



Entrepreneurship Education and Career Choice of Secondary School Students in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study examined the adequacy of entrepreneurship education and its influence on job perception and career choice among Senior Secondary School (SSS2) students in Mainland Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria. Using a self-structured questionnaire, data was collected from 200 SSS2 students and analyzed with Pearson correlation and independent samples t-test at the 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed significant positive relationships between adequate entrepreneurship education and students' career choice, job interest, and entrepreneurial outcomes. A significant gender difference was also found in job perception, with male and female students differing in their views. The study concludes that adequate entrepreneurship education significantly shapes students' job perception and career choice. It recommends the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the secondary school curriculum nationwide and urges guidance counselors to motivate and support students' participation in entrepreneurial activities.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, career choice, secondary students, job perception.

1. Introduction

Education in general has the mandate to equip students with functional knowledge and skills, to build up their character, attitude and vision. It is also important for providing the basis for innovation, creating a value system and developing entrepreneurial culture, which drives wealth creation and gives further push to innovations. In fact, to make a country's economy strong, the focus should be on the young generation (Hameed & Irfan, 2019), with education as the driving force. Entrepreneurship education is today a globally acknowledged programme of study which seeks to provide students with knowledge, skills and

motivation with the focus to encourage entrepreneurial success at different levels of education. It will also foster innovation, creativity, adaptivity, leadership skills, collaboration, communication and critical thinking.

Thus, entrepreneurial education in the 21st Century can no longer be neglected because it plays a vital role in preparing youths to face the future with the ever dynamics of complex global economy (Mahmudin 2023, Barba-Sánchez, Mitre & Del Brío, 2022, Carmela, Sonia & Klaus, 2006). In this era of globalisation and rapid technological advancement, for the young generation to be more competitive, relevant and productive, they need to possess entrepreneurial skills in addition to the theoretical knowledge acquired in schools. This will enable them to understand the global business landscape with its rapidly significant transformations. The veritable transformations on a global scale can only be matched by individuals in acquiring innovative entrepreneurial skills such as creativity, innovativeness, quick decision-making and risk-taking for an economic survival (Azzaakiyyah, 2023).

Agbonlahor, (2016) reiterated entrepreneurship education as the engine of social, economic and transformational changes which cannot be overemphasized in any society. Uku and Marge (2017) on their part argued that society is improved not only by entrepreneurship but by entrepreneurial individuals with knowledge, attitudes and skills to identify and exploit opportunities, create value, and orient toward action. Ratten and Usmanij (2021) opined that entrepreneurship education plays a key role in cultivating students' intentions and should be experiential learning that needs to be embedded with key learning objectives in the curriculum for greater engagement. While Nwisagbo (2025) argued that the

inclusion of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is a solution to joblessness. The modules should offer students the tools to think creatively and be an effective problem solver. Buttressing this point, Mahmudin, (2023); Azzaakiyyah, (2023) stated that the development of entrepreneurial mindset requires learning by doing and the conversion of knowledge into problem-solving methods. As a matter of fact, education for entrepreneurship in secondary schools is particularly more effective in vocational training, since the students are close to choosing their careers and entering work life. Becoming, self-employed in the long term may be a valuable option for them as they become useful not only to themselves but also to the society where they belong (Mahmudin, 2023; Azzaakiyyah, 2023; Del Brío, 2022).

For instance, the need for entrepreneurship education first emerged in Nigeria towards the close of 1980s, with the collapse of national economy, the youth and graduate unemployment hit the roof and with outcries from parents and other stakeholders. The period was noted for lay off workers and retirements because of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) and failed economic policies in the country. At this point in time entrepreneurship education would have helped in salvaging the situation but it was far not seen as important or recognized as part of the school curriculum in the secondary schools (Ogunleye, 2019; Agbonlahor, 2016). Currently, vocational training in secondary schools operates under extra-curricular activities such as barbing, tie-dyeing, shoe making, tailoring and others. Moreover, entrepreneurial education is infused into school subjects such as fine art, crafts, home economics, business studies, basic technology, commerce and farming. Recognizing the role of vocational training in our educational institutions today seems to be having positive impact on graduates' unemployment.

The focus then was to establish an adequate and functional entrepreneurship education in secondary schools. This will promote its awareness through formalized teachings of the young ones for participation in the socio-economic development of the nation. The total aim is to see entrepreneurship education as the process of identifying an opportunity related to need-satisfaction that could be converted to product or service. While the objectives, include having a curriculum to offer functional education that would enable the youth to become self-employed and self-reliant (Obi, 2015). It will also enhance student's job perception, become creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities as well as help in their choice of career.

