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The Role of Mathematics Education in the Development of Entrepreneurial Skills for Self-Reliance Among Senior Secondary School Students in Bayo, Hawul, Kwaya-Kusar and Shani Local Government Areas of Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the role of Mathematics Education in the development of entrepreneurial skills among senior secondary school students. The study chooses a sample from the total population of 9200 senior secondary school students from the total of 15 public and private secondary schools in Bayo, Hawul, Kwaya-Kusar and Shani Local Government Areas of Borno State. A simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 183 SS2 students and 71 teachers from the 15 secondary schools in the selected local government areas. The study addresses three research questions. Data was collected using a self-constructed questionnaire (SQ). Data collected were analyzed and research questions answered using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation, and co-relational statistics of Pearson moment correlation. Among others, it was found that both students and teachers need knowledge of mathematics to be good entrepreneurs. There is strong positive relationship between mathematics and entrepreneurial skills. Additionally, the study reveal how Mathematical knowledge enhances the acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills and show the significant differences between male and female students' responses regarding the importance of Mathematical knowledge in acquiring Entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance. It was recommended that there is need to enhance the mathematical background of students, and teachers with strong mathematical background should be used in teaching entrepreneurship education.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial, Skills, Mathematics, Education.

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Introduction

Mathematics is a fundamental process for developing Entrepreneurship skills, as it is essential for everyone. Recognizing the importance of Mathematics can serve as a springboard for any student that is preparing for self-sufficiency in his/her life. Mathematics is a subject that involves the logic of shape, quantity and arrangement. Onyeachu (2016) pointed out that, Mathematics serves as a model for logical thinking, developing scientific solutions, drawing conclusions and solving real-life problems. Uka (2015) pointed out that there is a very good relationship between problem-solving skills and Entrepreneurship Education. Problem-solving which is a core component of Mathematics as a subject, just the way creativity is central to Entrepreneurship. Therefore, there exist a strong connection between these two important variables, as both foster critical thinking and innovation. Mathematics gives extra power to our thinking and creative minds. Every occupation which students may choose to pursue need the application of Mathematics (Eze, 2019).

Entrepreneurship Education is the aspect of Education that help in equipping an individual with the mind-set to undertake the risk of venturing into new opportunities by applying knowledge and skill acquired in school. These skills include resiliency, focus, creativity, problem solving, concentration, management of resources, goal-setting, decision-making among others.

Nigeria, being a developing nation, is faced with several challenges, among which including unemployment, poverty, conflict etc. (Oviawe, 2019). These issues present significant obstacles to the well-being of individuals. The high rate of unemployment among Nigerian graduates from several institutions is largely due to a gap between labor market demands and the lack of essential employable skills among these graduates (Diabelen and Oni 2020). These skill gaps hinder youth development, which in turn affects national development. One way to address this issue is by fostering entrepreneurial skills in Nigerian students, which could help to mitigate the growing unemployment crisis among others.

Nigeria is blessed with natural resources, but despite the availability of these natural resources and huge revenue that use to be generated from the sale of oil and gas, Nigeria's economy has not been significantly responding to the pressures of demand from over two hundred and ten (210) million people. This highlights the problem and limitations of relying on wealth derived from natural resources without a robust manufacturing sector. As many countries in the world plan to phase out the use of petrol-powered vehicles etc. experts warn that this could spell trouble for Nigeria, whose economy is heavily dependent on crude oil sales in the global market. Therefore, it is crucial to prepare a future for Nigerian youths beyond oil and gas, for its citizens to achieve self-reliance. It is based on this background that this research work seeks to determine how the knowledge of Mathematics Education is capable of enhancing the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills such as creativity and problem-solving skills among senior secondary school students.

