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Entrepreneurship skills needed by vocational and technical education students for self-employment in a recessed economy

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Abstract

The study identified the entrepreneurship skills needed by Vocational and Technical Education Students for self-employment in a recessed economy. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population for the study was 172 which comprises of 52 vocational and technical education Lecturers from both Federal College of Education Eha-Amfufu, and Enugu State College of Education (Technical) Enugu State, and 120 Vocational and Technical Education Students from both Colleges. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaires. Data collected from the respondents was analyzed using statistical packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS-20.0). The statistical tools for data analysis were mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The study found that , organize activities in line with set up of organizational guidelines, ability to prevent conflicts and resolve issues as they arise, demonstrate effective financial management, and application of basic accounting record principles among others, are some of the entrepreneurship skills needed by vocational and technical education students for self-employment in a recessed economy. The study recommends among others, that Lecturers in vocational and Technical Education should undergo training and re-training in entrepreneurship skills in forecasting models to be able to meet up with new trend in global economy and Technology.

Keywords: 1. Entrepreneurship skills 2. Students 3. Self-Employment 4. Vocational And Technical Education 5. Recessed Economy.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship plays an important role in the economic growth and development of nations. Most economists today agree that entrepreneurship is a necessary ingredient for stimulating economic growth and employment opportunities in all society. In developing Countries like Nigeria, small businesses are the engines of job creation, income growth and poverty reduction (Agbonlahor,2016). He further stated that entrepreneurship is a purposeful activity that includes an initiation, promotion and distribution of wealth and service. The recognition of entrepreneurs dates back to the eighteenth century, when the French Economist Richard Cantillon associated the risk bearing activities in the economy with the entrepreneurs. The developments of entrepreneurship will optimize the use of the unexploited resources; generate self-employment, and a self-sufficient economy. Entrepreneurship is for the people who got the right level of interest that could make them pursue their dreams, improve their life, and create a business (Omoluabi, 2014). Entrepreneurship can also be viewed as incorporating innovation and growth. According to Edukugho (2012), entrepreneurship is a process of identifying and starting a business venture, sourcing and organizing the required resources and taking both the risks and rewards associated with the venture. Entrepreneurship affects all organizations regardless of size or age, whether they are considered a private or public body, and independently of their objective (Nnaji,2020). To be a successful business owner or a successful entrepreneur, one needs to develop his/her entrepreneurship skills.

Entrepreneurship skills can comprise a large range of both soft and hard skills. Software development itself has so many inherent tenants that the developer needs to know and understand. These inherent tenants in software development require corresponding skills by the programmer (Microsoft, 2010). These skills are: attention to details, specialized and technical knowledge, good memory, ability to think in an abstract way. In addition to these skills are programming skills and entrepreneurial skills. Ahmed (2006) added credence to it that skill may be of technical or managerial in nature as they relate to ability to perform tasks or functions tactfully in specific areas of entrepreneurship endeavors. The term “skill” according to Nwangwu and Obi (2014) could be referred to as the ability to do a job or work very well. Nwangwu and Obi (2015), went further to say that a person is said to have acquired a skill when the person can competently/professionally finish task in a given time with minimum errors.

Therefore, entrepreneurial skills are the special abilities needed to enhance an enterprise. Management skills are those attributes or abilities that an Executive should possess in order to fulfill specific tasks in an organization (Angkana,2012). The Business management skill helps the manager to relate with their fellow co-workers and know how to deal with subordinates, which allows for the easy flow of activities in the organization. Personal skills refer to the inner abilities or skills of an individual and are a type of soft-

skills, meaning they are intangible and difficult to define. Examples of personal skills include the ability to communicate effectively with others, solving problems or thinking creatively. Personal skills are the characteristics, attributes or personality traits of an individual. Examples of personal attributes include honesty, good sense of humor, and being dependable etc. Marketing skills are those traits and attributes that enable the entrepreneur to interact effectively with the customers at the point of purchase of raw-materials to the point of sale of the products. Vocational and Technical Education Students require these traits and attributes to excel in entrepreneurship ventures.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2013), defines Vocational and Technical Education as, all forms and levels of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic life. The Nigerian National Policy on Education, outline the goals of Vocational and Technical Education as follows: To provide trained man-power in applied sciences, technology and business; to provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for economic development and to give training and impact necessary skill for self-reliance economically. From the above outlined goals, it is very clear that the essence of TVET is to serve mainly as a vehicle for achieving economic development and prosperity in a Nation through economic emancipation of individual citizenry.

