



# **Perception of Business Education Graduate Students on the Influence of Entrepreneurial Skills on Reduction of Unemployment in Rivers State**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined Perception of Business Education graduate students on the influence of Entrepreneurial skills on Reduction of Unemployment in Rivers State. Two (2) research questions posed and two (2) null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The researchers used the descriptive survey research design for the study. The population of the study consists of 111 (One Hundred and Eleven) Postgraduate Business Education Students of 2020/2021 academic session of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The sample for this study consists of the entire population of 111 (One Hundred and Eleven) Postgraduate Business Education Students. The instrument used for the study was Influence of Entrepreneurial skills on Reduction of Unemployment Questionnaire (IESRU). A four point rating scale of Very High Extent to Low Extent was used for the study. The research instrument was face and content validated. Test-re-test method was used for the reliability test which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.74. 111 Copies of questionnaire were distributed, and 104 were retrieved for analysis. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. Based on the analysis, it was revealed that Resource management skills help students to Identify sources of capital to start business. Risk skills help students to take up Business ventures. The researchers recommend among others that students should capitalize on the skills acquired through entrepreneurship education to develop business of their own and locally produced goods by students should be encouraged for utilization in school premises as it could be introduced outside the environment by students bringing about recognition and subsequently, expansion.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Resource management, Risk, Unemployment

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is a way of making people fit to live and fit to live with; it is a desirable change in human behaviour as well as a process that change the learner (Oduma, 2012). The process of education therefore, occurs whenever any influence produces a change or changes in the physical or mental behaviour of the recipient. Education serves as an instrument which enables individuals solve their problems and to meet up with their expectations. Education enables individuals to meet up with fundamental changes in the society. Functional education (given entrepreneurship skills acquisition) however equips individuals with rightly competences and skills that will enable them participate actively in the socio-economic development of the society.

Education is an instrument for national development and social change (FRN, 2014). The importance of education in the society cannot be overemphasized as education brings about positive changes in human life and behaviour. It is a machinery through which people develop skills, techniques, information, enables them identify their rights and duties towards family, society and nation at large (Sharna, 2018). It is notable facts that people need good education to enable them participate and survive in this competitive

world. However, the society we are in does not rely on education alone for economic transformation. This is observed as the number of unemployed graduates continues to increase despite formal education, although it may not be far from total reliance on white collar jobs by students upon graduation. Ejere and Tende (2012) opined that most Nigerian universities produce graduates that are suitable for white collar jobs. This is because they have little or no basic skills of any other vocational relevance. Amaewhule (2007) posited that many graduates are unemployed due to the fact that the training they received are not adequate to equip them with skills that will enable them create jobs and be self-employed. This explains why tertiary institutions have adopted entrepreneurship education as a key aspect of her educational curriculum regardless of students' course of study.

Akpomi (2017) noted that the importance of entrepreneurship education necessitated its adoption in universities all over Nigeria. According to Koko and Ikpesu (2009), entrepreneurship education being a globally acknowledge and recognized programme of learning is geared towards equipping learners with skills and motivation necessary for entrepreneurial success.

Asooso, Agbidge and Aboho (2014) opined entrepreneurship education as a necessity because graduates are produced yearly without job opportunities or entrepreneurial skills for self-employment thus their dependency on white collar jobs which are not available. This is to say that entrepreneurship education exposes students to other opportunities of creating wealth other than reliance on government or companies for employment. Ukata and Adejola (2018) refer to entrepreneurship education as an instrument for achieving economic development and also an instrument geared towards employment creation. Entrepreneurship education is focused on development of skills or attitudes that enable the realization of opportunities and reduction in unemployment rate.