Problem Statement

World economic instability and unemployment are global challenges, not unique to Nigeria alone but to many countries. Many countries have implemented various measures to address these issues, but the problem persists. Entrepreneurship, which involves the development of specific skills, has been recognized as a means of promoting self-reliance among students and empowering citizens to identify opportunities and create new job opportunities through the establishment of new ventures. The development of these skills requires a solid foundation in Mathematics. Therefore, the central question of this study is: *How can Mathematics Education enhance the acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills among senior secondary school students?* In other words, to what extent does the acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills depend on the knowledge of Mathematics Education?

This study therefore, is targeted to ascertain if the knowledge of mathematics will enhance the development of the skills. It will determine to what extent the skills required mathematics knowledge. It also investigates if gender of mathematics teacher has anything to do with the development of the entrepreneurial skills

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are to:

- i. Assess the extent to which Mathematics Education plays a significant role in the development of Entrepreneurial skills among secondary school students.
- ii. Examine the extent to which Mathematics knowledge contributes to the acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills.
- iii. Analyze the mean responses of male and female students regarding the importance of Mathematical knowledge in acquiring Entrepreneurial skills.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- i. To what extent does Mathematics Education play a significant role in the development of Entrepreneurial skills among secondary school students?
- ii. To what extent does Mathematics knowledge contribute to the acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills?
- iii. What are the mean responses of male and female students regarding the importance of Mathematical knowledge in acquiring Entrepreneurial skills?

Literature Review

There are a lot of literatures that focused on defining an entrepreneur and characteristics and traits of a typical entrepreneur. However, limited or no attention has been given on the effectiveness of Mathematics Education in the development of entrepreneurial skills among secondary school students in the context of sustaining the economy of developing nation like Nigeria, especially in comparing the concept, challenges and prospects of entrepreneurship. Nigerian government efforts in generating employment are supported by Entrepreneurship development programs. However, many literatures pointed out that improper coordination and focused national development plans renders these efforts ineffective. It is very clear that the key driver that could transform Nigeria's unemployment crisis is Entrepreneurship.

Mathematics has contributed more to the advancement of modern civilization than any other discipline. Its value lies in its universal application across cultures and its pivotal role in the development of Entrepreneurial skills. According to Abubakar (2020), Mathematics has been an integral part of human's progress, from calculating the distance to the stars to navigating the seas and designing complex machines etc. he further pointed out that all major business transactions, both local and international are grounded in Mathematical principles.

Idu (2018) studied the role of Mathematics in enhancing Entrepreneurship development in Nigeria and outlined the key objectives of teaching Mathematics at all levels of Education, which include fostering creativity and curiosity, developing relevant manipulative skills, highlighting the broad applicability of Mathematics and cultivating a positive attitude toward the subject. He discovered in his findings that entrepreneurship, like Mathematics, requires certain skills that can only be acquired through the application of Mathematical knowledge. He stated further that stakeholders recognize that Mathematics Education significantly contributes to improving a nation's economy by equipping youth with the necessary skills for entrepreneurial success.

Omokaro and Nwanunu, (2019) worked on the Mathematical role in Entrepreneurship development and discovered that Mathematics is indispensable to all fields of knowledge, and any Entrepreneurship Education that excludes it is built on a flawed foundation. As such, Mathematics will continue to be a guiding force for all sciences, technology and Entrepreneurship.

Veer and Shukla, (2019) studied Mathematics the queen of commerce and specify that Practical business applications include tasks such as managing accounts, forecasting sales, applying price discounts, and calculating payrolls, interest, and resource usage uses Mathematics which is crucial in everyday activities, especially in business, where it is used to manage transactions, categorize data, analyze information, and make decisions is the driving force. Mathematics is used in areas such as basic arithmetic (fractions, decimals, percentages, etc.), algebra, statistics, and even more advanced fields like linear programming, calculus and matrix algebra, all of which are vital for business management.

Mathematics Education as the Heart of Entrepreneurship

Abubakar (2020) worked on refocusing Education towards entrepreneurship development in Nigeria and observed that many young people, especially those of school-going age, have lost their lives, and the Nigerian government continues to struggle with addressing this crisis. A major contributing factor to this issue is the widespread perception that many Nigerian graduates lack the necessary employable skills. Entrepreneurship has been identified as a means of providing employment, generating income, and addressing poverty, which help in combating Nigeria's unemployment rate. He further stated that graduate unemployment has contributed significantly to social vices such as robbery, kidnapping, political violence, and insurgency, particularly in Nigeria's northeastern and northwestern regions.