However, the high rate of graduates' unemployment that has generated concerns for government at all levels and among stakeholders can become a thing of the past with introduction of entrepreneurship education. More importantly, unemployment being a very serious problem facing the nation, it has also engendered other social problems: crimes, kidnapping, rape, robbery, killings, cyber-crimes, delinquencies and many other social vices which are now menace to the society (Longe, 2019). According to Longe, Manongi, Babatunde, (2026), even the knowledge of entrepreneurship education, many graduates still prefer employment over entrepreneurship due to gaps in learning outcomes and lack of practical engagement, self-actualization, and accountability. Stimulating an entrepreneurial spirit at the secondary school level goes beyond business and profit-making; it also connects to community well-being, poverty reduction, and sustainable development.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Many secondary school students both at the basic and senior levels do not have idea about being an entrepreneur or how to acquire entrepreneurial skills. It is also appalling to see the lack of knowledge of young people about the details of work, in particular jobs, and about the kind of pay and lifestyle that different jobs offer (Mukuni, Libingi and Samanenga, 2025). Youth unemployment in Nigeria continues to rise, largely due to a lack of creativity and a functional education system. The current system has not adequately prepared graduates for self-employment or entrepreneurship, contributing to the high rate of youth unemployment in the country. Self-employment serves both as a survival strategy for generating subsistence income and as a pathway to owning a micro or small enterprise for young people with an entrepreneurial mindset. For this to be effective, the acquisition of generic skills and foundational knowledge should begin early, at the secondary school level. Although existing research in Nigeria has largely concentrated on undergraduates, this study fills that gap by investigating the relationship between entrepreneurship education and career choice among secondary school students in Lagos State.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the adequacy of entrepreneurship education on job perception and career choice among secondary school students. The study also attempted to:

- Identify the relationship between career choice and entrepreneurship education.

- Determine if relationship exists between students' job perception and entrepreneurship-focused education.
- Determine if relationship exists between availability of entrepreneurial programmes in secondary school and perceived entrepreneurial outcomes.
- Determine the relationship between gender differences in the job perception of secondary school students because of entrepreneurial education

1.3 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between career choice and entrepreneurship education.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between students' job perception and entrepreneurship-focused education.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between availability of entrepreneurial programmes in secondary school and perceived entrepreneurial outcomes.

Ho4: There is no significant gender difference in the job perception of secondary school students as a result of entrepreneurial education.

2. Research Methodology

This study employed descriptive survey design, and the population comprised all secondary school students in Mainland Local Government Area of Lagos State with approximately sixteen thousand seven hundred and ninety-four (16,794) students. The sample was made up of two hundred senior secondary school students (SSS2) selected through simple random sampling from five public schools. The instrument employed for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled: Adequacy of Entrepreneurship Education on Job Perception and Career Choice of secondary school students scale (ADEEJCS). The questionnaire comprised of two sections (sections A and B). Section A consisted of items on respondent's personal bio-data such as age, gender and class while Section B consisted of 30 items that measured the study variables. The content validity of the questionnaire was verified and a pilot test with twenty respondents outside the study sample gave a Cronbach alpha score of 0.95, a very high and significant reliability. Data was collated and analyzed with Pearson correlation coefficient and simple t-test statistics at .05 level of significance.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between career choice and entrepreneurial education.

Table 1: Relationship between career choice and entrepreneurship education

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	r-cal	p-value	L-sig	Remark
Career choice Entrepreneurship Education	200	12.27 13.85	2.35 2.77	198	.315	.00	.01	Reject Ho

P< 0.05, df =198, r-crit =0.315

Table 1 shows that the relationship that exists between career choice and entrepreneurship education with p-value of 0.00 is less than 0.05 significant level. This indicates that hypothesis one is rejected with r = 0.315, which means that the relationship is positive and highly correlated. It shows a significant relationship between student's choice of career and entrepreneurship education.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between student's job perception and entrepreneurship-focused education.

Table 2: Relationship between student's job perception and entrepreneurship-focused education

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	r-cal	p value	L-sig	Remark
Job Perception Entrepreneurship Education	200	13.45 13.85	2.87 2.77	198	.448	.00	.01	Reject

P<0.05, df =198, r-crit =0.448

Table 2 reveals the relationship that exists between student’s job perception and entrepreneurship-focused education with p-value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 significant level. Thus, hypothesis two is rejected having a high and positive correlation of $r = 0.448$. This means there is a significant relationship between student’s job perception and entrepreneurship-focused education.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between availability of entrepreneurial programmes in secondary school and perceived entrepreneurial outcomes.

