



GLOBAL INVENTORY SERVICES AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS ACQUISITION AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CALABAR EDUCATION ZONE, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: This study predicted the provision of information and inventory services on entrepreneurial skills acquisition among senior secondary school students in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. The research design that was used for this study is the correlational research design. The stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed to select a sample of 592 SS II students from a population of 5,918 for the study. A questionnaire titled “Inventory Services and Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition Questionnaire (ISESAQ)” developed by the researcher was used in collecting data on six sub-variables involved in the study. The reliability estimates of the sub-scales ranged from .71 to .83 which showed that the instrument was reliable for data collection. The Simple Regression statistical analysis was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance and 591 degrees of freedom. The results of the statistical analysis from the hypotheses showed that inventory service significantly predicts entrepreneurship skills acquisition among secondary school students in Calabar education zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. It was recommended among others that school counsellors should create awareness on inventory services in order to enhance employable skills acquisition among secondary school students. Counsellors should increase the level of publicity of inventory programmes and its services in the secondary schools. The programmes will help to address the needs of the students so as to enhance their economic empowerment skills.

Keywords: Inventory service, entrepreneurial skills acquisition, secondary school, students)

Introduction

The increasing complexity of competition in the Nigerian work environment as regards lack of job opportunities calls for the acquisition of entrepreneurial development of students, school leavers, youths among others (Adjei, 2021). Over the years, diverse economic, social and political problems at different magnitudes facing nations of the world exist and the third world countries are not excluded. According to Ajufo (2023), it is possible that these diverse economic, social and political problems might have adversely affected the sustainable development of these countries and Nigeria is not exonerated.

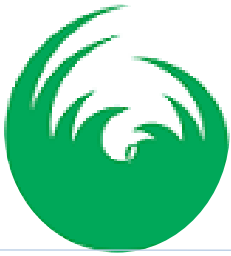
One of such problems is the issue of unemployment. Unemployment is a global problem that governments all over the world are contending with. It is a basic feature of any developing economy and a common phenomenon, which every nation strives to eradicate. In Nigeria, experience has shown that unemployment problem is so common that most youths seem to be either underemployed or unemployed and even misemployed after leaving schools. Over 80% of Nigeria youths are unemployed and this is one of the causes of youth restiveness in Nigeria (Udosen, et al, 2021). Thus, one way in which unemployment can be reduced is through entrepreneurship.

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According to Osinem (2021), entrepreneurship is a process through which individuals and/or government either on their own or jointly exploit available economic opportunities without being scared by associated risks or inadequate resources under their control. Entrepreneurship is promoted by the spirit of capitalism which in turn promotes economic development through job creation, increasing output of goods and services, enhancing technological innovation, and enhancing the per capital level of income. Ajufo (2023) averred that entrepreneurship education programme is critical for developing entrepreneurial skills, attitudes and behaviours that form the basis for the economic growth of a country. It is a vital cog in the economic performance of nations around the globe as it has the capacity to create adequate job opportunities that reduce unemployment rates. Entrepreneurship activities also contribute towards the revitalisation of the economy of developed countries and act as the engine of economic progress and job creation in developing countries. Entrepreneurship means setting up and running a business in a profitable and sustainable manner. Entrepreneurs innovate; discover new products, new opportunities, and start-up new ventures (Greg, 2020). Entrepreneurship skills are the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and be able to establish as well as run an enterprise successfully based on the identifiable opportunities. The benefits of entrepreneurship can be seen in the economies of China and Indian today (Adeboye & Olubela, 2019). Furthermore, the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is basic and instrumental to technological advancement of any nation. Such skills refer to the concepts, skills and mental awareness needed by individuals to start, develop and grow their business ventures (Osuala, 2020). Entrepreneurship manifests itself in creative strategies, innovative tactics, market move changes, courageous leadership when the way forward is not obvious. Despite all these, the most acute problem faced by our schools today is that of how to strengthen students to develop what they have learnt, in turn to create jobs on their own (Makinde, 2020). These programmes have been structured to make it fit to the challenging and demanding societies. Most school leavers are aiming at

getting high salaries in the public or private sector after graduation. They never realise that there is a sector that would offer them higher income than working in private or public sectors.

Entrepreneurial skills acquisition is aimed at providing economic empowerment opportunities amongst vulnerable youth, focusing on beads making, housing decoration, baking, making of textiles and food preparation, which advocate and refocus educational systems towards acquisition of vocational and technical skills to enhance smooth transition into job for school graduates, mostly university graduates (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2020). Skilled trade careers are those labour jobs which require specific training, such as bead and hat making, housing decoration, cloth making and textile, baking and food preparation.

