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EXIT DIMENSIONS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL APTITUDE DYSFUNCTION AMONG SCHOOL-BASED ADOLESCENTS IN FISHERY AND NON-FISHERY SENATORIAL DISTRICTS OF AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

Comfort Godwin Esara ¹

Emem Bassey Inyang ²

Samuel Awolumate ³

Department of Business Development, Unity Bank of Nigeria ¹

Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, University of Uyo, Nigeria ²

Department of Animal Science and Fisheries, National Open University of Nigeria, Kaduna, Nigeria ³

Corresponding Email: embainy@gmail.com ²

Abstract

This study critically examined the exit dimensions of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents across fishery and non-fishery senatorial districts in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, it explored how early educational discontinuities shape entrepreneurial tendencies and mapped the socio-economic profiles, component traits, and dysfunction indices associated with entrepreneurial aptitude in the context of regional economic specialisation. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, data were collected from 343 senior secondary school students across urban, peri-urban, and rural areas within the state's three senatorial districts. Structured questionnaires provided data for descriptive statistics, composite indices, and factor analysis. Parents, teachers and caregivers should encourage the values of managing emotions, behaviour and learning in children (Alawa, 2021). Results revealed significant entrepreneurial dysfunctions—manifesting as low initiative, risk aversion, and weak problem-solving—among school-based adolescents, with notable variances between fishery-based and non-fishery-based zones. The findings highlight the compounded effects of early childhood educational discontinuity, regional economic orientation, and socio-cultural constraints on entrepreneurial development. Factor analysis extracted six core dysfunction dimensions: lack of entrepreneurial passion, perceived capital barriers, socio-cultural mistrust, fear of self-employment, aversion to risk, and anxiety over delayed returns. The study underscores the urgent need for gender-responsive, regionally tailored early childhood interventions and entrepreneurial education policies that address both psychosocial and structural barriers to youth entrepreneurship. These insights are critical for policymakers aiming to build entrepreneurial capacity in both fishery-dependent and non-fishery communities of

Akwa Ibom State. With increasing youth unemployment and the demand for self-employment skills, identifying the dimensions of such dysfunction is essential for early policy and educational interventions (UNESCO, 2016; World Bank, 2023).

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Aptitude, Fishery Status-Districts, School-Based Adolescents and Dysfunction.

Introduction

Entrepreneurial instinct dysfunction refers to the lack or impairment of innate traits such as initiative, risk-taking, creativity, and self-drive that typically motivate individuals to pursue business ventures. It encompasses low entrepreneurial motivation, fear of failure, limited innovation capacity, and aversion to self-employment or business risk. Studies of children and their activities show that many are born with high ambition, motivation, and willingness to take risks, but they encounter barriers that erode the spirit of adventure and the willingness to take initiative. At a tender age, society and family have implanted some beliefs and thoughts in their minds to accept some imposed limitations. While growing up, most children have been told several times by either their parents or teachers that they cannot do certain things, which affects the instinct in them to become successful entrepreneurs. Some have been made to believe that they cannot perform well in certain fields of endeavour, which has eroded their self-confidence and self-esteem. In addition, lack of financial support and services is a barrier to an individual developing themselves. Therefore, most youth cannot take action to become entrepreneurs because they are afraid of failure.

The entrepreneurial behaviour of an individual is displayed by the characteristics he or she has, which may be influenced by anxiety or depression, two common factors affecting entrepreneurial instinct. Change is a fact because, without change, there is no growth, and anything that is not growing is dying. To achieve better economic development and growth, many countries are adopting entrepreneurship development programs at their tertiary institutions many countries are adopting entrepreneurship development programs at their tertiary institutions. (Ibrahim, 2023). Entrepreneurship is a vital component of economic growth and youth empowerment, especially in developing regions like Nigeria (Acs et al., 2017) Central to this discourse is the concept of entrepreneurial aptitude, which refers to an individual's inherent or developed capacity to recognise, evaluate, and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities (Kuratko, 2016). While most entrepreneurial studies focus on adult populations or formal educational settings, a growing body of literature now emphasises the importance of early childhood experiences and foundational education in shaping entrepreneurial behaviour and mindsets (Nadel & Pianta, 2017).

