

Strategies for Identifying and Motivating Potential Entrepreneurs in Public Secondary Schools in Abia State

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Abstract: *This study aim at specifying strategies for identifying and motivating potential entrepreneurs in public secondary schools in Abia State. Survey research design was adopted for the study and population of 216 business subject teachers was studied without sampling. Data was collected with structured questionnaire validated by 3 experts. Split-half method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument Mean was used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses. Findings revealed that respondents perceived students' project and observation of students as very good strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs and reinforcement a suitable strategy for motivating potential entrepreneurs right from the secondary school level. It was concluded that identifying and motivating potential entrepreneurs right from the secondary school level will sufficiently nurture entrepreneurial mindset in youths to eventually become successful entrepreneurs. It was therefore recommended that teachers should create enabling environment by identifying and encouraging potential entrepreneurs by making students become more creative in carrying out tasks to exhibit their potentials and governments should provide schools with resources that can help potential student entrepreneurs to set up young farmers clubs or small enterprises while in school.*

Key words: *Business Teachers, Identifying and Motivating, Potential Entrepreneurs*

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the logical and systematic acquisition of knowledge through recognized agencies and controlled environment of the school in order to achieve societal welfare and maximize personal adjustment {Udegboka in Atakpa, 2011}. It is the sum total of all the experiences that enlightens somebody's mind, increases one's power of knowledge, fosters insight, develops abilities and attitudes and strengthens one's will power. Education has been widely accepted as a

crucial factor for economic and industrial development of any nation.

For a society that is rapidly changing, it is very important that education for self-reliance should be the main thrust, in order to achieve vision 20-20 in 2020. The capacity of the economy to absorb majority of young people in paid jobs is shrinking at an alarming rate and this has necessitated the need to introduce of entrepreneurship education in our education curriculum from primary school to foster skills acquisition (Okorie, 2001). The aim is to equip the individual students with crucial and efficient skills for the world of work. In line with this, Darling-Hammond (2010) stated that education can no longer be productively focused primarily on the transmission of pieces of information that, once memorized, comprise a stable storehouse of knowledge. Instead, schools must teach disciplinary knowledge in ways that focus on central concepts and help students to learn how to think critically and learn for themselves. Such students can use knowledge in new situations and manage the demands of changing information, technologies, jobs and social conditions. In recognition of this, Onwuka (2009) stated that entrepreneurial studies enable students to acquire certain personal characteristics and enabling qualities, skills, expertise, attitude and aptitude including functional management skills needed for successful entrepreneurial ventures. Omoniyi (2006) stated that government introduced. Entrepreneurship education into the secondary school curriculum in order to prepare students for useful living within their society and for positive contributions to the development of the nation. Entrepreneurial education gives students an understanding of economic and business as well as to encourage them to be enterprising and to view business enterprises as positive and worthwhile (Beder, 2010). On the other hand, Alain (2009) sees entrepreneurial education as all activities that foster entrepreneurial mindsets, attitude and skills as ideas generation, start-up, growth and innovation. Nwabuisi (2009) added that skill acquisition and personal development for effective exploration of investment opportunities by entrepreneurs need to begin from the formative age of the child. Identifying and motivating of students with genuine entrepreneurial potentials are essential for timely planning of human resources.

With effective human resources planning, potential entrepreneurially inclined students in the school could be helped make impact on the growth of local businesses. People from Abia State are highly endowed with many potential business entrepreneurs seeking opportunities and are generally highly enterprising. They are hardworking and most of them are proprietors of one kind of business or another also many are entrepreneurs at different levels and standard . Ogwo (2010) added that there is need to identify and motivate potential entrepreneurs in Abia State and early detection of children with entrepreneurial spirit will go a long way in helping teachers to expose such children to learning experiences necessary for the entrepreneurial skill development. This calls for more careful education of school children in order to develop the entrepreneurial spirit in them (Chikobi & Ezenduka, 2010). An entrepreneur is a valuable asset of any nation that will ensure business success if the skills are identified early, motivated and utilized but these are not well taken care of by school curriculum and teachers in the secondary schools where such potentials are found (Ebiloma 2011).

An entrepreneur is anybody who co-ordinates other factors of production and bears the risk of uncertainty by investing his scarce resources in business ventures. He/she is an individual who is able and willing to take risks with aims and objectives of maximizing profits, one who is courageous, alert, visionary and is engaged in the network of exchanges that stimulate and promote the economy (Chikere, Onuoha, Emenike & Ikoru, 2013). A potential entrepreneur has qualities of an entrepreneur and talents that can be developed. A potential entrepreneur possesses a complex personality, certain personality characteristics make him quite different; and

most of these entrepreneurial traits can be further developed in an individual by well-structured training and development programmes (Ahkuemonkham in Atakpa, 2011).