Abiodun-Oyebanji (2015) studied entrepreneurship in theory and practice and discovered that the term Entrepreneurship is multifaceted, with contributions from various academic disciplines. Mathematicians, for instance, view Entrepreneurship as the combination of resources, materials, and assets to create value greater than the sum of the individual components. Unemployment is the portion of the labor force that is not employed at any given time, measured as a percentage. In Nigeria, the unemployment rate has reached dangerous levels, affecting professionals such as lawyers, doctors, engineers, and accountants.

Omolayo (2016) looked at Entrepreneurship as the act of establishing a business, managing transactions, and taking risks to profit from skills developed through the acquiring knowledge of Mathematics Education. Operationally, Entrepreneurship involves the ability to acquire educational skills, explore and exploit investment opportunities, and establish and manage successful businesses.

Mathematics as the Key for Enhancing Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria

Ackoff *et al.*, (2020) worked on system thinkers and pointed out that systems thinking involves recognizing that challenges are part of a larger system, and addressing them in isolation can lead to unintended consequences. Mathematics fosters a systems-thinking approach in people, which is essential in understanding the interconnectedness of people, structures, and processes within business organizations. For educators, this means embracing a forward-thinking vision that extends beyond what is immediately visible. Vision is about anticipating all future possibilities, not just reacting to the present situations.

In summary, by incorporating Mathematical knowledge into Entrepreneurship education we will see that mathematics is not just an academic subject; it is a vital tool for Entrepreneurship and the development of a sustainable

economy in every nation. Nigeria can better equip its youth to contribute to its economic growth and address the nation's unemployment challenges.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on Human Capital Theory by Becker (1964). The theory posits that individuals and societies derive economic benefits from investments in people, particularly through Education, training, experience, and health. The theory views these investments as a form of capital that increases productivity and earnings over time. In simpler terms, the theory suggests that the more a person invests in their own knowledge and skills, the more productive and valuable they become to employers, leading to higher wages and economic growth.

1. **Core Idea:** Human Capital Theory explains how education and skill development (including Mathematics Education) are investments that increase an individual's productivity and potential income.
2. **Relevancy with our research topic:** we are focusing on Mathematics Education as a form of human capital investment. We want to link it to the development of Entrepreneurial skills, which are crucial for self-reliance. This aligns perfectly with the theory's view that Education leads to better economic outcomes.
3. **Application:** considering the fact that Mathematics Education enhances problem solving, logical reasoning, financial literacy and critical thinking. These are the essential skills for Entrepreneurship. These skills, when developed early (e.g., in secondary school students), will prepare students to become self-reliant and economically productive individuals.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study followed and adopted a descriptive type of survey design, concerned with extensive collection of data using a structured questionnaire which was developed to collect data from a representative sample of students in the sampled schools regarding the role played by Mathematics Education knowledge in the development of Entrepreneurial skills among final year Senior Secondary School students.

The study was carried out in Bayo, Hawul, Kwaya-Kusar, and Shani, Local Government Areas of Borno State, Nigeria. The population was made up of mathematics teachers and students in 15 public and private secondary schools in Bayo, Hawul, Kwaya-Kusar, and Shani Local Government Areas of Borno State, presented in Figure 1.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample of this study consists of 183 Senior Secondary School (SS2) students and 71 teachers selected from 4 public secondary schools out of 25, and 11 private secondary schools out of 42 in the study area. The distribution is shown in Table 1. Likewise 71 mathematics teachers were randomly selected from both public and private secondary schools. From the public secondary schools, there were 21 respondents while in the private secondary schools, there were 50 respondents (See Table 2).

