

ENTREPRENEURSHIP CREATIVITY AND RISK-TAKING MANAGEMENT SKILLS ACQUISITION FOR SUSTAINABLE SELF-RELIANCE THROUGH VOCATIONALISATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

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Abstract

Secondary education in Nigeria faces critical challenges, particularly in addressing youth unemployment and preparing students for either higher education or the workforce. This study examined the acquisition of entrepreneurial creativity and risk-taking management skills for sustainable self-reliance through the vocationalisation of secondary education in South-West Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected from 372 respondents using a validated 23-item questionnaire. The instrument had a reliability index of 0.92. Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while hypotheses were tested with independent samples t-test at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that stakeholders perceived creativity (mean = 3.12) and risk management (mean = 3.07) as essential skills that could be acquired through vocational education. Significant differences were found in the perceptions of teachers and students regarding creativity skills, and between inspectors and teachers on risk management skills. The study concluded that vocationalising secondary education is a viable strategy to equip students with essential entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance. It recommended that curriculum planners integrate more hands-on projects and innovation-driven activities to foster creativity and business idea generation among students.

Key Terms : Vocationalization, Entrepreneurship, Sustainability, Creativity, Risk taking Skills.

Introduction

Education in Nigeria is no longer regarded as a guaranteed passport to secure employment. This reality has compelled many young graduates to view entrepreneurship and self-employment as viable alternatives to traditional jobs. One of the major causes of this shift is the growing concern over youth unemployment and underemployment, especially among secondary school leavers. Consequently, Nigeria is confronted with the critical task of redesigning its secondary education system to better prepare adolescents not just for tertiary education, but also for seamless entry into the workforce. There is a growing recognition of the need to introduce an education model that not only promotes entrepreneurship but also fosters creativity and innovation among students (Oladunjoye & Omemu, 2013).

In line with this thinking, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013) proposed a diversified curriculum at the secondary level to cater to varying talents and roles, emphasizing technical and vocational skills essential for national development. Unfortunately, current classroom practices remain overly focused, neglecting the cultivation of life and entrepreneurial skills needed in today's economy. This gap in practice makes the role of stakeholders crucial in implementing the secondary school curriculum effectively. Stakeholders such as administrators, teachers, students, and education inspectors are expected to drive curriculum reforms and ensure alignment with the nation's socio-economic needs. Their active engagement is necessary to shift from theory-heavy instruction to practical, skills-based learning that empowers students. To address this, educational programmes can be classified as school-based or combined school- and work-based, depending on how the curriculum is delivered (OECD, 2010).

Integrating real-world experiences within school programmes is increasingly seen as essential in developing employable skills. This need to merge academic learning with practical skills has intensified the focus on entrepreneurship, which is now viewed as a driving force for economic growth and transformation. Though definitions vary, entrepreneurship fundamentally involves identifying opportunities, mobilizing resources, and delivering value through innovative ventures (Jimoh, Adetokunboh & Alaka-Adetokunboh, 2017).

Entrepreneurship also requires a unique mindset one that embraces risk, vision, and creativity. Kuratko (2009) explains that successful entrepreneurs possess the passion and energy to develop and execute ideas, form teams, and recognize opportunities amid uncertainty. Given its emphasis on problem-solving and innovation, entrepreneurship has become indispensable in fostering societal progress. Scholars like Ameh & Maisamari (2020) and Ndikanwu & Aninye (2014) stress that entrepreneurship creates wealth by combining ideas, management skills, and resources to meet identified needs and add value. Importantly, entrepreneurship thrives under the right social conditions where resources are accessible, community support is strong, and change is embraced (Mokaya, Namusonge & Sikalieh, 2012). Thus, fostering entrepreneurial behaviour requires deliberate interventions to create enabling environments that support learning, capital access, and peer networking. Developing entrepreneurial skills is central to national educational goals and the drive for self-reliance. Self-employment involves identifying and seizing opportunities for innovation and profit generation. According to Onoh (2013), it also contributes to wealth creation, grassroots development, and economic stability.

To thrive in self-employment, individuals must acquire relevant skills, often through structured entrepreneurship education. These skills which may be technical, behavioural, or attitudinal enable entrepreneurs to create, manage, and grow successful ventures. Entrepreneurs typically play three key roles: creator (generating ideas and innovations), organizer (structuring teams and processes), and risk-taker (navigating uncertainties to create value). For secondary education to be effective, these roles must be supported through a curriculum that equips students with entrepreneurial competencies. According to Ademiluyi (2017) sales record keeping, sales promotion, negotiation, stock record keeping, salesmanship, pricing, advertising channel, advertising media, and consumer behaviour appreciation are among the skills and competencies required by business education graduates for effective self-reliance.

