



BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE: THROUGH THE INTERSECTION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined building community resilience through the intersection of business education and entrepreneurial empowerment programmes in Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study and one null hypothesis was formulated and tested. A correlational survey research design was employed for the study. The population consisted of 120 beneficiaries of the entrepreneurial programme. No sample was required as the population was manageable. A 15-item statements questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection which was validated by two research experts. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the test-retest technique. Data obtained were analyzed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistics and it yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.86. This value was considered appropriate for the study. Mean, Standard Deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlational Coefficient were used to analyze data from the research questions while linear regression was used to test the hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05. Findings indicate a positive relationship between community resilience business education and entrepreneurial empowerment. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that school administrators and other stakeholders should ensure an adequate integration of entrepreneurial initiatives by creating technology and innovative centres. More avenues for financial service assessments should also be created to enhance quality of life and improve capacity building and adaptability in communities.

Keywords: business education, community resilience, entrepreneurial empowerment, entrepreneurship

Introduction

In the face of global changes where communities are been faced with diverse challenges and social crises, community resilience has become an inevitable factor in ensuring a peaceful co-existence and sustainable community advancement. Community resilience is increasingly important as urbanization and globalization may increase the level of threats that communities could encounter. The main objective of community resilience is the ability to withstand threats and recover quickly when natural disasters occur. Strengthening community resilience means increasing its ability to adapt to sudden changes and threats, its ability to withstand disruptions and recover quickly from them. Essentially, community resilience connotes the community's ability to respond, adapt and recuperate fast from sudden events. It is the community's readiness and capacity to adapt, withstand and recover from disruptions and adverse situations such as natural disasters and impulsive occurrences. It also embodies adaptability measures, ability and unity of communities in periods of adversity without forfeiting its essential functions, structures



and identity. Bakas (2017) affirms that community resilience entails the ability of communities to adapt to challenges and recover speedily from adversity.

The concept of community resilience has evolved to be a critical determinant factor in the long-term shaping and progression of communities. Resilient communities not only possess the ability and capacity to resist shock and recover rapidly from natural catastrophes, but they also demonstrate adaptability and collective effort in the face of uncertainties. Such communities also demonstrate the capability to defy, acclimate and recuperate from adverse socio-economic situations and abrupt occurrences. Building community resilience is symbolically linked to business and entrepreneurship education. The level of creative opportunities, skills and knowledge that communities gain through entrepreneurial empowerment will determine the long-term resilience of such communities. According to Nguyen and Smith (2024), entrepreneurship education contributes to community resilience by creating economic opportunities, fostering social networks and providing a supportive and enabling environment for entrepreneurial adventures and economic growth. Education creates and promotes the physical well-being of individuals and champions societal development. Education is a transformative life-changing weapon that controls man's environment. The Critical Thinking Consortium (2020) defines education as the cultivation of critical thinking skills that encompass analytical, evaluation, and creation of knowledge which enable individuals to make concrete decisions and contribute to societal growth and development. The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2017) also asserts that Education involves the acquisition of skills and abilities that enable an individual to perform tasks, solve problems and adapt to novel situations.

In the context of business and Entrepreneurship, education focuses on imparting theoretical and practical understanding to individuals, equipping them with expertise knowledge and competencies required to navigate the business world. Business Education is a programme that aims at educating and empowering its beneficiaries with valuable skills and abilities that would enable them to be creative and become gainfully employed either as employees or as employers of labour. It is also described as the education for and about business. Osuala and Opara (2022) see business education as an essential part of the preparation of youths for life and living. The programme creates awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities and prepares people to become better citizens. The symbolic intersection of Business Education and Entrepreneurship Education emerges as a potent and driving force that plays pivotal roles in fortifying communities with formidable tools needed for adaptability and flourishing amid adversity. Business education and entrepreneurial empowerment lie in the community resilience blueprint, the interplay revealing their critical roles in fostering enduring and inclusive societal progress. Through effective business and entrepreneurship education, individuals develop problem-solving abilities which are essential in tackling concerns in communities. Thus, the intersection of business education and entrepreneurial empowerment are inevitable pillars in social cohesion and as drivers of sustainable peaceful communities and economic development.

