



PERCEIVED STRATEGIC ENTREPRENEURIAL PLANNING AND OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION SKILLS NEEDED TO COMBAT YOUTH RESTIVENESS IN NORTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract:

The study was conducted to ascertain the perceived strategic entrepreneurial planning and opportunity recognition skills needed to combat youth restiveness in North-West, Nigeria. It was guided by two specific purposes, two research questions and two null hypotheses. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consist of three hundred twenty-four (324) Business Education lecturers in eleven (11) tertiary institutions in North-West Nigeria. The sample size of the study comprised 179 Business Educators (123 males and 56 females). A proportionate sampling technique was used to apportion the sample size to each of the institutions under study. A 4-point rating scale questionnaire titled "Strategic Entrepreneurial Skills Rating Scale" (SESRS) developed by the researcher was used as an instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts and further tested for reliability using the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient test. The result showed an overall reliability coefficient of 0.85. Data was analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and a t-test to test the research hypotheses at 0.05 Alpha level of significance. The findings revealed that the respondents strongly agreed to planning and opportunity recognition as strategic entrepreneurial skills needed to combat youth restiveness. In addition, there is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female Business Educators on planning skills needed as entrepreneurial strategy; no significant difference in the mean score of Business Educators in urban and rural on strategic entrepreneurial opportunity recognition skills. It was recommended among others that agencies and persons concerned with planning curricula for

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entrepreneurship education and training should incorporate the teaching and learning of strategic planning and opportunities recognition in the curriculum.

Keywords: strategic entrepreneurial, planning, opportunity recognition, skills, youth restiveness

1. Introduction

Youth restiveness has become a topic of major discussion in the social, economic, religious, health, polity and other domains in recent times in Nigeria. It has become a worrisome development used by the youths to get what they want from the relevant authorities (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 Igbojiznwaekwu (2019) so believed, youth restiveness in most cases leads 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 channelling 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 including: bad governance, unemployment, poverty, inadequate educational opportunities and resources, and inadequate communication and information flow. For Suleiman (2019) some of the factors include: deprivation, culture of drug abuse, the role of mass media, ethnic nationalism and the formation of ethnic militias, sponsorship from the elites' class, urban congestion, parenting neglect, marginalization and feelings of dissatisfaction.

The North-west region of Nigeria has experienced disturbing consequences of youth restiveness in recent times. Suleiman (2019) further observed that the continuous clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers pose a lot of threat to the ideals of sustainable democratic government and by extension modern industrial sustainable development. Therefore, to combat restiveness in North-West Nigeria calls for the development of entrepreneurial skills among the youths.

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 fulfilment of functional, social, or emotional objectives. Jardim (2021) identified the following entrepreneurial skills: creativity and innovation, the spirit of initiative, self-efficacy and resilience, strategic planning, and evaluation, resolution of problems and decision-making, transformational leadership, clear and visual communication, teamwork and networking, and digital communication. The entrepreneurial skills mentioned above are numerous, however, attention is given to the following Entrepreneurial skills-related strategies: planning and opportunity recognition.

Planning is a basic managerial function which involves the formulation of detailed strategies to achieve the best result. It involves the process of identifying goals, setting strategy and deciding the best possible method to be followed to achieve better results. It helps to forecast future expectations and address certain things ahead of time. According to Cefe Illinois Education (2021), entrepreneurs must be able to develop plans to meet goals in a variety of areas, including finance, marketing, production, sales and personnel (hiring and maintaining productive and satisfied employees).

Opportunity recognition and turning them into a profitable venture is also an essential skill for the entrepreneur. He or she must be able to recognize opportunities when they present themselves; spot a trend and pattern of unfolding events; and able to create a plan to take advantage of the opportunities as they present themselves (Faris, 2019). The ability to recognize opportunities enables the entrepreneur to spot what is lacking or demanded and then quickly close the gap and make some earnings.

2. 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 North-West, Nigeria, taking the form of drug abuse, stealing, armed robbery, hostage-taking, arms insurgence, banditry, harassment of innocent citizens, rape, and terrorism to mention but a few are alarming. On a daily basis, lives are lost, properties are destroyed, businesses and schools are closed down and places of worship are attacked.

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. 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 panning and opportunity recognition skills needed by the youths in order to be meaningfully engaged in profitable entrepreneurial activities and reduce youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

2.1 Purpose of the Study

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

- 1) Planning skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.
- 2) Opportunity recognition skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

2.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- 1) What are the perceived strategic entrepreneurial planning skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria?
- 2) What are the perceived strategic entrepreneurial opportunities recognition skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria?

2.3 Hypotheses

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

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female Business Educators on the strategic entrepreneurial planning skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural-based Business Educators on the strategic entrepreneurial opportunity recognition skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

3. Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. It is a research design in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing 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 the sampled group from the entire North-West, Nigeria in order to make inferences. The population of the study consist of three hundred twenty-four (324) Business Education lecturers in Eleven (11) tertiary institutions in North-West 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 “Strategic Entrepreneurial Skills Rating Scale” (SESRS) 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 was 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 benchmark 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 a 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.

