

# Entrepreneurship Education and Insecurity Reduction in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>Umoh, Victor A.; <sup>2</sup>Ebito, Inemesit N; <sup>3</sup>Nsikan, John E.

<sup>\*1</sup> Department of Business Administration, Obong University, ObongNtak, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup> Department of Business Management, University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup>Department of Business Management, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria

**\* Corresponding author: [viqumoh@gmail.com](mailto:viqumoh@gmail.com)**

## **Abstract**

*The worrisome level of insecurity in Nigeria has ignited many suggestions for solution including entrepreneurship education. However, little is empirically known about the approach through which entrepreneurship education can reduce insecurity. This study surveyed final year business students in six public universities in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria to investigate the influence of entrepreneurship education on insecurity reduction. The specific objectives were to assess the influence of risk-taking propensity, opportunity recognition capability, and entrepreneurs' emotional intelligence on insecurity reduction. The sample size was 250 randomly selected final year degree university students. The structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data which were analysed by employing the weighted mean, standard deviation and correlation analysis. Results indicated that entrepreneurship education which emphasizes risk-taking propensity ( $r = .322, n = 195, P < 0.01$ ), opportunity recognition capability ( $r = .252, n = 195, P < 0.00$ ), and entrepreneur' emotional intelligence ( $r = .320, n = 195, P < 0.01$ ) has significant positive relationship with insecurity reduction. It is recommended that a review of current entrepreneurship education curriculum in Nigeria to incorporate findings of this study would lessen the menace of insecurity.*

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurship education; Insecurity reduction; Opportunity recognition capability; Risk- taking propensity, Entrepreneurs' emotional intelligence*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In recent times, there has been an increasing incidence of insecurity in Nigeria. Insecurity in Nigeria has been witnessed playing out almost daily. This is seen in terms of the occurrence of

kidnappings, political assassination, armed robbery, prostitution and cultism. Others are, Internet – fraudsters, gang wars, serial bombing, ritual killings, human trafficking, ethno-religious conflicts, thugery, among others. Achumba, Ighomeroho, & Akpor (2013) opined that insecurity can better be considered from two perspectives. First, a state of being opened to danger or threat of danger. Second, a state of being exposed to risk or anxiety. While insecurity is not exclusively a Nigerian problem, it is a topical issue in the country today. The issue appears so overwhelming that many Nigerians are being exposed to danger, fear and uncertainty. For instance, the Global Peace Index (2012) rated Nigeria low on security matters.

This unfortunate insecurity situation in the country has been linked with youth unemployment. Matthew, Haruna, Ameh & Maisamari (2020) reason that what accounts for poverty and unemployment among youths is the lack of entrepreneurship skills, their perception and interest. Youth unemployment results in economic displacement (Aliyu, 2018). As the youths are economically displaced, they become idle and think of what to do in their circumstance which in some cases lead them into vices in the society. In particular, some authors have opined that unemployment constitutes a key issue that breeds insecurity in different regions of Nigeria (Anho, 2014; Aliyu, 2018).

In the South South Zone of Nigeria, insecurity manifest mostly through the activities of crude oil theft, sea piracy/robbery, kidnapping for ransom, vandalism of oil pipelines and militancy among others. All these signals the worsening insecurity in the zone and country at large. In view of this situation, some authors, suggested that through entrepreneurship education, the situation can be checkmated through impartation of appropriate skill set and attitude, capabilities and development of individuals to enhance successful entrepreneurship (Sulaiman, 2017). Entrepreneurial education has also been proposed as a channel to the realization of positive values, reduction in poverty and a culture of peace (Anho, 2014).

Entrepreneurship education is concerned with the development of the individual's attitudes, behaviours and capacities (Sofoluwe, Shokunbi, Raimi & Ajewole, (2013). It deals with activities which impart knowledge on being resourceful, self-reliance, taking risks and being versatile (Anho, 2014). It comprises all experiences which offer to students the ability as well as vision of the appropriate approach to accessing and transforming business opportunities (Aliyu, 2018).