Data Collection and Analysis

The instrument to use in the data collection is questionnaire method of data collection. Respondents will be asked to express their opinions using a four-point modified Likert scale which are Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The scale will range from 4 to 1 for positively worded items, and the reverse for negatively worded items. The questionnaire will be validated by some experts, who will review and confirm its appropriateness for the study.

The data collected will be analyzed using mean and standard deviation by groping the data using frequency distribution and calculate the mean and standard deviation using the formula mean $\bar{x} = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f}$, and standard deviation

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (x - \bar{x})^2}{\sum f}}.$$

The hypothesis will be tested using t-test with SPSS version 30.0

The research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. To arrive at a decision, any item that is positively worded which has a mean score of 2.5 and above is taken as accepted while an item with a mean less than 2.5 is rejected. For the negatively worded items, the reverse is the case. Exceptionally in SQ, to determine the extent the entrepreneurial skills needed mathematics, Pearson moment correlation was used to correlate the students' score Entrepreneurship Education and Mathematics.

Instrument for Data Collection

Two instruments, one for students and the second for mathematics teachers which were questionnaires tagged “Students Questionnaire (SQ)” and “Mathematics Teachers’ Questionnaire (MTQ)” respectively. Each of the questionnaire is made up of two sections, section A of each dealt with the demographic variable of the respondents while section B of SQ and MTQ consists of 16 items and 9 items respectively. The instruments were validated by two experts after which the items in SQ increase from 12 to 16 while that of MTQ increased from 7 to 9.

A four-point likert scale rating was used from the strongly Agree (SA) to strongly Disagree (SD) with weighting ranging from 4 to 1 for positively cued items and vice versa for negatively cued items.

Administration of Instrument

A total of 200 and 80 copies of SQ and MTQ were administered to the respondents respectively by the researcher and his assistants. 183 and 71 were respectively collected back after respondents have filled them.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1

From Table 3, it could be observed that items 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10,11,12, positively worded with mean 3.47, 3.46, 3.11, 3.05, 2.90, 2.89, 2.54, 2.88, 2.85, 2.91, and 2.69 respectively were above the cut-off point (2.5) and were accepted, likewise item 8 had a mean of 2.32 and was rejected. All these indicate the extent to which mathematics is needed in developing entrepreneurial skills.

From Table 4, items 1 to 8 have means above the cut-off point (2.5) indicating that mathematics is highly needed in developing entrepreneurial skills. Both the students and teachers of entrepreneurship education need adequate knowledge of mathematics. The mean of item 9 is more than 2.5, which is the cut-off point. This implies that these attributes /traits of mathematics, initiate, risk-taker, drive and persistence, resilience, critical and creative thinking, problem solving ability, goal setting, decision making, planning and organizing have been confirmed as the characteristics of a good entrepreneur.

Research Question 2

Table 5 shows the correlation analysis between entrepreneurship scores and mathematics scores of students. From the result obtained, one can infer that there is a strong positive relationship (0.691) between entrepreneurial skills and mathematics. This shows that the strength of their relationship is about 69.1%. This relationship is very significant with a p- value of less than 0.001.

Research Question 3

From Table 6, items 1, 2, 3 have means 2.10, 2.23, 2.25 respectively which are less than 2.5 cut-off point and were rejected. This implies that the gender of the mathematics teachers does not affect the entrepreneurial skills development. Item 4 has a mean of 3.23 which is above 2.5 cut-off point and so is accepted indicating that both male and female teachers apply mathematics in entrepreneurial skills.

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

1. Mathematics is really needed in developing entrepreneurial skills.
2. Both students and teachers need knowledge of mathematics to be good entrepreneurs.
3. There is strong positive relationship between mathematics and entrepreneurial skills.
4. The gender of mathematics teachers does not influence the entrepreneurial skills acquisitions.
5. A good mathematician would be a good entrepreneur.
6. The attributes of the mathematical minded persons were confirmed to be that of entrepreneurs.