4. Results

Results from data analysis were presented as follows:

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

The data analysis for Research Question One is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Strategic Entrepreneurial Planning Skills Needed to Combat Youth Restiveness

S/N	Strategic Entrepreneurial Planning Skill Required:	X	SD	Decision
1	Ability to identify goals.	3.65	0.48	Strongly Agree
2	Ability to decide on the processes to be followed to achieve business goals.	3.62	0.49	Strongly Agree
3	Ability to pay attention to details.	3.62	0.49	Strongly Agree
4	Ability to analyse business opportunities.	3.60	0.52	Strongly Agree
5	Ability to identify urgent tasks that are required in allocating business resources.	3.61	0.49	Strongly Agree
6	Ability to establish how to measure results.	3.75	0.44	Strongly Agree
7	Ability to think critically from the start of the business.	3.60	0.50	Strongly Agree
8	Ability to identify obstacles timely in business.	3.80	0.41	Strongly Agree
9	Ability to scale tasks in order of importance (prioritization).	3.68	0.48	Strongly Agree
10	Ability to select alternative future courses of action.	3.72	0.46	Strongly Agree
	Grand Mean	3.66		Strongly Agree

Table 1 shows that all the items were strongly agreed to by the respondents as strategic planning skills needed. The grand mean value of 3.66 indicates that the items constitute strategic entrepreneurial planning skills needed to combat youths' restiveness in the North-West of Nigeria.

Research Question Two: What are the strategic entrepreneurial opportunities recognition skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria?

The data analysis for Research Question Two is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Strategic Entrepreneurial Opportunity Recognition Skills Needed to Combat Youth Restiveness

S/N	Strategic Entrepreneurial Opportunity Recognition:	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
11	Ability to listen to potential clients	3.70	0.46	Strongly Agree
12	Ability to receive feedback from customers	3.71	0.46	Strongly Agree
13	Ability to pay attention to the problems in the community	3.72	0.46	Strongly Agree
14	Personal imaginative ability	3.67	0.48	Strongly Agree
15	Ability to compare possible solutions with objectives	3.74	0.44	Strongly Agree
16	Ability to focus on the most promising opportunities	3.54	0.51	Strongly Agree
17	Ability to identify a business opportunity	3.66	0.48	Strongly Agree
18	Ability to build a broad-based social network	3.50	0.53	Strongly Agree
19	Ability to conduct a personal financial assessment	3.70	0.46	Strongly Agree
20	Ability to develop social networks with individuals to find out their needs	3.73	0.45	Strongly Agree
	Grand Mean	3.66		Strongly Agree

Table 2 shows that all the items were regarded by the respondents as strategic entrepreneurial opportunity recognition skills needed. The grand mean value of 3.66 indicates that the items constitute strategic opportunity recognition skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

4.1 Test of Hypotheses

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female Business Educators on strategic entrepreneurial planning skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

The t-test analysis of data collected to test the null hypothesis one is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Male and Female Business Educators Responses on Perceived Strategic Entrepreneurial Planning Skills needed to Combat Youth Restiveness

S/N	Gender	N=179	Mean	Std.	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
1	Male	123	3.64	0.49	177	0.46	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.67	0.47				
2	Male	123	3.60	0.50	177	0.41	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.64	0.48				
3	Male	123	3.60	0.50	177	0.73	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.66	0.47				
4	Male	123	3.60	0.52	177	0.24	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.58	0.53				
5	Male	123	3.61	0.50	177	0.13	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.60	0.49				
6	Male	123	3.74	0.45	177	0.27	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.76	0.42				
7	Male	123	3.59	0.50	177	0.38	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.62	0.48				
8	Male	123	3.81	0.41	177	0.41	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.78	0.41				
9	Male	123	3.68	0.50	177	0.17	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.69	0.46				
10	Male	123	3.73	0.46	177	0.47	1.97	Accept
	Female	56	3.69	0.46				
	Grand Mean					0.36		Accept

In Table 3, 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 0.36 was less than the critical-t value. This means that the null hypothesis is accepted. In other words, there is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female Business Educators on strategic entrepreneurial planning skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the mean score of urban and rural based Business Educators on strategic opportunities recognition skills needed as an entrepreneurial strategy to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

The t-test analysis of the data collected to test the null hypothesis two is presented in Table 4. In Table 4, item 18 was rejected because its calculated-t value of 3.20 was 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 1.19 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 urban and rural-based Business Educators on strategic entrepreneurial opportunities recognition skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria.

