

**STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH FUNCTIONAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AMONG GRADUATES OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN
KOGI STATE.**

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Abstract

This study was set to determine the strategies for enhancing economic growth through functional entrepreneurship education among graduates of business education in Kogi State. A survey research design was adopted while the population was 47 respondents (24 business education teachers from six colleges of education and 23 business entrepreneurs) in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State respectively obtained via pilot study. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire made up of two sections according to the research questions that guided the study. The questionnaire has a total of 19 item statements designed in 4 point response categories of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) assigned numerical values of 4, 3, 2 & 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by research experts while the reliability index of 0.77 was established using Cronbach's Alpha reliability estimate. Mean with standard deviation were used to answer the two research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed among others that retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers can enhance students learning towards improving economic growth in Kogi State; it will equip students with the human resources requirement of small business industries, it will equip student with potentials required for entrepreneurship. It was therefore recommended among others that schools at all level should ensure functional entrepreneurship cultures are being cultivated by making entrepreneurship a core subject.

Keywords: Enhancing Economic Growth; Functional Entrepreneurship.

Introduction.

Entrepreneurship has been seen as a vehicle for total transformation and transition from school to world of work (self-employment or paid employment). Tijani-Alawiye (2004) defined entrepreneurship as the process of increasing the supply of entrepreneurs or adding to the stock of existing small, medium and big enterprises available to a country by creating and promoting many capable entrepreneurs, who can successfully run innovative enterprises, nurture them to growth and sustain them, with a view to achieving broad socio-economic developmental goals. Ifeanacho (2013) explained the concept of entrepreneurship development as a gradual growth of creative, economic and social venture. It involves setting up an individual to explore opportunities successfully through making profitable or suffering loss of invested capital.

According to Alam and Hossan (2003) entrepreneurship plays a key role in the process of economic development; this implies that entrepreneurship requires applications of energy and passion towards the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solution into youth development. This was supported by Onoh (2011) who asserted that entrepreneurship promotes capital formation and creates wealth in a country. It is widely believed that entrepreneurship is beneficial for economic growth and development. Entrepreneurship has been remarkably resurgent over the past three decades in countries that achieved substantial poverty reduction (Naude, 2013). The place of entrepreneurship in enhancing economic growth of a nation cannot be over emphasized. Thus, entrepreneurship skills when acquired within the school are known as entrepreneurship education.

Onoh (2011) perceive entrepreneurship education as education for productive investments in human capital resources development. The author further stated that it is an education targeted at the youths for the acquisition of employable skills for self-reliance and economic empowerment. Adebayo and Kalawola (2013) described entrepreneurship education as a specialized training given to the students or trainers to acquire skills, idea, managerial abilities and capacities for self employment than being employed for pay. In this regards, Ogundele and Abiola (2006) revealed that the wide-spread level of unemployment in the country could have been minimized if Nigerians of varying age groups and backgrounds were exposed to entrepreneurial education, training and development across levels. The quest for producing great and dynamic economy, in the 21st century, if Nigeria is not to be left behind the rest of the world in the march towards propensity demands that all hands must be utilized to produce entrepreneurial education, training and development for the general populace. Entrepreneurship education plays significant role in preparing students for transition into the world of work; it equips them with abilities to be self-reliant individuals in business or occupation.

Onoh (2006) noted that through entrepreneurship education, skilled human resources who will be able to become entrepreneurs, self reliant and sufficiently competent to meet the global needs in order to reduce poverty will be produced. Furthermore, entrepreneurship education only impacts into its recipients the desired capacities for self reliance when it is functional. Functional entrepreneurship education refers to a programme that is equipped with the necessary resources (human and material) for effective teaching and learning. In addition, the best approach to entrepreneurial nationhood for Nigeria is through entrepreneurship education that cuts across the entire spectrum of the education system from primary school to university as well as in the informal system. Actualizing this will imply a definitive national philosophy of education that emphasizes self-reliance with entrepreneurship at the core (Ubong, 2013). In this view, business education is one of the programmes through which entrepreneurship skills are acquired.