Some of the important characteristics often attributed to successful entrepreneurs as highlighted by Ahkuemonkham in Atakpa, 2011 are need for achievement as (having an urge to do something new and better, a concern to maintain high standards), independence, drive (also called the need for power). They are people who do not like situations where the outcome of a pursuit depends on chance and not their efforts, highly creative and innovative, flexible and are willing to adopt a change.

Teachers have many roles to play in discovering and encouraging those students. Effective teaching requires that teachers apply methods, techniques and strategies in systematic manner to result gainful change in behavior of the learner and most practicing teachers fail to do this.. At all levels of education, teachers are the bedrock and life wire of education process. The teachers are good managers of both students and knowledge. Business subjects teachers teach business courses which lead to self-reliance. In the process of educating the students, teachers prepare lesson notes, teach and administer tests, monitor students' progress and serve as guidance counselors to the students. Ikegwani and Achilike (2006) Opined that identifying and motivating potential entrepreneurs are among cogent roles of teachers in teaching and learning processes Okpan (2010) added that this is where proper counseling of students comes in. To Okoye (2011), the absence of guidance counselors in secondary schools has added more tasks to school teachers who now are saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that students choose careers based on their interests and competences. Ndinechi and Okoye (2012) researched on Assessment of Anambra State Secondary School Business teacher's effectiveness in using field trip and demonstration strategies. The results of the analyses revealed that secondary School business teachers were ineffective in the use of field trip strategy and in the use of demonstration strategy. One of their recommendations was that government should provide fund for its development. Katz (2008) in his research titled 'fully mature but not fully legitimate: A different perspective on the state of entrepreneurship education seeks to demonstrate that the field of entrepreneurship/small business can be characterized as fully mature, a new contrasting one proposed by Kuratko. In addition, this article adds additional support to the concept of partial legitimacy on which Katz and Kuratko agree based on the analyses, a theoretical life cycle model for the growth of discipline in general is offered using entrepreneurship as the example. The major consequence of entrepreneurship's full maturity is identified as growing centrality of the business-school based discipline of entrepreneurship in relation to emerging entrepreneurship efforts across campuses. Amongst the two researchers none could state how to catch potential entrepreneurs young this work is meant to highlight different strategies for identifying and motivating of potential entrepreneurs in public secondary schools most teachers of business subjects have not been able to identify among their students because they have not applied them. It is expedient to identify potential entrepreneurs in the early stage of students' lives so as motivate them to channel their development towards whatever area that will bring success to them in future (Stoner, Freeman & Gilbert, 2009). Therefore, for effective guidance on choice of career depends on how these teachers perceive the strategies for identifying those potential entrepreneurs so as to motivate them.

Statement of the Problem

The absence of entrepreneurship education in any nation is a major cause of unemployment among young school leavers because entrepreneurship creates employment and enables self-employment. Young school leavers roam about the streets in search of jobs not because they lack

entrepreneurial abilities and potentials at their age, but because of their inability to identify among themselves those that have entrepreneurial abilities and potentials and because of inadequate encouragement. Teachers are usually busy struggling to cover their syllabuses, so busy teaching that they don't know the students' goals, interests, potentials and objectives. They hardly relate well enough with the students so as to assist them in making realistic personal decisions which has led some students into aspirations that are not their favorites due to frustration and lack of guidance and counseling.

Purpose of the Study

This main purpose of this study was to determine strategies for identifying and motivating potential entrepreneurs in public secondary schools in Abia State. Specifically, this study determined:

1. Students' projects as strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs in public secondary school in Abia State.
2. observation of students in/outside the classes as strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs in public secondary schools in Abia State.
3. Reinforcement of students' efforts as strategy for motivating potential entrepreneurs in public secondary schools in Abia State.

Research Questions

1. How can Students' project be a strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs in public secondary schools in Abia State?
2. How can observation of students in/outside the classes be a strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs in public secondary schools in Abia State?
3. How can reinforcement of students be a strategy for motivating potential entrepreneurs in public secondary schools in Abia State?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance;

1. There is no significant difference between the mean rating of the male and female business subject teachers on students' project as strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs in public secondary schools in Abia State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean rating of the male and female business subject teachers on reinforcement of students' efforts as strategy for motivating potential entrepreneurs in public secondary schools in Abia State..
3. There is no significant difference between the mean rating of the male and female business subject teachers on observation as strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs in public secondary schools in Abia State.