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (2004), defines Technical and Vocational education as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes and understanding. Vocational and Technical Education is the type of education that prepares people to work in various jobs such as trade, craft or technical. Vocational and Technical Education has been an integral part of national development strategies in many societies because of the impact on human resource development, productivity and economic growth (Oviawe, 2011). Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) has a vital role to play in technological advancement of any country. It is a known fact that the training and the acquisition of necessary skills therein promotes economic growth and national development. According to Abdullahi (2012), the capability needed by the entrepreneur to instigate and propagate industrialization and technological development, which promote national transformation can be acquired through an integrated TVET and entrepreneurship education. The acquisition of these capabilities through integrated TVET and entrepreneurship education enhances self-employment prospect of the learner (Abdullahi, 2012).

Self-employment is act of generating one's income directly from customers through working, clients or other organizations as opposed to being an employee of a business (or person). The common definition of self-employment is that you work for yourself, full time or part time. A self-employment person refers to any person who earns their living from any independent pursuit of economic activity as opposed to earning a living working for a company or another individual (an employer). According to Usman (2014), self-employed persons may be involved in a variety of occupations, but generally are highly skilled at a particular kind of work. A self-employed individual does not work for a specific employer who pays him/her a consistent salary or wage. Self-employment can provide a great deal of job flexibility and autonomy. The Government of Nigeria in 2006 introduced Entrepreneurial Education as a compulsory Curriculum in Tertiary Institutions with the aim of preparing graduates, for Entrepreneurial success through private sector initiatives and Vocational Education and Training.

More so, it is the society's expectation that youth who have benefited from academic Training of Vocational and Technical Education should be able to manage themselves academically through paid employment or the creation of one. But the reverse has been the case as most of the Vocational and Technical Education students are seen on the streets with little or no skill, doing nothing after graduation, while others are in menial jobs which are outside the skills they were supposed to acquire on the training. Similarly, the high population growth rate in Nigeria in the last decades has been associated with the youth's high level of unemployment, especially among Vocational and Technical Education graduates who supposed to be employer of labor. The second quarter 2020 report of National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) released on Friday 14th August, 2020 shows on its Labor Force statistics that Nigeria's unemployment rate has now gotten to 27 percent in the second quarter of 2020, a move from 23.1 percent reported in the third quarter of 2018. The emergence of covid-19 in the early 2020 had thrown major countries in the World into recession. A recession is a decline of economic activity, more specifically, a decline in gross domestic product (GDP) for two or more consecutive quarters. Effects of a recessed economy include a slump in the stock market, an increase in unemployment, increase in the national debt, and high inflation. The willingness and ability of Vocational and Technical Education students to seek out for skill job opportunities on graduation, and collation of the necessary resources to establish and run an enterprise successfully on their own is lacking. It is expected that Students who benefited from Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) should be able to manage themselves academically through paid employment or the creation of one. But the reverse has been the case as most of them are endless job seekers without necessary skills. This state (high youth unemployment rate) has direct effect on the country's economic and social status. It is in the light of these that the study tends to ascertain the Entrepreneurship skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education students in a recessed economy.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically the paper sought to determine the:

1. business management skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of vocational and Technical education Students in a recessed economy.
2. personal skills (traits) needed for enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education Students in a recessed economy.
3. Marketing skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of vocational and Technical education Students in a recessed economy.

Research Questions

The paper answered the following research questions:

1. What are the business management skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education Students in a recessed economy?
2. What are the personal skills (traits) needed for enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education Students in a recessed economy?
3. What are the marketing skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education Students in a recessed economy?

Methodology

Design of the Study: The study adopted a survey research design to ascertain the Entrepreneurship skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education students in a recessed economy. The study was conducted in Federal College of Education Eha-Amufu, Enugu State, and Enugu State college of Education(Technical)Enugu. Enugu State is one of the five States in the Eastern Nigeria. The State is bounded with Benue state to the North, Kogi State to the West, Imo and Abia States to the South, and, Cross River State to the East. The design is appropriate for the study since information was gathered from population who are familiar with the ideas relating to the purpose of the study.