At the moment, Nigeria's security problem is becoming quite unbearable. Efforts by the government, concerned groups, and individuals have not significantly and positively impacted on the country's insecurity situation. Furthermore, there is limited empirical research focusing attention on the link between entrepreneurship education and insecurity reduction, particularly in the South South Zone of Nigeria. However, the few available studies (Sofoluwe, *et al.* 2013;

Ancho, 2014) are mostly desk research with conflicting outcome such as that of Sofoluwe, *et al.* (2013 which reported that inadequate entrepreneurship education does not significantly impact sustainable security. A similar study by Matthew, Haruna, Ameh & Maisamari (2020) was limited to Gombe State in Northern region of Nigeria; It was revealed that entrepreneurship education influenced students into self-reliance. Wachukwu & Salomi (2020) discovered that entrepreneurial skills empower students to be gainfully employed hence would tackle insecurity; the study was however, limited to one local government in Rivers State. Eze, Worimegbe & Sanjo (2020) studied entrepreneurship education in Obafemi Awolowo University and Lagos State Polytechnic and found that equipping more people with entrepreneurship skills results in declining crime and insecurity rates. Further, investigation by Alabi (2019) indicated that entrepreneurship development would significantly affect insecurity level; the study was conducted in Ondo State, Nigeria. Thus, the objective of this study was to investigate the influence of entrepreneurial education on insecurity reduction in the South South Zone of Nigeria. In specific terms, this study:

- i. Assesses the relationship between risk-taking propensity and insecurity reduction
- ii. Investigates the relationship between opportunity recognition capability and insecurity reduction
- iii. examines the relationship between entrepreneurs' emotional intelligence and insecurity reduction

In order to achieve the highlighted specific objectives, the following null hypotheses were evaluated:

Ho1: Risk-taking propensity has no significant relationship with insecurity reduction

Ho2: Opportunity recognition capability has no significant relationship with insecurity reduction

Ho3: Entrepreneurs' emotional intelligence has no significant relationship with insecurity reduction

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship education is a major force in any economy and represents a form of education with contents which primarily target providing trainees with requisite interests, skills, motivation and attitude to take to self-reliance and job creation (Matthew, Haruna, Ameh&Maisamari, 2020). Entrepreneurship education covers every aspect of managing a business; business formation, business management, its diversification and growth alongside continuous process of equipping trainees with relevant entrepreneurial skills (Onuma, 2016). What entrepreneurship education does is to create in the individual, the zeal of taking a risk, creating as well as sustaining a growth oriented and profit-making enterprise (Mokaya, Namusonge&Sikalieh, 2012).

Aliyu (2014) asserts that given that it is effectively delivered, entrepreneurship education can potentially influence self-employment and accelerate sustainable growth and development. With proper delivery of entrepreneurship education, some authors have given hope that participants would acquire the requisite skills to recognize business opportunities that could be exploited; they can acquire the knowledge to be self-reliant and hence take to self-employment and can acquire the capacity to take risks and manage them properly.

### **Risk Taking Propensity**

Risk taking propensity denotes the extent of entrepreneur 'enthusiasm in the commitment of resources into business venture with possible chance of failure or success (Acikdilli and Ayhan 2013). It is exemplified in the degree or capability in which someone is willing to engage in uncertain ventures (investing in newly existing market, committing resources into new production lines, borrowing heavily with expectation of high yield) for the organization in order to achieve significant goals (Obioma, Miebaka& John, 2020; Lumpkin & Dess, 2001, Wiklund& Shepherd, 2005). Entrepreneurs operate in an almost uncertain environment, where the outcome may be unknown or relatively unpredicted. To such extent, learning to take and manage risk is an option that could help foster continuity for business firm and for the entrepreneur (De Hoe & Janssen, 2014).

A plethora of studies have shown that the propensity to take risk is related to many entrepreneurial outcomes such as organizational learning, entrepreneurial resilience, and corporate sustainability (Nwankwo, Ogamba, Anyanwu &Onu, 2016), improved level of customer satisfaction, business growth and enhanced social performance (Obioma, Miebaka& John, 2020). A couple of literature have also shown that developing the propensity to take risk is associated with better performance such as profitability, corporate growth, increased market share, financial efficiency, and introduce new products in advance of their competitors (Leko-Simic and Horvat, 2013; Miller & Le Bruton-Miller, 2011; Sarfaraz & Mustafa, 2021). Thus, it could be argued that firms and entrepreneurs that performs better in uncertain business

environment must have developed higher level of risk proclivity. Given the numerous empirical evidences of the relationship between risk propensity and firm performance, it is argued herein that potential entrepreneurs must develop risk-taking characteristics or capabilities if they wish to perform creditably. It follows therefore that, entrepreneurial education programmes whose curriculum emphasizes the development of risk-taking propensity is likely to enhance reduced tendency towards crimes that breeds insecurity in the community.

