

Vocational business education: An entrepreneurial engagement for the youths to alleviate insecurity in South-East, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated alleviating insecurity in southeast Nigeria using vocational business education for the entrepreneurial engagement of youths. The study answered three research questions and tested three hypotheses. A multistage sampling technique was adopted in selecting 275 respondents for the study. The instrument for data collection was a 32-item structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument was face-validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the Cronbach Alpha reliability technique which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.784. The data for the study were collected with the help of four research assistants. Out of the 275 copies of the questionnaire administered, 256 copies were completely filled and returned representing a 93.1% return rate. Data collected were analyzed using mean for answering the three research questions while the three hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study identified 8 implications of youth engagement in entrepreneurial activities on alleviation of insecurity, 10 sources of funds for youth's entrepreneurial activities that can be taught through vocational Business Education, and 13 strategies that can be taught through vocational Business Education for sustainable management of businesses among the youths in southeast Nigeria. There were no significant ($p < 0.05$) differences in the mean ratings of Business Educators and students on the implications of youth engagement in entrepreneurial activities and strategies that can be taught through vocational Business Education for sustainable management of businesses among the youths. Though, there was a significant ($p < 0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators and students on sources of funds for youth's entrepreneurial activities. The study among others recommended increased engagement of youths in entrepreneurial activities to alleviate their idleness and insecurity in the country.

Keywords: Insecurity; Southeast; Business Education; Entrepreneurial; Youths

1 Introduction

The Business Education program is one of the programs that provide high-caliber professionals in teaching office technology and management, marketing, accounting, management, and other business areas. Business education programs aimed at producing the manpower endowed with analytical and critical knowledge of the major factors in the contemporary business world to influence the development of a virile economy. Nwuzoh defined Business Education as the type of education that gives individuals the needed skills and knowledge to succeed in either small, medium, or large-scale businesses [1]. It is the aspect of a total educational program that provides the learners with knowledge, skills, understanding, and attitude to perform well in office, secretarial and distributive trade. Business Education offers its recipients the opportunity to make a contribution to the economic system of their country and equips them with lifelong skills that would enable them to make reasonable judgments as a producer (entrepreneurs), employees, or

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consumers of goods and services [2]. Graduates of the programs are expected to acquire relevant knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship as well as for employment in private and public establishments. The program plays an important role in the growth and development of a nation. Business education is a pivotal tool in the creation of wealth, economic growth and development, poverty alleviation, and reduction in crime and security challenges.

Security challenges in Nigeria have posed more damaging effects and as such discourage potential investment opportunities in Nigeria. The security challenges reduce the number of investors and also make investment unattractive and as a such become signal to whoever might have an interest in bringing in or investing in a business in the country. Nigeria in this present era has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity such as Unknown Gunmen activities, Boko Haram, kidnapping activities, banditry, and Fulani-Herders-Farmers clashes among others. These have made national insecurity threats to be major issues for the government and have prompted huge allocation of the national budget to fight insecurity across the country. In order to improve the incidence of insecurity, the federal government has embarked on the criminalization of terrorism by passing the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011 bothering on fundamental surveillance as well as investigation of criminal related offenses, heightening physical security measures around the country targeted at preventing the further occurrences, strengthening of security agencies through the provision of security facilities and the development and broadcast of security tips in mass media. Despite these efforts, the level of insecurity in the country is still very high most especially among the youths.

Youths are young people between 18 - 35 years of age bracket. According to Konopka [3], youth is the time of life when one is young, and often means the time between childhood and adulthood (maturity). In the opinion of Izuchukwu [4], youths constitute individuals between the age of 18 to 35 years irrespective of gender or sex. Furlong [5] noted that youth is the appearance, freshness, and vigor characteristic of one who is young. Njapa-Minyard [6], observed that youth is an experience that may shape an individual's level of dependency, which can be marked in various ways according to different cultural perspectives. The youths constitute the active working population of most society, southeast Nigeria inclusive. When the potentials and energy of the youths are not properly harnessed through entrepreneurial activities, idleness will push them into restiveness and other anti-social activities that will aggravate the already worsened insecurity we presently experience across Nigeria including the southeast.