The problem of unemployment is disturbing as it also leads to youth's restiveness in the society. As a matter of fact unemployment among youths poses a big threat in the society, not just economically but also politically. This is because the unemployed are consistently involved in creating a hostile environment. The increase in the rate of unemployment in Nigeria has subsequently led to increase in the level of insecurity of lives and properties (Akwara, Akwara, Enwuchola, Adekunle & Udaw, 2013). According to the bureau of statistics, 38% of the population that falls within the employable age are unemployed and 65% of Nigerian youth faces unemployment as at September 2016 (Johnson (2018). The rate of structural unemployment is also high as there is a mismatch between the skills requires by employers and the skills proposed by employees. This goes further to show that qualification/ certificate is not a guarantee to being employed. Aawogbonle and Iwuamadi (2010) identified lack of skills among graduates as one of the reasons for high rate of unemployment among graduates in Nigeria. Interestingly, unemployment was not a major problem in previous times because 75% of the populations in Africa were involved in Agriculture whereas the remaining 25% were engaged in petty trade. This implies that reliance on white colar jobs brought about the increase in unemployment. Ari (2011) observes that youth's unemployment has been a serious threat over the years in federal, state and local level. Statistics from directorate of National Youth Service Corps shows that over 600,000 youths graduates from the tertiary institutions annually this does not include the graduates from foreign universities that also engage in the National Youth Services Corps. The mindset of earning a living with university or other tertiary institution certificate is gone as the number of unemployed graduates continues to increase in the society. Following the definition and objectives of entrepreneurship education, it can be deduced that entrepreneurship education can facilitate reduction of unemployment as it will enable individuals to be innovative and reduce reliance on government for job opportunities.

#### **Management skills for reduction of unemployment**

Resource management connotes pre-planning, scheduling and allocation of various resources for efficiency maximization. It relates to adequately managing anything which could be skills acquired by employees, adopting software to carry out specific tax. This is dependent on the nature of project being carried out. Generally, resource management is based on optimization and efficiency (Hansen, 2018). According to onetonline (n.d), resource management skills entails ability to manage financial resource. This involves determining and ensuring money spent for project will yield desired results, managing material resources, ensuring appropriate utilization of equipment, managing of personal resources which

include motivating workers, developing their abilities as well as identifying the right people for particular jobs and managing time. Resource management skills entail skills for handling resources in an organization. They include communication skills, dispute resolution skills, domain knowledge, proactive planning, negotiating skills and risk management skills. These skills are physical, human, monetary and intellectual (Chisom, 2021).

The importance of resource management cannot be overemphasized as it has become an integral part of any business today. It encompasses resource scheduling, resource forecasting, capacity planning and business intelligence/ reporting. The profitability of any business is enshrined in the management of resources. This is because it brings about maximization of project resource cost, improving effective/ billable resource utilization, bridges the capacity vs demand gap proactivity, uses scarce resources effectively in a matrix organization. Some resource management skills include communication skills, ability to resolve conflict, domain knowledge, proactive planning, ability to negotiate and manage risk (Mansinghka & Negi, 2021).

For optimization and allocation of resources, resource management is important. It helps in minimizing waste, streamlining and automating processes. Demand and capacity is balanced through resource management as businesses prioritize, plan and schedule work with the right individuals suitable for the job. Resource management brings about transparency. This will enable proper monitoring of job progress and requirement to deliver projects. Thus without adequate resource management skill, there will be lack of understanding as it relates to resources available and when to utilize them. Assessing skills of people in an environment becomes a challenge, having knowledge of individual commitment to work also pose a problem. Understanding capacity as well as prioritizing initiatives becomes a challenge. Resources include not just people but technology, budget, locations and specialized equipment. Being effective and efficient is a major benefit accrued to resource management. Techniques in resources management include resource allocation, utilization of resources, resource levelling, forecasting resource.