Stakeholders in the education sector must ensure that secondary education delivers outcomes aligned with national goals. Internal stakeholders such as administrators and teachers, and external ones like policymakers and community leaders, play a vital role in curriculum planning and implementation (Ndifon et al., 2021; Livala et al., 2023). Students, as primary beneficiaries, must also be equipped with tools for success in life and work. Teachers, with their deep classroom knowledge, and education inspectors, who oversee policy compliance, must work collaboratively to ensure that vocational and entrepreneurial content is not sidelined.

To this end, Nigeria must reform its secondary education system to make it more responsive to the needs of the labour market. One promising approach is the vocationalisation of secondary education, which involves integrating vocational and practical subjects into a curriculum traditionally dominated by general education (Okaforcha et al., 2019). Vocationalised education fosters hands-on learning and skill acquisition. By promoting practical knowledge alongside theoretical instruction, students are better prepared to meet societal and economic demands. It also encourages innovation, cooperation, and active learning. As global trends indicate a shift towards mass secondary and tertiary education, the demand for diverse, inclusive, and skill-oriented curricula has grown. More students now seek not just academic success but also practical competencies that make them competitive in the workforce. This has led to increased emphasis on employability and economic productivity within education systems. While some scholars express concern about the vocational shift in curricula, others see it as a necessary evolution towards aligning education with real-world needs (Fien, Maclean & Park, 2008; Schwartz, 2010; Nussbaum, 2010).

In this context, vocationalised secondary education serves as a bridge between academic

knowledge and practical application. Subjects like industrial arts, agriculture, and business-related skills offer students a taste of the real economy while preserving core academic content. Historically, vocational skills were acquired through apprenticeships. However, the changing landscape of education particularly since the industrial revolution has necessitated the development of comprehensive curricula that combine academic learning with vocational training. Diversified schools that offer both types of instruction are now seen as ideal for preparing students for multiple pathways. By blending vocational and academic tracks, schools become more inclusive and adaptable, helping students of varying interests and abilities find meaningful pathways to success. This educational transformation is key to equipping the next generation with the tools, mindset, and skills required to thrive in an entrepreneurial and innovative-driven economy.

Creativity is one of the essential entrepreneurship skills required by secondary school students for self-reliance. Defined as the generation and implementation of novel, appropriate ideas to establish a new venture (Amadi & Chuku, 2021), creativity is often discussed in entrepreneurship literature within the context of venture formation. However, its significance extends beyond the initial stages of a business. Entrepreneurial creativity exists before, during, and after the lifetime of a business, influenced by both individual decision-making and the broader social environment. Building on the role of creativity, innovation emerges as a crucial component in sustaining business growth and gaining a competitive edge. Creativity fuels innovation by generating ideas, while innovation transforms those ideas into practical solutions. In today's globalized market, innovation has evolved from a competitive advantage to a necessity. Drawing on over a decade of OECD research (Box, 2009), innovation policies have been recognized as pivotal in addressing global challenges and driving economic growth across markets with increasing levels of internationalization.

This emphasis on creativity and innovation is reflected in the vocationalisation of secondary school education, which aims to instill entrepreneurial skills in students. According to Clow (2018), entrepreneurship involves mobilizing resources land, capital, and labor to seize business opportunities that fulfill societal needs, create jobs, and generate wealth. While entrepreneurship encompasses both new and existing businesses, the spotlight is often on the development of new ideas and startups. Therefore, integrating creativity and innovation into educational and economic policies is essential for national development and long-term prosperity. Entrepreneurs who embrace creativity and innovation early are better positioned to bring transformative products and services to the market. While creativity provides the foundation, innovation brings it to life by implementing ideas in ways that generate value. In many industries, the ability to innovate continuously is no longer optional but essential for survival. Creativity and innovation not only help improve existing offerings to maximize profits but also encourage unconventional thinking that leads to breakthrough ideas. These traits are vital for sustaining businesses and adapting to changing market dynamics (Baykal, 2018).

