



PSYCHOSOCIAL ATTRIBUTES AND ETHICAL QUALITIES NEEDED FOR SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY.

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Abstract

The promotion of entrepreneurship culture, in contemporary Nigeria, has become the primary weapon of choice in the war against poverty and social economic malaise. This study sought to identify psychosocial and ethical qualities which may be salutary to entrepreneurship prospects. The idea was to obtain the views of entrepreneurs on the psychological, social and ethical qualities which should be promoted in potential entrepreneurs in the new century. The researcher employed descriptive survey design. The population consisted of the 3,622 small and medium scale enterprises registered with the Ministry of Commerce in Osun State of Nigeria, out of which a sample of 360 was drawn using stratified random sampling technique. The researcher formulated three research questions and tested one hypothesis. A structured questionnaire was developed and was administered on entrepreneurs in Osun State. The research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using the t-test. The result showed that the attributes needed for successful entrepreneurship include persistence, courage, intelligence, ambition, persistence, confidence, intuition and discipline. Others include integrity, friendliness, tact and adherence to environmental laws and norms. The study suggested that Psychology of Entrepreneurship should at different levels, be introduced as an entrepreneurship topic, subject or discipline while greater emphasis should be laid on the psychological, sociological and ethical contents of entrepreneurship training.

Key words: Psychology, sociology, ethical qualities, entrepreneurship, 21st century.

Introduction

There is a universal consensus that governments the world over can no longer be counted on to provide employment for young graduates. The streets of third-world nations, and indeed, virtually all nations, are littered with scores of fresh graduates clutching degrees and diplomas, seeking employment in government and industry, often to no avail. There is consequently, a general agreement that the best way to tackle poverty and reduce unemployment is to introduce youths to the intricacies of entrepreneurship (Ademiluyi, Oyedele & Mustapha, 2020; Akinola, 2017). Many authors have waxed poetic on the competencies needed for effective entrepreneurship. These competencies and skills are indubitably important and perhaps even indispensable. Yet, the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills may not be the "be-all and end-all" of entrepreneurial breakthrough. There may be more to business success than intelligence quotient or aptitude tests can measure or predict. A person's personality is an important factor in his entrepreneurial prospects. It is often said that character is destiny. This may be even more true of entrepreneurial ventures than any other. A man may possess all the requisite skills and



ambition, yet he may find his way to the zenith persistently barred by factors beyond his comprehension. A man with mediocre skills on the other hand, buoyed by superior personality endowments, may constantly post superior attainments to the consternation of better endowed contemporaries. In respect of an analogous scenario, Shakespeare, cited in Ademiluyi (2014:7) wrote many years ago: "The fault, dear Brutus is not in our stars but ourselves, that we are underlings." It is the belief of this researcher that in addition to the acquisition of skills and theoretical entrepreneurial know-how, it may be necessary for potential investors to bring their personality endowments, including their psychological and sociological attributes, to bear on their entrepreneurial ventures in order to attain optimal results.

Olorundare and Kayode (2014) define entrepreneurship as a practical creativeness which combines resources and opportunities in new ways. It involves the application of personal qualities and other resources within the environment for the attainment of business success. Abasido (2015) perceives entrepreneurship as the process of using available capital in any form for business endeavours in an open and free market economy for the sole purpose of doing new things within a new philosophy of values and purpose of utility and quality and use which satisfies need. Entrepreneurship can therefore be seen as willingness and ability to seek out an investment opportunity, establish an enterprise based on this, and run it successfully.

Entrepreneurship is concerned with creating opportunities, meeting the needs of individuals and is a process of identifying gaps in one's immediate environment, community and society at large and bringing together resources in an innovative and profitable way to fill these gaps (Oni & Olaleye, 2004; Ogundele, 2020; Umoru & Orah, 2020). According to Say, cited in Jimgang (2004) the entrepreneur shifts economic resources out of an area of lower productivity into an area of higher productivity and greater yield. Jimgang believes that the entrepreneur searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity. Maslow, cited in Akinola, (2017) views the entrepreneur as someone who can recognize change, enjoy it and improvise without being fore-warned. In Maslow's view, the entrepreneur is a "here-now" creator, an improviser who is not afraid of being viewed as operating in dissonance with general practice and belief. Jimgang (2004:73) sums up on entrepreneurship: "The entrepreneur is someone who perceives or senses opportunity where others fear rejection; he will not talk of obstacles but challenges. His mind set while aware of the possibilities, does not allow it to preoccupy him."

