



TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGING ENTREPRENEURIAL INNOVATION FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE



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Abstract

This study explored techniques for managing entrepreneurial innovations for youth empowerment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Using a descriptive survey design, the study investigated 8142 teachers, with a sample of 382 perspective teachers from urban and rural schools using taro yemen sampling technique. A questionnaire, Techniques for Managing Entrepreneurial Innovation for Youth Empowerment (TMEIYEPSSQ), with a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.74, was used for data collection, mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions, while z-tests were employed to test hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed that teachers in both urban and rural schools positively attested to the techniques used for teaching entrepreneurial innovations, with mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. However, the study identified challenges such as lack of teacher training, low student motivation, inadequate funding, and poor school-industry collaboration etc. It concluded that techniques for managing entrepreneurial innovations are inconsistently applied and poorly managed, hindering youth empowerment, it recommended continuous professional development program for teachers with innovative teaching techniques and entrepreneurial thinking and maintained that government should review and revise the curriculum to embed practical action based entrepreneurial education.

Keywords: Techniques, Innovation, Entrepreneurial Innovation, Youth Empowerment.

Introduction

In the 21st century, entrepreneurial innovation is regarded as a deliberate and essential foundation, spearheaded by the National Education Research and Development Council (NERDC), to tackle youth unemployment and promote sustainable socio-economic development (Wobo & Amadi, 2024). The global rate of youth unemployment has heightened the need to equip young people with skills, knowledge, and entrepreneurial competencies while they are still in school (World Bank, 2022). Public senior secondary schools are viewed as foundational hubs for entrepreneurial training, providing an opportunity to instill skills in young individuals and empower them for the workforce or tertiary institutions.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a multifaceted concept that lacks a universally accepted definition, it involves describing individuals within their environment and how they meet their immediate needs, generate profits, manage themselves, and contribute significantly to socio-economic and political development (Wobo and Chukwu 2024). Historically, entrepreneurship was perceived as a myth that could not be taught or learned. However, research in the 21st century has debunked this mentality, emphasizing that entrepreneurship should not only be taught but also focus on effective pedagogical approaches to cover the curriculum and imbue entrepreneurial innovations, skills, and techniques in students across various generations, including generation Z, alpha generation, beta generation and others (Kuratko, 2005). The researchers concur that incorporating entrepreneurship education will expose students to technical, industrial, and critical thinking skills, enhancing their workability and promoting personal experiences (Kuratko, 2005). Successful entrepreneurial innovations and activities are contingent upon human venture and environmental conditions. Notably, Neck and Greene (2021) and Amini Phillip (as cited in Wobo and Amadi 2024) emphasized that it is the responsibility of teachers to discover reasoning and implementation skills that will enable students to excel in a highly uncertain entrepreneurial environment.

Techniques: The unabridged English dictionary (2022) defined technique as a method of achieving something out, especially one requiring some skills or knowledge. Let emphasize on some entrepreneurial techniques that will enhance youth empowerment according to Solomon (2007), the techniques are,

1. Integrating entrepreneurship education: Incorporating entrepreneurship principles and skills into the curriculum to accommodate all students without disparity.
2. Encouraging project-based learning: Fostering hands-on, real-world projects that develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills, within and outside the school environment because the business is business for all.
3. Fostering industry partnerships: Collaborating with local businesses and organizations, entrepreneurs to provide mentorship, resources, and opportunities.
4. Developing digital literacy: Equipping students with essential digital skills to thrive in a rapidly changing world.
5. Promoting innovation incubators: Creating spaces for students to ideate, prototype, and launch innovative projects. Such as, agricultural scheme, business groups, bead making, field trips ec cetera. In the same vain, Kutrako (2005) directed that approaches like opportunity identification and feasibility analysis, new venture planning, financing and operating, new market development and expansion strategies and institutionalizing innovation as these involves scholars interacting with entrepreneurs, by interviewing them, having them as mentors and learning about their experiences, through discussion.

By adopting these techniques, public senior secondary schools in Rivers State can imbibe and cultivate an entrepreneurial innovation culture thereby empowering youths to venture and succeed in an increasingly complex and dynamic world.

