

MARKETING SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT POTENTIALS OF JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

It is not in doubt that the standard of education has fallen such that young school leavers cannot get employment or create jobs for themselves. This is because they lack entrepreneurial skills. The study examined the integration of marketing skills into school curriculum and employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State. The study addressed one objective, one research question and tested one hypothesis. The study reviewed related literature; the study was underpinned by Schumpeter's Innovation Theory. The study adopted a correlational design; the population of the study comprised of the entire 613 public junior secondary schools in Delta State. The instrument for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire, it was validated by some experts in department of business education, and the reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability test method. Mean and Standard Deviation statistics was used to answer the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using Linear Regression (ANOVA) with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result of the study shows that there is a significant relationship between integration of marketing skills into school curriculum and employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State. In line with the findings, it was concluded that apart from introducing entrepreneurship education as a compulsory subject in the school particularly at the secondary and tertiary level, there is the need to have students exposed to entrepreneurship skills on daily bases and in different guises. Based on the findings and conclusion, the study recommends that; the scope of the education curriculum should be expanded to have more entrepreneurial skill courses in order to lead students through the path of productivity, self-reliant, and job creation; teachers should be mandated to use creative skills content while teaching students. This will foster the spirit of creativity in students and government should provide enabling environment (facilities and equipment) that are necessary for developing entrepreneurial skills in students.

Keywords: Marketing Skills, Entrepreneurial Skill, Employment Potential

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Government of Nigeria to build an entrepreneurial economy has mandated all tertiary institutions to implement entrepreneurship education in the curriculum. Hence entrepreneurship in most universities has been introduced as General Studies' courses. The basic reason for the policy is to re-address the minds of undergraduates and graduates alike from job-seeking to self-employment through the creation of productive ventures for a living and employment.

Several works of literature such as (Akinseide, 2010; Egwuyenga, 2010; Eimuhi and Oviasuyi, 2010; Okoro, 2010 and Igberaharha and Oroka, 2010) have addressed the issue surrounding the implementation of entrepreneurship education curricula in Nigerian tertiary education. Empirical evidence suggests that entrepreneurship education at the tertiary education will have a positive impact on Nigerian entrepreneurship and the economic environment. However, their assessment of the entrepreneurship intention of the business education programmes (Aganbi and Clever, 2010) submitted that the programme has no significant influence on the entrepreneurship intention of the students at all levels.

The implication of the finding supports the notion of the inadequacy of the business education programme to address the self-employment initiative of the programme. This is evident in the growing number of graduates unemployed every year (Nwandiani, 2010) in Nigeria. One of the arguments for the failure of the tertiary institution to breed entrepreneurship-minded graduates is the fact that the programme in being implemented at a level where the mindset of the graduates is on searching for lucrative jobs. In other words' teaching entrepreneurship as a General Studies course with shallow depth and time, is not enough to create an entrepreneurship culture.

It is also argued that the number of unemployed graduates in Nigeria is a fraction of the entire unemployment index. In other words, among the unemployed, there are the primary and secondary school leavers who could not proceed to higher education and the dropouts. If entrepreneurship is concentrated at the peak of education, what then happens to these categories? How else can they be integrated into the productive circle for their leaving as they compete for the non-existent jobs? The overall intention of the government in implementing entrepreneurship education is to build a Nigerian society with a strong entrepreneurship culture. Culture as we know underlies the values derivable from her educational system. Therefore teaching entrepreneurship to undergraduates is like sending a six-year-old to secondary school and the question is; can he cope? And for every plant to nourish itself and bear fruits it must, first of all, establish its root in the ground, therefore to implement entrepreneurship culture the grass-root (primary and secondary schools) cannot be ignored.

The issue of secondary school and entrepreneurship calls to question the role of the 6.3.3.4 system of education introduced to set sail for career building in small business development in Nigeria. However, its success of it was expected to have translated into graduates who have small business development (entrepreneurship) orientation. Unlike core entrepreneurship, the 6.3.3.4 system was not implemented as the policy intention differed from implementation and its attendant curriculum could not have been a substitute for entrepreneurship. It also calls to question the role of the then technical colleges which today have faded away for tertiary education and if universities become the sole home for training people for employment (white-collar and entrepreneurship development), it calls to question its role in research and development.

