

ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES FOR SELF RELIANCE REQUIRED BY HEALTH EDUCATION UNDERGRADUATES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

The present system of education in Nigeria is expected to equip the students on graduation with skills capable of making them entrepreneurs rather than job seekers. A perceived lack of capabilities remains one of the most frequently cited barriers for people to venture into a business or become creative. It has been observed that graduates of health education and other discipline depend solely on pay jobs rather than venturing into their own business. The study investigated entrepreneurial competencies for self reliance required by health education undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Imo State. The study utilized a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The sample was 430 health education undergraduates randomly drawn. A structured Entrepreneurship Competencies for Self Reliance Questionnaire (ECSRQ) was used for data collection. Means, standard deviations and t-test were used for data analysis. Results among others showed that health education undergraduates required behavioural competencies ($\bar{X}=3.08$, $SD=.59$); enterprises launching competencies ($\bar{X}=2.65$, $SD=.54$); and enterprise managing competencies ($\bar{X}=3.06$, $SD=.61$). Gender had no significant influence on acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies by health education undergraduates ($t=2.12 > .05$). The authors recommended among others that all education stakeholders in Nigeria should be actively involved in the task of translating the educational objectives into reality. This could be achieved by emphasizing education for creativity rather than education for certificate and job seeking, though they are important.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Competency, Self Reliance, Undergraduates

Introduction

Entrepreneurship plays significant role in economic development of an area by building the economic base, and providing job opportunities. Globally, efforts to build entrepreneurship competencies through education have increased significantly over time. Its training necessitate learners acquire competencies required for self

reliance. Many of Nigerian institutes of higher learning do not encourage the spirit of entrepreneurship by motivating students to venture into their own business by way of their teaching (Musa, 2004). Some of the youths who are still in the tertiary institutions, and those who have graduated from schools are seeking for paid job. There is urgent need for the Nigerian society to strive at producing graduates who are “job creators” rather than “job seekers”.

A crucial means to wealth creation and employment is encouragement and promotion of entrepreneurial competencies or skills in tertiary institutions. The acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by members of the society is a means of increasing the production power and employment in any nation (Igboanugo, 2015). Adamu (2005) identified four aspects of education that lead to entrepreneurship. These include: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and acquisition of interdependence. Nwosu (2006) stated that it is now a challenge for our educational system to ensure quality entrepreneurship education in all disciplines and at various levels of education. In addition, Inyada and Inah (2008) posited that the latent capacity of undergraduates and graduates for entrepreneurship would be significantly enhanced through inculcation of entrepreneurship competencies in our educational system. The entrepreneurship competencies required for self-reliance are integrated into all disciplines including health education in the universities (Nwana, 2000).

Health education is a field of study that is multidisciplinary and therefore aims at promoting and protecting the lives and health of individuals in various occupations through acquisition of knowledge, positive attitude and healthy behaviour (practice). Udoh (2000) opined that health education possesses the capability of ensuring optimal health for people, and therefore is preventive, vocational and skill-based in nature which prepares one for gaining employment, becoming an entrepreneur, employer of labour, good family living and for the development of the society. Udoh added that while the gain of entrepreneurial development for sustainable national development is often perceived via the prevailing industrial and economic development status of a nation in terms of productivity at all levels of human enterprise, the health of the individual in the society remains the bedrock of such a development. Therefore, there is no need to emphasize the already known fact that a healthy citizen makes a healthy nation, and it is only a healthy nation that can aspire for the achievement of entrepreneurial competencies or skills.

Entrepreneurship is a necessary ingredient for stimulating economic growth and employment opportunities in all societies. Okpupkara (2011) defined entrepreneurship as a purposeful activity that includes an initiation, promotion and distribution of wealth and service. It is any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment, a new business organization, or the expansion of an existing business by an individual, a team or an established business. A person who engages in entrepreneurship is called an entrepreneur. An entrepreneur is one who undertakes to organize, manage and assume the risks of a business (Afrafeh, 2016).

In common parlance, being an entrepreneur is associated with starting a business. Entrepreneurship signifies self-reliance, so an entrepreneur is expected to acquire skills or competencies, ideas and managerial abilities needed for effective and efficient running of a business enterprise.