### **Opportunity Recognition Capability**

The ability to recognize profitable business opportunity in the environment is also regarded as important facet of entrepreneurial orientation (Simon & Patrick, 2019; Guo, Tang, Su, & Katz, 2016). Opportunity recognition is a central construct in entrepreneurial development research (Bolton & Lane, 2012; Sabai & Tau, 2018). It explains an individual's ability or effort to consistently search the environment in order to identify new ideas leading to business development, superior performance, business survival, and competitive advantage (Guo, Tang, Su & Katz 2016). In a recent study, opportunity recognition was found to positively influence university graduate's self-employment (Oboreh & Aruoren, 2021). A good entrepreneur must be proactive in scanning the environment to identify situations that are receptive for the introduction of new firms, products, service, market niche, raw materials, improved processes and enhanced quality (Khalid & Sekiguchi, 2018; Oboreh & Aruoren, 2021).

According to Baron, (2006), a successful entrepreneur must possess the skills to recognize and detect potentially profitable opportunities that is hidden to others, and select the right alternative strategies for implementation. Scholars such as (Oboreh & Aruoren, 2021; Sofoluwe, Shokunbi, Raimi, & Ajewole, 2013) have argued that the ability to recognize business opportunity in the environment is a capability or competency that must deliberately be develop. To that extent, personal learning, training and education in entrepreneurship-oriented programmes have been suggested by entrepreneurship scholars (Fatoki, 2012; Ucbasaran, Westhead & Wright, 2009). However, these scholarly works appear to have ignored how the knowledge gained through entrepreneurial educational programmes could help in developing opportunity recognition competencies for purpose of reducing or mitigating insecurity. Thus, the specific link between opportunity recognition capability resulting from entrepreneurial education and insecurity reduction still seems blurry, therefore needing further empirical insights as undertaken by this study.

### **Entrepreneurs' Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence (EI) describes the ability to understand, perceive one's own feelings and manage them accordingly. It also includes the ability to identify emotional indications in other people and reacting to them in a favorable manner (Fakhr&Hadia, 2017). According to Olatide, & Richard, (2017) emotional intelligence, defines the degree of individual's capability to learn and control his own emotions and feelings and employ such understanding to relate with the thoughts of others accordingly. EI consists of four main dimensions including self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship management (Archana & Vasanthi, 2018; Olatide, & Richard, 2017). In a study, Mortanet *al.*, (2014) maintained that individuals with high emotional intelligence would remain in business even under stressful conditions and adapt well to changing business environment. Emotional intelligence has been linked with a number of performance outcomes including career and business success (Urquijo, Extremera&Azanza, 2019), better leadership performance (Amanawa, 2022), entrepreneurial intention (Parvaneh, & Korosh, 2014), organizational performance (Supramaniam, & Kuppusamy, 2021), and job satisfaction (Sulaiman, Abdu & Balarabe, 2016). We argue therefore that individual with high emotional intelligence are likely to set up a small business and run it successfully in the face of difficulty or unforeseen occurrence rather than take to crime and increase the level of insecurity (Foo, 2011). Thus, it is expected in this study that entrepreneur's emotional intelligence will positively influence insecurity reduction.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study was based on the survey research design. The study had a population of 667 final year bachelor of science (BSc) degree students in Business. They were selected from six public universities in the six states of the South-South zone of Nigeria. The sample size for this study was 250 final year BSc degree students undergoing a course of study in Business as at the time of this study. This sample size was determined through Taro Yamane sample size determination formula because the study had a finite population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2011). These respondents were selected for the survey because of their exposure to business and entrepreneurship courses in their degree curriculum. To ensure fairness, one university was chosen from each of the six South-South states (see Table 1). The selected institution must have been in existence for more than five years and have an existing physical structure or center for Entrepreneurship Development. The random sampling technique was employed to select respondents from five business-related disciplines or departments (Accounting, Business Administration/Management, Banking and Finance, Marketing and Insurance). The research subjects were administered copies of questionnaire in line with their proportional contribution to the population as shown in Table 1. The research instrument was duly validated by experts in the field of Business Management and Entrepreneurship. Their suggestions were used to modify the research instrument, thereafter, the Cronbach Alpha reliability test was performed on the study variables and constructs. The result yielded alpha coefficient of 0.81% indicating that the instrument in question was highly reliable. Measurement of research variables was done with five-point Likert-type scale with their scores arranged as follows: Strongly agree (SA=5), Agree (A=4), Disagree (D=3), Strongly Disagree (SD=2) and Undecided (UN=1). Both descriptive (univariate) and inferential (bi-variate)

analyses were carried out. A mean score of 3.0 and above was accepted as benchmark for decision making. In addition, correlation analysis was used to evaluate the bivariate constructs of the study. All results were analysed at 0.01 level of significance.