Population of the Study: The population for the study was 172 which comprised 20 lecturers from Federal College of Education Eha-Amufu, 32 lecturers from Enugu State College of Education(Technical), and 120 Second and Third year students on NCE program of both Colleges. The researcher made use of the entire population since the size was considered manageable.

Instrument for Data Collection: The instrument for the data was structured questionnaires titled “Entrepreneurship skills for Enhancement of Self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education Students Questionnaire” (ESESVTESQ) was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers through review of available literature on the topic. To ensure validity, the research instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts, one from the Department of Business Education University of Nigeria Nsukka, one from Federal College of Education Eha-Amufu, and the other from Enugu State College of Education(Technical). The reliability of the structured questionnaire instrument was determined by using Cronbach Alpha reliability test for obtaining the internal consistency of the item. 20 copies of the questionnaire were administered on 10 lecturers and 20 Business Education students of University of Nigeria Nsukka. The distributed copies were collected and analyzed to obtain the reliability coefficient of 0.86.

Data Collection Techniques: The structured questionnaire was administered on the respondents by the researcher through personal contact with the help of two research assistants, who helped in distribution and retrieval of the instrument. 172 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents and 167 copies of the instrument were retrieved representing 97.09% rate of return.

Data Analysis Techniques: The data collected from the respondents was analyzed using Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS-20.0). Statistical tools for data analysis were mean and standard deviation.

Research Question One: what are the business management skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of vocational and technical education students in a recessed economy?

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation responses of lecturers and Students on the business management skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of vocational and Technical Education Students in a recessed economy.

S/N	ITEMS	Lecturers (N=28)			Students (N=120)		
		X	SD	R	X	SD	R
1.	Ability to see an entire concept, analyze and diagnose a problem.	3.91	0.85	VHE	3.63	0.73	VH E
2.	Effectively predict hurdles any department or the business as a whole may face.	3.89	0.83	VHE	3.97	0.61	VHE
3.	Ability to find creative solution to	3.96	0.87	VHE	3.77	0.75	VHE

	problems						
4.	Organize activities in line with set up of organizational guidelines.	3.65	0.89	VHE	3.89	0.78	VHE
5.	Ability to prevent conflicts and resolve issues as they arise	3.73	0.77	VHE	3.63	0.68	VHE
6.	Ability to strategize, pursue and achieve certain goal with the available resources	3.85	0.79	VHE	3.67	0.69	VHE
7.	Clearly establish communication channels in an organization	3.86	0.89	VHE	3.63	0.57	VHE
8.	Demonstrate effective financial management and application of basic accounting records principles	3.87	0.94	VHE	3.60	0.63	VHE
9.	Proper management of time and resources	3.95	0.89	VHE	3.91	0.61	VHE
10.	Effectively and efficiently reassign tasks and give authority to the right employees	3.78	0.73	VHE	3.66	0.69	VHE
11.	Promotes improved decision-making skills	3.79	0.81	VHE	3.46	0.53	HE
12.	Skills to take advantage of existing job opportunities	3.92	0.86	VHE	3.90	0.85	VHE
13.	Ability to motivate subordinates	3.87	0.83	VHE	3.78	0.72	VHE
14.	Acquisition of knowledge to open and expand new markets	3.84	0.87	VHE	3.61	0.55	VHE
15.	Optimize productivity, ensures responsibility and accountability	3.92	0.86	VHE	3.88	0.58	VHE
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	3.85	0.85	VHE	3.73	0.66	VHE

Key:X=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, VHE=Very High Extent, HE=High Extent.

Table 1 above, showed that both Vocational and Technical Education lecturers and students agreed strongly in almost all the item of the instrument on the Business management skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education students. This is because their mean responses were above 3.00 mean benchmark set for this study.

Research Question Two: What are the personal skills (traits) needed for enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education Students in a recessed economy.

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation responses of Lecturers and students on the personal skills (traits) needed for enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education Students in a recessed economy.