Table 3: Relationship between availability of entrepreneurial programmes and perceived entrepreneurial outcomes

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	r-cal	p-value	L-sig	Remark
Entrepreneurial Programmes	200	13.56	2.93	198	.521	.00	.01	Reject Ho
Perceived Entrepreneurial Outcomes		13.85	2.77					

$P < 0.05$, $df = 198$, $r\text{-crit} = 0.521$

Table 3 shows that the relationship between student’s entrepreneurial programmes and perceived entrepreneurial outcomes with p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 significant level and this indicates that the hypothesis that says that there is no significant relationship between student’s entrepreneurial programmes and perceived entrepreneurial outcomes is rejected at $r = 0.521$. This means that there is a significant positive relationship between the two variables.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant gender difference in job perception of secondary school students because of entrepreneurship education.

Table 4: Gender difference in job perception due to entrepreneurship education

	Gender	N	X	df	Sig	SD	t-cal	t-crit	Remark
Job perception	Male	100	14.070	198	.896	2.865	2.592	1.96	Reject Ho
	Female	100	13.020						

$P < 0.05$, $d = 198$, $t\text{-crit} = 1.96$; $t\text{-cal} = 2.592 > 1.96$

Table 4 shows a calculated t-value of 2.592 at $p < 0.05$ level of significance and a $df = 198$ was found to be greater than the t-critical value of 1.96 ($2.592 > 1.96$). This indicates that there is a significant gender difference between the male and female on job perception. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

4. Discussion

For hypothesis one, the findings show that there is a significant relationship between student’s career choice and entrepreneurship education. This result supports the finding of Hameed & Irfan (2019); Obuah (2012), that there was an impact of entrepreneurship education on choice of career among higher education students which brought about improvement on their attitude, self-efficacy, risk taking and job intentions. The result also corroborates the findings of Kabongo & Okpara (2010) in their study of Asian and Latin American students’ disposition to entrepreneurial education. Their findings revealed positive responses of students to the introduction of entrepreneurial scheme into their studies and also responded well to career choice geared towards becoming entrepreneurs. However, their study was in variance with that of Ratten & Usmanij (2021) who reiterated that, although the conditions for entrepreneurial training improved,

the business start-up intention among the graduates was still relatively low. This observation can better be explained that at university level it is already too late for students to key into entrepreneurship education, hence, their low motivation. It is therefore being advocated that entrepreneurship education be introduced right from the formative stage even before students start attempting to choose career in secondary schools. Entrepreneurship education should be seen as an experiential learning that needs to be embedded with key learning objectives in the curriculum so as to increase students’ engagement.

The second hypothesis shows there is no significant relationship between students’ job perception and entrepreneurship-focused education. The findings of this study show that there is a significant relationship existing between students’ job perception and entrepreneurship-focused education. For example, Benjamin (2006) posited that American students showed a better and positive perception towards their career choice when they were effectively indoctrinated in the entrepreneurial education more than their contemporary Egyptian students. Likewise, Efinanya (2015) observed a tremendous job perception among the middle and low socio-economic status students who showed a significant desire and perception

towards entrepreneurial ventures as a result of well-tailored entrepreneurship education, thus, in agreement with the findings of this present study. Also, this research findings agree with Hameed & Irfan (2019); Milward, Ellenbogen, Derevensky & Gupta (2015) who in their works discovered that younger students do not show a significant perception in entrepreneurial ventures while the older ones have a huge desire and perception towards establishing an entrepreneurial venture. This age difference discrepancy in job perception can be improved through steady, focused and progressive introduction of entrepreneurial skills. For example, an analysis of the performance objectives in subjects' curricula obtainable in Nigeria secondary schools, shows that well over 80% of the objectives relate to the lower order teaching skills of definition, stating, identifying, listing, mentioning and such likes (Ogunleye, 2019). Meanwhile schools mostly cover the theoretical aspects of the topics instead of embellishing practical and first-hand activities and probably sites visitation as the case may be so as to improve the students' job perception. However, to make a country's economy strong, the focus should be on the young generation. Otache (2019), however, observed that students who were encouraged early enough in life embrace entrepreneurial ventures showed a high response to the perception towards entrepreneurial ventures. Introduction of entrepreneurship education early in secondary schools will increase the number of entrepreneurs and thus help the country's economy by creating jobs and reducing unemployment (Nabi & Holden, 2013).

The third hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between availability of entrepreneurial programmes in secondary school and perceived entrepreneurial outcomes. In accordance with these research findings, a significant relationship exists between the two factors. Hansemark (1998), in his study, found that entrepreneurial education had an overall positive outcome on students' performances and responses. He researched on a group of Ghanaian students at the Certificate level to determine the extent at which entrepreneurial education could significantly predict the entrepreneurial outcome. His studies span through both those who were in college and engaged in entrepreneurial ventures and those that were out of college and still engaged in entrepreneurial ventures. He observed significant positive results among those who were on the job and were still in college. This observation is explained that those students might have had early career ambition and pioneering skills through entrepreneurial programmes embedded in their school curriculum and through social media. Entrepreneurship education can change an individual

ability (including entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and spirit) to the intentions related to entrepreneurial outcomes. Also, Obi (2015) opined that there was an increasing rise in the entrepreneurial outcome when the students were well motivated towards entrepreneurial ventures through well-tailored and strategic approach. His finding was on the Ekiti secondary school students at the senior level; he expressed a sad disposition when he saw that the Junior Secondary School Curriculum did not attain its vocational philosophy. He was, however, surprised to see the large number of students learning entrepreneurial education. Explicitly, the influence of entrepreneurial education on students' career perception and career choice could be seen in the way the American students readily embraced and engaged in educational entrepreneurial skill acquisition more than those of the Finnish and United Kingdom students who were not given the proper and adequate entrepreneurial education (Benjamin, 2006).

