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PERCEIVED ENTREPRENEURIAL INNOVATION AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS NEEDED TO COMBAT YOUTH RESTIVENESS IN NIGERIA

Ammani Abubakar
Comradeammani8@gmail.com
08036786669
Department of Vocational Education
Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic, Katsina State

Prof. B. E. Okoli
Department of Business Education, Faculty of Education
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria

&
Augustina Chinweoke Anyigor-Ogah (Ph.D)
austking4real@yahoo.com
Department of Business Education, Faculty of Education
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to ascertain the perceived entrepreneurial innovation and communication skills needed to combat youth restiveness in Nigeria. The research was guided by two specific purposes, two research questions and two null hypotheses. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consist of three hundred and twenty-four (324) Business Education lecturers in Eleven (11) tertiary institutions in North-West of Nigeria. The sample size of the study comprised of 179 Business Educators (123 males and 56 females). A 4-point rating scale questionnaire titled "Perceived Entrepreneurial Skills Rating Scale" (PESRS) developed by the researcher was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts and further tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient test. The result showed an overall reliability coefficient of 0.88. Data was analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test to test the research hypotheses at 0.05 Alpha level of significance. The findings revealed that the respondents strongly agreed the innovation and communication as entrepreneurial skills needed to combat youth restiveness. In addition, there is no significant difference in the mean score of Business Educators in Federal and State public institutions on strategic innovation skills needed; no significant difference in the mean score of male and female Business Educators on communication skills needed as entrepreneurial.

Keywords: Innovation, Communication, Skills, Youth, Restiveness

Introduction

Youth restiveness has become a worrisome development used by the youths to get what they want from the relevant authorities. In recent years, Nigeria has experienced various forms of restiveness across different region. One notable example is the insurgency carried out by the extremist group Boko Haram, which began in 2009. Also, there has been instances of communal clashes and ethno-religious conflicts in various parts of Nigeria. It is imperative however to note that the Nigerian government has taken several measures to address the challenges, including security operations, dialogue initiatives, and development of programs. However, the restiveness in Nigeria remains a complex issue influenced by various factors, requiring sustained efforts to promote peace, stability, and inclusive development through entrepreneurial innovation and communication skills. Youth restiveness has become a topic of major discussion in the social, economic, religious, health, polity and other domains in recent times in Nigeria. (Igbo and Ikpa, 2013). Oromareghake, Arisi & Igho, (2013) described youth restiveness as a phenomenon which in practice has led to a near breakdown of law and order, low productivity due to disruption of production activities, increasing crime rate, intra ethnic hostilities, and harassment of prospective developers and other criminal tendencies. In the assertion of Ejumudo (2014), youth restiveness relates to matters of agitation by youths over issues of deprivation, neglect, marginalization, and feelings of dissatisfaction. As Elegbeleye in Maciver and Igbojinwaekwu (2019) so believed, youth restiveness in most cases lead to breakdown of law and order, disruption of activities of production, ethnic hostilities, and destruction of public and government properties. Youth restiveness can therefore, be seen as the channeling of youthful energy in negative ways which are capable of destabilizing peace and disrupting the smooth conduct of human legitimate activities.

Many factors have been attributed to youth restiveness. For Oyadeyi in Maciver and Igbojinwaekwu (2019), they include lack of social welfare, corruption, misinformation, lack of humanitarian activities and poverty in the country. Anasi (2010), mentioned some of the factors responsible for youth restiveness to include: bad governance, unemployment, poverty, inadequate educational opportunities and resources, inadequate communication and information flow. Under the menace of Boko Haram, food scarcity, lives and properties have been destroyed, industries have shutdown, and educational institutions have not been functioning optimally. The North-west region of Nigeria have experienced disturbing consequences of youth restiveness in recent times. As expressed by Suleiman (2019). Responding in the same vein, Agbaji, Akhabue, Duruaku, Egor, Ogban, & Uduak, (2018) are of the opinion that, any disconnect of the youths from their expected role as leaders of tomorrow could trigger violence leading to the loss of innocent lives and citizens could be displaced from their homes. Restiveness of this nature may degenerate to a full blown war that may endanger the disintegration of the country. Therefore, to combat

restiveness among youths in Nigeria, development of entrepreneurial skills becomes a welcome idea.