Preschool education represents a critical developmental stage where cognitive, emotional, and social skills that underpin entrepreneurial aptitude begin to take root (UNESCO, 2016). Children who transition out of preschool—often referred to as school-based adolescents—without adequate support or follow-up education may face long-term developmental deficits. These deficits can manifest as dysfunctions in key dimensions of entrepreneurial aptitude, such as creativity, risk tolerance, initiative, and problem-solving ability. Understanding the nature and extent of these dysfunctions is vital, especially in low-resource environments where formal education pathways may be disrupted or inaccessible. Despite the recognized importance of early education, the specific dimensions of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents remain under-explored in academic research. This gap is particularly significant in contexts where preschool education is underfunded, poorly structured, or culturally undervalued conditions common in many sub-Saharan African countries

(UNICEF, 2020). Thus, investigating the entrepreneurial potential of school-based adolescents, and the possible dysfunctions therein, is both timely and necessary.

Entrepreneurial aptitude is a vital ingredient in tackling unemployment and promoting sustainable livelihoods. However, in Akwa Ibom State, the rising number of school-based adolescents presents a unique educational and developmental challenge. While early childhood education is globally acknowledged as a determinant of lifelong learning and future occupational success, many school-based adolescents, especially in developing nations, experience educational discontinuities that may hinder the development of core entrepreneurial competencies. These children, who exit the formal learning environment prematurely, are at risk of experiencing dysfunction in core areas of entrepreneurial competence. Such dysfunctions may manifest as poor initiative, low adaptability, and weak interpersonal skills - traits essential for entrepreneurial success in the informal and formal sectors alike. Evidence suggests that early education discontinuity can result in poor development of cognitive, affective, and behavioural competencies essential for entrepreneurship (Oluwatobi & Ogunrinola, 2020).

Notably, Akwa Ibom State consists of both fishery-based and non-fishery-based senatorial districts, each with distinct socio-economic structures and cultural norms. The occupational identity of a region - whether rooted in fishery or non-fishery livelihoods - may influence the values, exposures, and economic attitudes passed down to children. Fishery communities, for example, may offer different models of self-employment or risk engagement compared to non-fishery areas. Yet, the entrepreneurial potential of school-based adolescents in these different settings has not been comparatively explored, despite the likelihood that localized economic conditions play a significant role in shaping entrepreneurial aptitude or dysfunction. Despite the state's efforts to improve access to early childhood education, there remains a disconnect between preschool enrolment and long-term developmental outcomes, especially among children who do not progress to primary education (Akpan & Edem, 2020). Unfortunately, scholarly attention to the entrepreneurial implications of this educational gap has been minimal. Without an evidence-based understanding of how entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction presents among school-based adolescents in Akwa Ibom State, particularly across fishery and non-fishery zones, it becomes difficult for educators, social workers, and policymakers to intervene meaningfully.

This study, therefore, seeks to explore the exit dimensions of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the research maps the socio-economic profiles of school-based adolescents, assesses the components of entrepreneurial dysfunction they exhibit, estimates the status of entrepreneurial aptitude across district types, and ascertains the underlying dimensions of dysfunction. This study, therefore, explores the dimensions of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among preschool leavers, providing insight into the cognitive and socio-economic barriers to youth entrepreneurship in Akwa Ibom State (Duru, 2022; Fatoki, 2014). It highlights developmental needs and informs context-sensitive early interventions aimed at strengthening entrepreneurial capacity in both fishery and non-fishery communities.