#### **Risk taking skills for reduction of unemployment in Rivers State**

Risk is defined as the potential failure or other results in carrying out some activity or venture. Sinha (n.d) posited that risk bearing and entrepreneurship are correlated. This explains why some persons are hesitant in becoming entrepreneurs. Risk taking behaviour can be developed however; different risk taking attitude is based on background, education, value system, personality and even experience. Most persons are pessimistic when it comes to venturing into new area of business. Risk takers suppress the pessimistic tendency and tend to be optimistic. Heights that may seem unrealistic and unattainable to some are attainable to risk takers. There also is an urge for learning new things. Constant learning is a trait of risk takers. They search, test and explore new things. Change being constant is a phenomenon most risk takers embrace as they look forward to a constant flux of new information and always seeking for improvement. Gut instinct and intelligent data are resources of risk takers (Lombardo, 2013).

Entrepreneurship basically involves risk taking hence the importance of entrepreneurship education as students upon graduation or even while in school, develop risk taking ability, capitalize on opportunities around their environment and develop businesses. Tas, Saydaliev, & Kaydrov (2022) reported entrepreneurship education as a factor for increase risk taking venture in the environment. Risk taking behaviour is related to entrepreneurship and as such, there is a need for students to develop a positive risk-taking attitude. This buttresses the need for development of entrepreneurial skills as postulated by Koko & Chike (2020). It is in the light of this that the researchers tends to investigate Perception of Business Education graduate students on the influence of entrepreneurial skills on reduction of unemployment in Rivers State.

#### **Statement of Problem**

There has been an increase in the rate of unemployment in the country. Rivers state has the highest unemployed population with a percentage of 36.4 and population of 1,673,991(Ogele, 2020). This comes as a shock and embarrassment owing to the fact that the state houses both foreign and national companies. One may want to consider illiteracy as a factor to the high rate of unemployment in the state but interestingly, most of these unemployed youths are graduates. Graduates are produced yearly in the state and this consequently increases the unemployed population as there are little or no establishments

absorbing the graduates upon graduation. Being educated is no longer enough to secure an employment. One major problem that has been linked to unemployment is lack of technical training and skills which will enable them to be highly employable (Soundararajan, Ravtkumar & Aro-Gordon, 2020) self-reliant and even create job opportunities for others by establishing their own businesses (Aririah, 2021).

This brings to our consciousness the need for entrepreneurship education as a major course for study among students as students will be exposed to practical situations that will be an eye opener and spur creativity in them thereby motivating them to create new enterprise or innovate. Entrepreneurship education will enable them identify needs and demands in their environment and subsequently, produce goods and services to meet up these demands, thereby making them entrepreneurs in the society rather than graduates depending on others for economic empowerment. With entrepreneurship education, there will be reduction in production of graduates without employable skills as well as innovative skills thereby reducing unemployment as these graduates will go into businesses of their own. Worthy to mention is the physical and mental activity that is entailed in entrepreneurship education thus engaging the participants and reducing the tendency of being idle and becoming the devil's workshop. Looking at the benefits of entrepreneurship education in the society, the researchers deems it necessary to determine the Perception of Business Education graduate students on the influence of entrepreneurial skills on reduction of unemployment in Rivers State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to determine the Perception of Business Education graduate students on the influence of entrepreneurial skills on reduction of unemployment in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which Resource Management skill has influenced reduction of unemployment in Rivers State.
2. Determine the extent to which Risk taking skills has influenced reduction of unemployment in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions guided the study:

1. To what extent have Resource Management skills influenced reduction of unemployment in Rivers State?
2. To what extent have Risk taking skills influenced reduction of unemployment in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Post Graduate Business Education Students in Rivers State University and those in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent to which Resource Management skills influenced reduction of unemployment in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Post Graduate Business Education Students in Rivers State University and those in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent to which Risk taking skills influenced reduction of unemployment in Rivers State.