METHOD

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The area of the study was Abia State of Nigeria. The population consisted of 216 (87 males and 129 female) business subject teachers in the three Education Zones in Abia State (Aba, Ohafia and Umuahia). Due to the manageable size of the population, there was no need for sampling as the whole population was used.

A 23 item questionnaire was the instrument for data collection titled "Teachers Perception of Strategies for Identifying and Motivating Potential Entrepreneurs in Public Secondary Schools" (TEPSIMPEPSSQ). The items were structured on a 4– point rating scale (Strongly agree- 4, Agree - 3, Disagree - 2 and strongly disagree -1). To ensure the validity of the instrument, the research instrument was subjected to content validation by three expert s. To establish the reliability of the instrument, the split-half method for testing reliability was used. by administering the instrument on a sample of 26 teachers of business subjects from public secondary schools in Imo State because it has similar secondary school system with Abia. Responses were collated and computed using Pearson Product Moment; a co-efficient of 0.92 was obtained .which proved that the instrument was considered reliable. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Z– test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Where the z - value was less than the critical value of z, the null hypothesis was not rejected but where the calculated z- value was equal or greater than the critical value of z, the null hypothesis was rejected

RESULTS

Research Question 1.

Table 1: Respondents' mean rating on students' project as strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs in secondary schools.

S/N	Items on using students project as strategy	X	SD	Decision
1	Taking school assignment seriously by students	3.27	0.79	Agree
3	Students that use their initiatives on an issue.	3.25	0.65	Agree
4	A student that manages the available resources in carrying out school assignment.	3.24	0.65	Agree
5	Students that perceivers in carrying out school assignment.	3.19	0.66	Agree
6	Students that produces marketable products.	3.04	0.79	Agree
7	Handling of difficult assignment by students.	2.91	0.74	Agree
8	Students that patiently work to complete assignments.	3.13	0.73	Agree
9	Students that have creative spirit.	3.28	0.62	Agree
10	Innovative ability by students.	3.20	0.67	Agree
11	Students that is ready to take risk as entrepreneurs.	3.02	0.84	Agree
	Cluster mean	3.15	0.73	Agree

Table 1 shows that all the items have mean rating ranging from 2.91 to 3.28 which is above the cut off mean of 2.50 and cluster mean of 3.15. This means that the respondents agreed with students' project as a strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs. Standard deviation for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents were not wide apart in their mean.

Table 2: Respondents' Mean rating on observation as strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs in secondary schools

SN	Items on using observation of students as strategy	X	SD	Decision
22	Students that are emotionally stable.	3.27	0.70	Agree
23	Students that exhibits leadership qualities.	3.20	0.69	Agree
24	Students that are open and honest in carrying out responsibilities.	3.02	0.67	Agree
25	Students that adapts easily to changes in school environment	3.07	0.61	Agree
26	Persistent in carrying out set out difficult academic goals by students	3.22	0.70	Agree
27	Students that communicate easily with fellow students, teachers or visitors	3.25	0.77	Agree
28	Students that relate very well with others in the course of carrying out school assignment.	3.22	0.71	Agree
29	Students that show self-confidence.	3.17	0.80	Agree
30	Students that are very attentive to classroom lessons.	3.04	0.63	Agree
31	Students that carry out school assignment independently.	3.27	0.67	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.16	0.70	Agree

Table 2 shows that all the items have mean rating ranging from 3.04 to 3.27 which is above the cut off mean of 2.50 and cluster mean of 3.16. this means that the respondents agreed with observation as a strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs. Standard deviation for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents were not wide apart in their mean.

Table 3: Respondents' Mean rating on Reinforcement as strategy for motivating potential entrepreneurs secondary schools.

S.N	Items on reinforcement as strategy	X	SD	Decision
12	Giving cash rewards for good performance.	3.00	0.93	Agree
13	Scholarship award for good performance before other students can motivate them.	3.44	0.62	Agree
14	Verbal praise for good performance before other students can motivate.	3.38	0.69	Agree
15	Display of project material during exhibition or seminar motivates.	3.44	0.65	Agree
16	Government sponsorship to participate in State or Federal competition is a motivator.	3.55	0.67	Agree
17	School sponsorship to participate in national school competition motivates potentials	3.46	0.74	Agree
18	Sponsorship of private enterprise to students motivates them.	3.41	0.73	Agree
19	Discussing student achievement in Newspapers and magazine	3.35	0.73	Agree

	motivates.			
20	Recognizing students through assigning responsibilities to them.	3.28	0.75	Agree
21	Giving special materials gift from teachers and school authority.	3.38	0.74	Agree
22	Offer of start-up capital for small enterprises.	3.24	0.78	Agree
23	Linkage to established entrepreneurs for `membership.	3.17	0.73	Agree
Cluster mean		3.34	0.73	Agree

Table 3 shows that all the items have mean rating ranging from 3.00 to 3.55 which is above the cut off mean of 2.50 and cluster mean of 3.34. This means that the respondents agreed with reinforcement as a strategies for motivating potential entrepreneurs. Standard deviation for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents were not wide apart in their mean.