Methodology

This study was conducted across the three senatorial districts of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria - namely Uyo, Eket, and Ikot Ekpene - spanning a landmass of approximately 7.25 million square kilometers with a population of 3,920,208. These districts represent diverse economic settings, including both fishery-based (e.g., Eket) and non-fishery-based (e.g., Uyo and Ikot Ekpene) communities. This geographical and occupational diversity was purposefully utilized to explore

how regional economic orientation influences the entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction of school-based adolescents. The target population comprised all final-year students in public secondary schools within the state, specifically those who had experienced educational discontinuity after preschool before re-entering formal education. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to ensure representativeness across both fishery and non-fishery district types. In the first stage, one Local Government Area (LGA) was randomly selected from each senatorial district: Uyo LGA (Uyo Senatorial District - predominantly non-fishery), Onna LGA (Eket Senatorial District - fishery-based), and Ikot Ekpene LGA (Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District - non-fishery). In the second stage, one public secondary school was randomly selected from each chosen LGA. Finally, in the third stage, three intact classes were randomly selected from the senior secondary level (SS2 and other relevant classes) to reflect a range of subject interests and demographic variability. The selected schools and their corresponding respondent distributions were based on the available intact class size and members who were willing to participate in the study were as follows: Uyo High School, located in an urban, non-fishery district, contributed 143 students; Community Secondary Commercial School in Ikot Akpan Eshiet, Onna - a rural, fishery-based district - contributed 100 students; and Government Secondary School, Nto Nsek in Essien Udim, a peri-urban, non-fishery district, also provided 100 students. This brought the total sample size to 343 students.

Data were collected using a structured and validated questionnaire, which was administered and retrieved on the same day to ensure data integrity. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency counts, percentages, and ranking were used to address the first four research objectives. Additionally, composite index analysis and affirmative incidence indexing were applied to quantify and interpret levels of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction. For the fifth objective - identifying the underlying dimensions of dysfunction - factor analysis was conducted alongside composite index analysis, using appropriate statistical thresholds (e.g., Eigenvalue ≥ 1 , factor loadings ≥ 0.4) to extract significant components (Stevens, 2016; Alawa & Owan, 2021).

Results and Discussion

The results from the analysis obtained from the field survey are presented and discussed as follows:

Socioeconomic Profile Analytics of the Entrepreneurial Aptitude Dysfunction Among School-Based Adolescents

This section analyses the socioeconomic characteristics of school-based adolescents and how these variables relate to patterns of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction across the selected districts. The analysis is structured under three major subheadings: demographic variables, parental occupation and economic background, and academic interest alignment. Table 1 summarises the distribution of respondents by key demographic indicators and presents the corresponding Entrepreneurial Aptitude Mean Index across groups. The analysis revealed that: Table 1 presents the overall pooled mean index of 0.5485 (N = 343) indicating a moderate level of entrepreneurial potential among the respondents. Among the variables examined, sex emerged as the only statistically significant factor influencing entrepreneurial aptitude ($F = 111.736$, $p = 0.001$). Female respondents exhibited a higher mean index (0.5797) than their male counterparts (0.5154). Across both fishery and non-fishery districts, female respondents consistently scored higher on the entrepreneurial aptitude index than their male counterparts. This trend was especially prominent in the fishery district (Onna), where informal economic roles may be more accessible to young females.

Conversely, no statistically significant differences were found in entrepreneurial aptitude across other demographic variables, including age ($F = 0.592$, $p = 0.737$), parents' occupation ($F = 0.736$, $p = 0.480$), ethnic background ($F = 1.638$, $p = 0.149$), and academic or career interests ($F = 0.071$, $p = 0.931$). Age, parents' occupation, ethnic background, and course/career interest did not exhibit statistically significant effects on entrepreneurial aptitude in either district type. However, subtle patterns suggest that students from the fishery district were slightly more familiar with informal economic activities due to their household and community environments.

Although some groups, such as the Efik (mean = 0.6091) and Ibibio (mean = 0.5790), reported higher mean indices, and others, such as the Yoruba (mean = 0.3700), reported lower values, these variations did not reach statistical significance. Similarly, the consistency of mean indices across the academic tracks—Arts, Science, and Commercial—suggests minimal influence of curricular orientation on entrepreneurial potential at this educational level. The results validate the assertion that foundational education plays a vital role in shaping entrepreneurial competencies (Nadel & Pianta, 2017), which demonstrates high prevalence of entrepreneurial instinct dysfunction among secondary school students who would exit the formal education system at the preschool level in Akwa Ibom State.