The rising insecurity resulting from agitation and anti-social engagement of the youths has continued to crumble economic activities in southeast Nigeria where citizens can no longer freely go about their lawful businesses due to fear of being attacked by unknown gunmen. The seat-at-home order in the southeast has not only proven counter-productive but has made the area very unsuitable for economic activities. An adage says, "*an idle mind is the devil's workshop*". Hence, something drastic must be done to arrest idleness among the teeming and energetic youths of the southeast of Nigeria through quality vocational education that has the capacity to equip the youths with the required skills for engagement in entrepreneurial activities. This is because Uzonwanne-Obianefo *et al.* [7] noted that a nation with a rising state of youth unemployment or idleness is sitting on a time bomb. It was based on this background that this study examined the alleviation of insecurity in southeast Nigeria using vocational Business Education for the entrepreneurial engagement of youths.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The broad purpose of the study was to examine the measures for alleviating insecurity in southeast, Nigeria using vocational Business Education for the entrepreneurial engagement of youths. Specifically, the study examined:

- Implications of youth engagement in entrepreneurial activities on alleviation of insecurity in the southeast of Nigeria.
- Sources of funds for youth's entrepreneurial activities that can be taught through vocational Business Education in the southeast, Nigeria.
- Strategies that can be taught through vocational Business Education for sustainable management of businesses among the youths in the southeast, Nigeria.

1.2 Research Question

- What are the implications of youth engagement in entrepreneurial activities on the alleviation of insecurity in the southeast, Nigeria?
- What are the sources of funds for youth's entrepreneurial activities that can be taught through vocational Business Education in the southeast, Nigeria?
- What are the strategies that can be taught through vocational Business Education for sustainable management of businesses among the youths in the southeast, Nigeria?

1.2.1 Hypotheses

- H01: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators and students on the implications of youth engagement in entrepreneurial activities on alleviation of insecurity in the southeast, Nigeria.
- H02: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators and students on sources of funds for youth's entrepreneurial activities that can be taught through vocational Business Education in the southeast, Nigeria.
- H03: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators and students on strategies that can be taught through vocational Business Education for sustainable management of businesses among the youths in the southeast, Nigeria

2 Material and methods

The study answered three research questions and tested three hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive survey research design was used in carrying out the study. A multistage sampling technique was adopted in selecting the respondents for the study. In the first stage, a random sampling technique was used in selecting two states (Ebonyi and Enugu) out of the five states in southeastern Nigeria. In the second stage of the selection, a purposive technique was used to select four six public Universities offering Business education programs in the two states. The four selected universities are (i) Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, (ii) Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike Ikwo, Ebonyi State, (iii) University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State and (iv) Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. At the third stage of the sampling, all 58 Business Educators and 217 final-year students of Business Education were selected from the four public universities making a total of 275 respondents to the study.

The instrument for data collection for the study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was structured into four sections A, B, C, and D. section A of the questionnaire was designed to collect the personal data of the respondents. Sections B, C, and D were designed to obtain data on (i) the relevance of entrepreneurial activities in economic engagement, (ii) sources of raising funds for entrepreneurial activities, and (iii) Strategies for sustainable management of established businesses of the youths. The response option of the questionnaire was structured on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The instrument was face-validated by three experts who are Senior Lecturers in Business Education at Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka, Anambra State. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by trial testing 15 copies of the instrument on 5 Business educators and 10 Business Education Students in the University. Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was used for analyzing the data collected which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.784. The reliability result indicates that the instrument was about 78% reliable for data collection for the study.

Data for the study were collected by the researchers with the help of four research assistants. The four research assistants handled the administration of the 275 copies of the questionnaire to the 275 respondents for data collection. Out of the 275 copies of the questionnaire administered, 256 copies were completely filled and returned. This represents a 93.1% return rate. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering the three research questions while the three hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics at a 0.05 level of significance. The criterion reference point of 2.50 was obtained for answering the research question on the 4-point rating scale. Based on the obtained reference point, any item with a mean value of 2.50 and above was interpreted as "Agreed" while those less than 2.50 were interpreted as "Disagreed. The hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted when the p-value (sig.) is greater than 0.05 level of significance. On the other hand, the hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected when the p-value (sig.) is less than 0.05 level of significance.