Business education involves an aspect of education that prepares its recipients with capacities to be sustainably self-reliant. Business education impacts skills both theoretical and practical for life long career. Business Education according to Nwagwu and Azih (2016) is a vocational programme that equips the recipients with skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding needed for effective participation and

contribution as producers and/or consumers of business products. It therefore means that Business Education prepares individuals who will adequately participate in business activities and also equip individuals with business knowledge and skills. In the words of Udo (2008) business education is a comprehensive activity-based educational programme that is concerned with the acquisition of practical skills, understandings, attitudes, work habits and competencies that are requisite to success in a chosen business occupation. With the same mindset, Nwokike (2014) opines that business education is that aspect of technology and vocational education that prepares individuals for useful living within the society as an effective office worker or successful entrepreneur. The author noted that business education students are the youths in the universities studying accounting education, office/secretarial or distributive/marketing education.

In another development, Nwachukwu (2012) stated that business education is an education programme that equips individuals with functional and saleable skills and attitude or value that would enable them to operate in the environment they find themselves. Business education programme is developed to prepare students with job entry skills or business competencies for self-reliance. One of the aims of Business Education is to produce graduates that are equipped with vocational skills and competency required in modern offices and schools towards being a successful entrepreneur through the help of a business education teacher. Business education teacher in this context refers to an expert with excellent teaching skill in business related courses.

In addition, Krishnan (2008) asserted that business education is about facilitating learning of job-related behaviors in order to improve individual and corporate performance. This programme in which individuals are equipped for occupations (entrepreneurs) on graduation for enhancing economic growth and sustainability in most cases has been unable to impact the desired capacities into its recipients especially in Kogi State. The programme has been unproductive as a result of lack of resources required in teaching its recipients, thereby affecting the growth and development of the economy of the state. On this note, the need therefore arise to determine the strategies for enhancing economic growth through functional entrepreneurship education among graduates of business education in Kogi State.

Statement of Problem

Entrepreneurship has been seen as a vehicle for total transformation and transition from school to world of work (self employment or paid employment) adopted by business education. This programme in Kogi State has been seen unsatisfactory in the production of competent individuals with saleable skills for self-reliance. The programme has been challenged as a result of lack of trained human and material resources for effective teaching and learning of the trade. In this regards, most graduates do not posses the qualities of an entrepreneur and associated competencies among others like risks associated in business and location as a factor for business growth, this scenario has brought about misfortunes among graduates in that some have resorted to search for paid employment as a result of establishing an enterprise that is prone to failure. These situations has affected the growth and development of the economy of the State thereby increasing the rate of business education graduates unemployment in the State. On these notes, the study seeks to determine the strategies for enhancing economic growth through functional entrepreneurship education among graduates of business education in Kogi State.

Purpose of the Study

This study was set to determine the strategies for enhancing economic growth through functional entrepreneurship education among graduates of business education in Kogi State, but the study specifically sought to identify;

1. how retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers can enhance students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State?

2. how entrepreneurship workshops/seminars can facilitate students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State?

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:-

1. how can retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers enhance students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State?
2. how can entrepreneurship workshops/seminars facilitate students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses formulated and tested at .05 level of significance guided the study;

H0₁: A significant difference does not exist in the mean ratings between business education teachers and entrepreneurs on how retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers can enhance students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State.

H0₂: A significant difference does not exist in the mean ratings between business education teachers and entrepreneurs on how entrepreneurship workshops/seminars can facilitate students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State.

Research Methods

A descriptive survey research design was adopted by this study, carried out in Kogi State with a population of 47 respondents (24 business education teachers from six colleges of education and 23 business entrepreneurs) in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State respectively obtained via pilot study. Due to the manageable size of the population, there was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire with a 19-item statement developed by the researchers sectioned A & B with response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) assigned numerical values of 4, 3, 2 & 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by research experts while the reliability index of 0.77 was established using Cronbach's Alpha. According to Uzoagulu, (2011), Cronbach's Alpha is used to determine the reliability estimate of an instrument that does not have yes or no response (not dichotomously scored).