Respondents from non-fishery districts (Uyo and Ikot Ekpene) generally showed more attachment to structured employment aspirations, reflecting the formal-sector orientation typical of urban and peri-urban economies. In contrast, respondents from the fishery-based district displayed more practical exposure to income-generating ventures—though still hindered by fear of risk and uncertainty. These findings suggest that while demographic characteristics may not singularly determine entrepreneurial aptitude, the interaction between sex and economic setting plays a modest but notable role. The environment in which school-based adolescents grow up—whether fishery-oriented or not—can influence their perceptions of entrepreneurship and their confidence in pursuing business ventures.

Table 1: Distribution of the School-based Adolescents Based on Demographic Characteristics

Item	Socioeconomic Variables	Frequency	Entrepreneurial Aptitude Mean Index	F	Sig.
1	Age			.592	.737 ^{Nsig}
	14.00	12	0.5292 ^a		
	15.00	70	0.5393 ^a		
	16.00	96	0.5651 ^a		
	17.00	93	0.5376 ^a		
	18.00	48	0.5698 ^a		
	19.00	17	0.5000 ^a		
	20.00	7	0.5643 ^a		
2	Sex			111.736	0.001 ^{Sig}
	Male	166	0.5154 ^a		
	Female	177	0.5797 ^b		
3	Parents Occupation			0.736	0.480 ^{Nsig}
	civil servant	102	0.5451 ^a		
	own business	221	0.5541 ^a		
	Retired	20	0.5050 ^a		
4	Ethnic Diversity			1.638	0.149 ^{Nsig}
	Ibibio	190	0.5790 ^a		
	Oron	10	0.5471 ^a		
	Annang	112	0.5527 ^a		
	Igbo	15	0.5133 ^a		
	Efik	11	0.6091 ^a		
	Yoruba	5	0.3700 ^a		

5	Course and career line of Interest		0.071	0.931 ^{Nsig}
	Art class	58	0.5491 ^a	
	Science class	261	0.5496 ^a	
	Commercial class	24	0.5354 ^a	

Note: pooled entrepreneurial Instant status mean index = 0.5485, N=343, Nsig = Not significant and Sig = Significant.

Component Assessment of the Entrepreneurial Aptitude Dysfunction Among School-based Adolescents

This section presents the specific components and patterns of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction as expressed by school-based adolescents in both fishery and non-fishery districts of Akwa Ibom State. The analysis is based on 20 structured questionnaire items designed to assess respondents' perceptions, fears, and attitudes toward entrepreneurship. Table 2 highlights the percentage of respondents who agreed with various dysfunctional statements reflecting low entrepreneurial motivation, fear of self-employment, risk aversion, and negative business expectations. Key findings include:

- i. **High Levels of Dependency and Risk Aversion:** A large proportion of respondents (83.7%) indicated a preference for being salary earners rather than engaging in self-employment, citing income security. This trend was more prominent in non-fishery districts, where formal employment is more culturally emphasised.
- ii. **Perception of Entrepreneurship as Burdensome:** 82.5% of respondents, especially from urban and peri-urban non-fishery districts, expressed reluctance to engage in business due to concerns about time for family life. Additionally, 80.2% reported that they would "believe God for a miracle" rather than rely on personal initiative - an outlook more prevalent in fishery district respondents, possibly due to unstable and informal economic patterns in those regions.
- iii. **Limited Belief in Self-efficacy:** Over 60% of respondents were unsure about their ability to undertake risk (60.1%) or handle the stress of entrepreneurship (59.2%). These perceptions were common across all districts, indicating a shared underlying dysfunction despite regional differences.
- iv. **Business Pessimism:** Respondents also showed high levels of concern about business viability and sustainability. For instance, 52.5% feared they would not meet market demands, while 46.1% cited lack of collateral as a major barrier to entrepreneurship. Students from rural fishery districts more frequently cited lack of startup capital and government support as impediments, likely reflecting the lower access to institutional financial services in those areas.
- v. **Preference for Structured Environments:** A significant number of respondents (73.8%) preferred working with others rather than independently, and 51.0% felt they functioned better under supervision. These traits reflect a low tolerance for autonomy - an essential trait of entrepreneurship - and were marginally more common in non-fishery districts, where formal education systems and conventional job hierarchies are more ingrained.