Entrepreneurship exists mostly in small and medium scale business enterprises (SMEs). Okenwa (2005) observed that “small business enterprises” constitute a vital engine or principal catalyst for economic growth and self-reliance among entrepreneurs. In other words, self-reliance is the ability to do or decide things by oneself rather than depending on other people for help. Moore (2019) stated that self reliance implies that people can solve their problems and make decisions themselves; develop self-acceptance; acquire self knowledge and practising self compassion. Contextually, self-reliance refers to the ability of health education undergraduates to do things and make decisions by themselves, without needing other people to help them. The productivity level of entrepreneurs can be improved through intellectual enhancement. Intellectual enhancement pertains to acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills that assist one to perform effectively and efficiently. Entrepreneurial competencies or skills are usually acquired through educational means often referred to as entrepreneurship education, which can be developed through entrepreneurship education and training that focus on promoting an entrepreneurial mindset and behaviours.

Many countries, schools, vocational education and training institutions and higher education institutions are enriching their study programmes with dedicated courses on how to start a business, either as self-standing modules or embedded into curricula. Entrepreneurship education is designed to communicate the skills needed to recognize business opportunities, organize, start new business venture, and tries to provide knowledge and hands on learning experience that will help youths develop the skills associated with starting a business venture (Brown, 2000). Entrepreneurship training enhancement is constrained by poor funding, lack of qualified instructors and inadequacy of entrepreneurial content in the curriculum of undergraduates in our educational system (Osadi & Goddey, 2009). This means that for small scale enterprises to thrive, adequate funding is needed. But this is lacking for most undergraduates, hence many of them fail. This is where the government should come in to fund their enterprises or give them soft loans to venture into their own business as undergraduates.

Undergraduate is a university or college student who is studying for his or her first degree. These learners are future entrepreneurs who will perceive business opportunities and take advantage of the scarce resources and use them profitably (Adikwu, 2008). Therefore, improved entrepreneurial skills need to be imparted to undergraduates of health education and other disciplines, in order to empower them with competencies or skills that will help them create jobs and generate wealth through the establishment of counseling centres; where they serve as resource

persons, operating cosmetic and patent medicine stores, opening recreational centres, health programme designing and co-ordination among others. Competency is a standardized skill or set of skills for an individual to properly perform a specific job. Undergraduates need to possess some competencies so as to empower them to become self employed and self reliant. When this happens, they can work or function as entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial competency refers to the sum of the entrepreneur's requisite attributes for successful and sustainable development (Kiggundy, 2002). It also refers to an individual's ability to identify and seize opportunities, turn ideas into action, and to plan and manage processes to achieve objectives (European Union, 2017). Therefore, contextually, entrepreneurial competency refers to the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired by health education undergraduates through training or entrepreneurship education which help them to successfully venture into an enterprise. Dixon (2005) disclosed that planning and organizational skills or competencies include the know how to prioritize and manage risks, agility in thinking and planning; and the leadership skills that include sharing information with workers among others.

As an indicator, a broader base of knowledge on entrepreneurship competencies could create a wider scope for the discovery of potential opportunities and assist undergraduates in adapting to new situation, and in becoming self employed and productive as a way of warding off unemployment and enhancing self reliance. Entrepreneurship competencies required of undergraduates include: creating opportunity, innovation, entrepreneurship aspiration, relationship, resource integration, entrepreneurial perseverance and entrepreneurial learning (Hui, 2011). Sethi and Sexana (2012) opined that entrepreneurial competencies are the skills necessary for the entrepreneur to venture into an enterprise, organize and manage an enterprise ably and completely, and realize the goal for which the enterprise is established. These authors added that these competencies can be broadly classified as behavioural competencies, such as: initiative, systematic planning, creativity and innovation, risk taking and risk management, problem solving, persistence, quality performance, information management and persuasion and influencing abilities; enterprises launching competencies, such as: formulating a business objective, review of business ideas, drawing up programme for business take off, making a budget for investment, identifying sources of fund and information, identifying relevant location for business and marketing outlet for business; and enterprises managing competencies, such as: provision of resources for business, confidence, human relations attribute, building network for enterprise, flexibility in management, risk taking and resource integration, decision making, searching for favourable markets, monitoring business season and environment among others..