Entrepreneurship education has emerged to be a potential tool in empowering individuals and communities with requisite skills and adaptability capacities that enable them to navigate



uncertainties and thrive amidst adversity. Entrepreneurial enhancement programmes have increasingly gained prominence as an intervention to mitigate socio-economic vices through the knowledge, skills and mindset required to identify opportunities, mobilize resources and helm challenges. Entrepreneurship education promotes local entrepreneurial ventures and stimulates economic activities by creating employment opportunities and reducing the vulnerability level of individuals and communities. Through experiential learning workshops, seminars and real-world challenges, individuals develop adaptive skills such as dealing with natural disasters, problem-solving, emotion regulation and perseverance. According to Garcia and Patel (2024), entrepreneurship education is the inculcation of entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and attitude that would enable individuals to co-exist peacefully and successfully contribute meaningfully to the development of their community and the society at large. Martin and Osberg (2007) also affirm that entrepreneurship education contributes to community resilience by creating economic opportunities, fostering social networks and providing a supportive and enabling environment for entrepreneurial adventure and economic advancement. Strengthening entrepreneurship includes networking and relationship building, ethics and social responsibility, value creation, access to financial services and adoption of new technologies.

These entrepreneurial initiatives when thoughtfully integrated into communities could enhance self-reliance and stability, especially when communities face threats and hardship. The skill development programme may include a training aspect that enables individuals to develop vocational skills such as sewing, hairdressing and makeup, as well as other skills that will enable them to set up small and medium-scale enterprises. These empowerments aim at establishing individuals to become entrepreneurs who will successfully manage and grow businesses, thereby contributing to community development and national economic growth. Entrepreneurial empowerment could also cover avenues for accessing funds for setting up new businesses and growing businesses that are already in existence. The financial service programmes also enhance the overall quality of life of individuals and improve capacity building for sustainable value creation and resilience in communities.

Statement of the Problem

In recent times, various communities have been faced with diverse threats that range from insecurity, unrest, and hardship to economic fluctuation. Nevertheless, entrepreneurial empowerment is one promising approach to addressing these uncertainties. Although the laudable potential of entrepreneurship programmes has experienced constraints in their implementation and effective integration into community development strategies that could foster resilience. Many communities seem to lack a structured approach to building resilience. Addressing these issues may require an understanding of the crucial role of business and entrepreneurial education in strengthening community resilience. However previous research and observation have revealed that the non-holistic integration of business education and entrepreneurial empowerment programmes into community building has resulted in a splintered approach to building resilience within troubled communities and this has exposed them to vulnerability threats and sudden attacks. Nguyem and Smith (2024) asserted that the fragmented



approach of these laudable programmes has created a gap in planned responsive strategies and community readiness in times of shock. This according to the researcher has become a stumbling block to communities in accessing opportunities for socio-economic growth and development. The continuous existence of the scenario poses a worry to this study. Consequently, the aforementioned if not checked or contained may probably continue to have an adverse effect on community resilience if not adequately checked or contained. It is against this backdrop that this study examined the intersection of business education and entrepreneurial empowerment in building community resilience in Ika North-East Local Government area of Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered in this study:

1. How do business education and entrepreneurial empowerment programmes influence community resilience?
2. In what ways do entrepreneurial empowerment initiatives affect the socio-economic stability of participants and their communities?
3. What are the long-term effects of business education and entrepreneurial empowerment on building individuals' adaptability capacity amidst adversity?

Research Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was formulated and tested at alpha level of 0.05.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean response scores of male and female participants' perceptions of building community resilience through business education and entrepreneurial empowerment programmes.

Methodology

The study employed a correlational survey research design. Three research questions guided the study and one null hypothesis was formulated and tested. The study was conducted in Ika North-East Area in Delta State where empowerment programmes have been implemented. The study involved 120 beneficiaries of these programs, and due to the small population size, the entire population was used as the sample. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Building Community Resilience through the Intersection of Business Education and Entrepreneurial Empowerment Programme Questionnaire" (BCRTIBEEEPQ). The questionnaire was validated by two research experts, and its reliability was determined using the test-retest technique, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.86. Data analysis included the use of mean, standard deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient and linear regression tested at 0.05 level of significance.



Results

Research Question 1: How do business education and entrepreneurial empowerment programmes influence community resilience?

Table 1: Mean of respondents on how business education and entrepreneurial empowerment programmes influence community resilience

Table with 5 columns: S/N, Entrepreneurial empowerment, (x), SD, Remark. It lists 10 items related to business education and empowerment, with a Grand Mean of 2.80 and SD of 0.47.

Table 1 reveals that the mean value of items 1,2,4,6,7,8,9 and 10 falls within and above the criterion mean of 2.50, while the value items of 3 and 5 fall below the limit of 2.50. With a grand mean score of 2.80 above the criterion mean of 2.50. The result agreed with the fact that business education and entrepreneurial empowerment programmes influence community resilience.

Research Question 2: In what ways do entrepreneurial empowerment initiatives affect the socio-economic stability of participants and their communities?

Table 2: Mean of respondents on ways entrepreneurial empowerment initiatives affect the socio-economic stability of participants and their communities.