While Olaleye (2013) believes that entrepreneurship is not an inborn characteristic or personality trait, he concedes that it is a mix of doses of theory, concept, intuition, discipline, art, experience, trial and error and even heresy. Implicitly, therefore, personality plays a role in the entrepreneurial mix. Lally and Valentine-French (2018) define personality as a sum total of individual characteristics and ways of behaving which in their organization or patterning describe the individual's unique adjustment to his environment. Personality can also be seen as the characteristics and behaviour which differentiate a man from another. Olaleye (2013:152) believe that the importance of understanding individuals' personality cannot be over-emphasized because "evaluating a person's personality gives us knowledge of how to deal with him." This is particularly true of business relationships where it is often necessary to predict people's actions or reactions in order to determine how to relate to them. It is often very necessary to predict the level of integrity, sincerity and capabilities of business partners and contemporaries in order to properly define the appropriate business relationships with them (Umoru & Ademiluyi, 2020). In the same way, it is very important to win the confidence of potential business partners by projecting positive images in several important respects.

Psychoanalytic theorists posit that the structure of the personality comprises three major sub-systems: id, ego, and super-ego. The sub-systems work together and a person



may experience personality conflicts if there are unresolved conflicts among the systems. The id comprises everything inherited, including instinctual drives like sex and aggression. It provides the energy known as libidinal energy and provides the other systems with the energy needed for operation. Ego controls and tames the activities and desires of the id. It determines which of id's impulses can be rationally satisfied at a particular time. The super-ego is analogous to the conscience which incorporates all the things a child is punished for; the ego-ideal are the things a child is rewarded for. The super-ego forms the cultural norms and values of society taught by the parents (Reiss & Collins, 2004). Psychologists have also identified defence mechanisms which may reflect in a person's personality and psychosocial configuration. These include repression, projection, reaction formation, regression, displacement, renationalization intellectualization, denial and sublimation.

Defence mechanisms are used to prevent anxiety from totally taking over the feelings of someone with unresolved conflicts. They protect the individual from anxiety (Blum & Naylor, 1984; Lally & Valentine-French (2018). Defence mechanisms not only block out the source of anxiety, a number of personality projections are often defence mechanisms deployed to assuage sublime anxieties. The term 'psychosocial' refers to the influence of social factors on an individual's mind or behavior and to the interrelation of behavior and social factors (Oxford English Dictionary, 2019). It refers to the close relationship between the individual and the collective aspects of any social entity. In the context of entrepreneurship, psychosocial refers to the interactions of psychological and social factors with an entrepreneur's perceptions, decisions and choices. Like all other aspects of personality, the perceptions of an entrepreneur's psychosocial configuration affects how others relate to him in respect of entrepreneurship and business activities.

The twenty first century, now into its third decade, is already significantly different from the previous decades in the in the variety of the opportunities and challenges it presents. The ever expanding dominance of information technology has introduced new concepts and implements. The advent of the internet, with its attendant facilities like the social media, coupled with the promise of artificial intelligence, indicates that yesterday's realities, norms and practices may no longer be applicable in the contemporary environment. The 21st Century has therefore heralded new realities and possibilities with potentially staggering implications for entrepreneurship theory and practice. The common assertion that a businessman is only as good as his word emphasizes the primacy of ethics in entrepreneurial considerations. Entrepreneurship decisions are often informed by the confidence a person has in his partners, clients, subordinates and patrons. The perception of a person's integrity, reliability and diligence is likely to influence one's business relationship with that person. However in the current milieu, when the buzzword appears to be "The end justifies the means," it appears that ethical considerations are no longer on the front burner of the new century's entrepreneurial concerns and training. There appears to be, especially among the youths, a genuine tendency to confuse fraudulent activities, especially internet fraud, with profound entrepreneurship engagement; It does not appear that in entrepreneurship pedagogy, adequate attention is being paid to developing the right entrepreneurial personality, psychosocial and ethical qualities. Evidently, these considerations are not taken care of in the current entrepreneurship curriculum, hence the need for this study.



Research Questions

Four research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What psychological attributes are necessary for successful entrepreneurship in the 21st century?
2. What social qualities are likely to contribute to success in entrepreneurship in the 21st century?
3. What ethical qualities are needed for successful entrepreneurship in the 21st century?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was raised and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female entrepreneurs on the psychosocial and ethical qualities needed for successful entrepreneurship in the 21st century.

