



Entrepreneurship Education as an Antidote for Rehabilitating Street Beggars from Poverty Life to Self-Reliance Citizens in Lagos State, Nigeria

SHITTU, Taofeek Olawale Ph.D.², TEMISANREN, Olawunmi Esther Ph.D.¹, ABUDU, Abosede Mariam² & SHITTU, Aramide Ayorinde²

¹Department of Educational Foundations, Federal College of Education, Osun State, Nigeria

²Department of Educational Management, Lagos State University

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*Corresponding Author: SHITTU, Taofeek Olawale Ph.D.

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Abstract

This study investigates relationship between entrepreneurship educations rehabilitating of street beggars from poverty life into self-reliant citizen in Lagos State, Nigeria. Street begging has become a persistent socio-economic problem in Lagos State due to harsh realities of poverty, unemployment, lack of vocational skill acquisition and poor social welfare support. The study anchored on Human Capital Theory. The targeted population of the study comprised all street beggars residing within 20 Local Government areas of Lagos State, Nigeria. Two research questions were raised and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A sample of size of 200 street beggars were selected through accidental and disproportionate sampling techniques. Two research instruments titled 'Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire' (EEQ) and 'Street Begging Rehabilitation Questionnaire' (SBRQ) were used for data collection. Content validity of the instruments was ensured by test experts and reliability consistency of the instruments was at 0.70 and 0.71 using Cronbach's alpha. The Kendall's tau-b correlation was used to analyse data collected via Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26.0. The findings of the hypotheses 1 and 2 showed that: a significant relationship existed between vocational skill acquisition program and street begging rehabilitation in Lagos State, Nigeria ($\tau_b = .581$; $N=200$; $p<0.05$); and a significant relationship existed between financial empowerment initiative and street begging rehabilitation in Lagos State, Nigeria ($\tau_b = .592$; $N=200$; $p<0.05$); Based on the findings, the study concluded that integration of vocational skill acquisition and financial empowerment initiative into rehabilitation programs enhances self-esteem, creativity, and income generation, thereby reducing the prevalence of street begging and urban poverty. Therefore, it is recommended amongst other that Policymaker should provide adequate funding to the established vocational and entrepreneurship training centres across local governments areas in Lagos State to provide continuous learning opportunities for rehabilitated beggars.

Keywords: Empowerment, Entrepreneurship education, Poverty alleviation, Rehabilitation and Street beggars.

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Original Research Articles

Introduction

Today, entrepreneurship education seems to be an antidote for street begging which aligns with global development agendas, particularly the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 1 seeks to eradicate poverty in all its forms, while Goal 8 promotes decent work and economic

growth through entrepreneurship and innovation (United Nations, 2015). By equipping beggars with entrepreneurial skills, Lagos State can contribute to achieving these goals, reduce urban poverty, and enhance economic productivity through entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education fosters not only economic transformation



but also psychological and social reformation. According to Shittu, Ajimuse and Idowu (2020), the emergence of entrepreneurship education is an indication of its importance in youth empowerment, wealth creation and poverty reduction. Entrepreneurship as a career empowered youths and street beggars the opportunity to be self-reliance and increase the achievement of professional goals. Many street beggars suffer from low self-esteem and social alienation in Lagos metropolis.