Entrepreneurship competencies combine creativity, a sense of initiative, problem-solving, the ability to marshal resources, and financial and technological knowledge. Entrepreneurship Development Institute (2012) expressed that some of

these competencies include initiative-which means taking the lead rather than waiting for others to start; sees and acts on opportunities; persistence-not giving up easily, seeking continuously until success is achieved. Others include concern for high quality of work, commitment to work contract, efficiency orientation in terms of time, money and effort; systematic planning; problem solving, self-confidence; assertiveness-conveying emphatically one's vision and convincing others of its value; persuasion-use of influence, strategies, monitoring and concern for employee welfare. Some of these competencies are latent in the entrepreneur, which need to be identified, nursed and nurtured. Others are acquired through training and practice. Competencies could be acquired through structured and unstructured training (Uso, Ogbuany, & Udoh, 2012).

The present system of education in Nigeria is expected to equip the students on graduation with skills capable of making them entrepreneurs rather than job seekers. Undergraduates should be properly trained to believe that if there is no entrepreneurial skill, there will be no employment opportunity. There is need for incorporating into the curriculum at all levels of education, entrepreneurship education that would lead to job creation and self-reliance, and bring about wealth creation. No genuine effort has been made to incorporate the required creativity in terms of equipping students with necessary entrepreneurial skills practically in the classroom in Nigerian education as it is being done in the industrialized countries. In spite of the relevance of entrepreneurship, there seems to be poor understanding of the competencies involved in venturing into job creation through establishment of private business enterprises. A perceived lack of capabilities remains one of the most frequently cited barriers for people to venture into a business or become creative. It has been observed that graduates of health education and other discipline depend solely on pay jobs rather than venturing into their own business. Health education undergraduates in Imo East senatorial district appear to still depend on their sponsors for provision of all their needs, thereby increasing the burden of their sponsors. Some graduates are seen roaming the street in search of pay jobs, when they were trained to create job opportunity, be self reliant and employ others. The prevalence of carrying files around going from office to office, and attending interviews for employment has been a constituted menace to the society, and also reduced economic development. In the light of the above, it therefore, became necessary to embark on this study which aimed to investigate the entrepreneurial competencies for self-reliance required by health education undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the entrepreneurial competencies for self-reliance required by health education undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Imo State. Specifically, the study determined:

1. behavioural competencies required by health education undergraduates;
2. enterprises launching competencies required by health education undergraduates; and
3. enterprises managing competencies required by health education undergraduates.

Research Questions

Three research questions were posed to guide the study.

1. What are the behavioural competencies required by health education undergraduates?
2. What are the enterprises launching competencies required by health education undergraduates?
3. What are the enterprises managing competencies required by health education undergraduates?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in mean responses of male and female health education undergraduates on entrepreneurial competencies required for self-reliance at .05 level of significance.

Methods

This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design. This design according to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) is one that produces a snapshot of a population at a particular point in time, and instead of following a group of subjects over a period of time, cross-section of the subjects of varying ages and other socio-demographic factors are sampled and studied at the same time. The population for the study consisted of 1,205 health education undergraduates from tertiary institutions in Imo State. The sample size was 430 male and female health education undergraduates drawn using a two-stage sampling procedure. The first stage involved drawing two tertiary institutions (Imo State University & Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education) that offer Health Education as a programme. The second stage involved simple random sampling of balloting without replacement of 105 male and 110 female health education undergraduates, that is, two hundred and fifteen (215) from each of the two tertiary institutions. Therefore, this brought the sample size for the study to four hundred and thirty (430) respondents.

The instrument for data collection was a close ended 28-item-structured Entrepreneurship Competencies for Self Reliance Questionnaire (ECSRQ) divided into two sections A and B. Section A contained one item that sought information on

demographic characteristics of the respondents while section B contained 27 items on behavioural, enterprises launching, and enterprises managing competencies with response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was validated by a jury of three experts from business education and health education. The internal consistency coefficient of .87 was established using the Cronbach's alpha, and was adjudged reliable for embarking on the study. The instrument was administered and collected back after completion by the researchers on the spot with the aid of two assistants from each of the institutions used for the study. Out of the 430 copies of the questionnaire returned (100% return rate), 412 were properly filled out and were used for analysis. The responses were coded and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) batch system 'version 22' to indicate the response means and standard deviations. The criterion for deciding an entrepreneurial competency required was based on a 2.5 criterion mean obtained from the response options of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Any competency item with a mean less than 2.50 was regarded as competency not required. Means and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions, and t-test statistic was used to test the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Mean Responses of Behavioural Entrepreneurial Competencies (n=412)