### **METHODS**

The study area was in Rivers State owned Universities offering Business Education programme. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised of 111 postgraduate Business Education students from Rivers state owned Universities offering Business Education. Due to the fact that the population of the study is small, the researchers adopted a census technique to engage all the one hundred and eleven (111) post graduate Business Education students. However 104 made up of 47 from Rivers State University and 57 from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education responded to the instrument. The researchers developed 10 item structured questionnaires for data collection of the study. The study adopted a 4 point rating scale, with span options of High Extent (HE), Moderate Extent (ME), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient (PPMCC) statistical tool was used to determine the reliability of

the instrument and a co-efficient of 0.76 was obtained. The research questions were answered using the weighted mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using -test .The decision rule stands to accept the mean points up to 2.50 and above for the research questions, otherwise rejected, which the null hypotheses were accepted when the calculated r is lesser than the r-critical value, if otherwise rejected.

**RESULTS**

**Research question 1:** *To what extent have Resource Management skills influenced reduction of unemployment in Rivers State?*

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent resource management skill has influenced reduction of unemployment in Rivers State (N=104)**

S/N	Item Statements	RSU =47			IAUE =57		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	Resource management skills develop the ability to identify sources of capital to start up business thus reducing dependence on government for job in Rivers State.	3.00	1.05	High Extent	3.39	0.83	Very high extent
2	Through resource management skills, online jobs are being created regardless of office space, facilitating self employment.	2.89	0.99	High Extent	3.25	0.88	Very high extent
3	Resources management skills help in enabling allocation of right resources to start up a business hence reducing unemployment in the society.	3.02	1.13	High Extent	3.42	0.72	Very high extent
4	Resources management skill enables effective utilization of scarce resources in an organization thereby reducing the risk of lost of job.	3.31	0.98	Very high extent	3.18	0.96	high extent
5	Through resource management skill, students rely on knowledge gotten and develop business ideas thus making them self-employed.	2.62	1.10	High Extent	3.19	0.80	high extent
<b>Total Mean &amp; SD =</b>		<b>14.84</b>	<b>5.25</b>		<b>16.43</b>	<b>4.19</b>	
<b>Grand Mean &amp; SD =</b>		<b>2.97</b>	<b>1.05</b>		<b>3.29</b>	<b>0.84</b>	

**Source: Field Survey, (2022)**

The results in table 1 show that all the items on the table were rated to be High Extent by the students. The results indicate that Resource management skills help students to Identify sources of capital to start business. Resource management skills help students to utilize financial resources judiciously for entrepreneurial activities. The confirmation was made with a grand mean of 2.97 and 3.29 and standard deviation of 1.05 and 0.84 as responses of the respondents on both IAUE and RSU.

**Research Question 2:** *To what extent have risk taking skills as an aspect of Entrepreneurship Education influenced reduction of unemployment in Rivers State?*

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent risk taking skill has influenced reduction of unemployment in Rivers State (N=104)**

S/N	Item Statements	RSU =47			IAUE =57		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
6	Risk taking skills increases self-confidence thus facilitating entrepreneurial decision, creating self employment.	2.93	1.06	High Extent	3.26	0.64	High Extent
7	Students tend to identify problems in the society as business opportunities thus developing ideas leading to creating job opportunities for them and others.	2.73	1.03	High Extent	3.09	1.11	High Extent
8	Reliance on government created jobs is reduced as students develop the ability to take up business risks.	3.33	1.05	Very high extent	3.47	0.88	Very High Extent
9	As a result of risk taking skills, Small and medium ventures have been established thereby reducing the number of unemployed.	3.09	1.07	High Extent	3.11	1.02	High Extent
10	Business ideas and strategies are improved as a result of risk management skill thereby leading to development of new businesses.	3.20	0.86	Very high extent	3.60	0.72	Very High Extent
<b>Total Mean &amp; SD</b>		=	<b>15.28</b>	<b>5.07</b>		<b>16.53</b>	<b>4.37</b>
<b>Grand Mean &amp; SD</b>		=	<b>3.06</b>	<b>1.01</b>		<b>3.31</b>	<b>0.87</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, (2022)

The results in table 2 show that all the items on the table were rated to be High Extent by the students. The results indicate that risk taking skills helps students to understand the sources of business risks. Risk taking skills make students to see problems as opportunities for new ideas. The confirmation was made with a grand mean of 3.06 and 3.31 and standard deviation of 1.01 and 0.87 as responses of the respondents on both IAUE and RSU.