The rise in globalization and rapid technological advancements has led to a surge in business opportunities, yet it has also intensified market competition (Jain, 2019; Edralin et al., 2019). In this context, creativity enables entrepreneurs to identify and act on unique opportunities, thus securing a competitive advantage. It serves as a catalyst for business development and can contribute positively to societal well-being (Ballor & Claar, 2019). Regardless of scale from local enterprises to global corporations entrepreneurship benefits significantly from creative thinking. Creativity and innovation extend to a wide array of entrepreneurial activities, including identifying viable business ideas, recognizing investment opportunities, setting goals, and conducting market research across urban and rural areas. They are equally essential in initiating business operations, managing resources, promoting products, and navigating risks. According to Gontur et al. (2016), these capabilities are fundamental for achieving organizational goals and ensuring adaptability in a competitive environment.

However, the Nigerian context presents a unique challenge. Many Nigerian entrepreneurs struggle to effectively combine available resources with opportunities. Compared to their counterparts in the Western world, their creativity levels remain relatively low. Poor preparation, inadequate management practices, and an aversion to taking calculated risks often hinder their ability to launch and sustain innovative ventures. As a result, many fail to capitalize on the potential benefits that

creativity and innovation could bring. Nonetheless, the potential of creativity remains vast. As Gontur et al. (2016) suggest, the application of innovative ideas can impact various strategic business areas from products and services to processes and procedures. Barroso-Tanoira (2017) further explains that ideas become valuable when they are unique and beneficial, whether directly or indirectly, in the short or long term. This underscores the importance of transforming abstract ideas into tangible organizational outcomes, such as new products or improved processes.

To further clarify the relationship between creativity and innovation, Gontur et al. (2016) highlight how creativity feeds into the innovation process. Creativity involves generating ideas, while innovation involves selecting, organizing, and refining those ideas into something practical. Innovations can be radical or incremental and may manifest in either products or processes. The extent of innovation depends on past methods, the influence of creative factors, and the structuring of implementation strategies (Roopsing & Nokphromph, 2017). Ultimately, creativity and innovation are interdependent and intertwined. Innovation is usually linked to the development or improvement of products and processes, making it essential to recognize the creative process as a prerequisite. As Antonites and Van Vuuren (2014) assert, the creative outcomes form the foundation upon which innovations are built. Despite varying mechanisms and outcomes in different contexts, fostering creativity remains a critical step toward meaningful and sustainable innovation.

Risk management skill encompasses the entrepreneur's ability to accurately identify, assess, and manage risks while understanding the extent of risk that is acceptable or bearable (Ajamobe, 2021). Rather than preventing risks altogether, this skill is centered on predicting potential risk events by evaluating their likelihood and the severity of their impact—then applying efforts to maintain these risks at a manageable level. The success or failure of a secondary school graduate entrepreneur largely hinges on this capacity to effectively minimize risks while maximizing returns. In today's digital world, digital literacy plays a crucial role in facilitating efficient and cost-effective risk management strategies. Building on this, risk-taking competency is another integral aspect of entrepreneurial ability. It involves recognizing the various risks an enterprise may face, assessing their implications, and setting priorities based on thorough risk analysis. Traditionally, organizations followed a linear approach to managing risks; however, as the scope of risks has evolved to include non-traditional factors, enterprises now adopt a more comprehensive method known as Enterprise Risk Management (ERM). This framework enables a holistic understanding of interconnected risks, promoting an integrated response strategy that reaches every level of the organization (Bezzina, 2010).

In support of this, the World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report (2008) highlights that while previous decades experienced stable economic growth, the modern globalized business landscape introduces increased volatility through systematic financial risks, rising food prices, extended supply chains, and potential energy crises. These new dynamics call for analytical and strategic risk-taking—an essential trait historically associated with successful entrepreneurship. A defining feature of an entrepreneurial mindset is the willingness and ability to engage with risk, not recklessly, but thoughtfully and with purpose (Bezzina, 2010). Although cultural context influences risk perception and behavior, research indicates that entrepreneurs globally adopt a cautious and informed approach to risk. They do not take risks impulsively but rather after a detailed analysis of their capacity to manage the outcomes. According to Penchev and Salopaju (2011), entrepreneurs prefer moderate risks in environments where they feel a degree of control, utilizing their skills and experience to navigate uncertainty. Risk-taking, therefore, is not driven by compulsion but by necessity and confidence in one's own ability to achieve favorable outcomes.