However, street begging in Lagos metropolis has reached alarming proportions, with recent estimates by the Lagos State Government (2022) indicating over 120,000 individuals including children, adults, and the elderly subsisting on alms by begging for money on streets, traffic intersections, and public venues. This phenomenon is symptomatic of deeper structural deficiencies, including chronic unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, inadequate social safety nets, and a pervasive lack of marketable skills among vulnerable to exploitation and health hazards (Ogundele & Olarenwaju, 2021). Despite periodic charitable interventions and welfare schemes, beggars remain trapped in a cycle of poverty, as such measures fail to address the root cause insufficient economic empowerment. In Lagos State, where commerce and trade flourish, the informal sector provides a fertile ground for small-scale entrepreneurship. Street beggars, if properly rehabilitated and trained, can leverage this environment to become active participants in the economy. Through entrepreneurship education, they can rediscover their self-worth and develop a sense of purpose. Entrepreneurship education can help them transition from begging to business ownership, thus reducing dependency on alms and improving their living standards. This approach not only alleviates poverty but also promotes social inclusion and dignity. Yusuf and Lawal (2021) opines that empowering street beggars through entrepreneurship-based programs can reduce urban poverty and enhance community development. Despite the potential benefits, implementing entrepreneurship education for street beggars faces several challenges. These include stigmatization, lack of vocational skill acquisition programme,

inadequate financial empowerment initiative, and poor rehabilitation policy coordination. Street begging remains a conspicuous fixture of Lagos metropolis, Nigeria's commercial nerve centre and one of Africa's most populous urban agglomerations. The sight of men, women, and children soliciting alms on traffic junctions, market stalls, and religious venues is emblematic of deep-seated socioeconomic distress. Consequently, there is an urgent need to shift the paradigm from palliative handouts to sustainable empowerment strategies that can transmute street beggars from perpetual job-seekers into viable job-creators (Adeyemi, 2019; Ogundele & Olarenwaju, 2021). Moreso, many rehabilitation centers lack the resources and personnel to provide structured entrepreneurship training (Nwachukwu, 2020).

Hence, for entrepreneurship education to be effective, there must be deliberate collaboration among government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private sector actors, and the community. In practice, the integration of entrepreneurship education into rehabilitation programs requires a multi-dimensional approach. First, curriculum designers must develop context-specific training tailored to the needs and abilities of the beggars. Such training should include vocational skills (e.g., tailoring, crafts, food processing), financial literacy, and basic business management (Emeh, 2020). Second, there should be mentorship and incubation programs where reformed beggars can receive guidance and support as they establish their enterprises. Third, government policies should facilitate access to micro-credit facilities and market linkages to sustain their businesses.

Problem of the Study

Recently, street begging has remained a persistent social and economic problem in Lagos State, Nigeria, despite several government interventions and rehabilitation efforts. The growing number of beggars on streets, markets, and highways reflects the deep-rooted challenges of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, displacement, and lack of social welfare support. Many individuals who resort

to begging do so not out of choice but as a means of survival in a society that provides limited opportunities for economic participation. Unfortunately, existing approaches to address the menace have focused mainly on rescue operations, temporary shelters, and charitable reliefs, which fail to provide sustainable solutions to the underlying causes of dependency. However, rehabilitation programs often lack comprehensive empowerment components such as vocational skill acquisition programme and financial empowerment initiative, which could enable reformed beggars to acquire relevant skills for self-reliance and income generation. As a result, many beneficiaries relapse into begging after rehabilitation due to a lack of employable or entrepreneurial skills. The absence of structured entrepreneurship education within rehabilitation schemes has hindered the transformation of beggars from dependents into productive contributors to society. Given the socio-economic importance of Lagos State as Nigeria's commercial hub, the continuous presence of street beggars poses a challenge to urban development and social harmony. Therefore, there is an urgent need to explore entrepreneurship education as a strategic antidote for reforming street beggars from a life of poverty to that of productivity. This study seeks to investigate how entrepreneurship education can effectively transform street beggars into self-reliant and economically active citizens in Lagos State.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to:

1. Examine the relationship between vocational skill acquisition program and street begging rehabilitation in Lagos State, Nigeria.
2. Determine the relationship between financial empowerment initiative and street begging rehabilitation in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

The following Null hypotheses were raised:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between vocational skill acquisition program and street begging rehabilitation in Lagos State, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between financial empowerment initiative and street begging rehabilitation in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