Preparing today's students for success and eventual leadership in the new global marketplace is the most important responsibility in education today, entrepreneurship education is an important tool for achieving these objectives, therefore should be universally available to provide all students with opportunities to explore and fulfill their potentials. The introduction of entrepreneurship at secondary school will set the spring board for early identification of career and business opportunities early to be nurtured throughout the educational system. Tertiary education would then serve to further the leadership qualities necessary for successful entrepreneurship. It is against this backdrop in the integration of entrepreneurship in Nigeria's tertiary education system that this study examined the integration of entrepreneurship skills into the school curriculum and employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State.

Objective of the Study

The study aimed to determine the integration of entrepreneurship skills into the school curriculum and employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. examine how the use of marketing skills content relates to the employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State.

Research Question

- i. To what extent does marketing skills content relate to the employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State?

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between marketing skills content and employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State.

Schumpeter's Innovation Theory

Schumpeter (1942) highlighted the part of advancement in the entrepreneurial procedure. Accordingly, Schumpeter calls for innovation among entrepreneurs to continue staying in the market. Innovation comes in form of new processes, new products and services. This theory applies to this study since a firm must be able to create, innovate and market new products. The products should be able to meet the ever-changing demands of the customers in times of quality and even value. This theory is propounded by Schumpeter (1939) who viewed entrepreneurship as the fourth factor of production, as the catalyst of economic performance and revitalization. He also indicated that an entrepreneur is innovative, creative and has foresight. Innovation and enterprise are concerned mainly with producing new combinations. It is the entrepreneur who breaks the cycle of routine activity, swimming against the stream to produce new products and techniques of production, discover new markets, explore new sources of raw material and rearrange markets (Davidsson, *et al.*, 2006) and leading to an increasing rate of the survival of small and medium scale business in the social enterprise sector (Deakins and Freel, 2009). Technological innovations are the most visible form of innovation. The advancement of innovations is not constantly distributed through time; rather, it occurs in leaps that disturb the status quo and lead to irregular economic performance. He saw the innovative transformation of routine behaviour as a relatively slow and conflict-ridden process and distinguished innovation as the function of the entrepreneur that is separate from the administrative function of the manager. This new interpretation assisted him in formulating his theory that economic business cycles mirror the wave-form process of economic evolution under capitalism. According to Schumpeter, supply shifts based on uneven technological change are what produce fluctuations rather than technological uncertainty, which is neither a sufficient nor a necessary factor of fluctuations. The economic systems, business cycles, especially Kondratieff, and waves are the major catalyst of economic performance. Schumpeter suggested a three-cycle model of economic variations or waves that included the Kitchin inventory cycle (3-5 years), the Kuznets infrastructural investment cycle (15-25 years), and the Kondratieff long cycle (45-60 years). Schumpeter (1939), also argued that as a result of competition, entrepreneurs had to produce radical innovations. Looking at Schumpeter's writings (1934, 1939, and 1942) as a whole it is possible to distinguish two different types of processes underlying innovation by firms: Creative destruction creates economic discontinuities, and in doing so, an entrepreneurial environment for the introduction of innovation, and earning monopoly profits (Lintunen, 2000). Competition is a self-destructive mechanism that normalizes the profit level when the innovation effects, value-added, have been utilized. An entrepreneurial discovery happens when an entrepreneur hypothesizes that a group of resources is not being used voluntarily. To introduce innovations and earn monopoly profits, an entrepreneur needs to identify market opportunities early enough. The creativity of entrepreneurs (or small businesses) entering untapped markets with low entry barriers for new entrants while exploiting a shared knowledge stock pool is connected with creative destruction. Although by its very nature creative destruction is a microeconomic process that has significant macroeconomic implications for economic performance (Aghion and Howitt, 1992, 1998). Innovations are materialized in new innovative firms and jobs are highly personalized. The institutionalized innovation of major corporations is linked to the accumulation of creativity. When creative destruction entrepreneurs use public domain materials merely to make their ideas available to copycats, large creative accumulation corporations appropriate and protect a major part of their intellectual property, and develop their proprietary knowledge stock through RandD departments. Multinationals (1) use monopoly power to a large extent and build on proprietary knowledge stocks through big in-house RandD departments and networks of partners, including universities. Multinationals are useful partners for entrepreneurs since they can provide their partners with world-class technologies and the most efficient global marketing channels and logistics. Multinationals

operate on all continents, and in all markets (goods, services, financing, IPRs, etc). By utilising the scale economies and monopoly power large firms create high barriers to entry of new entrants and impact industry life cycles and market structure (Agarwal, Sarkar and Echambadi, 2002). Some writers have continued to deal with dynamic transformation processes in economies driven by the introduction of innovations, for instance, Freeman (1982) developed a process model of quality-improvements in sequential and stochastic RandD races. Cheng and Dinopoulos (1991) divided the quality improvement process into technological breakthroughs in terms of creative destruction, and improvements.