Innovation: Gartner (1999) in Wobo and Amadi (2024) defined "innovation "as the process in which the older and new or larger organizations should undertake on, in their business to actualize a desired goal. It is the implementation of a new improved products (goods or services) or process, marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practices, work place organization or external relations (Organization for Economic Co- operation and Development, 2005). These involves a practical implementation of ideas that results in introduction of new goods and services. It is an ultimate change, impressive results, an outcome, a step made to actualize a desired project. For a project to be successful, one must employ and explore design thinking to integrate the needs of the people, ensure possible technologies as well as business success requirements (IDEO, 2015). It is a dynamic and imperative tool for entrepreneurs, hence they need to know and apply the principles of successful

innovation, it should rather be seen as an economic concept, since it recognizes how best to take an advantage of opportunities and changes in an within the environment.

Entrepreneurial innovation: Entrepreneurial innovation is a multifaceted concept that involves developing and implementing novel solutions to real-world problems, driving economic growth, and improving living standards. It encompasses identifying opportunities, taking calculated risks, and capturing value through successful innovation.

Key Aspects of Entrepreneurial Innovation:

- **Identifying Opportunities:** Recognizing unmet needs and market gaps to provide solutions to known challenges. This involves analyzing market trends, consumer needs, and emerging technologies to spot gaps that can be filled with innovative products or services.
- **Risk Taking:** Investing time and resources to showcase market innovations, which can lead to job creation, revenue generation, and economic growth.
- **Capturing Value:** Creating value for customers, entrepreneurs, and society through successful innovation, which can be achieved by introducing new products, services, or business models.

Characteristics of Entrepreneurial Innovation:

- **Creativity:** Generating novel ideas through brainstorming, competencies, and practical experiences.
- **Proactivity:** Anticipating and responding to changing market conditions to stay ahead of the competition.
- **Adaptability:** Accepting market dynamics and seeking feedback to refine innovations.
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Benefits of Entrepreneurial Innovation:

- **Economic Growth:** Driving economic development, creating jobs, and increasing productivity.
- **Improved Living Standards:** Addressing complex challenges and improving quality of life.
- **Competitive Advantage:** Differentiating businesses from competitors and attracting customers.

Examples of innovative entrepreneurs include Mark Zuckerberg, who shaped the digital future through Facebook, and Elon Musk, who revolutionized the space industry through SpaceX. Aliko Dangote is another notable example of an entrepreneur who has made significant contributions to economic development. By fostering entrepreneurial innovation, individuals, groups, organizations, and societies can strike, drive, or enhance economic growth and development, improve living standards, and address complex challenges.

Youth Empowerment (YE)

Youth empowerment is a vital process that equips young people with the necessary tools, resources, and skills to take control of their lives and shape their future. It involves providing skills, attitudes, and competencies through formal, informal, or non-formal education, enabling young individuals to actively create a better future for themselves and their communities. UNESCO (2021) directed that YE should build confidence, direct and translate knowledge into action as this can only be achieved through EI hence it will provide the youth with practical skills for job creation, problem solving and economic independence . Ezeani (2023) enumerated that youths that youths can be empowered with the necessary tools required to earn a living and contribute immensely to the society.

Benefits of Youth Empowerment

- **Reduction in Crime Rate:** Empowered youth are less likely to engage in criminal activities, as they have opportunities, resources, and support to make positive life choices.
- **Poverty Eradication:** Youth empowerment can lead to economic growth, job creation, and a stronger society, ultimately breaking the cycle of poverty.
- **Increased Self-Esteem and Confidence:** Empowered young people develop a stronger sense of self-worth, believe in their abilities, and make informed decisions.



- Job Creation and Entrepreneurship: Empowered youth can become job creators rather than job seekers, driving innovation and economic development.
- Improved Mental Health: Empowerment can lead to reduced stress, anxiety, and depression among young people, promoting overall well-being.
- Stronger in Social Connections: Youth build meaningful relationships and networks through empowerment programs, fostering a sense of community and belonging.
- Enhanced Leadership Skills: Young people learn to take initiative, guide others effectively, and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Challenges to Entrepreneurial Innovation

According to Wobo and Emenike (2024) there are some factors inhibiting effective implementation of entrepreneurial innovation for youth empowerment. Poor Funding: Insufficient financial support hinders the growth of entrepreneurial initiatives. Governments and organizations can address this by providing access to funding, grants, or investment opportunities.