Unfortunately, in spite of the seeming awareness of the utmost importance of the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by key players in secondary education subsector, it seems, the attainment of its goal and objectives remains a mirage in Calabar Education Zone (Sunday & Neji, 2023). Hence, many school leavers complete this cycle of education without acquiring the basic entrepreneurial skills of business accounting, secretarial skills, business management, art, marketing and business communication. It has been observed that many secondary school leavers in Cross River State cannot contribute meaningfully to the economic development of our country as they find it difficult to gain admission into higher institutions of learning (Akeke, et al, 2015)

Similarly, the capacity of school leavers to venture into self-paid engagements is further limited by the curriculum of activities of the Nigerian education system (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2020; Osinem, 2021). The curriculum appears to be largely of liberal bias placing emphasis on academic excellence rather than skills acquisition that would duly and truly prepare the graduates for self-employment; realistically more useful and fulfilling ventures. This aggravates the search for government jobs that may always not be there. Further, these school leavers may not be equipped with the skills required to fit into the world of work, thus rendering them unemployable.



High levels of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria have been attributed to lack of relevant practical skills needed for paid or self-employment. A rather disturbing revelation was made by Shay and Wood (2020) who noted that students from Nigeria lack self-confidence to start-up businesses, compared to their counterparts in Argentina, India, Brazil, and Mexico. Therefore, better approaches need to be identified in order to motivate students to engage in entrepreneurial skills acquisition, primarily for the purpose of becoming entrepreneurs (job-creators), particularly in the current job-scarce environment in the country. This ugly situation poses a serious concern to parents, educational planners, counsellors, sociologists of education and government as the persistent unemployment rises. Therefore, achievement of secondary school goals may be influenced by the provision of counselling services. Counselling is designed to facilitate student achievement, improve student behavior and attendance and help students develop economically and socially (Eremie & Jackson, 2019; Ibrahim (2023)

Based on this, counselling services are formalized actions undertaken by the school to make guidance operational and available to students. These are: orientation service, appraisal service, information service, placement service, counseling service, consultation service, evaluation service and follow-up service. According to Makinde (2020), it refers to the type of services which provide help to an individual to adjust better in the new circle or environment. This service is essential for individuals who are new to an environment and in most cases coming into such environment and situation for the first time. The essence of this service is to enable the students adjust better and effectively within the environment for which they have little or no knowledge about and to which they are not familiar. The purpose of it is to assist the students in the process of all round development. It provides an opportunity to the individual to discuss their plans and problems with a professional or counsellor in a helping environment. The process ultimately makes a person capable of self-directing and self-sufficient. This service can be practiced only by a counsellor. Denga (2012) sees counselling as “a cluster of formalised educational services designed by the school to assist students to achieve self-

knowledge or self-understanding which is necessary for them to attain full self-development and self-realization of their potential”. The counselees could only be reached through the various services rendered by guidance.

Individual inventory service is an important type of guidance service which may be recognized often as “pupil’s” inventory service (Bahago, et al, 2021; Ajufo, 2023). The inventory service is a systematic collection, organizing, interpreting of a wide variety of data for the purpose of better understanding of the student or client. Personal records of the child are to be written in the cumulative folder (Bailey, 2021). The cumulative records contain comprehensive information about an individual student over a period of years for which he is in school. All the necessary information or data needed for appraising a student are usually obtained from the student cumulative record. This will enable the school authorities to plan satisfying educational, vocational and social programmes for the students. Therefore, the researchers being concerned about entrepreneurial skills acquisition of secondary school students considered it imperative to carry out this study on the predictive impact of the provision of counselling information and inventory services on entrepreneurship skills acquisition among secondary school students in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Many school leavers lack practical skills such as bead and hat making, housing decoration, baking, cloth and textiles and food preparation, which make them to rely only on getting white collar jobs that cannot be found, because no government can solely provide job opportunities for all her citizens (Shay. & Wood, 2020; Oduh, et al, 2020). This problem is assuming alarming proportion as unemployment is increasing by the day. Hence, many unemployed youths engage in unwholesome activities such as internet scamming, cultism, armed robbery, while the females get unwanted pregnancies. This has led to a loud outcry by the government, parents, employers of labour and relevant stakeholders that schools are not producing the right mix of graduates for the knowledge driven economy (Osinem, 2021). Hence, youths become



liabilities to, and dependent on both parents and the national economy.