Marketing Skills

According to Ezeani, *et al.*, (2012) marketing skills are another important and essential skill that affects the success or failure of a business. They further indicate that since the activity of marketing is a very complex and elusive one, vigorous training is required if graduates are to be successful entrepreneurs. This also implies that the activities of marketing are diverse and are not easy to fix. Commenting on the application of marketing skills by successful entrepreneurs in Nigeria, Ezeani *et al.*, (2012) argue that many successful entrepreneurs simply depend on talent and luck and that they consider training in marketing skilled as irrelevant to success in trading activities. This is however a dangerous view to be held in this modern era. Whereas such an argument would hold some water in the centuries before this 21st century, it is believed that the modern business market is full of competition not only for the buyers but also for resources and the differentiation of products. Since the population has increased and the number of sellers has increased greatly, business success would rarely happen by chance as it used to be, rather there is a need to completely adhere to the skills acquired from education and training that promote individual marketing competencies.

According to Gidado and Akaeze (2014), marketers conduct surveys leading to the identification of people's needs and wants and developing products or services that meet those needs and wants. University graduates can practice entrepreneurship using marketing skills acquired during their programs of study. This is because the knowledge of marketing can prompt them to make good use of the four Ps of marketing (product, price, place and promotion). It is expected that this will lead to the development of sound product ideas by university graduates, which can be translated into acceptable products or services. Lastly, acquiring and using the right marketing skills can help entrepreneurs succeed by ensuring that their goods and services are priced fairly and in line with market standards, that they are accessible when and where customers need them, and that the best promotional strategies are employed to encourage sales.

Marketing skills enable one to make important business decisions like setting the price right, which is a very vital factor in product marketing and obtaining an adequate level of sales volume. In choosing an effective strategy for the physical distribution of goods and services, an entrepreneur needs to have excellent marketing abilities (Stanton, 2002).

Gidado and Akaeze (2014) attributed the failure of many entrepreneurs to succeed as entrepreneurs, to a lack of marketing skills, in form of market research skills, data collection methods and data interpretation skills, segmentation skills, and strategic and planning skills. Other marketing skills that many entrepreneurs lack are pricing mathematics skills, pricing strategy skills, channel management skills, product development skills, advertising skills, personal selling skills and sales promotion skills. On the other hand, Uche (2006) as quoted by Ademiluyi (2007) opined that the acquisition of marketing skills offers the entrepreneur a unique strategy for succeeding in business. The entrepreneur can offer the right product to his targeted customers. He can cost and determine his product price and which can be acceptable to the customers, based on their perception of the value and a cost that allows for profit making. Business-related graduates require these marketing skills to enable them to identify their potential customers and persuade them to buy their products or services. In the research works of Ademiluyi (2007) ten marketing skills and competencies needed for effective entrepreneurship by business-related graduates were identified and these include: i) salesmanship; ii) negotiation; iii) sales record keeping; iv) sales promotion; v) stock record keeping;

vi) pricing; vii) advertising channels; viii) advertising media; ix) consumer behaviour appreciation; and x) transportation. Modern marketing emerged as the concept that business exists to create and serve customers and at the same time achieve the firms' profit objective. Entrepreneurs in business-related areas should therefore organize their resources to concentrate on achieving success in the market place as mishandling or negligence can lead to failure.

Kibuuka (2011) operationalised marketing skills using seven aspects namely; i) ability to apply competitive strategies (e.g. cutting prices, improving quality, designing new products, packages etc, fashion, colour, etc.); ii) ability to develop a marketing budget; iii) ability to identify new markets and/or customers; iv) ability to respond quickly to competitive forces; v) ability to satisfy customer needs; vi) ability to identify customer needs; and vii) ability to identify competitors' strength and weaknesses.