S/n	Behavioural competency	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Initiative	3.42	0.61	Required
2.	Systematic planning	2.95	0.49	Required
3.	Creativity and innovation	2.51	0.52	Required
4.	Risk taking & risk management	3.05	0.46	Required
5.	Problem solving	2.42	0.54	Not Required
6.	Persistence	3.25	0.73	Required
7.	Quality performance	3.16	0.65	Required
8.	Information management	3.53	0.70	Required
9.	Persuasion and influencing abilities	3.41	0.67	Required
	Grand mean	3.08	0.59	Required

Data in Table 1 showed that the behavioural entrepreneurship competencies required for self reliance had their means ranged from 2.42 – 3.53. The means were above the criterion mean of 2.50, except for problem solving ($\bar{X} = 2.42$). This means that most of the behavioural competencies were required. The grand mean ($\bar{X} = 3.08$) shows that Health Education Undergraduates reported the required behavioural competencies for self reliance. The entrepreneurial competencies had their standard

deviations ranged from .46 - .73. This indicated that the respondents were close to one another in their responses, and were also not too far from the means.

Table 2: Mean Responses of Enterprises Launching Competencies Required by Health Education Undergraduates (n = 412)

S/n	Enterprise Launching Competency	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Formulate a business objective	2.91	0.51	Required
2.	Review of business ideas	2.35	0.47	Not Required
3.	Drawing up programme for business take off	3.02	0.75	Required
4.	Making a budget for investment	2.71	0.57	Required
5.	Identifying sources of fund	2.63	0.59	Required
6.	Identifying sources of information	2.57	0.50	Required
7.	Identifying relevant location for business	2.84	0.56	Required
8.	Identifying market outlet for business	2.68	0.48	Required
9.	Agile in thinking	2.17	0.39	Not Required
	Grand mean	2.65	0.54	Required

Data in Table 2 showed that the enterprises launching competencies required for self reliance had their means ranged from 2.17 – 3.02. The means were above the criterion mean of 2.50, except for Review of business ideas ($\bar{X} = 2.35$) and agile in thinking ($\bar{X} = 2.17$). This means that most of the enterprises launching competencies were required and 2 enterprise launching competencies were reported not required. The grand mean ($\bar{X} = 2.65$) shows that Health Education Undergraduates reported the required enterprises launching competencies for self reliance. The entrepreneurial competencies had their standard deviations ranged from .39 - .75. This indicated that the respondents were close to one another in their responses, and were also not too far from the means.

Table 3: Mean responses of Enterprises Managing Competencies Required by Health Education Undergraduates (n = 412)

S/n	Enterprise managing competency	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Provision of resources for business	3.07	0.66	Required
2.	Risk taking & resource integration	2.75	0.51	Required
3.	Flexibility in management	3.92	0.78	Required
4.	Confidence	3.63	0.71	Required
5.	Decision making	3.01	0.69	Required
6.	Building network for enterprise	2.86	0.53	Required
7.	Monitoring business season & environment	2.53	0.49	Required

8.	Searching for favorable markets	2.91	0.57	Required
9.	Human relations attribute	2.82	0.52	Required
	Grand mean	3.06	0.61	Required

Data in Table 3 showed that the enterprises managing competencies required for self reliance had their means ranged from 2.53 – 3.92. Each mean score was above the criterion mean of 2.50. This means that all the 9 enterprises managing competencies were required for self reliance. The grand mean ($\bar{X} = 3.60$) shows that Health Education Undergraduates reported the required enterprises managing competencies for self reliance. The entrepreneurial competencies had their standard deviations ranged from .49 - .78. This indicated that the respondents were close to one another in their responses, and were also not too far from the means.