In order to curb this menace, government has launched entrepreneurship skills acquisition programme to encourage the establishment of small and medium scale enterprises. Additionally, the government has introduced entrepreneurship course or subjects as compulsory requirement for Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) (marketing, sewing, animal husbandry, carpentry, home management, tourism, fishery, data processing, electrification, among others) (National Policy on Education (NPE, 2014). Also, some people attributed this problem to inadequate teaching methods, lack of instructional materials, lack of supervision, finance, bottlenecks in business registrations, lack of business start-up skills, lack of skills to survive and grow (be a successful entrepreneur), to state but a few. At school level, principals and board management have approved the inclusion of social clubs like young farmers, computer, climate change and jet clubs to boost entrepreneurial skills acquisition. However, these measures have not been able to provide a lasting solution to the problems of entrepreneurship skill acquisition among most secondary school leavers (Sunday & Neji, 2023).

It is this reason that gave the impetus for the researchers to find out whether the provision of counselling services such as information service, inventory service, referral service, follow-up service, remedial service and orientation service could predict entrepreneurial skills acquisition among secondary school students in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to find out how the inventory services predict entrepreneurial skills acquisition among senior secondary school students in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research question

How does inventory services predict entrepreneurship skills acquisition among senior secondary school students?

Statement of hypotheses

The hypothesis stated was inventory service does not significantly predict entrepreneurship skills acquisition

Research design

The research design that was used for this study is the correlational research design. This design was appropriate for investigating possible cause and effect relationship between two variables.

Population/Sample of the study

The population of this study comprised all Senior Secondary Two Students in 81 public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria, (2022/2023) academic year. At the time of this research the population stood at about 5,918 SS II students.

The sampling technique adopted for this study was the stratified and simple random sampling techniques. In using stratified random sampling, the first stage is to stratify the zone into seven local government areas. At the local government level, 40% of the schools were selected for the study. This gave a total of 32 public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

The second stage is to select 10% SS 2 students from each school selected using simple random sampling method. However, students are randomly picked using balloting method. Pieces of paper with “Yes” and “No” written are rolled and put in a container and those that picked “Yes” are used for the study. This will give a total of 592 respondents. Therefore, from the total of 5,918 SS2 students in the secondary schools of the study area, a sample of 592 (10 percent) of students was drawn for the study of which 341 were males and 251 were females.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection was the “Inventory Services and Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition Questionnaire (ISESAQ)”. The validity of the instrument was done using face validity. Face validity was achieved through expert proof reading and assessment of the items by the supervisor and two other experts in Educational Psychology as well as Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instruments was obtained through trial testing. In pilot testing of the instrument, a total of forty



(40) students from one of the non-participating schools within the research area were used. The data collected were coded and Cronbach Alpha reliability was used to determine the reliability. After the first administration of the Provision of Information and Inventory Services and Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition Questionnaire (PIVSESAQ), the coefficient of internal consistency was calculated. The results of the test analysis ranged from 0.71 to 0.83 which are considered significantly reliable.

Statistics for data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of simple percentages, mean and standard deviation and Simple Linear Regression analysis were used to analyze data.

Data analysis

The mean scores and standard deviations of the major variables are presented in Table 1. A total of 592 students responded to the questionnaire and were used for the study.

TABLE 1: General description of research data

Variables	Category	Frequency		
Gender :	Male	341		57.6
	Female	251		42.4
	Total	592		100
Age:	16-20 years	508		85.8
	21-25	81		13.7
	26 & above	3		.5
	Total	592		100
Variables	n	\bar{x}	sd	
Inventory service	592	17.30	1.36	
Entrepreneurship skills acquisition	592	17.17	1.29	

The mean and standard deviation of the major variables are calculated and presented in Table 1. A total sample of five hundred and ninety-two SS II students was used for the study. The result in Table 1 shows that 341 representing 58% of the total respondents were male, while 251 (42%) were female. For students' ages, 508 (85.8%) were between 16-20 years, 81 (13.7%) are between 21-25 years, while 3 respondents (.5%) were between 26 years and above.

Test of hypotheses

Inventory service does not significantly predict entrepreneurship skills acquisition. To test this hypothesis, Simple Linear Regression was used and the result as presented in Table 3.