Challenges to integrating entrepreneurship into the curriculum of secondary schools

Likely challenges to be encountered in Nigeria while integrating entrepreneurship education with the curriculum of secondary schools are numerous. First and foremost, the teachers must be entrepreneurial conscious. The teachers' awareness of entrepreneurship studies, according to Elena and Markku (2003) has grown and attitudes towards the theme have become more positive but teachers may not know enough about the aims, contents, and work method of entrepreneurship education and therefore, may not be able to effectively impart the desired knowledge and entrepreneurial skills to the students.

The task of drawing up relevant entrepreneurship lessons and content to be included in the curriculum of the secondary school system poses a threat to the teachers who may not have been inundated with such relevant knowledge, which according to Blenker *et al*/(2003) will require a very long educational process.

Entrepreneurship education is capital intensive (Igberaharha and Oroka, 2010) since both teachers and students need money to purchase the instructional materials needed for teaching and learning entrepreneurship in addition to carrying excursions to enterprises and places of interest bridge theory with practice. This may constitute a constraint and will subsequently frustrate the introduction of the entrepreneurship in secondary school curriculum. The need for entrepreneurship education overrides these attendant problems.

The lesson period of secondary school spans between 8.00 am to 2.00 pm offering about eight compulsory lessons. Given this fact, the insertion of entrepreneurship studies into the lesson period becomes a problem. The questions raised here include extending the lesson time-table; reducing the time of each lesson or removing some not-very vital lessons to pave way for entrepreneurship lessons. Answers to these options will emanate from a properly articulated plan of action since

Entrepreneurship Skills Required to Overcome Barriers to Growth

It is still a topic of much debate whether entrepreneurs are born or made. While it is generally acknowledged that there are natural 'born' entrepreneurs, there are also researchers who believe that entrepreneurship is a skill that can be learned. Drucker (1985) opined that entrepreneurship is a training and that "*most of what you hear about entrepreneurship is all wrong. It's not magic; it's not mysterious; and it has nothing to do with genes. It's a discipline and, like any discipline, it can be learned.*" If one agrees with Drucker's concept of entrepreneurship, then it follows that education and training can play a key role in its development. In a traditional understanding, entrepreneurship was strongly associated with the creation of a business and therefore it was argued that the skills required to achieve this outcome could be developed through training. Recently, entrepreneurship has come to be understood as a method of thinking and acting that applies to all facets of society and the economy, necessitating a new strategy for training. The educational methodology needed in today's world helps to develop an individual's mindset, behavior, skills and capabilities and can be applied to create value in a range of contexts and environments from the public sector, charities, universities and social enterprises to corporate organisations and new venture start-ups.

Lichtenstein and Lyons (2001) argued that service providers must understand that each entrepreneur requires a unique "game plan" for expanding his or her skills because each one enters the entrepreneurial world with a different level of skill. However, Kelley *et al* (2010) propounded that within any society it is important to support all people with 'entrepreneurial mindsets', not just the entrepreneurs, as they each have the potential to inspire others to start a business. Kelley argued that any educational training should enable people not just to develop skills to start a business but rather to be capable of behaving entrepreneurially in whatever role they take in life. This approach is quite broad but it captures the critical philosophy of modern entrepreneurship education and training programs required if countries are to generate an increasing pool of people who are willing to behave entrepreneurially. But how one develops these skills and values, particularly with relevance to growth-orientated business activities, remains a question to which many researchers are still seeking an answer.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is a correlational and survey design. The population is the complete set of people in a given area with a specialized set of characteristics in research interest. The population comprised the 613 Junior Secondary Schools in Delta State. The sample size is made up of two hundred and thirty-four (234) principals from the 613 populations using Krejcie and Morgan Sampling table. The instrument for data collection for this study will be two questionnaires titled. Mean and Standard Deviation statistics were used to answer the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using Linear Regression with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A criterion mean of 3.0 was calculated and used to agree or disagree with the research question items. The 3.00 ratio is calculated thus, $5+4+3+2+1 = 15$, therefore $15/5 = 3.00$. A mean of 3.00 and above was judged as a high extent, while a mean of 3.00 and below was judged as a low extent.

Research Question 1: To what extent does marketing skills content relate to the employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State?

Mean and standard deviation answer to marketing skills content with employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State.