Looking at the fourth hypothesis, which is on the significance of gender difference in job perception of secondary school students, it is observed that there is a significant gender difference in students' view on job perception. Female students prefer jobs that will permit them time for home upkeep. The female students though educated, prefer to have small work force that would allow them have effective care on their families while the male students prefer to work hard in all fronts to ensure they cater for their families. Ediagbonya (2013) identified culture, family background, and previous work experience among others as the main causative for the female choice of preferring entrepreneurial ventures more than the male counterpart. Despite the stereotypic gender roles, students can take advantage of the benefits of entrepreneurship education even before they enter college. An entrepreneurship-focused education can help middle and high-school age girls develop crucial life skills that will serve them well beyond the classroom walls. Gender plays an important role in shaping individuals' perceptions of entrepreneurship (Shinnar, Giacomini, & Janssen, 2012). A broad array of measures for entrepreneurship education among female have been proposed, ranging from education, student awareness and interest to skills and knowledge, entrepreneurial intention, venture creation innovation, growth and development of enterprises, and community impact (United Nations Economic for Africa (ECA), 2021). When the factors listed above are well established, they will improve individual stereotypic value on job perception.

5. Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education should be a lifelong learning process, starting as early as elementary school and progressing through all levels of education, to broaden early job perception and guide in choice of career. Public policy planners and government agencies worldwide should put in place machinery recognizing entrepreneurship education to encourage social innovation for both genders. Explicitly for adequacy, entrepreneurship education does not just benefit those entering the fields of science, technology, and business. Students of art, music, and humanities can also develop their imagination and learn how to apply creative thinking skills to real-world problems.

In Nigeria, the infusion of creative and critical thinking, entrepreneurial skills and relevant elements of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) into the relevant contents of the 9-year Basic Education curriculum (NERDC, 2007) is a good strategy to be followed towards changing the education landscape to one that could engender entrepreneurial thinking, practices and turn the national industrial space around productively. Thus, entrepreneurship, as the capacity to not only start companies, but also to think creatively and ambitiously, is very important to be included in secondary school curriculum.

6. Counselling Implications

There is an urgent need in Nigeria for educating decision makers to consider renewing the learning content of secondary education so as to impact, in a holistic way, the relevant knowledge and life skills that will empower secondary students to engage in productive and self-fulfilling life and work, and also to develop positive attitudes and values in dealing with the paradox and conflict generated by changes as witnessed today. The role of school Guidance Counsellors is inevitable in achieving the most needed goals of entrepreneurship education in secondary schools in Nigeria: -

There is the apprehension that under representation of qualified women in leadership positions has created a gender gap that exists in almost every industry; this is a position that mental model re-orientation intervention can be galvanized into the entrepreneurial education for more success.

While every student can benefit from entrepreneurship-focused education, girls (especially middle-school and high-school-age girls) stand to gain

the most from it, they are helped in developing their leadership skills, embrace their competitive side, and learn to take more risks despite gender stereotypes and social pressure with adequate personal-socio counselling procedures.

Also, introducing young kids to entrepreneurship develops their initiative and helps them to be more creative and self-confident in whatever they undertake and to act in a socially responsible way. Bearing this in mind, the expertise of guidance counsellors will be very helpful in attaining robust well-being among the adolescents through effective follow up and coaching services.

Guidance Counsellors can also collaborate in achieving entrepreneurship-focused programs tailored at teaching students' crucial life skills that will help them navigate the uncertain career future full of complex global, social, and environmental issues.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

- Teachers are to put in their best in the teaching and learning process by adapting all the learning style within the sphere of entrepreneurial education to improve the students' entrepreneurial outcome.
- Curriculum developers should structure a better and enhanced method and approaches of pedagogy especially at the early stage so that any misconception of entrepreneurial intention will be corrected.
- It is also of the researchers' opinion that the school guidance counsellors assist in career guidance, by encouraging students to engage in entrepreneurial activities in school and also encourage teachers to put in all the necessary efforts to help students get a better understanding of the importance of entrepreneurial education at early stage.
- The students should cross gender barriers to improve on their general attitude towards entrepreneurial education.

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