Mean with standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Upper and lower limits of the mean were used as basis for decision, thus;

Strongly Agree (SA): 3.50 - 4.00, Agree (A) : 2.50 - 3.49, Disagree (D): 1.50 - 2.49, Strongly Disagree (SD): 1.00 - 1.49.

The null hypotheses were tested using t-test at .05 level of significance. The null hypotheses was rejected when t-cal is greater than t-critical, otherwise not rejected when t-cal is less than t-critical.

Results

The results are presented in Table(s) 1, 2, 3 & 4 in line with the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

Research Question 1

How can retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers enhance students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State?

Table 1: Mean with standard deviation of how retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers can enhance students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State.

S/N	Retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers will;	Teachers N= 24		Entrepreneurs N= 23		Overall N= 47		Decision
		X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	
1	Exposes students to risks associated in business	3.32	0.92	3.35	0.82	3.34	0.87	Agree
2	Exposes them to causes business failure	3.29	0.82	3.52	0.54	3.41	0.68	Agree
3	Makes them aware of signal dangers in business	3.28	0.72	3.23	0.81	3.26	0.77	Agree
4	Equip students with concept of feasibility research	3.40	0.66	3.31	0.81	3.36	0.73	Agree
5	Teach them the qualities of an entrepreneur	3.17	0.84	3.42	0.60	3.30	0.72	Agree
6	Equip the students with business opportunities identification capacity	3.45	0.66	3.46	0.57	3.46	0.62	Agree
7	Provide them with the basic skills required for enterprises by entrepreneurs	3.28	0.65	3.33	0.74	3.31	0.70	Agree
8	Equip students with the human resources requirement of small business industries	3.43	0.79	3.30	0.85	3.37	0.82	Agree
9	Analyzes the relevance of record keeping	3.34	0.54	3.25	0.87	3.30	0.71	Agree
10	Equip students with facts about location as a factor in the entrepreneurship development.	3.00	0.88	3.26	0.78	3.13	0.83	Agree
11	Equip student with potentials required of entrepreneurs.	3.12	0.88	3.18	1.08	3.15	0.98	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.28	0.76	3.33	0.77	3.31	0.77	Agree

In Table 1, the mean responses of respondents revealed that all items numbered 1 to 11 were agreed as how retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers can enhance students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State. The aggregate scores ranged from 3.13 to 3.46. The Table therefore shows that retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers can enhance students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State. The grand mean value of 3.31 also attested to that. The cluster standard deviation of 0.77 indicates that the opinions of the respondents are close.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: A significant difference does not exist in the mean ratings between teachers and entrepreneurs on how retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers can enhance students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State.

Table 2: t-test analysis between teachers and entrepreneurs on how retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers can enhance students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State.

Respondents	No	X	SD	Df	Level of signi.	t-tab	t-cal	decision
Teachers	24	3.28	0.76	45	.05	2.000	-2.53	NS

Entrepreneurs	23	3.33	0.77
Total	47		

NS: Not Significant. SD: Standard Deviation. DF: Degree of freedom

With reference to the Table above, (t-test) the result above shows that t-calculated value of -0.253 is less than t-tabulated value of 2.000 at 45 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that a significant difference does not exist in the mean ratings between teachers and entrepreneurs on how retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers can enhance students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State.

Research question 2

How can entrepreneurship workshops/seminars facilitate students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State?

Table 3: Mean with standard deviation of how entrepreneurship workshops/seminars can facilitate students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State.

S/N	Entrepreneurship workshops/ seminars can;	Teachers N= 24		Entrepreneurs N= 23		Overall N= 47		Decision
		X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	
12	Teach job creation	3.09	0.65	3.09	0.92	3.09	0.79	Agree
13	Balance regional development	3.78	0.78	3.26	0.78	3.27	0.78	Agree
14	Enable students to acquire skills for improving their standard of living	3.54	0.66	2.29	1.05	3.23	0.86	Agree
15	Improve per-capital income	3.42	0.79	3.12	0.82	3.27	0.81	Agree
16	It impacts competencies for improving GDP	3.68	0.47	3.44	0.66	3.56	0.57	Strongly Agree
17	Teach wealth creation	3.08	1.00	3.17	0.84	3.13	0.92	Agree
18	Enhance community development	3.14	0.63	3.05	0.96	3.21	0.80	Agree
19	Address and encourage export	3.18	0.77	3.00	0.86	3.09	0.82	Agree
	Cluster Mean	3.30	0.72	3.13	0.86	3.23	0.79	Agree