**Table 1: Proportion of Sample Representation**

S/N	Institution	Number of Final Year Business Students	Proportional Representation
1.	University of Uyo	102	38
2.	University of Calabar	126	47
3.	University of Benin	87	33
4.	University of Port Harcourt	118	44
5.	Federal University, Otuoke	131	49
6.	Delta State University	103	39
	Total	667	250

**Source:** Various Universities' Websites, 2023

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Respondents Characteristics

Of the 250 respondents who received copies of questionnaire, 195 were valid responses used for data analysis (Table 2); yielding a 78% response rate. Several steps were taken to achieve the reported response rate. These include making announcement and reminders during practical entrepreneurship sessions, sending bulk text messages on WhatsApp platforms and students' groups, sending email reminders through the heads of the department of the participants.

Table 2 shows the respondents' demographic data for the study. It is observed that 113(57.95%) of the respondents were male while 82(42.05%) were female. In addition, 35(17.95%) of the respondents were below 20 years of age; 139(71.28%) respondents were between 20 and 25 years of age; 19(9.74%) respondents were between 26 and 30 years of age, while 2(1.03%) respondents were 31 years and above. In terms of the respondents' course of study, 58(29.74%)

of the respondents offered Business Administration/Management; 33(16.92%) were students of Banking and Finance; the highest number of respondents 77(39.49%) offered Accounting; 21(10.77%) of the respondents studied Marketing while 6(3.08%) offered Insurance and Risk Management.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N= 195)

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage%
Sex	Male	113	57.95
	Female	82	42.05
Age	Less than 20yrs	35	17.95
	20-25yrs	139	71.28
	26-30	19	9.74
	31yrs and above	2	1.03
Course of Study	Business Admin	58	29.74
	Banking& Finance	33	16.92
	Accounting	77	39.49
	Marketing	21	10.77
	Insurance & Risk Mgt	6	3.08

Source: Field Survey, 2023

#### 4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Univariate Data

Table 3 shows result of descriptive univariate analysis for each study variables and constructs. Based on the 5-point Likert scale constructs, the mean score of 3.0 was used as threshold for making agreement or disagreement decision. The 3.0 threshold point was derived by dividing the sum of the 5-point Likert scale by 5. Thus, a mean score  $\geq 3.00$  for any construct signifies agreement and vice versa.

Table 3: Descriptive assessment of study variables

Variable/constructs	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
<b>Risk-taking Capability:</b>				
Proclivity to high risk project	195	3.68	0.81	Agree
Boldness to taking risk	195	3.41	1.10	Agree
Taking calculating risk	195	3.46	1.07	Agree
Propensity to handling uncertainty	195	2.30	0.49	Disagree



	195	3.27	1.09	Agree
<b>Opportunity Recognition:</b>				
Seeing potential new venture all around				
Sensitivity/alertness to new venture opportunity	195	3.50	1.49	Agree
Perceiving new venture opportunity naturally	195	2.62	0.44	Disagree
<b>Emotional Intelligence:</b>				
Self-Management	195	3.41	1.45	Agree
Self-Awareness	195	3.86	1.25	Agree
Social Awareness	195	3.26	1.34	Agree
Relationship management	195	3.47	1.42	Agree

Source: Field Research Data, 2023

As reported in Table 3, it can be observed that except for the risk-taking construct “propensity to handle uncertainty” (Mean=2.30, SD=0.49), and opportunity recognition construct “perceiving new venture opportunity naturally” (Mean=2.62, SD=0.44), all other items scores met and exceed the mean score threshold. However, the highest mean score pertains to the construct “self-awareness” (Mean= 3.86, SD=1.25). The low mean scores for the two variables- uncertainty handling propensity, and natural perception of business opportunities- implies that respondents do not find them as necessary requirements for effective entrepreneurship education that could curb insecurity. The highest mean score item “self-awareness” implies that the ability to recognize feelings as it happens and to accurately and confidently make self-assessments is an important element of entrepreneurship education and a factor in insecurity reduction.

**4.3 Bivariate analysis of relationship amongst all variables**

In order to arrive at reliable findings and conclusion from the analyzed data, the proposed hypotheses are tested using the Pearson product moment correlation at 0.01 level of significance. Table 4 shows the results of correlation analysis concerning the relationship between entrepreneurship education variables (risk-taking propensity, opportunity recognition capability, entrepreneurs’ emotional intelligence) and insecurity reduction.