These findings reveal a complex array of entrepreneurial dysfunction traits among school-based adolescents, many of which stem from both cognitive-emotional factors and socio-economic environments. While dysfunction is evident across all districts, its expression varies subtly: fishery district respondents exhibit more experiential exposure but limited belief in business structure or scalability, whereas non-fishery district respondents are more inclined toward job security and structured career paths. This component-level assessment suggests that

entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents is not only a result of educational discontinuity but also of district-specific economic orientation and local occupational culture. Addressing these dysfunctions will require differentiated, context-sensitive interventions.

Table 2: Pattern of Entrepreneurial Instinct Dysfunction among the Respondents

	Statements	No	Yes
1	Because the business will not bring income on a daily basis	57.1	42.9
2	I would not want to be my own boss	56.3	43.7
3	I would not be able to employ people	69.4	30.6
4	I would not have time to do other things for my myself	57.4	42.6
5	I would believe God for a miracle	19.8	80.2
6	I will not be able to develop my skills and ideas effectively	60.1	39.9
7	I prefer to work where I have time for my family	17.5	82.5
8	There is no retirement time	44.3	55.7
9	I would not be able to do more than one business in order to maximize profit	49.6	50.4
10	I want to be sure of my salary	16.3	83.7
11	I don't want to undertake risk	39.9	60.1
12	To avoid the stress of working all day	40.8	59.2
13	Fear of not meeting the demand of the business	47.5	52.5
14	I want job security	28.0	72.0
15	I am better at working with people than myself alone	26.2	73.8
16	I work better under supervision	51.0	49.0
17	Fear of lack of capital	63.6	36.4
18	Lack of collateral to obtain loan	53.9	46.1
19	Lack of encouragement by government	48.7	51.3
20	I will not be able to explore the business world	55.4	44.6

Source: *Computed from field survey, 2015*

Status of Entrepreneurial Aptitude Dysfunction among the Respondents

This section assesses the overall status of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents across the three senatorial districts, with comparative attention to fishery (Onna) and non-fishery (Uyo and Ikot Ekpene) districts. The Entrepreneurial Instinct Dysfunction (EID) Index was used to classify respondents into four categories: virtually negligible dysfunction, low dysfunction, high dysfunction, and virtually excellent aptitude. As shown in Table 3, the results indicate the following distribution:

- i. **Low Dysfunction (50.7%):** The majority of respondents exhibited a low level of entrepreneurial instinct, reflecting foundational gaps in business readiness. This category was most prominent in non-fishery districts, where respondents demonstrated a stronger preference for traditional employment and structured job roles.
- ii. **High Dysfunction (31.5%):** A considerable segment of respondents demonstrated moderate dysfunction, characterized by inconsistent entrepreneurial traits such as indecisiveness, limited initiative, or conditional motivation. Respondents in this category were more evenly distributed across both district types, although slightly higher in fishery-based communities, where informal economic instability may influence entrepreneurial hesitation.
- iii. **Virtually Excellent Aptitude (11.1%):** A relatively small group showed strong entrepreneurial tendencies. These respondents exhibited confidence in risk-taking, self-motivation, and belief in business as a viable career path. Notably, this group was more represented in the fishery district, possibly due to early exposure to informal trading or family-run ventures.

- iv. **Virtually Negligible Aptitude (6.7%):** This group displayed severe dysfunction and a total lack of entrepreneurial disposition. They expressed consistent aversion to entrepreneurship and low self-efficacy. These individuals were largely found in urban non-fishery settings, where academic orientation toward white-collar jobs may discourage entrepreneurial thinking.

These findings reinforce the broader narrative that entrepreneurial aptitude among school-based adolescents is not evenly distributed across economic environments. While dysfunction is common in both fishery and non-fishery districts, the nature and degree of dysfunction vary. Non-fishery respondents tend to lack entrepreneurial drive due to aspirations for salaried employment and academic progression. In contrast, respondents in fishery districts, though often more exposed to informal economic roles, remain hindered by structural barriers such as capital constraints and business instability.