In Table 3 above, the mean responses of respondents revealed that item numbered 16 was strongly agreed while item number 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18 & 19 were agreed as how entrepreneurship workshops/seminars can facilitate students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State. The aggregate scores ranged from 3.09 to 3.56. The Table therefore shows that organizing entrepreneurship workshops/seminars can facilitate students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State. The grand mean value of 3.23 also attested to that while the cluster standard deviation of 0.79 indicates that the opinions of the respondents are close.

H0₂: A significant difference does not exist in the mean ratings between teachers and entrepreneurs on how entrepreneurship workshops/seminars can facilitate students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State.

Table 4: t-test analysis between teachers and entrepreneurs on how entrepreneurship workshops/seminars can facilitate students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State

Respondents	No	X	SD	Df	Level of signi.	t-tab	t-cal	Decision
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Teachers	24	3.14	0.72	45	.05	2.000	0.809	NS
Entrepreneurs	23	3.26	0.86					
Total	47							

NS: Not Significant. SD: Standard Deviation. DF: Degree of freedom

The t-test result above shows that t-calculated (0.809) is less than t-tabulated (2.000) at 45 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This therefore implies that a significant difference does not exist in the mean ratings between teachers and entrepreneurs on how entrepreneurship workshops/seminars can facilitate students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study in research question 1 revealed that retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers can enhance students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State as it will expose students to risks associated in business, it will teach them the qualities of an entrepreneur, it will equip the students with business opportunities identification capacity and many more. The T-test result also showed that t-calculated value is less than t-tabulated value; therefore the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that a significant difference does not exist in the mean ratings between teachers and entrepreneurs on how retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers can enhance students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State. This is in agreement with the findings of Onoh and Ogbapu (2017) who noted that training/retraining is essential strategy for enhancing entrepreneurial competencies of building construction graduates in Rivers State.

The study further revealed in research question 2 that entrepreneurship workshops/seminars can facilitate students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State as it imbue in students wealth creation competencies which enhances community development, balance regional development and the likes. It is therefore necessary to encourage entrepreneurship workshops/seminars which facilitate students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State. The t-test result showed that t-calculated value is less than t-tabulated value. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This therefore implies that a significant difference does not exist in the mean ratings between teachers and entrepreneurs on how entrepreneurship workshops/seminars can facilitate students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State. This is in agreement with the findings of Aneke (2014) who found out that attending seminars, workshops and conferences exposes the learner to new environment with new technologies and idea that will enhance competency.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, retraining of entrepreneurship education teachers can enhance students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State; it will equip students with the human resources requirement of small business industries, it will equip student with potentials required of entrepreneurs and more. Teachers and entrepreneurs agreed that one of the strategies for enhancing economic growth through functional entrepreneurship education among graduates of business education in Kogi State is by retraining entrepreneurship education teachers so as to up keep their competencies. These will in turn stimulate students' interest and enhance their knowledge on requirements for entry into business ventures. Furthermore, both teachers and entrepreneurs agreed that organizing entrepreneurship workshops/seminars can facilitate students learning for improving economic growth in Kogi State as it equip the students with wealth creation competencies which enhances community development, balance regional development and the likes. It is therefore hoped that if these necessary strategies are acknowledged and integrated into business education curriculum for training its recipients, they will be self-reliant and as well employment providers which will undoubtedly enhance economic development in Kogi State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in view of the findings of the study:

1. Retraining of business education teachers on entrepreneurship courses is necessary for capacity building and effective training of recipients.
2. Organizing seminars, workshops and conferences on entrepreneurship should be considered effective tool for proper teaching and learning
3. Provision of financial resources for entrepreneurship should be made by Government.
4. Schools at all level should ensure functional entrepreneurship cultures are being cultivated by making entrepreneurship core subject.

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