Methods

The study was conducted in Osun State, in southwestern Nigeria. The researcher employed the descriptive survey design. The population consisted of the 3622 owners of the small and medium scale enterprises registered with the Osun State Ministry of Commerce and Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Agency (SMEDA) as at December 2019, out of which a sample of 362 respondents, representing 10 percent, was selected using proportionate stratified random sampling based on whether they are located within or outside the state capital. The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire based on the formulated research questions and hypothesis. The first section sought relevant demographic data of the respondents. This was used in testing the hypothesis. The second section sought the respondents' ratings on the psychosocial attributes and ethical qualities needed for successful entrepreneurship. The instrument was designed to elicit the ratings of respondents on a 4-point rating scale as follows: Very much needed, 4 points; much needed, 3 points; slightly needed, 2 points; not needed, 1 point. The instrument was face-and content-validated by two experts; one a psychologist, the other, a business educator. Three hundred and sixty two copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents by the researcher and his two assistants. Three hundred and thirty five copies were returned but only 330 were properly completed. This represents 93% return. Data collected were analyzed using mean rating for the research questions. The decision rule was that any item within a range of 3.5-4.0 was adjudged as very much needed; items with mean scores ranging between 2.50 and 3.49 were adjudged much needed; those between 1.50 and 2.49 were rated barely needed, while scores less than 1.50 were rated as not needed. The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using independent samples t test. Where the calculated p value was less than or equal to the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was to be rejected. Conversely, if the calculated p-value was greater than the level of significance, the null hypothesis was not to be rejected.

Findings

The results obtained from analysis of data and test of hypothesis are presented below. Research Question 1: What psychological attributes are needed for successful entrepreneurship in the 21st century? Table 1: Respondents' Ratings of Psychological Qualities needed for Successful Entrepreneurship



Table 1: Respondents' Ratings of Psychological Qualities needed for Successful Entrepreneurship

S/N	Psychological attributes	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Openness	3.08	0.53	Much Needed
2.	Conscientiousness	3.26	0.61	Much Needed
3.	Persistence	3.66	0.47	Very Much Needed
4.	Courage	3.87	0.58	Very Much Needed
5.	Extroversion	2.34	0.74	Barely Needed
6.	Confidence	3.45	0.66	Much Needed
7.	Intelligence	3.36	0.71	Much needed
8.	Optimism	3.42	0.68	Much needed
9.	Intuition	3.13	0.68	Much Needed
10.	Good memory	3.01	0.73	Much Needed
11.	Fortitude	3.34	0.74	Much needed
12.	Greed and covetousness	1.44	0.66	Not needed
13.	Callousness	1.26	0.71	Not needed
14.	Agreeableness	2.48	0.61	Barely Needed
15.	Ambition	3.65	1.12	Very Much Needed

Table 1 shows that all the psychological attributes listed are needed for successful entrepreneurship. Persistence and ambition are rated as very much needed with mean scores of 3.66 and 3.65 respectively. Openness, conscientiousness, persistence, courage, maturity, confidence intuition, good memory and ambition were rated as much needed with mean scores ranging from 2.73 to 3.45. Two items, extroversion with mean score of 2.34 and agreeableness, with mean score of 2.48 were rated as barely needed. Greed, covetousness and callousness were rated as not needed. The standard deviation scores range between 0.68 and 1.12 which shows that the scores were not dispersed but rather cluster around their means.

Research Question 2: What social qualities are needed for successful entrepreneurship in the 21st century?



Table 2: Respondents' ratings of Social Qualities Needed for Successful Entrepreneurship

S/N	Social Qualities	Mean	SD	Remarks
16.	Friendliness needed	3.53	0.73	Very much
17.	Kindness	3.21	0.65	Much needed
18.	Tact	2.98	0.74	Much needed
19.	Generosity	2.06	0.53	Barely needed
20.	Conversation/persuasion skills	3.77	0.74	Very much needed
21.	Good Family Background	3.04	0.62	Much needed
22.	Empathy	3.21	0.66	Much needed
23.	Strong religious affiliation	3.38	0.84	Much needed
24.	Memory for faces and Names	3.18	0.71	Much Needed
25.	Membership of social clubs	1.52	0.68	Barely needed
26.	Social media skills needed	3.51	0.58	Very much
27.	Conflict resolution skill	3.55	0.68	Very much needed
28.	Relationship management skill	3.38	0.91	Much needed
29.	Communication skill needed	3.77	0.74	Very much
30.	Listening skill	3.44	0.82	Much needed

Table 2 shows that conversation/persuasion skills (Mean:3.77), communication (Mean:3.77), conflict resolution (Mean:3.55)skills and friendliness (Mean:3.53) were rated as very much needed. Needed skills include kindness, tact, generosity, good family background, empathy and good memory, with mean scores which ranged from 2.98 to 3.21. Generosity, strong religious observation and membership of social club are rated as barely needed. No item was rated as not needed. The standard deviation scores, which ranged from 0.73 and 0.88 show that the scores clustered around their means and were not dispersed.