3 Results

3.1 Research Question One

What are the implications of youth engagement in entrepreneurial activities on alleviation of insecurity in the southeast, Nigeria?

The mean ratings of the respondents on the eight items in Table 1 ranged from 3.40 to 3.71 with a pooled mean of 3.57 which are all greater than the criterion reference point value of 2.50 on the 4-point rating scale. This indicates that the eight identified items in the table are implications of youth engagement in entrepreneurial activities on alleviation of insecurity in the southeast of Nigeria. The standard deviation values of the eight items ranged from 0.45 to 0.68 which implies that the responses of the respondents are close to one another and the mean.

Table 1 Mean responses of respondents on implications of youth engagement in entrepreneurial activities on alleviation of insecurity in the southeast, Nig. (n = 256)

SN	Implications of youth engagement in entrepreneurial activities on alleviation of insecurity include	X	SD	Rmks
1	Engagement of youths in entrepreneurial activities reduces their idleness.	3.65	0.68	Agreed
2	Entrepreneurial engagement eliminates criminal tendencies among the youths in society.	3.63	0.51	Agreed
3	Entrepreneurial engagement improves the patriotism and loyalty of the youths towards state rules and laws.	3.71	0.45	Agreed
4	Paid and self-employed youths will naturally want the security of lives and properties.	3.49	0.53	Agreed
5	Economically engaged youths will develop a stakeholders' mentality that will boost security in society.	3.40	0.49	Agreed
6	An increase in youth employment translates to the alleviation of insecurity in society.	3.53	0.53	Agreed
7	Employment boosts the financial security status of youths and reduces anti-social vices such as kidnapping among others.	3.63	0.49	Agreed
8	Entrepreneurial engagement of youths stimulates nations' economic growth and peaceful coexistence of citizens.	3.53	0.50	Agreed
	Pooled Mean	3.57	0.51	Agreed

Note: X = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; N = Number of Respondents.

3.2 Research Question Two

What are the sources of funds for youth's entrepreneurial activities that can be taught through vocational Business Education in the southeast, Nigeria?

Table 2 Mean responses of the respondents on sources of funds for youths' entrepreneurial activities that can be taught through vocational Business Education (n = 256)

SN	Sources of funds for entrepreneurial activities include:	X	SD	Rmks
1	Raising of funds through personal savings	3.74	0.43	Agreed
2	Seeking soft loans from commercial banks	3.72	0.48	Agreed
3	Seeking credits from youths cooperatives societies	3.49	0.51	Agreed
4	Sales of assets such as land to raise business capital	3.60	0.55	Agreed
5	Borrowing from friends and relatives without interest	3.36	0.49	Agreed
6	Selling household items to raise business capital.	2.34	0.67	Disagreed
7	Submission of enticing business proposals to funding organizations or agencies.	3.56	0.52	Agreed
8	Getting involved in petty paid jobs to raise money for the desired business.	3.49	0.53	Agreed
9	Taking business overdrafts from commercial institutions to start up a business.	3.52	0.47	Agreed
10	Applying for government grants for business start-up pack.	3.66	0.54	Agreed
11	Asset-based collateral borrowing plan to start a business.	3.37	0.50	Agreed
	Pooled Mean	3.44	0.62	Agreed

Note: X = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; N = Number of Respondents.

The mean ratings of the respondents on 10 out of the 11 items in Table 2 ranged from 3.36 to 3.74 with pooled mean of 3.44 which are all greater than the criterion reference point value of 2.50 on the 4-point rating scale. This suggests that the 10 identified items in the table are regarded by the respondents as sources of funds for youth's entrepreneurial activities that can be taught through vocational Business Education in the southeast, Nigeria. The mean rating of the respondents on item 6 in the table was 2.34 which was less than the criterion reference point value of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale indicating that item 6 should not be a source of raising funds to start up a business. The standard deviation values of the 11 items ranged from 0.43 to 0.67 which signifies that the responses of the respondents are close to one another and the mean.

3.3 Research Question Three

What are the strategies that can be taught through vocational Business Education for sustainable management of businesses among the youths in the southeast, Nigeria?