**Table 4: Correlation matrix of all study variables**

Variable		RTP	ORC	EMI	IR
RTP	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.306*	.316*	.535**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.040	.012	.002

	N	195	195	195	195
ORC	Correlation Coefficient	.306*	1.000	.329*	.502*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.	.020	.011
	N	195	195	195	195
EMI	Correlation Coefficient	.316*	.329*	1.000	.521**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.020	.	.000
	N	195	195	195	195
IR	Correlation Coefficient	.322**	.252*	.320**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.011	.000	.
	N	195	195	195	195

**Note:** RTP= Risk-taking Propensity, ORC= Opportunity Recognition Capability,

EMI = Entrepreneurs' Emotional Intelligence, IR= Insecurity Reduction

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** Field Research Data, 2023

At 99% level of confidence, correlation coefficient for all dimensional variables of entrepreneurial education and insecurity reduction yielded positive and significant result: risk-taking propensity ( $r = .322$ ,  $n = 195$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), opportunity recognition capability ( $r = .252$ ,  $n = 195$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), and entrepreneurs' emotional intelligence ( $r = .320$ ,  $n = 195$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). Since the correlation coefficients (R) for each variable are not equal to zero, it implies that positive relationship exists between entrepreneurial education variables and insecurity reduction. Based on the results, all the null hypotheses are rejected. The highest significant R-value is observed between risk taking propensity (RTP) and insecurity reduction (IR) ( $r = .322$ ,  $n = 195$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). This suggests further that a unit increase in each of the independent variables (RTP, ORC, EEI) is associated with an increase in reduction of insecurity in the region.

#### **4.4 Discussion of Findings**

The main thrust of this paper was to argue that entrepreneurial education that emphasizes three basic elements-risk-taking propensity, opportunity recognition capability and entrepreneurs' emotional intelligence is capable of curbing insecurity challenges. It has been found and confirmed in this study that the proposed elements of entrepreneurial education are positively correlated with reduced insecurity. For instance, risk taking propensity has been found to make the highest significant association with reduced insecurity; which implies that the more entrepreneurial education programmes and curriculum in our schools encourages risk-taking and the building of risk-taking capability among the youths, the more there would be the possibility of reducing the challenges of insecurity. To build risk taking capability, entrepreneurship education should emphasize measures such as proclivity to high risk business projects with higher returns, boldness in taking risks and taking calculated risks. Risk taking has been suggested by prior studies as part of the requirements for business success and learning (Nwankwo et al., 2016; Sofoluwe et al., 2013; Sarfaraz & Mustafa, 2021). The findings in this study is therefore consistent with the earlier suggestions. In addition, the present study has found positive relationship between entrepreneurs' emotional intelligence and insecurity reduction. This also implies that the more entrepreneurial education programmes have the elements of entrepreneurs' emotional intelligence including self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship management, the more likely it would help future entrepreneurs remain focused in their venture and by extension lessens the menace of insecurity in the study area. Again, this position similar to prior research advocating the integration of emotional intelligence in University teaching and learning (Amulya, 2016; Elias, 2004; Mamat, & Ismail, 2021), emotional intelligence and career and business success (Urquijo, Extremera & Azanza, 2019; Supramaniam, & Kuppusamy, 2021; Amanawa, 2022) On the contrary, the findings in this study refutes that of Sulaiman, Abdu & Balarabe, (2016) whose study reported negative relationship between emotional intelligence and lecturer's job satisfaction, and students learning ability.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Worried by the worsening insecurity situation in the South South Geo-political Zone of Nigeria, this study was conducted to explore the possibility of leveraging entrepreneurship education in addressing the menace. Findings of the study indicated that entrepreneurship education has a significant positive relationship with insecurity reduction. This suggests that security in the South South Geo-political Zone of Nigeria can be improved when more attention and increased investment is made on entrepreneurship education. Hence, it is concluded that entrepreneurship education is urgently needed in the zone to create jobs, reduce poverty, create wealth and

raise the standard of living with a view to ultimately reducing insecurity. Following this conclusion, it is recommended that there should be a review of current entrepreneurship education curriculum in Nigeria with emphasis placed more on trainees' risk-taking propensity, opportunity recognition capability and entrepreneurs' emotional intelligence in order to effectively tackle the menace of insecurity.

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