**Table 3: t-test Analysis on the Difference between Post Graduate Business Education Students in Rivers State University and those in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent resource management skills have influenced reduction of unemployment in Rivers State.**

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Std Error	Df	A	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
RSU	47	2.97	1.05	0.036	102	0.05	1.68	1.96	Accepted

**Source: Field Survey, (2022)**

Table 3, the t-calculated value of 1.68 is less than t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 levels of significance and 102 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis is accepted. Indicating there is no significant difference in the mean responses of Post Graduate Business Education Students in Rivers State University and those in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent entrepreneurship education influence resource management skills for reduction of unemployment in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Post Graduate Business Education Students in Rivers State University and those in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent to which risk taking skills as an aspect of entrepreneurship education influenced reduction of unemployment in Rivers State.

**Table 4: t-test Analysis of the Difference between Post Graduate Business Education Students in Rivers State University and those in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent risk taking skills have influenced reduction of unemployment in Rivers State.**

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Std Error	Df	$\alpha$	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
RSU	47	3.06	1.01						
				0.013	102	0.05	2.27	1.96	Rejected
IAUE	57	3.31	0.87						

**Source: Field Survey, (2022)**

Table 4, the t-calculated value of 0.25 is less than t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 levels of significance and 102 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis is therefore Rejected. Indicating there is no significant difference in the mean responses of Post Graduate Business Education Students in Rivers State University and those in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent entrepreneurship education influence risk taking skills for reduction of unemployment in Rivers State.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDING**

The result of research question 1 showed that Students are exposed to Resource management skills which help them to identify sources of capital to start business. Resource management skills help students to Understand loan implication on the business. This finding is in agreement with the view of Hansen, (2018) who opined that Resource management connotes pre-planning, scheduling and allocation of various resources for efficiency maximization. It relates to adequately managing anything which could be skills acquired by employees, adopting software to carry out specific tax. This is dependent on the nature of project being carried out. Generally, resource management is based on optimization and efficiency. In agreement with the view of Chisom, (2021) which shows that Resource management skills include skills for handling resources in an organization such as communication skills, dispute resolution skills, domain knowledge, proactive planning, negotiating skills and risk management skills. These skills are physical, human, monetary and intellectual.

Also, the findings is in line with the view of Mansinghka & Negi, (2021) which noted that the importance of resource management cannot be overemphasized as it has become an integral part of any business today. This is because it brings about maximization of project resource cost, improving effective/ billable resource utilization, bridges the capacity vs demand gap proactivity, uses scarce resources effectively in a matrix organization. Some resource management skills include communication skills, ability to resolve conflict, domain knowledge, proactive planning, ability to negotiate and manage risk.

The result of research question 2 revealed that Risk taking skills helps students to understand the sources of business risks. Risk taking skills make students to see problems as opportunities for new ideas. This finding is in agreement with the view of McElwee (2015), who opined that Risk taking, growth orientation and innovativeness are prominent in economic theories of entrepreneurship, suggesting an

expectation that a „proper“ entrepreneur is engaged in active dynamic and competitive pursuit of opportunity and economic growth . It is also in agreement with the view of Zhai, Sun, Tsai, Wang, Zhao and Chen (2018) that Risk-taking helps an enterprise form an organizational atmosphere of tolerance and risk.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concludes that Resource management skills help students to Identify sources of capital to start business. Resource management skills help students to understand loan implication on the business. Risk taking skills helps students to understand the sources of business risks. Risk taking skills make students to see problems as opportunities for new ideas.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusion as presented above, we make the following recommendations.

1. Students should capitalize on the skills acquired through entrepreneurship education to develop businesses of their own.
2. Upon identification of business opportunities, students should be encouraged by stakeholders with start-up. This could be in form of loan or recommendation to a funding institute.

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