Summary of z- test comparison of male and female respondents on students’ project as a strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs in secondary schools.

Group	N	X	SD	Df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
Male	87	3.17	0.41	214	0.59	1.96	Not Significant
Female	129	3.13	0.38				

Table 4 shows that calculated z – value of 0.59 is less than the critical z- value of 1.96 at 214 degree of freedom . This mean that the respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on student project as a strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs in secondary schools in Abia State. Therefore, the null hypothesis was upheld.

Table 5: Summary of z– test comparison of male and female respondents on observation as strategy for identifying of potential entrepreneurs.

Group	N	X	SD	Df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
Male	87	3.21	0.42	214	1.33	1.96	Not Significant
Female	129	3.13	0.41				

Table 5 shows that calculated z– value of 1.33 is less than the critical z- value of 1.96 at 214 degree of freedom. This mean that the respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on test of aptitude as a strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs in secondary schools in Abia State. Therefore, the null hypothesis was upheld.

Table 6: **Summary of z – test comparison of male and female respondents on reinforcement as strategy for motivating of potential entrepreneurs.** N = 216

Group	N	X	SD	Df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
Male	87	3.36	0.35	214	1.22	1.96	Not Significant
Female	129	3.29	0.39				

Table 4 shows that calculated z – value of 1.22 is less than the critical z- value of 1.96 at 214 degree of freedom . This mean that the respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on reinforcement as a strategy for motivating potential entrepreneurs in secondary schools in Abia State. Therefore, the null hypothesis was upheld.

DISCUSSIONS

Strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs

Findings of the study revealed that strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs in secondary schools include students' project and observation of students in/outside the class. The finding is in agreement with Okwuanaso & Nwazor (2000) that student project is a problem given to class or certain members to solve by the actual performance of activities connected with it and could be a survey such as practically determining all it takes to run a small business organization or business unit. The finding agrees with Pedro (2010) that students will know how to think critically, apply knowledge to new situations, analyze information, understand new ideas, communicate effectively, collaborate, solve problems and make decisions.

The finding agrees with the view of Halfdan (2009) that observation is ideal strategy for identifying potential entrepreneurs in school because some characteristics of entrepreneurs such as risk taking, task orientation, leadership, creativity, resourceful versatile, knowledgeable and imaginative can only be identified by observation. The finding also agrees with the view of Emenogu (2009) that direct observation of behaviour to assess students demands viewing the individual in a real life stimulate situation such as student's regular interest in reading an occupation course catalogue, enrolment in an occupation programme rather than a literal arts programme, regular attendance to occupational classes and choice of projects.

The fact that the respondents did not differ significantly in their mean rating as a result of gender is ample evidence that the strategies are generally considered as effective for all students irrespective of gender. Findings of the study revealed that strategies for motivating potential entrepreneurs in secondary schools include reinforcement. The finding agrees with Bateman & Sneil (2009) view on motivation as forces that energize, direct and sustain a person's efforts and highly motivated person (as reinforcement) works hard toward achieving performance goals. The finding agrees with Nnabuike (2009) that motivation (as reinforcement) has to do with why people behave the way they do. The finding agree with the work of Anwanna (2010) that motivation is important in getting children to learn, undertake meaningful and purposeful actions that must be guided by some objectives and for the objective to be attained by students, resources, environment and other variables have to be supportive to drive them toward desired direction.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that identifying and motivating potential entrepreneurs' right from the secondary school level will sufficiently nurture entrepreneurial mindset in youths to eventually become successful entrepreneurs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Secondary school principals should create enabling environment for identifying and motivating potential entrepreneurs through innovative and creative activities.
2. Secondary school teachers should take necessary steps to identify and motivate potential entrepreneurs through relevant class activities such as excursions to industries and business organizations.
3. Curriculum planners should include the strategies identified in this study in secondary school curriculum so as to start early to prepare potential entrepreneurs from that formative age.
4. Successful entrepreneur should offer scholarships to identified potential entrepreneurs from secondary schools to motivate them.
5. The government should provide schools with finance to set up young farmers' club and business/commercial centers in order to expose students to practical business life.

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