Indeed, success in risk-taking is often a result of deliberate planning rather than sheer luck (Bezzina, 2010). Risk-averse individuals and institutions still embrace risks when they perceive the potential to convert uncertainty into competitive advantage. This is evident in companies entering volatile markets or adopting emerging technologies, believing they can outperform rivals through calculated risk-taking. As Cameron and Shah (2015) point out, sustainable business success stems not from avoiding risk but from developing repeatable strategies to manage it, which enables consistent innovation and market growth. This mindset directly aligns with the concept of self-reliance, defined as the capacity to work independently and generate income without relying on employment from

others (Ukah & Atah, 2021). For secondary school graduates, becoming self-reliant means leveraging entrepreneurial and risk management skills to create income-generating ventures. Thus, fostering self-reliance through entrepreneurship becomes a vital developmental goal, especially in preparing students to contribute meaningfully to the economy. To this end, the introduction of entrepreneurship education in secondary schools is aimed at equipping students with the creativity, teamwork, and initiative required for business success. According to Ngerem and Ezikpe (2016), vocationalising entrepreneurship education introduces students to real-world business opportunities, instilling in them the drive to establish ventures and participate in job creation. This educational reform is not only a response to youth unemployment but a pathway to national development through functional education.

Despite these efforts, concerns persist regarding the effective implementation of vocationalisation in secondary schools. Okaforcha, Enefu, Usman, and Okolo (2019) argue that while numerous government policies and reforms have been introduced, the expected outcomes remain elusive. The reasons for this could include inadequate implementation by school authorities, lack of resources, student disinterest, or teacher apathy. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how entrepreneurship skill acquisition, when properly implemented, can promote sustainable self-reliance through the vocationalisation of secondary school education. The ongoing debate around human capital and human resource development (HRD) has fostered a more practical, function-oriented approach to skills development—shifting the focus from purely academic education to one that emphasizes work readiness. This shift influences general, pre-vocational, and vocational education and transforms the role of secondary-level technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The growing need to enhance productivity and improve individual employability through job-related competencies has led to the integration of vocational strands into secondary education under the broader concept of "vocationalization," alongside general and pre-vocational pathways.

This trend is particularly evident in contexts where secondary-level TVET has a significant impact on improving graduates' employability. In such settings, practical aspects of training such as technological proficiency, adaptability, and increased productivity are prioritized over traditional academic achievements. However, in many countries, the education system still prioritizes social demand and academic objectives, often at the expense of labour market relevance. For instance, in Egypt, 55% of secondary school students are enrolled in school-based vocational education and training (VET), yet much of this training has limited relevance to the job market (Arab Republic of Egypt MOE, 2008; Wallenborn, 2010). Recognizing this gap, the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2008) called for a paradigm shift from traditional VET methods to competency-based, work-oriented training—suggesting an expanded interpretation of vocationalization to include context-driven secondary-level TVET. This marks a broader transition from an education-focused model to one that prioritizes the functional development of job-related skills within secondary education systems. As a result, many governments now set ambitious enrolment targets for vocational programmes at the secondary level, driven by a belief in the strong correlation between vocational education participation and national income growth. More countries have adopted vocational education at the upper secondary level (ISCED 3), recognizing it as a strategic stage for curriculum diversification. This approach accommodates the varied needs of an increasingly diverse student population, ensuring a broader range of educational options. Additionally, vocational programmes at the post-secondary non-tertiary level (ISCED 4) were reported by 80 countries in 2005, highlighting a growing global commitment to skill-based education.

In Nigeria, the relevance of vocational and functional education is further emphasized by the rising significance of the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector. SMEs are estimated to contribute about 20% of the country's GDP and provide employment for approximately 80% of the population, positioning them as key drivers of industrial growth (Phyllis, 2016). According to Mwangi et al. (2015), SMEs play a critical role in Nigeria's economic development, and their financial performance directly impacts the nation's economic well-being. Katua (2014) supports this view, identifying SMEs as the backbone of global economic growth and poverty reduction. The Nigerian government, aiming for a middle-income status by 2030, has identified key sectors including SMEs as instrumental to this vision. Despite this recognition, many SMEs continue to struggle, with most failing to survive beyond