The study anchored on Human Capital Theory which originating in the work of Schultz and Becker, Human Capital Theory posits that education and training increase individuals' productive capacities and future earnings (Becker, 1964). In this context, entrepreneurship education is conceived as an investment in human capital: vocational and business skills improve economic productivity and reduce reliance on alms. Entrepreneurship is an age-long practice traced back to 1732 when Irish economist called Richard Cantillon who described it as individuals that possess a willingness to carry out various forms of activities associated with financial risks and new venture creation. Entrepreneurs are globally regarded as risk-bearer. Entrepreneurship education has been globally recognized as a critical tool for economic empowerment and poverty alleviation. It involves the systematic training of individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to identify business opportunities, organize and manage resources, and establish viable enterprises (Olawale & Garba, 2020). In the Nigerian context, entrepreneurship education has been integrated into the national curriculum to combat youth unemployment and foster economic growth. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2020) emphasizes entrepreneurship education as a means of producing self-reliant individuals capable of contributing to national development.

However, while the policy has been largely implemented in formal education settings, there remains a gap in extending entrepreneurship education to informal and marginalized populations, such as street beggars, who are excluded from mainstream educational systems. As noted by Odu and Olayinka (2021), the true potential of entrepreneurship education lies in its inclusiveness and ability to reach vulnerable groups who are most affected by poverty. Moreover, entrepreneurship education can serve as an antidote for reforming street beggars by transforming their mindset and

equipping them with skills for economic self-sufficiency. It offers them the opportunity to learn vocational and managerial skills that can be applied in establishing micro or small-scale businesses. According to Olorunsola (2018), entrepreneurship education plays a transformative role by converting unproductive individuals into innovative contributors to national productivity. Similarly, Akpan and Etim (2020) assert that entrepreneurship education is a pathway to empowerment and wealth creation, especially among disadvantaged populations who lack access to formal employment opportunities. This study argues that a targeted, context-sensitive vocational education programme can serve as an antidote to the cycle of begging in Lagos. By imparting market-relevant skills such as tailoring, carpentry, food processing, and basic digital literacy. The intervention seeks to enhance employability, foster entrepreneurial mind-sets, and facilitate access to micro-credit facilities. Moreover, the study posits that successful transformation hinges on coordinated efforts among multiple stakeholders: Lagos State Ministries of Social Welfare and Education, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector enterprises, and community leaders. Such synergy is essential to address intersecting barriers, social stigma, limited financial literacy, and inadequate infrastructure that currently impede sustainable livelihoods for beggars (Okoye & Onyenwe, 2018; Adeyinka & Ojo, 2020).

Methodology

The research design was correlational. The targeted population of the study comprised all street beggars residing within 20 Local Government areas of Lagos State, Nigeria, including Ikeja, Lagos Island, Mushin, and Agege, as well as selected rehabilitation centres and vocational training institutes. Two research questions were raised and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A sample of size of 200 street beggars were selected through accidental and disproportionate sampling techniques. Two research instruments titled 'Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire' (EEQ) and 'Street Begging Rehabilitation Questionnaire' (SBRQ) were used for data collection. The questionnaire is divided into two sections: Section A and B. Section A contains the personal information of the respondents and section B contains the questionnaire items structured around the research questions. Each statement is measured on a four-point modifier Likert-type-rating scale, namely: "Strongly Agree (SA)", "Agree (A)", "Strongly Disagree (SD)" and "Disagree (D)". Content validity of the instruments was ensured by test experts and reliability consistency of the instruments was at 0.70 and 0.71 using Cronbach's alpha. The Kendall's tau-b correlation was used to analyse data collected via Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26.0.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Pearson's correlation analysis between vocational skill acquisition programme and street begging rehabilitation in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Correlations			
Variables		Vocational Skill Acquisition Programme	Street Begging Rehabilitation
Vocational Skill Acquisition Programme	Pearson Correlation	1	.581**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	200	200
Street Begging Rehabilitation		.581**	1