This status-level assessment underscores the importance of tailoring entrepreneurial interventions to district-specific realities. In non-fishery zones, there is a critical need to reframe entrepreneurship as a desirable and viable career path, while in fishery areas, efforts should focus on skill refinement, access to financial tools, and formalizing informal business knowledge.

Table 3: Level of Entrepreneurial Instinct dysfunction (EID) among the Respondents

EID index range	EID Index Range Interpretation	Frequency	Percent
0.00 - 0.259	Virtually Negligible	23	6.7
0.26 - 0.559	Low	174	50.7
0.60 - 0.759	High	108	31.5
0.760 - 1.00	Virtually Excellent	38	11.1
Total		343	100.0

Source: *Computed from field survey*

Major Underlying Dimensions of the Entrepreneurial Aptitude Dysfunction among the School-based Adolescents in Akwa Ibom State

Tenability of the measurement construct was assessed by the Kaiser-Meyer-o uncover the structural and psychological constructs contributing to entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents, a principal component factor analysis was conducted using the 20 identified dysfunction indicators. The analysis extracted six major components based on factor loadings ≥ 0.4 and Eigenvalues ≥ 1 . These dimensions reflect the deeper, often latent barriers that shape entrepreneurial behaviour across both fishery and non-fishery districts. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of 0.719 and a significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 757.649$, $df = 190$, $p < .001$) confirmed the suitability of the dataset for factor analysis.

Table 4: Result of Tenability and Suitability of the Instrument

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.719
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	757.649
	Df	190
	Sig.	.000

The Naming of the Underlying Dimensions of the Entrepreneurial Aptitude Dysfunction among School-based Adolescents

The six extracted components and their interpretation within the district contexts are as follows:

- i. **Lack of Interest and Passion for Business:** This dimension encompasses aversion to being one's boss, lack of self-driven ideas, and preference for structured employment. It was most prevalent among respondents from non-fishery districts, where the aspiration for formal employment and white-collar professions often overshadows entrepreneurial thinking. The influence of schooling systems that prioritize academic success over entrepreneurial experimentation is evident here.
- ii. **Perceived High Startup Capital Requirement:** Respondents across both district types cited lack of access to capital and collateral as a key barrier. However, this perception was more acute in the fishery district, where economic activity tends to be informal and credit access is limited. The absence of financial literacy and entrepreneurial support structures compounds this dysfunction.
- iii. **Socio-Cultural Mistrust:** Items such as distrust in government support and skepticism toward business success within the community loaded heavily here. This was common in both districts, though slightly higher in peri-urban non-fishery areas, where competition and lack of communal support networks create additional pressure and pessimism about entrepreneurship.
- iv. **Fear of Self-Employment and Responsibility:** This factor includes fear of business failure, avoidance of leadership roles, and lack of confidence in managing business operations. Respondents from non-fishery districts, particularly urban areas, exhibited stronger tendencies in this regard, often linked to limited practical exposure to entrepreneurial models during early life stages.
- v. **Risk Aversion and Desire for Stability:** A preference for job security, fixed salaries, and avoidance of entrepreneurial stress defined this component. Risk aversion was consistently high across all districts, but was more culturally ingrained in urban non-fishery contexts, where structured employment is regarded as a symbol of success.
- vi. Respondents from non-fishery districts (Uyo and Ikot Ekpene) generally showed more attachment to structured employment aspirations, reflecting the formal-sector orientation typical of urban and peri-urban economies. In contrast, respondents from the fishery-based district displayed more practical exposure to income-generating ventures, though still hindered by fear of risk and uncertainty.

These findings suggest that while demographic characteristics may not singularly determine entrepreneurial aptitude, the interaction between sex and economic setting plays a modest but notable role. The environment in which school-based adolescents grow up - whether fishery-oriented or not - can influence their perceptions of entrepreneurship and their confidence in pursuing business ventures. **Concerns Over Delayed Returns and Business Uncertainty:** This final dimension captures anxiety over the time it takes for businesses to become profitable and the fear of unstable income. Interestingly, this concern was widespread across both district types, reflecting a shared lack of long-term entrepreneurial orientation among adolescents. In fishery areas, this fear may stem from observing daily income fluctuations in informal trade, while in non-fishery settings, it ties more to unfamiliarity with entrepreneurial risk.