Table 3 Mean responses of the respondents on strategies that can be taught through vocational Business Education for sustainable management of businesses among the youths (n = 256).

SN	Strategies for the management of businesses include:	\bar{X}	SD	Rmks
1	Proper keeping of enterprise records to avoid losses and business failure.	3.66	0.47	Agreed
2	Carry out a comprehensive feasibility study before embarking on the enterprise.	3.34	0.48	Agreed
3	Auditing of investment in order to ensure the net benefits are received.	3.29	0.52	Agreed
4	Prepare a business plan before venturing into the business	3.67	0.51	Agreed
5	Setting predetermined investment objectives for the year	3.63	0.47	Agreed
6	Holding current stock in anticipation of a price rise to make a profit.	3.69	0.46	Agreed
7	Provision of products and services at the lowest possible cost to attract customers.	3.48	0.47	Agreed
8	Avoiding excessive carrying costs to minimize loss of profit.	3.68	0.46	Agreed
9	Continuous supply of raw materials to ensure uninterrupted business activities.	3.54	0.57	Agreed
10	Avoiding excessive idle cash to minimize idle cash costs.	3.53	0.55	Agreed
1	Maintain high cash inflow and less cash outflow to reduce losses.	3.48	0.50	Agreed
12	Matching excess cash and deficiency of cash to determine the optimum level of cash balances.	3.50	0.53	Agreed
13	Effective management of personnel in the business or enterprise.	3.58	0.49	Agreed
	Pooled Mean	3.54	0.47	Agreed

Note: \bar{X} = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; N = Number of Respondents.

The mean ratings of the respondents on the 13 items in Table 3 ranged from 3.29 to 3.69 with a pooled mean of 3.54 which are all greater than the criterion reference point value of 2.50 on the 4-point rating scale. This shows that the 11 identified items in the table are strategies that can be taught through vocational Business Education for sustainable management of businesses among the youths in the southeast, Nigeria. The standard deviation values of the 13 items ranged from 0.46 to 0.57 which implies that the responses of the respondents are close to one another and the mean.

3.4 Testing of Hypotheses

3.4.1 Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators and Students on the implications of youth's engagement in entrepreneurial activities on the alleviation of insecurity in the southeast, Nigeria.

The result presented on the t-test statistics in Table 4 reveals that the p-value of 0.53 was greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that there was no significant ($p < 0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business Educators and Students on the implications of youth's engagement in entrepreneurial activities on alleviation

of insecurity in the southeast, Nigeria. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant ($p < 0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the Business educators and students is accepted on hypothesis one.

Table 4 Result of t-test statistics of significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators and students on the implications of youth engagement in entrepreneurial activities on alleviation of insecurity in the southeast, Nigeria

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	Std. Error	t-cal	p-value	Level of sig.	Decision
Business Educators	55	3.59	0.47						
Bus. Edu. Students	201	3.55	0.50	254	0.022	0.30	0.53	0.05	NS (Accept H ₀₁)

Note: Level of Sig. = 0.05; NS = Not Significant

3.4.2 Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators and students on sources of funds for youth's entrepreneurial activities that can be taught through vocational Business Education in the southeast, Nigeria.

Table 5 Result of t-test statistics of significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators and Students on sources of funds for youth's entrepreneurial activities that can be taught through vocational Business Education

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	Std. Error	t-cal	p-value	Level of sig.	Decision
Business Educators	55	3.36	0.72						
Bus. Edu. Students	201	3.52	0.47	254	0.058	2.18	0.03	0.05	S* (Reject H ₀₂)

Note: Level of Sig. = 0.05; S* = Significant

The result presented on the t-test statistics in Table 5 shows that the p-value of 0.03 was less than the 0.05 level of significance. This implied that there was a significant ($p < 0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business educators and Students on sources of funds for youth's entrepreneurial activities that can be taught through vocational Business Education in the southeast of Nigeria. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant ($p < 0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the Business educators and students is rejected on hypothesis two.

3.4.3 Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators and students on strategies that can be taught through vocational Business Education for sustainable management of businesses among the youth in the southeast, Nigeria.