their third year of operation (Janet & Ngugi, 2013). This underlines the urgent need to align vocational and entrepreneurial education with practical, market-relevant skills to support sustainable SME development.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of poverty resulting from a lack of skills is a significant and complex issue that affects individuals, families, and the entire nation. Poverty is a multifaceted problem with various causes, and the lack of skills is one of the key contributing factors. The abstract nature of education in the secondary schools has indeed contributed to a lack of practical skills and exacerbates the problem of poverty. Our educational systems prioritize theoretical knowledge and academic achievement over practical skills. While this approach is important for fostering critical thinking and a broad understanding of various subjects, it can leave students ill-equipped to handle real-world challenges. This explains why Ngerem and Ezikpe (2016) argue that education has not realized its expected end because majority of students from secondary school usually leave school lacking the basic skills for entrepreneurship as there is still high rate of unemployment among school leavers. When students graduate without practical skills that are in demand in the job market, they may struggle to find meaningful employment and get involved in entrepreneurship, leading to economic difficulties.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the perception of stakeholders of creativity skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students?
2. What is the perception of stakeholders of risk management skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated to be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of teachers and students on creativity skills acquisition for self-reliance through vocationalisation among secondary school students.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of inspector of education and teachers on risk-management skills acquisition for self-reliance through vocationalisation among secondary school students.

Methodology

The design used for the study is descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 909,871 comprising principals, vocational related subject teachers, and students (Internal stakeholders) of senior public secondary schools in Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti and Ondo States while external stakeholders were the parents (father/mother) and Inspectors of Education of public secondary schools in the south-west States, Nigeria. Using Research Advisor Table, (commonly known as the Krejcie and Morgan table) The sample size for the study consisted of 384 respondents (principals, vocational related subject teachers, students, parents and Inspector of education) drawn across the three states which were randomly sampled through a hat and draw method. The three States were Ekiti, Oyo and Osun States. The study employed proportionate, stratified, and convenience sampling techniques. The data collection instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition through Vocationalisation of Secondary Education for Self-reliance Questionnaire (ESAVSEQ)." The questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A, focuses on gathering demographic information from the participants while Section B, addresses Research Questions on a modified four-point Likert scale. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity. A pilot study was undertaken to familiarize the researcher with potential issue and to assess the instrument's suitability and effectiveness. The responses gathered from the pilot study were used to assess the instrument's reliability by applying Cronbach's alpha reliability test, which measures the instrument's internal consistency. The Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test resulted in a reliability coefficient of 0.92 indicating a high level of internal consistency for the questionnaire. A total of 384 copies of the questionnaire were distributed by the research team out of which 377 were fully completed and returned resulting to 98.2 % return rate. Data collection was conducted using a face-to-

face delivery approach, ensuring direct interaction with respondents. The entire process of questionnaire administration and retrieval was completed within three weeks.

Data for the demographic variables of the respondents were analysed using percentages. Data collected to answer research questions were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using independent samples t-test.

Result

Analyses of Data to Answer the Research Questions

Analyses of data to answer the research questions are presented in Tables 5 to 9 as follows:

Research Question 1: What is the perception of stakeholders of creativity skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of responses on creativity skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation

S/N	Item Statements	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Develops students' ability to identify business opportunities.	3.16	0.81	Agreed
2.	Enhances students' skills in resource mobilization for entrepreneurial activities.	3.07	0.84	Agreed
3.	Improves students' creative thinking skills needed for innovation.	3.16	0.85	Agreed
4.	Fosters entrepreneurial skills that lead to self-reliance.	3.15	0.86	Agreed
5.	Prepare students to develop new products or services.	3.08	0.85	Agreed
6.	Encourage students to think outside the box for problem-solving.	3.18	0.89	Agreed
7.	Enhances students' long-term sustainability and performance in business ventures.	3.07	0.87	Agreed
8.	Enhance students' ability to come up with innovative business ideas.	3.10	0.89	Agreed
9.	Improves students' skills in identifying and capitalizing on investment opportunities.	3.10	0.87	Agreed
10.	Fosters students' creativity in developing distinct and useful business processes and procedures.	3.07	0.83	Agreed
11.	contributes to students' ability to transform innovative ideas into new or improved products and services.	3.16	0.85	Agreed
Weighted average		3.12	0.86	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis of data in Table 1 show the mean and standard deviation of responses on perception of stakeholders on creativity skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students. The Table reveals that the respondents agreed that acquisition of creativity skills develops students' ability to identify business opportunities; enhances students' skills in resource mobilization for entrepreneurial activities; and improves students' creative thinking skills needed for innovation (mean = 3.16; 3.07 and 3.16 respectively). Also, the respondents agreed that it fosters entrepreneurial skills that lead to self-reliance; prepares students to develop new products or services; encourages students to think outside the box for problem-solving; and enhances students' long-term sustainability and performance in business ventures (mean = 3.15; 3.08; 3.18 and 3.07 respectively). Conclusively, they agreed that it enhances students' ability to come up with innovative business ideas; improves students' skills in identifying and capitalizing on investment opportunities; fosters students' creativity in developing distinct and useful business processes and procedures and contributes to students' ability to transform innovative ideas into new or improved products and services (mean =