Discussion of Findings

The data on Tables 3 and 4 show that the knowledge of mathematics will enhance entrepreneurial skills development. This is in agreement to the opinion of Sidhu (2006) which says that the aim of learning mathematics is not only for knowledge and understanding objectives, it includes skills objectives which among other things, will help the learners and develop skills. It will also help him (learner) develop the ability to apply mathematics in his future vocational life. This finding also agrees to the general saying that mathematics is needed in every facet of life. The study from Tables 3 and 4 reveals that both the students and teachers agreed that knowledge of mathematics is really needed for the development of entrepreneurial skills. Item 7 of Table 4 reveals that though knowledge of mathematics is needed, one need not be a mathematician before entrepreneurial skills are developed.

The positive relationship between the students’ mathematics score and that of their entrepreneurial education as stated in Table 5 is a clear indicator and agrees with people’s opinion that a good mathematics students can equally do well in other areas including development of entrepreneurial skills. Furthermore, it reveals that a good mathematician should be a good entrepreneur. This study from Table 6 also reveals that the gender of the mathematics teacher does not influence the development of entrepreneurial skills. This agrees with the opinion of Uka (2015) which says that there is no significant main effect of gender on pupils’ academic achievement in mathematics. From item 9, of Table 4, it reveals that the attributes of mathematical minds were that of entrepreneur. This agrees with the thinking of some experts who said that entrepreneurs

are willing to take risks, make decisions, and possess ability to initiate among others.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study revealed that knowledge of mathematics is a crucial element in the teaching/learning and development of entrepreneurial skills. The sex of the mathematics teaching has nothing to do with acquisition of the entrepreneurial skills. Both the students and teachers need knowledge of mathematics to really scale through in the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.

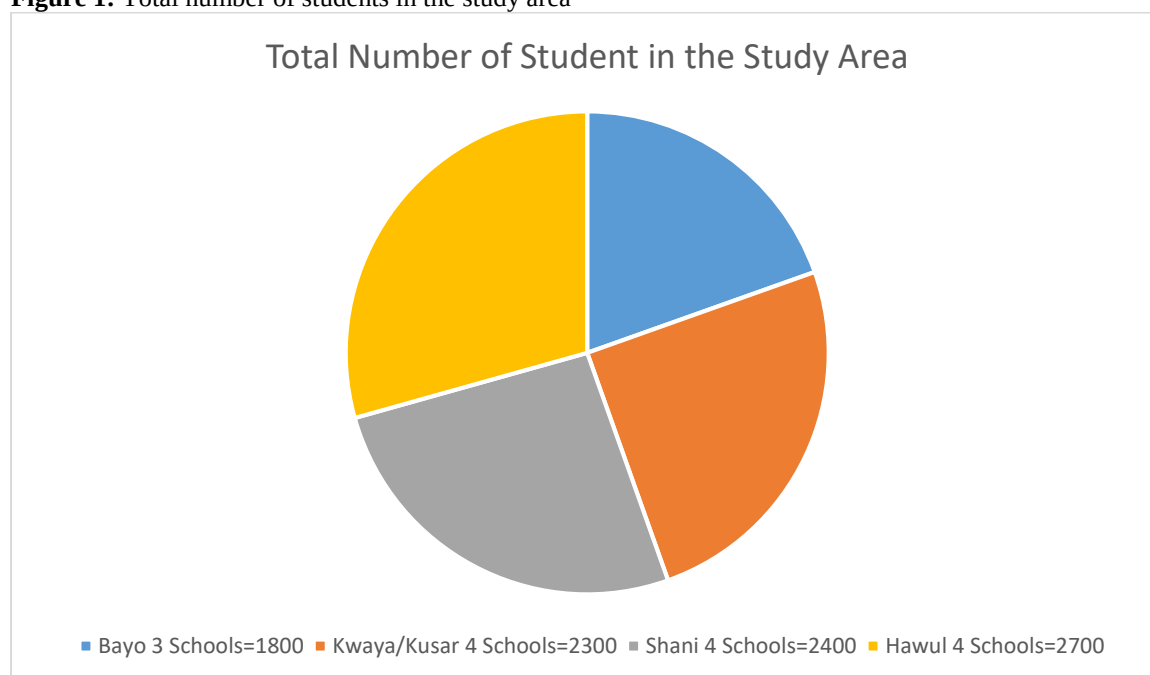
1. There is need to enhance the mathematical background of students.
2. Teachers with strong mathematical background should be used in teaching entrepreneurship education.
3. Entrepreneurship education teachers whose background is not in mathematics should embark on training and re-training to improve their mathematical traits.