Research Question 3: What ethical practices are needed for successful entrepreneurship in the 21st century ?

Table 3: Respondents' ratings of ethical practices needed for successful entrepreneurship

S/N	Ethical Qualities	Mean	SD	Remarks
31.	Integrity (Telling the truth always) needed	3.48	0.93	Much
32.	Punctuality (at work & meetings)	3.17	0.89	Much needed
33.	Strict adherence to rules and regulations	3.38	0.78	Much needed
34.	Self discipline	3.81	0.66	Very much needed
35.	Fairness and justice needed	2.83	0.68	Much



36. Adherence to professional best practices much needed	3.54	0.56	Very
37. Strict adherence to agreements needed	3.52	0.97	Very much
38. Strict observance of religious laws/norms needed	1.31	0.53	Not
39. Avoidance of fraudulent activities much needed	3.55	0.71	Very
40. Abhorrence of Bribery (giving or receiving) needed	1.55	0.71	Barely
41. Avoidance of theft/conversion needed	3.51	0.79	Very much
42. Avoidance of substance abuse	3.47	0.96	Much Needed
43. Avoidance of alcoholism	2.58	0.53	Much needed
44. Avoidance of cult activities needed	3.46	0.87	Much
45. Avoidance of promiscuity needed	2.46	0.96	Much

Table 3 shows that self discipline, adherence to professional best practices, strict adherence to agreements, avoidance of fraudulent activities, and avoidance of theft and conversion which have mean scores of 3.81, 3.54, 3.52, 3.55 and 3.51 respectively are ethical attributes very much needed for successful entrepreneurship. All the other constructs, except strict adherence to religious norms (Mean: 1.31, not needed) were rated as much needed. The standard deviation scores, which ranged from 0.53 and 0.96 show that the scores clustered around their means.

Hypothesis Test

T-test for the difference in the ratings of respondents in and those outside the state capital on the psychosocial attributes and ethical qualities needed for successful entrepreneurship.

Table 4: T-Test result for the difference in the ratings of respondents in and those outside the state capital on the psychosocial attributes and ethical qualities needed for successful entrepreneurship.

Group	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	P-Value	Decision
Entrepreneurs in the state Capital	191	2.98	0.20				
Entrepreneurs outside the state capital	139	2.87	0.16				
					328	2.050	0.000
NS							

The data presented in Table 4 show the t-test result of the ratings of entrepreneurs in the state capital (Osogbo) and those outside the state capital on the psychosocial attributes and ethical qualities needed for successful entrepreneurship. Those in the state capital numbered 191, their mean score was 2.98, their standard deviation was 0.20. For those



outside the capital, the number, mean, and standard deviation were 1.39, 2.87 and 0.16 respectively. The calculated t was 2.05; while the P value was 0.000 which was less than the level of significance of 0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. Consequently, no significant difference was observed in the mean ratings of entrepreneurs in the state capital and those outside the capital on the psychosocial attributes and ethical qualities needed for successful entrepreneurship.

Discussion of Findings

The result of research question 1 as presented in Table 1 indicates that entrepreneurs in Osun State rated courage, persistence and ambition, as psychological qualities very much needed for successful entrepreneurship. Qualities much needed for the same purpose include, maturity, confidence, initiative, intelligence, optimism, good memory, and discipline. These are attributes which are indispensable in the natural course of life's tortuous journey. Adewuyi (2017) states that the qualities needed for success in entrepreneurship are similar to those needed to succeed in any discipline or life situation. Olaleye (2013) claims that the life story of any successful entrepreneur is nothing but a story of persistence, doggedness, ambition, courage, calculation and fortitude; it is not surprising, therefore that these same qualities are similarly – or perhaps even more – in demand for entrepreneurship ventures. Ogundele (2020) opines that good managers need, to be effective, to have basic psychosocial abilities, including some of those listed above. It is similarly not surprising that the respondents rated agreeableness as barely needed for entrepreneurship. Since a competent entrepreneur may sometimes need to disagree with his clients, staffers and customers. The respondents also rated callousness, covetousness and greed as qualities which are not needed for successful entrepreneurship. With this finding, the popular caricature of the successful entrepreneur as an amoral, money obsessed gnome has not found significant support in this study.