Entrepreneurial skills are those skills necessary to promote innovation, business growth and competitiveness. In the idea of Jardim in Jardim (2021) and Anyigor-Ogah (2023), entrepreneurial skills are considered as the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that enable an entrepreneur to be successful in developing original and valuable projects, products, or services, based on the needs of a targeted population and, as a result, the fulfillment of functional, social, or emotional objectives. The entrepreneurial skills are numerous, however, attention is given to the Entrepreneurial skills related strategies: innovation and communication.

Innovation is another quality an entrepreneur should possess. It is seen as a process of translating new ideas into actions that create value and stimulate demand. In the same vein, innovation can as well be seen as a product of critical thinking of which new ideas are generated and brought to reality at economical cost and which is capable of satisfying customer's need. Bhasin (2020); Reckmann (2022) and Molokhina, Pishchik, and Fomin, (2021) that strategic entrepreneurial innovation skills are quite significant for personal life because it opens new ways of thinking that enhances creative thinking skills most constructively and productively.Thus, every entrepreneur needs strategic innovation skills to be able come up with ways to make idea into reality and of economic value.

Communication enables the entrepreneur to be able to interact effectively with business team, explain and discuss issues with customers in order to market goods or services to them. It is also imperative that entrepreneurs should be able to express themselves explicitly, both in written and verbal forms. In addition, communication is a two-way process. The entrepreneurs should be able to understand and be understood by the other party. The emphasis here is that entrepreneurs should be able to communicate effectively, and should be able to understand contracts and other forms of written business communication. Kalogiannidis and Papaevangelou (2020) that effective communication is needed to maintain a good relationship with business partners, customers, and stakeholders. Munjal (2017) that effective communication helps the entrepreneur to be aware of the performance of their subordinates in regards to how they get the job done well, on time and on budget. Sood (2017) stated that strategic communication skills enhance branding and selling, since they are all about being able to confidently communicate both the business points of value and what makes it different from others in the market.

Statement of the Problem

It is glaring that restiveness orchestrated by the youths is on the increase and fast spreading in almost all parts of the country, especially in North-West, Nigeria. The acts of violence and increasing lawlessness in Nigeria, taking the form of drug abuse, stealing, armed robbery, hostage-taking, arms insurgence, banditry, harassment of innocent citizens, rape, terrorism to mention but a few is alarming. On a daily basis lives

are lost, properties are destroyed, businesses and schools are closing down and places of worship are attacked. It is becoming a near normal for the use of restiveness as a transnational device to get what the youth desire from concerned authorities or the government.

Unfortunately, the government at all levels have not done enough to provide functional education, basic social amenities, employment opportunities and effective empowerment programmes for the youths to be gainfully employed. Neither have the government demonstrated commitment to alleviate the hardship the youths are subjected to. They even lack strategic entrepreneurial skills, hence their inability to engage themselves in meaningful economic activities. The researchers observed that the marginalization of the youths, especially, in the North-West, Nigeria have brought about many restive behaviours that are causing insecurity in the region. Urgent measures must be put in place to address and reverse the situation.

The researchers, therefore, decided to find out the strategic entrepreneurial skills needed by the youths in order to be meaningfully engaged in profitable entrepreneurial activities and reduce youth restiveness in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain the perceived entrepreneurial skills needed to combat youth restiveness in North-West, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to ascertain the perceived entrepreneurial:

1. Innovation skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.
2. Communication skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the perceived entrepreneurial innovation skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria?
2. What are the perceived entrepreneurial communication skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study and were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of Business Educators in Federal and State public institutions on the entrepreneurial innovation skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female Business Educators on the entrepreneurial communication skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