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Figures**Figure 1:** Total number of students in the study area**Tables****Table 1:** Distribution of Sampled Senior Secondary School (SS 2) students

Nature of School	Male	Female	Total
Public	20	42	62
Private	56	65	121
Total	76	107	183

Table 2: Distribution of Sampled Mathematics Teachers

Nature of School	Male	Female	Total
Public	6	15	21
Private	20	30	50
Total	26	45	71

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation scores of Respondents' (students) Opinion on the need of Mathematics in Developing Entrepreneurial skills.

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1	I like mathematics.	3.47	0.678	Accept
2	I like acquiring entrepreneurial skills.	3.46	0.600	Accept
3	I need Mathematics to do well in entrepreneurial skills.	3.11	0.904	Accept
4	Good mathematics students do better in entrepreneurial skills than those who are not so good in mathematics.	3.05	0.953	Accept
5	Developing entrepreneurial skills needs sufficient knowledge of mathematics.	2.90	0.876	Accept
6	Mathematics is highly needed in every entrepreneurial skill.	2.89	0.916	Accept
7	One cannot do well in entrepreneurial skills without mathematics.	2.54	0.948	Accept
8	Knowledge of mathematics is not really needed in entrepreneurial skill development.	2.32	0.983	Reject
9	Every entrepreneurial skill requires knowledge of mathematics.	2.88	0.894	Accept
10	My doing well in entrepreneurial skills is hinged on my knowledge of mathematics.	2.85	0.909	Accept
11	Without knowledge of mathematics I cannot do well in entrepreneurial skills.	2.91	0.855	Accept
12	My entrepreneurial skills cannot be developed without mathematics.	2.69	0.924	Accept

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation scores of respondents' (mathematics teachers) opinions on the need of mathematics in developing entrepreneurial skills.

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1	Mathematics is needed in developing entrepreneurial skills.	3.68	0.580	Accept
2	Teaching of entrepreneurial skills need adequate knowledge of mathematics.	3.44	0.649	Accept
3	There is no entrepreneurial skill that does not need mathematics knowledge.	3.13	0.792	Accept
4	A good mathematics student will do well in entrepreneurial skills.	3.39	0.597	Accept
5	A good entrepreneur cannot do without a good knowledge of mathematics.	2.94	0.715	Accept
6	Required traits of a good entrepreneur are impeded in the traits/ attitudes of a good mathematics learner.	3.08	0.627	Accept
7	Teachers of entrepreneurship need adequate knowledge of mathematics.	3.25	0.625	Accept
8	A good mathematics student will be a good entrepreneur.	3.27	0.675	Accept
9	The under listed entrepreneurial skills, traits/ behaviors are major attributes of mathematical mind. so one can be a good entrepreneur			Accept
	i. Optimistic			
	ii. Initiative	3.54	0.556	
	iii. Risk- taker	3.61	0.520	
	iv. Drive and persistence	3.59	0.550	
	v. Resilience	3.61	0.547	
	vi. Critical and creative thinking	3.62	0.544	
	vii. Problem-solving ability	3.63	0.541	
	viii. Goal-setting	3.58	0.552	
	ix. Decision-making	3.59	0.523	
	x. Planning and organizing	3.56	0.527	
		3.58	0.525	

Table 5: Pearson Moment Correlation of Students' Score in Entrepreneurial Skills and that of Mathematics.

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation Coefficient	P- Value
Entrepreneurship Score	70.97	17.07	0.691	< 0.001
Mathematics Score	69.78	16.11		