S/N	ITEMS	Lecturers (N=28)			Students (N=120)		
		X	SD	R	X	SD	R
16.	Ability to communicate effectively with others	3.64	0.76	SA	3.97	0.92	SA
17.	Having a good sense of humor	3.55	0.74	SA	3.72	0.77	SA
18.	Being dependable to others	3.73	0.77	SA	3.59	0.75	SA
19.	Ability to think creatively	3.75	0.84	SA	3.76	0.84	SA
20.	Working with others as a team in an Organization	3.88	0.73	SA	3.81	0.81	SA
21.	Ability to manage emotions	3.95	0.91	SA	3.85	0.82	SA
22.	Willingness to learn from others	3.82	0.85	SA	3.75	0.84	SA
23.	Ability to make things happen positively	3.60	0.76	SA	3.64	0.81	SA
24.	Flexibility in handling situations	3.77	0.77	SA	3.71	0.76	SA
25.	Ability to resolve conflict in work place	3.74	0.76	SA	3.81	0.85	SA
26.	Develop a long- term vision in line with changing world economy and taste	3.82	0.82	SA	3.91	0.87	SA
27.	Ability to initiate and start things independently	3.71	0.67	SA	3.77	0.77	SA
28.	Possesses strategic thinking skills to be able to solve complex problems	3.62	0.78	SA	3.90	0.87	SA
29.	Passion to accomplish business objectives	3.89	0.86	SA	3.87	0.85	SA
30.	Dealing with stressful situations in a calm and professional manner	3.87	0.83	SA	3.88	0.84	SA
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	3.76	0.79	SA	3.80	0.82	SA

Key: X= mean, SD= Standard Deviation, SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, R= Remark

Table 2 above, showed that both Vocational and Technical Education Lecturers and students agreed in all the items of the Instrument on personal skills (traits) for

enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education students. This is because their mean responses were above 3.5 mean benchmark set for this study.

Research Question Three: what are the Interpersonal and Marketing skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education students in a recessed economy.

Table 3 Mean and Standard Deviation responses of lecturers and Students on the Interpersonal and marking skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of vocational and Technical Education Students in a recessed economy.

S/N	ITEMS	Lecturers (N=28)			Students (N=120)		
		X	SD	R	X	SD	R
31.	Flexibility in changing customers expectations in technology	3.89	0.83	VHE	3.63	0.73	VHE
32.	Ability to handle pressure and meet deadlines	3.91	0.85	VHE	3.97	0.61	VHE
33.	Ability to adapt to new realities in marketing and distribution	3.96	0.87	VHE	3.77	0.75	VHE
34.	Willingness to learn from others business partners and subordinates	3.65	0.89	VHE	3.89	0.78	VHE
35.	Being enthusiastic of what to do for business growth	3.73	0.77	VHE	3.63	0.68	VHE
36.	Ability not to idle in the face of obstacles or challenges	3.85	0.79	VHE	3.67	0.69	VHE
37.	Clearly establish communication channels in an organization	3.86	0.89	VHE	3.63	0.57	VHE
38.	Demonstrate effective marketing strategies for business breakeven	3.87	0.94	VHE	3.60	0.63	VHE
39.	Skills in choosing best advertising media that best appeal to customers	3.95	0.89	VHE	3.91	0.61	VHE
40.	Effectively demonstrate excellent team work	3.78	0.73	VHE	3.66	0.69	VHE
41.	Ability to engage in good negotiation with customers and business partners	3.79	0.81	VHE	3.46	0.53	HE
42.	Skills to take advantage of existing job opportunities	3.92	0.86	VHE	3.90	0.85	VHE
43.	Ability to motivate subordinate	3.87	0.83	VHE	3.78	0.72	VHE

44.	Acquisition of knowledge to compete with similar products in the market	3.84	0.87	VHE	3.61	0.55	VHE
45.	Skills to expand market opportunities, ensures responsibility and accountability	3.92	0.86	VHE	3.88	0.58	VHE
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	3.85	0.85	VHE	3.73	0.66	VHE

Key: \bar{X} =Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, VHE=Very High Extent, HE=High Extent.