Research Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This is a research design in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analysing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group (Nworgu, 2015). The design is appropriate to aid the researcher collect data on the opinions of sampled group in order to make inferences. The population of the study consist of three hundred and twenty-four (324) Business Education lecturers in Eleven (11) tertiary institutions in North-West of Nigeria. The sample size of the study comprises 179 Business Educators (123 males and 56 females). The instrument used for data collection was A 4-point rating scale questionnaire titled "Perceived Entrepreneurial Skills Rating Scale" (PESRS) developed by the researcher. Validation was done by three experts, two of the experts came from Business Education Department and one from Measurement and Evaluation all in Ebonyi State University. The instrument was subjected to internal consistency testing after validation. The data collected was tested using Cronbach Alpha. The reliability coefficient obtained were as follows: cluster 1 (0.86); cluster 2 (0.84) However, the overall reliability coefficient was 0.85. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. A criteria value of 2.50 was adopted as a bench mark for the mean scores in the research questions. This means that any item with 2.50 and above was considered agreed as strategic entrepreneurial skills, while any item with mean value below 2.50 will not be considered as strategic entrepreneurial skills. t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. For any of the null hypotheses to be accepted, the calculated-t value must be less than the critical–t value otherwise rejected.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What are the entrepreneurial innovation skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria?

Table 1: ***Entrepreneurial Innovation Skills Needed to Combat Youth Restiveness***

S/N	Innovation Skills:	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Ability to create new values for clients	3.74	0.44	Strongly Agree
2	The ability to apply knowledge to find solution to a problem	3.72	0.45	Strongly Agree
3	Ability to think creatively about a business model and develop it further	3.79	0.41	Strongly Agree
4	Ability to generate noble ideas	3.68	0.47	Strongly Agree
5	Ability to adjust to new business ideas	3.62	0.49	Strongly Agree
6	Ability to influence others to willingly accept new ideas	3.73	0.48	Strongly Agree
7	Ability to add value to satisfy customers' needs	3.64	0.49	Strongly Agree
8	Ability to push forwards one's ideas	3.65	0.50	Strongly Agree
9	Ability to use technology to enhance business	3.73	0.45	Strongly Agree
10	Ability to accommodate changes in the business environment	3.70	0.46	Strongly Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.70**		Strongly Agree

Table 1 reveals that all the items were regarded by the respondents as entrepreneurial innovation skills needed. The grand mean value of 3.70 implies that the items are entrepreneurial innovation skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What are the communication skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria?

Table 2: ***Entrepreneurial Communication Skills Needed to Combat Youths' Restiveness***

S/N	Communication Skills	$\bar{X}$	SD	DECISION
11	Ability to initiate information	3.70	0.46	Strongly Agree
12	Ability to listen to conversations	3.62	0.49	Strongly Agree
13	Ability to read messages	3.60	0.51	Strongly Agree
14	Ability to write	3.66	0.50	Strongly Agree
15	Ability to translate words into communication symbols	3.70	0.46	Strongly Agree
16	Ability to speak effortlessly	3.70	0.46	Strongly Agree
17	Ability to understand messages effectively	3.76	0.43	Strongly Agree
18	Ability to resend information	3.76	0.43	Strongly Agree
19	Ability to act upon a message in the manner intended by the sender	3.72	0.47	Strongly Agree
20	Ability to understand body languages	3.63	0.52	Strongly Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.68**		**Strongly Agree**

Table 2 shows that all the items were regarded by the respondents as strategic communication skills needed. The grand mean value of 3.68 indicates that the items constitute entrepreneurial communication skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of Business Educators in Federal and State public institutions on entrepreneurial innovation skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

Table 3: ***Business Educators in Federal and State Public Institutions on perceived Entrepreneurial Innovation Skills Needed to Combat Youth Restiveness***

S/N	Ownership	N=179	Mean	Std.	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
1	Federal	122	3.81	0.41	177	2.80	1.97	Reject
	State	57	3.61	0.49				
2	Federal	122	3.71	0.47	177	0.55	1.97	Accept
	State	57	3.75	0.43				
3	Federal	122	3.79	0.42	177	0.17	1.97	Accept
	State	57	3.80	0.39				
4	Federal	122	3.69	0.48	177	0.05	1.97	Accept
	State	57	3.68	0.46				
5	Federal	122	3.60	0.50	177	0.75	1.97	Accept
	State	57	3.66	0.47				
6	Federal	122	3.70	0.50	177	1.09	1.97	Accept
	State	57	3.78	0.41				
7	Federal	122	3.64	0.49	177	0.20	1.97	Accept
	State	57	3.63	0.48				
8	Federal	122	3.70	0.45	177	2.02	1.97	Reject
	State	57	3.54	0.56				
9	Federal	122	3.72	0.46	177	0.69	1.97	Accept
	State	57	3.77	0.42				
10	Federal	122	3.72	0.46	177	0.72	1.97	Accept
	State	57	3.66	0.47				
	Grand Mean					**0.90**		**Accept**

