81 and 0.82 for the EESQ and PRQ, respectively. This made using the study's instrument necessary.

Method of Data Collection: Before giving the instruments to the HODs, approval from the senior staff was requested. Each HOD received 100 copies of the EESQ and 100 copies of the PRQ. They were given time to react to the instrument's parts. After filing, these instruments were retrieved for data analysis.

Analysis of Data Method: The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, and the null hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical tool at a significance level of =0.05. Because the data obtained was an interval data, the Pearson Product Moment correlation (PPMC) was used.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship skills in agriculture and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis (r) of the relationship between Entrepreneurship skills in Agriculture and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria (N = 100)

Variable	Σx Σy	Σx^2 Σy^2	Σxy	\bar{X} \bar{Y}	Std.	r-cal	P-value
Entrepreneurship Skills in Agriculture (x)	349.6	1245.52		3.50	0.49	0.527*	
			1224.04				0.001
Poverty Reduction (y)	346.8	1223.6		3.47	0.46		

***Correlation is significant at P < 0.05, df = 98, r-crit = 0.195**

Information on the tested hypothesis was provided in Table 1 along with the PPMC (r-value) measurement used to assess the significance of the link between Nigerian agricultural entrepreneurship and poverty reduction. The calculated coefficient of r was found to be 0.527 with 98 degrees of freedom, which is higher than the threshold r-value of 0.195. The alternative hypothesis (H₁) is retained and the null hypothesis (H₀₁) is rejected due to the significance level of p<.05. According to the analysis's statistical conclusions, Nigeria's poverty reduction and agricultural entrepreneurship skills are significantly correlated.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship skills in furniture/wood works and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis (r) of the relationship between Entrepreneurship Skills in Furniture/Wood Works and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria (N = 100)

Variable	Σx Σy	Σx^2 Σy^2	Σxy	\bar{X} \bar{Y}	Std.	r-cal	P-value
Entrepreneurship Skills in Furniture/Wood Works (x)	363.4	1337		3.63	0.41	0.714*	
			1266.08				0.000
Poverty Reduction (y)	346.8	1223.6		3.47	0.46		

***Correlation is significant at P < 0.05, df = 98, r-crit = 0.195**

In order to assess the significance or otherwise of the link between entrepreneurship abilities in furniture/wood works and poverty reduction in Nigeria, Table 2 provided information on the tested hypothesis as measured by PPMC (r-value). The calculated coefficient of r was found to be 0.714 with 98 degrees of freedom, which is higher than the threshold r-value of 0.195. The alternative hypothesis (H₂) is retained and the null hypothesis (H₀₂) is rejected because p<.05 level of significance. According to the analysis's statistical findings, entrepreneurship abilities in the field of furniture and woodworking and the decline in poverty in Nigeria are significantly correlated.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills in computer services and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis (r) of the relationship between Entrepreneurial Skills in Computer Services and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria (N = 100)

Variable	Σx Σy	Σx^2 Σy^2	Σxy	\bar{X} \bar{Y}	Std.	r-cal	p-value
Entrepreneurial Skills in Computer Services (x)	352.8	1267.44	1233.36	3.53	0.48	0.452*	0.006
Poverty Reduction (y)	346.8	1223.6		3.47	0.46		

*Correlation is significant at $P < 0.05$, $df = 98$, $r\text{-crit} = 0.195$

In order to ascertain the significance or otherwise of the connection between entrepreneurial skills in computer services and poverty reduction in Nigeria, Table 3 provided information on the tested hypothesis as measured by PPMC (r-value). The calculated coefficient of r was found to be 0.452 with 98 degrees of freedom, which is higher than the threshold r-value of 0.195. The alternative hypothesis (H_3) was kept and the null hypothesis (H_{03}) was rejected because $p < .05$ level of significance. According to the analysis's statistical conclusions, Nigeria's poverty reduction and entrepreneurial expertise in computer services are significantly correlated.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills in food/drink/bakery and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis (r) of the relationship between Entrepreneurial Skills in Food/Drink/Bakery and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria (N = 100)

Variable	Σx Σy	Σx^2 Σy^2	Σxy	\bar{X} \bar{Y}	Std.	r-cal	p-value
Entrepreneurial Skills in Food/Drink/Bakery(x)	356.6	1283	1243.64	3.57	0.34	0.621*	0.000
Poverty Reduction (y)	346.8	1223.6		3.47	0.46		

*Correlation is significant at $P < 0.05$, $df = 98$, $r\text{-crit} = 0.195$

In order to assess the significance of the link between entrepreneurial abilities in the food, drink, and bakery industries and the reduction of poverty in Nigeria, Table 4 provided information on the tested hypothesis as measured by PPMC (r-value). The calculated coefficient of r was found to be 0.621 with 98 degrees of freedom, which is higher than the threshold r-value of 0.195. The alternative hypothesis (H_4) is retained and the null hypothesis (H_{04}) is rejected because $p < .05$ level of significance. According to the analysis's statistical findings, entrepreneurial abilities in the food, beverage, and bakery industries are significantly correlated with a decrease in poverty in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Relationship between Entrepreneurship Skills in Agriculture and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

The purpose of this study is to examine the above. This was verified by objective one and tested with hypothesis one. Items 1-5 on the B part of the questionnaire were carefully constructed to answer this question. The grand mean stood at 3.50($SD=0.49$) for entrepreneurship skills in agriculture. The result shows that the relationship between entrepreneurship skills in agriculture and poverty reduction in Nigeria $\{r(98)=.527; > \text{critical value } (0.195), p < .0001\}$ is strongly positive and significant at .05 alpha level. Since the calculated r-value is greater than the r-critical value, we have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_{01}) while retaining the alternative (H_1) at .05 alpha level. This implies that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship skills in agriculture and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Our research on horticultural farmers was conducted by Verhees, Kulpers, and Klopjic (2011), and their study found a connection between agricultural performance and the entrepreneurial

orientation (E.O.) method they used (Verhees et al 2011). According to a different study by Akhuemonkan, (2001), agricultural entrepreneurship involves the examination of attitudes and abilities related to relating to one's environment when starting an agricultural business. He also affirmed that a competent agricultural instructor is one who possesses leadership abilities, leadership skills, and knowledge of agriculture.