The results of research question 2 shows that friendliness and good conversation/negotiation skills, communication, social media, and conflict resolution skills are very much needed for successful entrepreneurship. Qualities much needed include tact, empathy, and good memory, listening skill and relationship management skills. A strong religious belief is also rated as much needed, while membership of social clubs was rated as barely needed. Blum and Naylor (1993) identified friendliness and tact among skills that managers and administrators should learn. Adewuyi (2017) opines that social qualities are important because success in any discipline depends largely on ability to adapt to the environment. Ademiluyi (2014) states that in a fluid environment, especially one characterized by fluctuations in national economic conditions and new technologies, an entrepreneur's ability to maneuver, to swiftly and effortlessly transit from one situation to another will be a major factor in success or failure. Ademiluyi emphasized the primacy of interpersonal skills in business success. The emphasis on strong religious affiliations however confirms Nigeria's recent ranking as "the most religious country on earth." Nigerians' affinity for the supernatural and the celestial has been confirmed by many recent studies (Madueke & Adinoyi, 2017). It is consequently only natural that Nigerians should rank religious beliefs among the qualities needed for success in virtually all life's ventures.

The result of findings on research question 3 shows that self discipline, adherence to professional best practices, strict adherence to agreements, avoidance of bribery, fraud and theft are ethical qualities are rated as very much needed for successful entrepreneurship. Qualities and attributes rated as much needed include: punctuality; strict adherence to environmental norms; avoidance of cult activities, substance abuse and alcoholism. The respondents did not insist on strict adherence to religious laws and norms. The findings raise a few posers. Why did respondents rate high strong religious affiliations, (on Table 2) but do



not have the same ratings for strict observance of religious rules? This probably reflects the paradox of the south-western Nigerian society where strong religious affinity coexists with relaxed social norms. The religious emphasis in Osun State, and perhaps, the generality of southwestern Nigeria, is on affiliation, not strict observance. It is even more significant that respondents are split down the middle on never receiving – or even more important, never giving – a bribe. Respondents to this study do not believe that this level of honesty is necessary for entrepreneurial pursuits in Nigeria. The result of the test of hypothesis indicates that there is no split in the mean responses of entrepreneurs in the state capital and those in the other parts of the state on psychological, social and ethical qualities needed to succeed in entrepreneurship. This should not be surprising considering the fact that there is little sociological difference (in terms of population, gender and ethnicity) between the Osun state capital and the other urban centres where the entrepreneurial ventures reside.

Conclusion

It is indubitable that in today's competitive world, self employment is the best employment. It is therefore very important that all factors which may encourage entrepreneurship should be identified and reinforced. Many competencies and skills have been identified by different authors as necessary to succeed, and to remain successful in business. But even the best skills and techniques may be vitiated by repugnant psychosocial attributes and negative ethical practices. Business succeeds only when potential clients and customers develop confidence not only in the goods and services being offered, but also in its promoters. Many excellent products have been done in by the repulsive personalities of their canvassers. On the other hand, we all now mediocre professionals and entrepreneurs who have struck gold in their practices largely on the strength of their personalities and psychosocial attributes. It is therefore important to emphasize in training would-be entrepreneurs, psychological attributes, social skills and ethical qualities which can best promote their entrepreneurial efforts. Many of these attributes are innate, but they can also be acquired by appropriate conditioning. It may indeed be time for teachers in tertiary institutions to introduce into the curriculum something like The psychology of Entrepreneurship at different levels as a topic, subject, or even a discipline. The acquisition of positive personality attributes will, to say the least, do nothing to vitiate entrepreneurship prospects.

Recommendations

With the research concluded, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Entrepreneurship teachers should promote in their students psychological and personality characteristics which may enhance their entrepreneurship prospects. Qualities like optimism, courage, fortitude should be emphasized and developed in entrepreneurship training.
2. Entrepreneurship students and practitioners should appreciate the importance of developing those social qualities which are germane to entrepreneurship success. Friendliness can be learnt, communication and social media skills can be mastered to the benefit of entrepreneurship prospects,
3. Entrepreneurship curriculum developers should emphasize the importance of ethics in future curriculum reviews. The tendency to confuse fraudulent activities with legitimate entrepreneurship ventures can be redressed by placing curricular emphasis on the dos and don'ts of genuine entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship students should be made to understand that fraud is not business and criminality is not entrepreneurship.



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