- Inadequate Infrastructure: Unreliable electricity supply, such as frequent power failures in Rivers State, limits the utilization of tools and equipment necessary for entrepreneurial activities.
- Inadequate Teacher Training: Most teachers lack pre-service and in-service entrepreneurial training, which is essential for imparting practical skills to students. Educational institutions should prioritize teacher training and development. Nwankwo and Nwachukwu (2023) emphasized on the following challenges,
- Theoretical Knowledge Over Practical Application: Secondary schools often focus on theoretical knowledge, neglecting practical components that foster innovation and creativity. Integrating hands-on learning experiences and real-life entrepreneurial tasks can help bridge this gap.
- Low Student Motivation: Students often view education as a pathway to white-collar jobs, rather than entrepreneurship. Mentorship programs and industry collaborations can help correct this mindset and encourage students to pursue entrepreneurial innovation.
- Lack of School-Industry Collaboration: Limited partnerships between schools, local businesses, and NGOs hinder opportunities for internships, mentorship, and real-life entrepreneurial experiences. Establishing these collaborations can provide students with valuable industry insights and practical skills.

Statement of the Problem

Entrepreneurial innovation has been identified as an imperative tool for youth development, empowerment and employability skills. Although the federal government directed it should be incorporated in the curriculum, there is need to find out how it's been implemented whether there's adequate content in it's curriculum that will instill and install the practical skills, confirm the adequacy of staff preparation and provision of adequate funding to support the program. Observations and some empirical evidences have shown that there's no connectivity between school programs, school communities and local economic environment which makes it impossible for the youths to translate entrepreneurial ideas into viable ventures. However, without adequate and effective techniques to manage entrepreneurial innovations and concrete efforts made to ensure youth empowerment through entrepreneurial innovation, it may be difficult to actualize the aim of empowering youths (Nwankwo and Nwachukwu, 2023). The researchers are worried and want to exploit the necessary techniques that can be used to ensure entrepreneurial innovation that can foster youth empowerment in public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers state, hence the problem of study.

Objectives of the study

1. To find out the techniques employed for teaching entrepreneurial innovation for youth empowerment in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers state.



2. Examine challenges hindering entrepreneurial innovations for youth empowerment in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

1. What is the techniques employed for teaching entrepreneurial innovations for youth empowerment in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers state
2. What are the challenges hindering entrepreneurial innovations for youth empowerment in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the mean score of urban and rural teachers on the techniques employed in teaching entrepreneurial innovations for youth empowerment in public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers state
2. There is no significant difference between the mean score of urban and rural teachers in the challenges hindering entrepreneurial innovations for youth empowerment in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers state.

Method of Data Analysis

The study is a descriptive survey design; the population consists of 8142 teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers state statistics of (River State Ministry of Education 2024). a sample size of 482 urban and rural teachers was drawn using Taro Yemen sampling technique, instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled " Techniques for Managing entrepreneurial innovations for youth empowerment in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers state questionnaire (TMEIYEPSSQ).The instrument contains 17 items patterned with the modified four points likert rating scale, the instrument was validated by senior lecturers in Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Management River State University, the instrument went for a reliability test using z- test which yielded 0.74. Data was analyzed using mean, standard deviation to answer the research questions while the z test statistics was used to test the hypotheses. A mean rating of 2.50 and above were regarded a positive effect

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Techniques employed for teaching entrepreneurial innovation for youth empowerment in public senior secondary schools.

S/N	Techniques	Mean Urban	SD	Decision	Mean Rural	SD	Decision
1.	Teachers do teach using real-life business case studies?	2.86	1.03	A	2.50	0.34	A
2	Students are engaged in project based learning such as agro farming, laundry services	3.20	1.12	A	2.64	0.65	A
3	Entrepreneurship education is taught as a separate subject in school.	2.71	0.97	A	2.62	0.74	A
4	Entrepreneurs are always invited to mentor and interact with students.	2.68	1.26	A	2.51	0.66	A
5	School administrators do support business groups or clubs.	3.41	1.20	A	2.90	0.79	A
6	Practical section like tailoring, carpentry, bead-making, farming are part of EI classes.	3.21	1.12	A	2.58	0.66	A
7	Do teachers receive entrepreneurial training often?	2.30	0.71	A	2.50	0.87	A
8	I adapt my teaching methods to suit students interest and local business	2.41	0.65	A	2.60	0.71	A