Relationship between Entrepreneurship Skills in Furniture/Wood Works and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

The purpose of this study is to examine the above. This was verified by objective two and tested with hypothesis two. Items 6-10 on the B part of the questionnaire were carefully constructed to answer this question. The grand mean stood at 3.63(SD=0.41) for entrepreneurship skills Furniture/Wood Works. The result shows that the relationship between entrepreneurship skills in furniture/wood works and poverty reduction in Nigeria $\{r(98)=.714; > \text{critical value } (0.195), p<.0001\}$ is strongly positive and significant at .05 alpha level. Since the calculated r-value is greater than the r-critical value, we have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_{02}) while retaining the alternative (H_2) at .05 alpha levels. This implies that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship skills in furniture/wood works and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

This study concurs with a study by Malmberg and Maskel (2002) that found co-operation helps businesses. They concluded from their research that, even when it is a requirement for the curriculum, knowledge and skills in the furniture industry cannot be acquired through simple observation. They emphasized that in order for skills to be attained, students or apprentices must actually use the tools. Okoro (2005) noted unequivocally that individuals learn and practice vocational trades and subjects (including furniture making) in order to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary for self-employment. That is to say, furniture-making knowledge and skills are crucial for independence. Obi (2010) noted that woodwork is a significant contributor to a country's economy but lamented the lack of emphasis on it in tertiary institutions. He emphasized how successful the woodworking industry is. In his study, Omeje (2013) found that woodworking involves skills such as business opportunities and is much more than what people typically refer to as "carpentry."

Relationship between Entrepreneurial Skills in Computer Services and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

The purpose of this study is to examine the above. This was verified by objective three and tested with hypothesis three. Items 11-15 on the B part of the questionnaire were carefully constructed to answer this question. The grand mean stood at 3.53(SD=0.48) for entrepreneurial skills in computer services. The result shows that the relationship between entrepreneurial skills in computer services and poverty reduction in Nigeria $\{r(98)=.452; \text{greater than critical value } (0.195), p<.0001\}$ is strongly positive and significant at .05 alpha level. Since the calculated r-value is greater than the r-critical value, we have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_{03}) while retaining the alternative (H_3) at .05 alpha level. This implies that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills in computer services and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

According to a study by Daboli, Kamberova, Impagliazzo, Fu, and Curie (2010), computer education has a significant impact on students' creativity, innovativeness, and intention. Because the computing industry is one of the most dynamic fields that involves other fields and disciplines, including computer studies in students' activities will have a similar impact. Many researchers are interested in studying the field of computer services because it forms the foundation of contemporary technologies. One such interest was demonstrated by the National Center for Entrepreneurship in Education (NCEE, 2011), and the University of Strathclyde received their award as a result. In their study, they realized that the University of Strathclyde teaches skill in computer sciences to the students. In addition those specific careers have been created for staff to further intentions in computer services.

Relationship between Entrepreneurial Skills in Food/Drink/Bakery and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

The purpose of this study is to examine the above. This was verified by objective four and tested with hypothesis four. Items 16-20 on the B part of the questionnaire were carefully constructed to answer this question. The grand mean stood at 3.57(SD=0.34) for entrepreneurial skills in food/drink/bakery. The result shows that the relationship between entrepreneurial skills in food/drink/bakery and poverty reduction in Nigeria { $r(98)=.621$; greater than critical value (0.195), $p<.0001$ } is strongly positive and significant at .05 alpha level. Since the calculated r-value is greater than the r-critical value, we have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_{04}) while retaining the alternative (H_4) at .05 alpha level. This implies that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills in food/drink/bakery and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

According to Odiba and Baba's (2013) study, entrepreneurship education has been recognized through the acquisition of skills in agriculture, furniture and woodworking, computer services, as well as food, drink, and bakery. This study supports their findings. Graduates with these abilities will undoubtedly be independent. Additionally, graduates in the field of entrepreneurship have been discovered to be extremely competent and perform significantly better than their peers. Because of this, entrepreneurship education should be promoted in Nigeria at all levels of education, with a focus on tertiary institutions (Charney & Libcap 2000; European Commission 2015); this will have an impact on Rivers State.

CONCLUSION

After leaving a higher education institution, graduates' ability to support themselves grows, and this invariably depends on how well entrepreneurship education is planned and delivered. Higher education graduates' ability to support themselves is improved by the practical application of entrepreneurial education concepts in the areas of electrical services, agriculture, furniture/woodworking, computer services, and food, drink, and bakery.

Recommendation

This study recommended that Nigerian government should undertake the responsibility of equipping our institutions with the necessary skill acquisition measures so as to train our youth on entrepreneurship skill which will in turn, spur economic growth and reduce poverty.

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