Table 3 above, showed that both Vocational and Technical Education lecturers and students agreed strongly in almost all the item of the instrument on the Interpersonal and marketing skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education Students in a recessed economy.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study in research question 1 revealed that, ability to see an entire concept, analyze and diagnose a problem, effectively predict hurdles of any department or the business as a whole may face, ability to find creative solution of problems, organize activities in line with set up of organizational guidelines, ability to prevent conflicts and resolve issues as they arise, ability to strategize, pursue and achieve certain goal with the available resources, clearly establish communication channels in an organization, demonstrate effective financial management and application of basic accounting records principles, Proper management of time and resources, effectively and efficiently reassign tasks and give authority to the right employees, promotes improved decision-making skills, skills to take advantage of existing job opportunities, ability to motivate subordinates, acquisition of knowledge to open and expand new markets, and optimize productivity, ensures responsibilities and accountability are the business management skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of vocational and technical education Students in a recessed economy.

The findings of the study in research question 2 revealed that, ability to communicate effectively with others, having a good sense of humor, being dependable to others, ability to think creatively, working with others as a team in an organization, ability to manage emotions, willingness to learn from others, ability to make things happen positively, flexibility in handling situations, ability to resolve conflict in work place, develop a long-term vision in line with changing world economy and taste, ability to initiate and start things independently, possesses strategic thinking skills to be able to solve complex problems, passion to accomplish business objectives, and dealing with stressful situations in a calm and professional manner are the personal skills (traits) needed for enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education Students in a recessed economy.

The findings of the study in research question 3 revealed that, flexibility in changing customers expectations in technology, ability to handle pressure and meet deadlines, ability to adapt to new realities in marketing and distribution, willingness to learn from other business partners and subordinates, being enthusiastic of what to do for business growth, ability not to idle in the face of obstacles or challenges, clearly establish communication channels in an organization, demonstrate effective marketing strategies for business breakeven and advancement, skills in choosing best advertising media that best appeal to customers, effectively demonstrate excellent team work, ability to engage in good negotiation with customers and business partners, skills to take advantage of existing job opportunities, ability to motivate subordinate, acquisition of knowledge to compete with similar products in the market, and skills to expand market opportunities, ensures responsibility and accountability are the interpersonal and marketing skills needed for enhancement of self- employment of vocational and technical education students in a recessed economy.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, entrepreneurship skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education Students in a recessed economy were identified. It was therefore found that, organize activities in line with set up of organizational guidelines, ability to prevent conflicts and resolve issues as they arise, demonstrate effective financial management and application of basic accounting records principles, ability to communicate effectively with others, having good sense of humor, being dependable to others, possesses strategic thinking skills, passion to accomplish business objectives, flexibility in changing customers expectations in technology, ability to adapt to new realities in marketing and distribution, demonstrate effective marketing strategies for business breakeven and advancement, skills in choosing best advertising media that best appeal to customers, skills to expand market opportunities, ensures responsibility and accountability, etc are some of the Entrepreneurship skills needed for enhancement of self-employment of Vocational and Technical Education Students in a recessed economy.

Recommendation

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

1. Vocational and technical education Lecturers should undergo training and re-training in entrepreneurship skills to be organized by the government, stakeholders, faculties and at the departmental levels to be effective with practical skills such training could impact on the learner.

2. Entrepreneurship skills to be acquired by vocational and technical education students should have a synergy with the skill needs of industries for employment opportunities.
3. Curriculum developers and reviewers of entrepreneurship education should be knowledgeable in skill forecasting models to be able to meet up with new trends in technology.
4. Students that showed willingness on entrepreneurship as career option should be admitted to vocational and technical education programs in the tertiary institutions.
5. Government at all levels should grant young entrepreneurs tax waivers or reduction in percentages as encouragement to establish their own businesses
6. Successful entrepreneurs should be invited in vocational and technical education conferences, workshops and seminars to enable students have first-hand information on how best to become successful skilled entrepreneurs.
7. Federal Government under Federal Ministry of Education, stakeholders in education sectors, philanthropies, should help in providing adequate laboratories with modern facilities to enable students acquire relevant entrepreneurship skills to avert institution and industrial skills mismatch.
8. Students of vocational and Technical education should have a skilled area of specialization from the onset of their admission and develop on that skill maximally.

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