Table 6 Result of t-test statistics of significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators and students on strategies that can be taught through vocational Business Education for sustainable management of businesses among the youths

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	Std. Error	t-cal	p-value	Level of sig.	Decision
Business Educators	55	3.56	0.48						
Bus. Edu. Students	201	3.52	0.51	254	0.033	0.40	0.71	0.05	NS (Accept H ₀₃)

Note: Level of Sig. = 0.05; NS = Not Significant

The result presented on the t-test statistics in Table 6 reveals that the p-value of 0.71 was greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that there was no significant ($p < 0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business educators and students on strategies that can be taught through vocational Business Education for sustainable management of businesses among the youths in the southeast of Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant

($p < 0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the Business educators and students is accepted on hypothesis three.

4 Discussion of findings

This study on research question identified the implications of youth's engagement in entrepreneurial activities on alleviation of insecurity to include the fact that: engagement of youths in entrepreneurial activities reduces their idleness, entrepreneurial engagement eliminates criminal tendencies among the youths in the society, entrepreneurial engagement improves patriotism and loyalty of the youths towards state rules and laws, paid and self-employed youths will naturally want the security of lives and properties and economically engaged youths will develop stakeholders' mentality that will boost security in the society among others. The report of the US Department of Health and Human Services confirmed that to effectively prevent youth violence, stakeholders must understand and address the risk factor which is the unemployment of youths [8]. Commission for Social Development [9], stated that in any society, youth employment promotes social integration, intergenerational dialogue, citizenship, solidarity, and the creation of income-generating job opportunities that have direct positive consequences for poverty and insecurity alleviation.

This study on research question two identified sources of funds for youths' entrepreneurial activities that can be taught through vocational Business Education including raising funds through personal savings, seeking soft loans from commercial banks, seeking credits from youths cooperatives societies, sales of assets such as land to raise business capital, borrowing from friends and relatives without interest, submission of enticing business proposals to funding organizations or agencies and taking business overdraft from commercial institutions to start up business among others. The report of UNIDO showed that some of the major sources of funds for entrepreneurial activities include personal savings, loans, credits, and informal borrowing from friends and relatives [10]. Similarly, other sources of raising funds for starting up a business as reported by Harshal [11] include funding from business incubators and accelerators, and raising money through bank loans and microfinance providers. In addition, Hosbeg [12] identified sources of raising business capital including raising funds from friends and family, getting capital for business through bank loans, and capital through government programs that fund business start-ups.

The findings of this study with respect to research question three identified strategies that can be taught through vocational Business Education for sustainable management of businesses among the youths including the proper keeping of enterprise records to avoid losses and business failure, carrying out a comprehensive feasibility study before embarking on the enterprise, auditing of investment in order to ensure the net benefits are received, prepare a business plan before venturing into the business, setting predetermined investment objectives for the year, holding of current stock in anticipation of a price rise to make a profit and avoiding excessive carrying cost to minimize loss of profit among others. The findings of this study conformed with that of Nick who identified investment management practices to include: record management, stock management, avoiding excessive carrying cost, avoiding excessive idle cash, maintaining high cash inflow, and holding of current stock [13]. McGraw-Hill shared the specific strategies for enhancing investment practices including the development of disciplined savings habits, effective record keeping, auditing of investment, practicing business planning, setting realistic investment objectives, and carrying out a feasibility study of the intending business [14].

5 Conclusion

The study investigated alleviating insecurity in southeast, Nigeria using vocational business education for the entrepreneurial engagement of youths. From the data collected and analyzed, the study identified 8 implications of youth engagement in entrepreneurial activities on alleviation of insecurity, 10 sources of funds for youth's entrepreneurial activities that can be taught through vocational Business Education, and 13 strategies that can be taught through vocational Business Education for sustainable management of businesses among the youths in the southeast of Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study concluded that using Business education as a platform for youth entrepreneurial training will boost youth employment to reduce insecurity in the country and the southeast in particular. The study, therefore, recommended that:

- There should be the increased engagement of youths in entrepreneurial activities to alleviate their idleness and insecurity in the country.
- The government at all levels should ensure adequate provision of grants and soft loans as start-up parks to youths as support for entrepreneurial engagement in the country.
- The curriculum of Business Education should be updated with skills for training youths in sustainable business establishment and management.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The author(s) have declared no conflict of interest.

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