3.10; 3.10; 3.07 and 3.16 respectively).

All the 11 items have standard deviation ranging from 0.81 to 0.89. This means that the responses of the respondents are not widespread as they are close to the mean. Table 5 shows a grand weighted average mean and standard deviation of 3.12 and 0.86, which indicates that the stakeholders agreed with the constructs in Table 5 on creativity skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students (mean = 3.12; SD = 0.86).

Research Question 2: What is the perception of stakeholders of risk management skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of responses on risk management skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation

S/N	Item Statements	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
12.	curriculum covers entrepreneurial risk-taking competencies.	3.06	0.92	Agreed
13.	programs integrate real-world risk management scenarios into their teaching.	3.06	0.87	Agreed
14.	encourages to develop action plans for responding to risks.	3.07	0.86	Agreed
15.	highlights the interconnectedness of global risks.	3.08	0.82	Agreed
16.	programs teach students about Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) is a holistic approach to risk management.	3.12	0.88	Agreed
17.	programs foster an entrepreneurial mindset, including risk-taking propensity, among students.	3.15	0.88	Agreed
18.	program teaches students the importance of careful decision-making in risk-taking scenarios.	2.84	0.98	Agreed
19.	exposes to real-life examples of successful risk-taking by entrepreneurs.	3.07	0.86	Agreed
20.	encourages students to assess their own abilities to handle and manage risks.	3.11	0.86	Agreed
21.	teaches students about the proactive use of risk-taking competencies in demanding situations.	3.04	0.86	Agreed
22.	prepares students to exploit risks to their advantage and generate value.	3.10	0.84	Agreed
23.	Educates students on the strategies successful companies use to manage and benefit from risks.	3.10	0.85	Agreed
Weighted average		3.07	0.87	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Data in Table 2 show the mean and standard deviation of responses on the perception of stakeholders of risk management skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students. The Table reveals that the respondents agreed that curriculum covers entrepreneurial risk-taking competencies; programs integrate real-world risk management scenarios into their teaching; and encourages to develop action plans for responding to risks (mean = 3.06; 3.06 and 3.07 respectively). Also, the respondents strongly agreed that it highlights the interconnectedness of global risks; programs teach students about Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) as a holistic approach to risk management; programs foster an entrepreneurial mindset, including risk-taking propensity, among students and program teaches students the importance of careful decision-making in risk-taking scenarios (mean = 3.08; 3.12; 3.15 and 2.84 respectively). Same way the respondents agreed that it exposes to real-life examples of successful risk-taking by entrepreneurs; and encourages students to assess their own abilities to handle and manage risks (mean = 3.07 and 3.11). Equally, the

respondents agreed it taught students about the proactive use of risk-taking competencies in demanding situations; prepares students to exploit risks to their advantage and generate value and educates students on the strategies successful companies use to manage and benefit from risks (mean = 3.04; 3.10 and 3.10 respectively).

The standard deviations of all 12 items of the construct ranges from 0.82 to 0.98. This means that the responses of the respondents are not widespread as they are close to the mean. Table 6 shows a grand weighted average mean and standard deviation of 3.07 and 0.87, which indicates that the stakeholders agreed with the constructs in Table 6 on risk management skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students (mean = 3.07; SD = 0.75).