9	opportunities. I involved students in identifying community problems and proposing business solutions.	2.00	0.91	D	1.92	0.83	D
	Aggregate	2.75	1.00	A	2.53	0.70	A

In table 1 above, the 9 items rated above 2.50 which is the acceptable mean score. This indicates that teachers in urban and rural areas positively attested to the techniques employed for teaching and management of entrepreneurial innovations for youth empowerment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The mean and standard deviation shows that the teachers responses were closely related

Table 2

Challenges hindering effective teaching of Entrepreneurial Innovation for youth empowerment in public senior secondary schools

S/N	Challenges	Mean Urban	SD	Decision	Mean Rural	SD	Decision
1	Lack of trained teachers affects delivery of EI	2.98	1.60	A	2.79	0.93	A
2	The curriculum does not support practical entrepreneurship.	2.94	0.28	A	2.82	0.05	A
3	There is little or no instructional material and facilities for practical session.	2.75	0.84	A	3.01	1.49	A
4	Entrepreneurs classes are treated less important by the school.	2.60	0.64	A	2.51	0.80	A
5	Students are not encouraged to learn entrepreneurship due to lack of incentive or follow up.	3.00	1.50	A	2.84	0.68	A
6	Schools lack financial support for innovation programs.	2.79	0.91	A	2.51	0.65	A
7	Teachers are overloaded with other task.	1.98	0.50	D	2.00	0.84	D
8	Over Crowded classes and noise making hinders learning of entrepreneurship	3.60	0.43	A	2.74	0.80	A
	Aggregate	2.76	0.84	A	2.72	0.78	A

In table 2 above, the mean score of 7 out of the 8 assessed items are above the criterion mean of 2.50. this means that the suggested items are the challenges hindering effective teaching of entrepreneurial innovations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.



Table 3
Hypothesis 1

S/N	Category	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	T _{cal}	T _{cri}	Alpha Level	Decision
3)	Urban teachers	225	2.75	1.00	380	0.17	1.96	0.05	Not Significant t Ho1 Accepted
4)	Rural teachers	157	2.53	0.70					

Data in table 3 presented the summary of Z-test that showed t-calculated value of 0.17 is less than t. calculated value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha significant level and 380 degree of freedom. This indicated that the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore there is no significant difference between the mean score ratings of urban and rural teachers in techniques employs for teaching entrepreneurial innovation for youth empowerment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4
Hypothesis 2

S/N	Description	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	T _{cal}	T _{cri}	Alpha Level	Decision
1)	Urban teachers	225	2.76	0.84	380	0.04	1.96	0.05	Not Significant HO ₂ Accepted
2)	Rural teachers	157	2.72	0.78					

Data in table 4 presented the summary of z-test analysis which showed that the t-cal of 0.04 is less than t-cri of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant level and 380 degree of freedom. This indicated that the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean score ratings or urban and rural teachers on the challenges inhibiting effective management of entrepreneurial innovation for youth empowerment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that urban and rural teacher in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State did not employ the techniques for entrepreneurial innovations including entrepreneurial clubs, project based learning school based enterprise, group business assignment; collaboration among entrepreneurs and will be entrepreneurs. This supports the finding of UNESCO (2021) which stresses the importance of experiential learning in fostering entrepreneurial skills. However, the data revealed that schools lack the basic infrastructure or trained personnel to fully integrate these techniques.

Secondly, the findings indicates that the application of well managed entrepreneurial innovation techniques significantly improves students self-reliance, decision taking skills and readiness for employment as students who participated in entrepreneurial activities in schools reported higher levels of confidence in starting small business. This in line with Ezeani (2023) who insisted that entrepreneurial education enhances youth confidence and economic participation as well a a leadership potentials.



Conclusion

Entrepreneurial innovations is not appropriately managed in public secondary schools in Rivers State, hence, it cannot foster youth empowerment as to build a generation of self-reliance, creative and productive citizens.

Recommendations

1. There should be continuous professional development program for teachers with innovative teaching techniques and entrepreneurial thinking.
2. The government should review and revise the curriculum to embed practical action based entrepreneurial education.

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