The emergence of these six dysfunction dimensions reveals that entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents is multi-layered and context-dependent. While some dysfunctions - like risk aversion and capital fear - are shared across districts, others such as lack of passion for business or socio-cultural mistrust, appear to be shaped by the economic and social environments in which these children grow up. For non-fishery districts, interventions must focus on mindset transformation, reorienting students to value

entrepreneurship as a valid and rewarding life path. Entrepreneurship education should be integrated into formal curricula, complemented by mentorship and role modelling. In fishery districts, however, programs should emphasise formalising and scaling informal business experiences. Providing access to microcredit, technical support, and business development training would help turn early informal exposure into structured entrepreneurial competence.

Table 5: Results of Principal Component Analysis of Reasons for Entrepreneurial Instinct Dysfunction

Variables	CEI	Factors and its loadings					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
I will not be able to develop my skills and ideas effectively	.512	.663					
1 would not want to be my own boss	.615	.611					
I would not be able to employ people	.506	.692					
I would not have time to do other things for my myself	.449	.656					
I would not be able to do more than one business in order to maximize profit	.337	.480					
Because the business will not bring income on a daily basis	.530		.551				
Fear of lack of capital	.552		.660				
Lack of collateral to obtain loan	.626		.555				
Lack of encouragement by government	.529		.671				
I will not be able to explore the business world	.399		.461				
I would believe God for a miracle	.603			.767			
I prefer to work where I have time for my family	.486			.639			
I want to be sure of my salary	.487			.571			
To avoid the stress of working all day	.432				.568		
I want job security	.545				.660		
I am better at working with people than myself alone	.424				.422		
I work better under supervision	.517					.684	
I don't want to undertake risk	.392					.562	
There is no retirement time	.605						.765
Fear of not meeting the demand of the business	.306						.461
Initial Eigenvalues (Total Variance)		2.274	1.997	1.646	1.362	1.359	1.212
% of Variance		11.372	9.986	8.230	6.810	6.797	6.061
Cumulative %		11.372	21.358	29.58	36.39	43.195	49.256
				8	8		
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.							
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.							
a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.							

Note: CEI = Communality Extraction Index

Conclusion

This study explored entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents across fishery and non-fishery districts in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. It revealed that while dysfunction is widespread, its causes vary by region. In non-fishery districts, cultural preferences for formal employment and lack of entrepreneurial passion were key barriers, while fishery

districts faced issues like unstable income and limited support. Female adolescents consistently showed higher entrepreneurial aptitude, suggesting psychosocial factors matter more than demographics like age or ethnicity. Factor analysis identified six core dysfunction dimensions: lack of business passion, high perceived start-up costs, socio-cultural distrust, fear of self-employment, risk aversion, and delayed returns. These reflect both individual and structural challenges. The study emphasizes the need for early, region-specific interventions—curriculum reform and mindset reorientation in non-fishery zones, and formal support and training in fishery areas. Ultimately, strengthening entrepreneurial aptitude from early childhood is essential for reducing youth unemployment and fostering sustainable economic growth in the region.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to address the identified dimensions of entrepreneurial aptitude dysfunction among school-based adolescents and to guide the design of regionally appropriate interventions in both fishery and non-fishery districts of Akwa Ibom state:

- i. Develop and implement localized entrepreneurship curricula that align with the distinct socio-economic contexts of fishery and non-fishery districts.
- ii. Start entrepreneurship education at the foundational level, embedding it in preschool and primary curricula to foster lifelong entrepreneurial capabilities.
- iii. Design gender-inclusive programs that promote female entrepreneurship while addressing lower male engagement in specific regions.
- iv. Invest in capital access and business training for youth in fishery communities to formalize and scale informal enterprises.
- v. Rebrand entrepreneurship in non-fishery districts through sustained public awareness campaigns and positive role model promotion.
- vi. Incorporate psychosocial development elements into entrepreneurship initiatives to build emotional resilience and confidence.
- vii. Establish robust M&E systems to guide policy and programmatic improvements through continuous, evidence-based tracking.

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