Table 4: Summary of t-Test Analysis of Difference in Mean Scores of Male and Female Health Education Undergraduates on Entrepreneurial Competencies Required for Self Reliance

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	N	df	t	p-value
Male	2.71	.46	205	410	.522	.302
Female	2.79	.15				

***Significant $p < .05$**

Results in Table 4 showed the results of t-test analysis of difference in entrepreneurial competencies required for self reliance by health education undergraduates based on gender. The table indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of male ($\bar{X} = 2.71$, $SD = .46$) and female ($\bar{X} = 2.79$, $SD = .15$) health education undergraduates on entrepreneurial competencies required for self reliance at $p > .05$ ($t = .522$; $p = .302$). This implies that entrepreneurial competencies required for self reliance by health education undergraduates did not differ based on gender.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study showed that Health Education Undergraduates required behavioural entrepreneurial competencies as indicated by the grand mean 3.08 in Table 1. The finding showed that problem solving was not reported as a required behavioural competency. The finding on problem solving was expected and not surprising. This is because problem solving skills are most often not taught to students in various levels of education, rather students are being loaded with theoretical aspects of education, and are almost completely assisted in doing everything, without imparting practical knowledge to them, and allowing them to

practise and solve problems on their own. This finding contradicts the affirmations of Sethi and Saxena (2012) and Entrepreneurial Development Institute (2012), that problem solving is one of the behavioural competencies required in entrepreneurship pursuits. The findings on the other components were in line with the categorization of Sethi and Saxena (2012) of the behavioural entrepreneurial competencies required for self reliance.

The finding of the study revealed that health education undergraduates required enterprises launching competencies as indicated by the grand mean 2.65 in Table 2. The finding showed that review of business idea and Agile in Thinking were not reported as enterprise launching competencies. The finding on the other seven items was expected and not surprising. This finding conforms to the assertion of Dixon (2005), that planning and organizational skills or competencies include the know how to prioritize and manage risks, agility in thinking and planning; and the leadership skills that include sharing information with workers among others. But, the findings on review of business idea and thinking were not expected and surprising. This is because review of business idea to engage self into and being agile in thinking about it, should be one of the initial planning steps to be considered before venturing into a business.

The finding in Table 3 revealed that Health Education Undergraduates required enterprises managing competencies as indicated by the grand mean of 3.06. The finding was expected and not surprising. This is because each of the identified enterprise managing competencies is required for effective venturing and management of a business establishment by the entrepreneur. These findings were in conformity with reports and literatures on entrepreneurship competencies, especially those of Dixon (2005) that planning and organizational skills include knows how to prioritize and manage risks, agile in thinking and planning among others, and the assertions of Sethi and Saxena (2012) and European Union (2017), who noted that entrepreneurial competencies are the skills necessary for an entrepreneur to venture into an enterprise, organize and manage an enterprise ably and completely and realize the goal for which the enterprise is established. These imply that health education undergraduates should focus on acquiring practical skills in correspondence to the theoretical knowledge being imparted to them. The t-test analysis showed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female health education undergraduates on entrepreneurship competencies required for self reliance. This implies that being a male or a female has no influence on acquiring the entrepreneurial competencies required for self reliance.

Conclusion

The results of the findings of this study showed that health education undergraduates in universities in Imo East senatorial district reported the required behavioural, enterprises launching and enterprises managing competencies. Being a

male or a female has no influence on acquiring the entrepreneurial competencies required for self reliance. Creativity is also required for entrepreneurship development. Entrepreneurial studies would not only help to alleviate the problem of massive unemployment coupled with poverty and related social ills, but would contribute to personal and national economic development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The entrepreneurship skills or competencies required by undergraduates should be integrated into skill acquisition centres for training prospective entrepreneurs.
2. There should be periodic workshops and seminars on entrepreneurship and wealth creation so as to inculcate the basic competencies required for self reliance.
3. Start up funds should be made available to young entrepreneurs after graduation in the form of loan to enable their business establishment.
4. Entrepreneurial competency education should be strictly incorporated into the curriculum of every discipline in the tertiary institutions in Imo State and beyond, so as to inculcate practical values of the education acquired from school.
5. Lecturers in tertiary institutions should be trained, and periodically be retrained on entrepreneurship studies, so as to encourage them incorporate it in their normal school programme.
6. All education stakeholders in Nigeria should be actively involved in the task of translating the educational objectives into reality. This could be achieved by emphasizing education for creativity rather than education for certificate and job seeking, though they are important.

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