Table with 5 columns: S/N, Entrepreneurial Initiatives, (x), SD, Remark. It lists 10 initiatives for entrepreneurial empowerment, with a Grand Mean of 2.73 and SD of 0.59.

The analysis of data in Table 2 reveals that the mean responses ranged from 2.17 – 3.56 with the mean value of items 11, 14, 15, 16, 18 and 19 above the criterion mean of 2.50 while values of items 12, 13,17 and 20 fall below the limit of 2.50. With an aggregate mean score of 2.73, this implies consent that entrepreneurial empowerment initiatives affect the socio-economic stability of participants and their communities.



Research Question 3: What are the long-term effects of business education and entrepreneurial empowerment on building individuals’ adaptability capacity amidst adversity?

Table 3: Mean of respondents on the long-term effects of business education and entrepreneurial empowerment on building individuals’ adaptability capacity amidst adversity

S/N	Long-term effects of entrepreneurial empowerment	(x)	SD	Remark
1	Enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills	3.19	0.64	Agreed
2	Foster financial management skill	2.65	0.45	Agreed
3	Builds a mindset of resilience	2.42	0.56	Disagreed
4	Individuals develop a stronger belief in their adaptability capabilities in times of unrest.	2.63	0.54	Agreed
5	Stronger local economies	2.23	0.55	Disagreed
6	Empowers individuals to develop a contingency plan	2.63	0.43	Agreed
7	Exposes individuals to diverse cultural perspectives and competencies	3.45	0.45	Agreed
8	Enhanced quality of life	2.67	0.24	Agreed
9	Enhance individual responsiveness to changes over time	2.73	0.36	Agreed
10	Enhance development and stability in the community	2.65	0.38	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.72	0.46	Agreed

Data analysis in Table 2 reveals the mean response range of 2.17 – 3.56 with the mean value of items 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28. 29 and 30 above the criterion mean of 2.50 while items 23 and 25 mean values fall below the limit of 2.50. With the grand mean of 2.72 that connotes agreed, it implies that there is a long-term effect of business education and entrepreneurial empowerment on building individuals’ adaptability capacity amidst adversity

Test of Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean response scores of male and female participants’ perceptions of building community resilience through business education and entrepreneurial empowerment programmes.

Table 4: t-test analysis of male and female participants’ perception on building community resilience through business education and entrepreneurial empowerment programmes

Group	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Male	50	3.56	0.54	118	0.42	1.96	0.05	Not Significant
Female	70	3.45	0.49					

The result in Table 4 reveals that at alpha level 0.05, the t-calculated value is 0.42 while the t-critical is 1.96, the result shows that the t-calculated value is less than the t-critical value. This depicts a null hypothesis of no significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean response scores of male and female participants’ perceptions on building community resilience through business education and entrepreneurial empowerment programmes is accepted.



Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study were discussed in line with the research questions and the tested null hypothesis. The study revealed several key findings that underscore the potent intersection of business education and entrepreneurial empowerment programmes in building community resilience. From the data obtained, respondents agreed that entrepreneurial empowerment programmes contribute positively to individuals' well-being through the diversity of job creation, business development, a stable source of income, adaptability capacity and overall community resilience building. This is in consonant with Martin and Osberg's (2017) finding which revealed that entrepreneurship education contributes to community resilience by empowering individuals to develop contingency plans, enhance critical thinking, foster financial management skills, and provide a supportive and enabling environment for entrepreneurial advancement among others. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean response scores of male and female participants' perceptions on building community resilience is accepted as the t-critical was greater than the t-calculated. By implication, therefore, it signifies that business education and entrepreneurial empowerment programmes enhance community resilience. This is in corroboration with Nguyen and Smith's (2024) assertion that entrepreneurship education contributes to community resilience by creating valuable opportunities, building networks and collaborative support among local business owners for economic stability and advancement.

Conclusion

Building community resilience through business education and entrepreneurial empowerment is a resourceful strategy that can lead to economic stability, social coherence and adaptability. The holistic collaborative role of business education and entrepreneurial empowerment facilitates vocational skill developments which not only prepare them to be self-reliant but also create job opportunities for quality life living and sustainable growth. Entrepreneurial initiatives are inevitable tools in building sustainable resilience in communities, especially in times of sudden shock.

Recommendations

Based on findings, the study recommends among others that:

- 1 Government and entrepreneurial administrators should prioritize job creation and business development to increase the socio-economic strength, adaptability capacity and overall well-being of individuals in uncertain communities
- 2 Community-based entrepreneurial trainings, workshops, and seminars among others should be regularly organized to enhance stable development in vulnerable communities.
- 3 Network events should be initiated to encourage collaborative opportunities and capacity building among local business owners in communities.

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