S/N	Marketing Skills	Mean	SD	Remark
11.	Marketing skills improved employment opportunities.	4.3510	1.39112	Agree
12.	Marketers conduct surveys leading to the identification of people's needs and wants and developing products or services that meet those needs and wants.	4.3944	1.54767	Agree
13.	University graduates can practice entrepreneurship using marketing skills acquired during their programs of study.	4.3315	1.63096	Agree
14.	Acquisition and utilisation of the right marketing skills can promote entrepreneurship.	4.3359	1.74014	Agree
15.	Marketing skills enable one to make important business decisions like setting the price right, which is a very vital factor in product marketing and obtaining an adequate level of sales volume.	4.2362	1.58577	Agree
Grand mean		4.3298	1.51971	Agree

The data in Table 4.3 (items 11-15) using mean and standard deviation for the analysis showed that respondents agreed that marketing skills improved employment opportunities (M=4.3510; SD=1.39112) and that marketers conduct surveys leading to the identification of people's needs and wants and developing products or services that meet those needs wants (M=4.3944; SD=1.54767). Respondents agreed that university graduates can practice entrepreneurship using marketing skills acquired during their programs of study (M=4.3315; SD=1.63096), and that acquisition and utilisation of the right marketing skills can promote entrepreneurship (M=4.3359; SD=1.74014). Finally, respondents agreed that marketing skills

enable one to make important business decisions like setting the price right, which is a very vital factor in product marketing and obtaining an adequate level of sales volume.

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between marketing skills content and employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State.

Table 4.8: Summary of regression analysis on the relationship between marketing skills content and employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State.

Part A: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.785 ^a	.616	.614	2.06003

a. Predictors: (Constant), marketing skills

Part B: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1082.812	1	1082.812	255.156	.000 ^b
	Residual	674.753	193	4.244		
	Total	1757.565	194			

a. Dependent Variable: employment potentials

b. Predictors: (Constant), marketing skills

Part C: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	3.788	1.622		2.336	.021	.585	3.788
	Financial management strategies	.690	.043	.785	15.974	.000	.605	.690

a. Dependent Variable: employment potentials

The data in Table 4.8 showed the coefficient of the relationship between marketing skills content and employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State. Part A showed that the coefficient of the relationship between marketing skills content and employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State is 0.785 while the R-squared value is 0.616 indicating that marketing skills content positively relates to employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State. The table also showed that marketing skills content accounts for about 61.6% (0.616x100) relationship with employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State. Meaning that the remaining 38.4% of employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State is explained by other variables not included in the model. From marketing skills content and employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State F_{1, 159}=255.156, p<.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis three was rejected at 0.05 alpha level. The regression equation $y=3.788+0.690x$ in Part C is indicating that an increase in marketing skills content will lead to an increase in the employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State.

DISCUSSION

The table also showed that marketing skills content accounts for about 61.6% (0.616x100) relationship with employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State. This finding is supported by the study by Gidado and Akaeze (2014) attributed the failure of many

entrepreneurs to succeed as entrepreneurs, to a lack of marketing skills, in form of market research skills, data collection methods and data interpretation skills, segmentation skills, strategic and planning skills. Other marketing skills that many entrepreneurs lack are pricing mathematics skills, pricing strategy skills, channel management skills, product development skills, advertising skills, personal selling skills and sales promotion skills. On the other hand, Uche (2006) as quoted by Ademiluyi (2007) opined that the acquisition of marketing skills offers the entrepreneur a unique strategy for succeeding in business. The entrepreneur can offer the right product to his targeted customers.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the integration of marketing skills into the school curriculum and employment potentials of junior secondary school students in Delta State. The result of the study shows that there is a significant relationship between the integration of marketing skills into the school curriculum and the employment potential of junior secondary school students in Delta State. In line with this; the study concluded that apart from introducing entrepreneurship education as a compulsory subject in the school, particularly at the secondary and tertiary level, there is the need to have students exposed to entrepreneurship strategies on daily bases and in different guises. This can be done using the infusion and integration approaches where the students will encounter the various skills they need in different subject areas and topics as a result of which the students will be exposed to opportunities where they can apply and transfer learning to a variety of entrepreneurship avenues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

- i. The scope of the education curriculum should be expanded to have more entrepreneurial skill courses to lead students through the path of productivity, self-reliance, and job creation.
- ii. Government should provide enabling environment (facilities and equipment) that are necessary for developing entrepreneurial skills in students
- iii. Students should be taught how to build marketing skills through the integration of marketing subjects into school curriculum.

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