Table 4: Urban and Rural Based Business Educators Responses on Perceived Strategic Entrepreneurial Opportunity Recognition Skills Needed to Combat Youth Restiveness

S/N	Location	N=179	Mean	Std.	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
11	Urban	108	3.70	0.47	177	0.20	1.97	Accept
	Rural	71	3.71	0.45				
12	Urban	108	3.75	0.45	177	1.24	1.97	Accept
	Rural	71	3.66	0.47				
13	Urban	108	3.66	0.49	177	1.94	1.97	Accept
	Rural	71	3.80	0.40				
14	Urban	108	3.65	0.49	177	0.44	1.97	Accept
	Rural	71	3.69	0.46				
15	Urban	108	3.77	0.43	177	1.07	1.97	Accept
	Rural	71	3.70	0.45				
16	Urban	108	3.56	0.51	177	0.55	1.97	Accept
	Rural	71	3.52	0.50				
17	Urban	108	3.70	0.47	177	1.32	1.97	Accept
	Rural	71	3.60	0.49				
18	Urban	108	3.40	0.51	177	3.20	1.97	Reject
	Rural	71	3.66	0.53				
19	Urban	108	3.73	0.46	177	0.96	1.97	Accept
	Rural	71	3.66	0.47				
20	Urban	108	3.70	0.47	177	1.07	1.97	Accept
	Rural	71	3.77	0.42				
	Grand Mean					1.19		Accept

5. Discussion

The findings indicated that strategic entrepreneurial planning skills are critical to combat youth restiveness. The findings reflect the common axiom that *“failure to plan is planning to fail”*. The ability to plan is imperative because it helps in deciding ahead what is to be done, setting goals and considering ways how, when and whom to use in achieving the set goals. The findings align with Sharma (2016) that planning is the most important management function upon which the achievement of any successful manager depends on. The findings could be relevant to youths to help them strategically plan for their future so that they do not get frustrated by the current system and become forced to resolve things in a restive manner.

Planning is unavoidable. It cuts across all segments and is required at all levels of any organization. This agrees with Business Jargons (2022) that, the scope of planning may vary at different levels and departments but in all the levels, strategic planning is required. Every potential entrepreneur must learn how to plan and give attention to planning.

The findings agree with Olusanya et al. (2012) that strategic planning has a relationship with organizational productivity and that strategic planning leads to employee performance in an organization. The finding is in line with the opinion of Doyle (2021) that the ability to effectively plan enables managers to select a course of action to help a business achieve its goals without constant doubts and overthought. Thus, if

youths in North-West acquire the strategic entrepreneurial planning skills and devote time positively to planning a better future for themselves based on entrepreneurship, it could be a reliable means to combat youth restiveness.

The test of hypothesis one revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female Business Educators on strategic entrepreneurial planning skills needed to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria. The findings suggest that strategic entrepreneurial planning skills are not gender sensitive. This is because men and women have various needs, various levels of access and control over resources, and different opportunities and constraints which would necessitate them to plan (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020). Planning is for everyone; it is not exclusive for males or females alone. The males as well as the females must plan their lives to become helpful to themselves and to others. The finding is also in line with Vilkinas (2015) that, the gender of the manager does not impact on how they are perceived by others, including how they perform managerial functions like planning. No one (male or female) is exempted from planning to own and run a personal business or work in an organization.

The finding is supported by Pahwa (2022), that recognizing business opportunities increases the chances of building a business, avoiding failure, growing and maximising profits. The findings agree with Pahwa (2022) that, the ability to recognize opportunities allows businesses to create and implement ideas and innovations. In other words, it is a more refined value proposition to the target market, and building a more efficient business model. It is also a chance to improve performance by solving existing problems better.

The test of hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean score of urban and rural-based Business Educators on strategic opportunity recognition skills needed as an entrepreneurial strategy to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria. This implies that opportunities abound in the urban and rural areas, waiting to be identified and utilized by interested individuals. Urban and rural areas are not isolated; they inter-depend on each other. While the urban relies on rural areas to meet their demands for food, water, wood, raw materials, etc., which are basically products of rural ecosystem services, the rural areas in turn depend on the urban for finished goods and services. The finding is in line with Gebrea and Gebremedhim (2019) that rural areas are absolutely necessary for urban areas to function and each offer opportunities in a unique way. In essence, there are opportunities in each of the areas.

6. Conclusion

Practical solutions are urgently needed to combat restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria. This study is optimistic that one of the reliable solutions is through entrepreneurial skills acquisition. This is because entrepreneurial engagements profitably utilize peoples' energies. Thus, discouraging them from partaking in restive behaviours. Also, entrepreneurship serves as a means 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 the inculcation of strategic entrepreneurial planning and recognition of opportunity skills in youth will be a veritable way to combat youth restiveness in the North-West, Nigeria. The skills are gender friendly and could be applied in any location.

7. Recommendations

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

- 1) Agencies and persons concerned with planning curriculum for entrepreneurship education.
- 2) Training should incorporate the teaching and learning of strategic planning and recognition of opportunities in the curriculum.
- 3) Youths who dropped out of school and who are presently engaged in restiveness should be assembled and rehabilitated using entrepreneurial training with an emphasis on strategic planning, recognition of opportunities marketing, innovation, resource management, and communication.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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