In Table 3 items 1 and 8 were rejected because their respective calculated-t value of 2.80 and 2.02 were greater than the critical-t value of 1.97. The rest of the items were accepted. This is because the calculated-t value of corresponding items was less than the critical-t value. In addition, the grand mean of the calculated-t value of 0.90 was less than the critical-t value. This means that the null hypothesis three is accepted. Thus, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of Business Educators in Federal and State public institutions on strategic entrepreneurial innovation skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female Business Educators on entrepreneurial communication skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

Table 4*: Male and Female Business Educators responses on perceived Entrepreneurial Communication Skills Needed to Combat Youth Restiveness*

S/N	Gender	N=179	Mean	Std.	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
11	Male	123	3.69	0.48	177	0.78	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.75	0.43				
12	Male	123	3.61	0.50	177	0.08	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.62	0.48				
13	Male	123	3.59	0.52	177	0.59	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.64	0.48				
14	Male	123	3.65	0.65	177	0.56	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.69	0.69				
15	Male	123	3.69	0.69	177	0.78	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.75	0.75				
16	Male	123	3.69	0.69	177	0.55	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.73	0.73				
17	Male	123	3.76	0.76	177	0.51	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.76	0.76				
18	Male	123	3.74	0.74	177	0.78	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.80	0.80				
19	Male	123	3.72	0.72	177	0.11	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.73	0.73				
20	Male	123	3.65	0.65	177	0.50	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.60	0.60				
	Grand Mean					**0.52**		**Accept**

Table 4 shows that all the items were accepted. This is because the calculated-t value of the corresponding items was less than the critical-t value of 1.97. Furthermore, the grand mean of the calculated-t value of 0.52 was less than the critical-t value. This means that the null hypothesis two is accepted. Thus, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female Business Educators on entrepreneurial communication skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that innovation skill is a necessary entrepreneurial strategy. Every entrepreneur needs strategic innovation skills to be able to generate ideas of economic value. Any innovator with amazing skills is likely to be a successful innovator. This agrees with Gokhberg and Poliakova (2017:4) that such innovators are the most active in browsing professional information on the web; technologically advanced; notable for achieving the highest scores in e-skills; best equipped with the knowledge of business processes and are experienced in team building and steering, developing entrepreneurial strategies, marketing, and external communications. The finding suggest that the youths can make use of their innovativeness positively rather than engaging in restiveness. Youth can explore their energies in things that are rewarding. They can think innovatively and do something that is profitable.

The findings agree with Bhasin (2020) that strategic entrepreneurial innovation skills

are quite significant for personal life because it opens new ways of thinking that enhances creative thinking skills most constructively and productively. The findings also align with Lee & Benza in Glassman and Opengart (2016) that innovation is a principal source of differentiation and competitive advantage in the increasingly complex and rapidly changing business environment of the 21st century. In order to successfully key into the business environment, prospective entrepreneurs need to be better prepared with innovation skills. Innovation skill is critical for individual's problem-solving ability. It requires using creative thinking power to resolving personal, societal, business, or technological problems. Innovative thinking sharpens the ability to identify a problem, find out its causes, make sensitive inquiries and brainstorm to profound solution. Strategic entrepreneurial innovation skills therefore, equip the youths to resolve matters and avoid risky challenges, and make the individual a better competitive businessman. This agrees with Kim et al (2018) that the abilities to apply knowledge and technology in a creative manner to fine solution, could drive sustainable growth and development in business. It also agrees with Reckmann (2022), strategic innovation skills have the ultimate goal of ensuring that an individual have the best answer to a problem with maximum buy-in from all parties involved – an outcome that will ultimately saves business time, money and stress. The finding is supported by Molokhina et al, (2021) that strategic innovation skills are necessary to solve a difficult problem, formulate conclusions, interpret the results, make an assessment and make a decision.