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	200	200

Source: Field Survey (2025) * Correlation was significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)*

Pearson Product Moment correlation was run to investigate the relationship between vocational skill acquisition programme and street begging rehabilitation in Lagos State, Nigeria. The result indicated that there was a positive correlation relationship between vocational skill acquisition programme and street begging rehabilitation in Lagos State, Nigeria. which was statistically significant ($r = .581$; $N=200$; $p<0.05$). Hence, the hypothesis which stated that “there is no significant relationship between vocational skill acquisition programme and street begging rehabilitation in

Lagos State, Nigeria was rejected and alternate was accepted. The p-value of .001 is less than the 0.05 significance level which indicates the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggested that there was a statistically significant correlation between vocational skill acquisition programme and street begging rehabilitation in Lagos State, Nigeria. This result is consistent with Nwankwo, Ugochukwu and Alimba (2019) that street beggars had a high capacity for vocational training and that structured training significantly improved their ability to exit street begging.

Table 2: Pearson’s correlation analysis between financial empowerment initiative and street begging rehabilitation in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Correlations			
Variables		Financial Empowerment Initiative	Street Begging Rehabilitation
Financial Empowerment Initiative	Pearson Correlation	1	.592**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	200	200
Street Begging Rehabilitation	Pearson Correlation	.592**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	200	200

Source: Field Survey (2025) * Correlation was significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)*

Pearson Product Moment correlation was run to investigate the relationship between financial empowerment initiative. The result indicated that there was a positive correlation relationship between financial empowerment initiative which was statistically significant ($r = .592$; $N=200$; $p<0.05$).

Hence, the hypothesis which stated that “there is no significant relationship between financial empowerment initiative was rejected and alternate was accepted. The p-value of .001 is less than the 0.05 significance level which indicates the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggested that there was

a statistically significant correlation between financial empowerment initiative. This result is consistent with Adewunmi and Olorunfemi (2020) that Lagos State livelihood support programmes particularly women's microcredit schemes and small business stimulus funds enabled beneficiaries to transition from street trading and street begging to more stable forms of self-employment.

Conclusion

This study concludes that entrepreneurship education serves as a powerful antidote for reforming street beggars from a life of poverty to productive and self-reliant citizens in Lagos State, Nigeria. Through vocational skill acquisition programme and financial empowerment initiatives, beggars can be rehabilitated from dependency to self-reliance citizens in Lagos State, Nigeria. The integration of entrepreneurship education into rehabilitation programs enhances self-esteem, creativity, and income generation, thereby reducing the prevalence of street begging and urban poverty. For sustainable results, such programs must include access to microfinance, mentorship, and market linkages to support start-up ventures. Government agencies, NGOs, and private institutions should collaborate to institutionalize entrepreneurship education as a core component of social rehabilitation. Ultimately, empowering street beggars through entrepreneurship transforms them from societal liabilities into assets contributing meaningfully to community and national development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Lagos State government should incorporate entrepreneurship education into all rehabilitation and empowerment programmes for street beggars to promote self-reliance and skill acquisition.
2. Policymaker should establishment of skill acquisition centres across local governments to provide continuous training and learning opportunities for rehabilitated beggars.
3. Lagos State Government and NGOs should provide financial empowerment initiative, soft loans, grants, or microcredit facilities to trained street beggars for sustaining small businesses.
4. Experienced entrepreneurs should mentor rehabilitated beggars through business incubation programmes to enhance their practical understanding of enterprise management.
5. Public awareness programmes should be launched to change societal attitudes towards rehabilitated beggars and reduce stigma, encouraging community support and inclusion.
6. Strong partnerships among government agencies, NGOs, religious institutions, and the private sector should be fostered to fund and implement entrepreneurship-based rehabilitation initiatives.

A comprehensive policy framework should be developed to ensure the long-term sustainability of entrepreneurship education as a rehabilitation strategy for street beggars in Lagos State.

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