Test of Hypotheses

The two null hypotheses of the study were tested using independent samples t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The summary of the test of hypotheses is presented in Table 3 to 4 as follows:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean perceptions of teachers and students on creativity skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation among students

Table 3: Independent samples t-test summary of creativity skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	p-value	Decision
Teachers	75	4.00	0.00	19.53	207	0.00	Rejected
Students	134	2.30	0.75				

Source: Field survey, 2025

P<0.05

Data in Table 3 reveal that there are 75 Teachers and 134 Students. The respondents' responses show that they agreed on creativity skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students ($\bar{x} = 4.00$; SD = 0.00) and ($\bar{x} = 2.30$; SD = 0.75). Their responses are close to the mean as the standard deviations are very low. The table reveals that there is a significant difference in the mean perceptions of teachers and students on creativity skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students ($t_{207} = 19.53$, $P < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the mean perception of teachers and students on creativity skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students was rejected. This implies that teachers and students differ significantly in their responses on creativity skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students. Their responses show that the teacher rated the acquisition of creativity skills through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students higher than the students (mean difference = 1.70).

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean perceptions of inspectors of education and teachers on risk management skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation among students.

Table 4: Independent samples t-test summary of risk management skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	p-value	Decision
Inspectors of Education	9	3.77	0.31	-6.65	82	0.00	Rejected
Teachers	75	4.00	0.00				

Source: Field survey, 2025

P<0.05

Data in Table 4 reveal that there are nine Inspectors of education and 75 Teachers. The Inspectors of education and teachers' responses show that they agreed on risk management skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students ($\bar{x} = 3.77$;

SD = 0.31) and (\bar{x} = 4.00; SD = 0.00). Their responses are close to the mean as the standard deviations are very low. The table reveals that there is significant difference in the mean perception of inspectors of education and teachers on risk management skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students ($t_{82} = -6.65$, $P < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the mean perception of inspectors of education and teachers on risk management skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students was rejected. This implies that inspectors of education and teachers differ significantly in their responses on risk management skills acquisition through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students. Their responses show that the teacher rated the acquisition of risk management skills through secondary education vocationalisation for self-reliance among students higher than the inspectors of education (mean difference = -0.23).

Discussion of Findings

This study explored how vocational education in secondary schools fosters students' sustainable self-reliance in Southwest Nigeria, focusing on creativity and risk management skills. Findings on creativity skills showed that stakeholders viewed creativity as vital for identifying business opportunities, mobilizing resources, and driving innovation. This supports Ballor and Claar (2019), who noted that creativity gives entrepreneurs a competitive edge. However, García-González and Ramírez-Montoya (2023) emphasized that opportunity recognition entrepreneurial alertness often has a greater influence on success. Thus, creativity must be complemented by mentorship and business knowledge to transform ideas into viable enterprises. The study's first hypothesis revealed a significant difference between teachers and students in their perceptions of creativity skill acquisition ($t(207) = 19.53$, $p < .05$). Teachers rated vocational education as more effective in fostering creativity, possibly due to their deeper understanding of instructional goals, while students may have limited exposure to practical applications.

Regarding risk management skills, stakeholders agreed that training in this area is essential for developing students' decision-making and entrepreneurial competence. Consistent with Bezzina (2010) and Peng (2015), risk-taking was viewed as central to entrepreneurship, though excessive risk highlighted by Feng and Wang (2024) can lead to failure without financial literacy. The study recommends balancing risk-taking with prudence by integrating practical risk assessment tools into vocational education. Findings from the second hypothesis indicated that inspectors of education rated the acquisition of risk management skills lower than teachers did, likely due to inspectors' broader oversight and exposure to inconsistent curriculum implementation. Teachers, on the other hand, viewed classroom practices more positively, reflecting their hands-on involvement.

Overall, the study underscores that vocational education promotes self-reliance when creativity and risk management skills are taught through practical, contextual, and well-supported instructional approaches.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the vocationalisation of secondary education plays a crucial role in equipping students with essential entrepreneurship skills for sustainable self-reliance. Stakeholders widely acknowledge that vocational education fosters creativity and risk management skills which are fundamental to entrepreneurial success. However, significant differences exist in the perceptions of various educational stakeholders (teachers, students, principals, inspectors, and parents) regarding the acquisition of these skills.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Ministry of Education at Federal or State level or school administrators should ensure that the secondary school curriculum integrate more hands-on creative projects, problem-solving activities, and innovation-driven coursework while also organizing regular workshops and seminars for stakeholders to align their perspectives on entrepreneurship education and enhance cooperation in skill development.
2. Private Sector & NGOs should partner with schools to sponsor competitions and mentorship programs such as case studies, simulations, and entrepreneurial competitions while ensuring

teachers receive professional development in entrepreneurship education.

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