TABLE 2: Summary of Simple Linear Regression analysis of the influence inventory service on entrepreneurship skills acquisition among secondary school students (n= 592)

R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	Change of the R ²



	.157 ^a	.025	.023	1.28474	.025 ^b
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio
Regression		24.548	1	24.548	14.873
Residual		973.829	590	1.651	
Total		998.377	591		
					p-value
					.000 ^b

Coefficient of the Beta weights of the influence of inventory service on entrepreneurship skills acquisition among senior secondary school students.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients Beta	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	14.601	.670	21.789	.000
Inventory Service	.149	.039	3.857	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurship skills acquisition

b. Predictors: (Constant), Inventory service

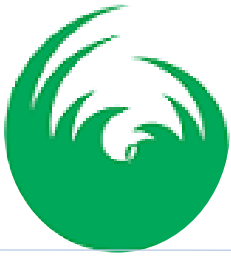
Table 2 also showed that the coefficient of determination $R^2 = .025$ indicated that inventory service contributed to 2.5% of the entrepreneurship skills acquisition among students. This implies that the inventory service considered in this study covered 2.5% of the factors that influenced the entrepreneurship skills acquisition among students and there are other factors that are accounting for 97.5% of the determinant of entrepreneurship skills acquisition among students in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Again, from the ANOVA table of the regression, the result obtained; F-ratio = 14.873, $p = .000$ ($p < .05$) at df of 1 and 591 indicated that the F value is significant. The implication of this result is that the null hypothesis is rejected and the finding drawn from the result is that inventory counselling service significantly predicts

entrepreneurship skills acquisition among secondary students in Calabar education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria.

The calculated R of value .157 is also statistically significant. This means that the independent variable (inventory counselling service) significantly relates to entrepreneurship skills acquisition among secondary students. The t-value of the independent variable is statistically significant. Meaning that the contribution of information service to entrepreneurship skills acquisition among secondary students is ($t_{cal} = 3.857$; $P = .000$).

Meanwhile, analyzing the differential weight of inventory counselling service and entrepreneurship skills acquisition among secondary students, the result revealed that there was a variation in the standardized coefficient beta (weight) values. The information service has the influence (Beta = .157). The regression equation is: entrepreneurship skills acquisition = 14.601 + .149 Inventory counselling



service. The beta indicated the weight of the impact of the component delivered. In other words, the inventory counselling service is a determinant of entrepreneurship skills acquisition among secondary students in Calabar education zone, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

The findings revealed that inventory service significantly predicts entrepreneurship skills acquisition. This could stem from the fact that inventory service enhances every guidance programme. The present study supports Alihu and Jibril (2018), Uba (2020) and Lawrence (2021) who studied teachers' counselling services as correlates of students' digital and academic engagement behaviours in secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone. The finding is also in line with the study of Duruamaku-Dim (2019) who investigated perception of counselling services among primary school pupils in Calabar, Cross River State and how it influences their social adjustment in the school.

The finding is in line with Bailey (2021) who assessed the criterion validity of the Students Readiness Inventory (SRI) instrument at Baker University using four years of entering student cohort SRI data (n = 829). The finding is also in line with Mathias and Owuor (2015) who revealed that inventory management system is positively related and is significant for organizational performance in Grain Bulk. Three of the four attributes of inventory management system were found to be positively related to organizational performance. The finding is in line with Nwamgbebu, et al (2019) who investigated the impact of inventory management on the performance of public health institutions in Nigeria, evidence from Federal Teaching Hospital Abakaliki (FETHA). The finding is also in supported of Agbaje (2019) on the effects of counselling in Sex Education through student problem inventory and Behaviour Modification Course on Healthful Living Behaviour among youths in secondary schools in Uyo Metropolis. The finding of this aspect of the study revealed that information and inventory services significantly predict entrepreneurship skills acquisition.

Conclusion

The main purpose of the study was to find out how the provision of inventory services predict entrepreneurial skills acquisition among senior secondary school students in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, two hypotheses were generated to guide the study. Based on the statistical analysis, it was concluded that inventory services significantly predict entrepreneurship skills acquisition among secondary school students in Calabar education zone, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on findings from the analysis, it was recommended that:

1. School counsellors should create awareness on inventory services in order to enhance employable skills acquisition among secondary school students.
2. Counsellors should increase the level of publicity of inventory programmes and its services in the secondary schools. The programmes will help to address the needs of the students so as to enhance their economic empowerment skills.
3. Government and non-governmental organizations should organize education programmes in secondary schools such as soap making, catering service and cloth making for students to acquire higher knowledge that will help them to be self-employed.

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