It was also found that there is no significant difference in the mean of Business Educators in Federal and State public institutions on entrepreneurial strategic innovation Skills needed as entrepreneurial strategy to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria. The unanimous decision by the educators in the various institutions of learning irrespective of ownership, proofs the efficacy of strategic entrepreneurial innovation skills as entrepreneurial strategy that is of value. The finding is in line with Dabo (2020) that strategic entrepreneurial innovation skills enables entrepreneurs to conceptualize, observe, analyse and evaluate before embarking on innovation of products. These abilities help the entrepreneurs to save cost and time, minimize risk and ascertain the feasibility of business before taking action. The finding agrees with Agbo and Okanazu (2021) who found that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers in Federal and State Universities in Enugu and Anambra States on the perception of Business Education lecturers towards follow-up targeted towards innovation for self-reliance of students on graduation. The finding also agrees with Akpan and Etor (2013) that lecturers in Federal and State Universities in Nigerian have positive view of entrepreneurship education as a program that will empower the youths through acquisition of appropriate entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to be self-employed, job creators, employer of labour as well as

empower them to face the challenges of globalization, unemployment and poverty.

The findings indicate that effective communication skill is a critical entrepreneurial strategy. That is because it is out of place to engage in any form of business transaction without communication. Communication constitutes the foundation upon which an entrepreneur maintains a successful business. It is the means whereby entrepreneurs could achieve the desire success in the development of their organizational goals through interactions with others. The findings agree with Kalogiannidis and Papaevangelou (2020) that effective communication is needed to maintain a good relationship with business partners, customers, and stakeholders. Communication skills in Business is vital because it enable managers to discuss the interest of the organization with employees during meetings and interact with others outside the organization. This is in line with Munjal (2017) that effective communication helps the entrepreneur to be aware of the performance of their subordinates in regards to how they get the job done well, on time and on budget. The finding aligns with Cefe Illinois Education (2021) that it is important to be able to interact effectively with business team, explain and discuss issues with customers in order to sell and market goods or services to them. It is also imperative that entrepreneurs should be able to express themselves explicitly, both in written and verbal expression. The finding is also supported by Sood (2017) that strategic communication skills enhance branding and selling, since they are all about being able to confidently communicate both the business points of value and what makes it different from others in the market.

The analysed data also revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female Business Educators on communication skills needed as entrepreneurial strategy to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria. Both men and women do communicate. This may explain why no difference in the ways male and females perceive communication skills was found. The finding agrees with Fox, et al. (2007) that in many ways, messages sent by respondents were similar regardless of the gender of the sender or the recipient. Communication is not exclusive to a particular gender. Men and women entrepreneurs are required to communicate their ideas to individuals both within and outside the organization. Nawaz and Gomes (2014), agreed with the finding that communication helps every individual to articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts. In addition, the finding agrees with Yavuz and Güzel (2020) that male and female teachers had high scores in terms of effective communication skills, revealing that there is no significant difference on how communication skills are perceived by teachers.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the need for practical solutions are very urgent needs to combat restiveness in Nigeria. This study is optimistic that one of the reliable solutions is through entrepreneurial skills acquisition.

This is because entrepreneurial engagements utilize peoples' energies in a profitable manner. Thus, discouraging them from part-taking in restive behaviours. Also, entrepreneurship serve as a mean to provide trainees with knowledge, skills and attitudes to create wealth for poverty reduction and self-employment. Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that inculcation of entrepreneurial innovation and communication skills in youth will be a veritable way to combat youth restiveness in Nigeria. Furthermore, gender, and institutional affiliation of the respondents had no perceived influence on entrepreneurial skills needed to combat youth restiveness. The skills could be applied in any location and are gender friendly.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Youths who dropped out of school and who are presently engaged in restiveness should be assembled and rehabilitated using entrepreneurial training with emphasis on innovation and communication skills.
2. Institutions of learning and vocational training centres should focus in the development of learners' functional entrepreneurial skills such as opportunities marketing, innovation and communication so that they can be employable; and the government and philanthropies should financially support youth entrepreneurial training programmes. Subsequent upon, will engage the youths meaningfully and keep them away from restive practices.

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