



Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria. Three objectives, three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of this study was 106 Post-graduate students graduate from selected universities in South-south and South-East, Nigeria. The entire population was used for the study hence there was no sampling. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire titled “Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability Questionnaire” (ESABESEEQ). The instrument was structured on a four-point rating scale of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions, while T-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. It was revealed that Problem-Solving Skills give opportunity to utilize ones’ potentials. It was recommended among others that The University curriculum should seek to produce graduates that are critical and creative thinkers, with real skills, those who are ready to challenge the status quo, ready to make mistakes and learn from them. Graduates, who are not afraid to put forward novel ideas, listen to others and be ready to compromise where necessary. Entrepreneurship education in the universities should be adequately funded. This can be achieved through increase in the budgetary allocation to the universities by the government. With adequate funding, universities will be able to establish entrepreneurial development centers for practical work and the provision of training/instructional material for the programme.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition, Business Education, Students

INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of educating or being educated. It is also regarded as the theory and practice of teaching, or information about or training in a particular subject.

Entrepreneurship is a way of thinking, reasoning and acting that is opportunity based and holistic in approach. The term entrepreneur is synonymous with independent business activity. Different scholars have defined the term entrepreneur in a variety of ways. These scholars use different indices in defining the concept, owing to their different cultural, academic, environmental and social backgrounds. Osuala (2004) recognized entrepreneurs as those who possess a willingness to take risks while others stand to talk; identify opportunities to which others are blind and develop optimum confidence in themselves well beyond that of others. Nwachukwu (2010) viewed entrepreneurs as people, who have the ability to see

and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources to take advantage of them and initiate appropriate action to ensure success. To Nwachukwu, an entrepreneur is a risk taker, a man who braves uncertainty, strikes out his own and through devotion to duty and singleness of purpose somehow creates a business and industrial activity where none existed before. Entrepreneurship according to Akpomi (2012) stimulates and promotes economy, while entrepreneurs are innovators and job creators. Accordingly, Amesi (2011) viewed entrepreneurship as a mission for self-employment and success achievement through creativity, which is the hope of many Nigerians in entrepreneurship businesses. Entrepreneurship is the ability to create and build something from practically nothing. It has to do with doing, achieving, and building an enterprise or organization, rather than just watching, analyzing, or describing one. It refers to the willingness to take calculated risks, both personal and financial, and then do everything possible to get the odds in your favour (Wikipedia, 2018). Nzelum (2010) defined entrepreneurship education as a functional education and learning by doing. According to Kroom and Moolman (2019), entrepreneurship is described as the act of being an entrepreneur or undertaking innovations, finance in an effort to transform transactions into economic goods. This may result in new organizations or may be part of revitalizing mature organizations in response to perceived opportunities. Nwokolo (2012) viewed entrepreneurship as the totality of find and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources, initiate appropriate actions to ensure success. Entrepreneurship education is that aspect of education specifically designed to prepare the individual for the world of work in specific areas and to develop a level of maturity to be self-employed, to manage resources and create more wealth (Obasi, 2010).

Entrepreneurship is a process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas, combining them with management and organization skills in order to meet an identified need and thereby create wealth (Agomuo, 2012). It is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully. Entrepreneurship is thus, the process of learning the skills needed to assume the risk of establishing a business. Akpotowoh and Amahi (2016) opined that the skills acquired in any of the functional areas of business related programme promotes training in entrepreneurship as well as equip Graduates with requisite potentials to establish and run small businesses on their own. According to Ademiluyi (2017), entrepreneurship skills are simply business skills which individuals acquire to enable them effectively function in the turbulent business environment as an entrepreneur or self-employed. Akinola (2011) pointed out that it takes special skills to succeed as an entrepreneur most especially the female folks. The future of the female entrepreneurs becomes worrisome due to gender-related discriminations prevalent in developing countries like Nigeria inclusive (Roomi & Parrot, 2018).

According to Andrea (2010) entrepreneurial skills ought to consist of five basic skills which include: human resource management skills, financial/Account management skills, innovative skills, customer skills, marketing skills, communication and management skills. Andrea opined that opportunities for employment as a result of Business Education preparation are enormous. These opportunities include development of small scale business, which if properly managed, will keep member of families gainfully employed and generate sufficient income with which to maintain their families and continually improve their standard of living. Olaleye (2010) identified technical skills as one of the entrepreneurial skills needed for self-employment. Obi (2015) stated that without graduates possessing enough technical skills in their various trades, other abilities cannot withstand the test of time. Obi affirmed that, if Business educator is to succeed in producing graduates who can gain and hold employment in a competitive world, it must endeavor to provide its graduates with adequate skills for entrepreneurship.

Skill acquisition is the ability to be trained on a particular task or function (Mike, 2014). Mike emphasized that the importance of skill acquisition includes self-employment, employment generation, effective function, and crime reduction. Idoko (2014) defined skill acquisition as the form of training by individuals or group of individuals that can lead to acquisition of knowledge for self-sustenance. It involves the training of people in different fields of trade under a legal agreement between the trainers and the trainees for certain duration and under certain conditions.

Ochiagha (2015) stated that skill acquisition is seen as the ability to do or perform an activity that is related to some meaningful exercise, work or job. Ochiagha maintained that for skills to be acquired, appropriate knowledge, attitudes, habit of thought and qualities of character are learnt to enable the acquirer develop intellectual, emotional and moral character which prepares the individual for a brighter future. Similarly, Donli (2014) was of the view that skill acquisition is the manifestation of idea and knowledge through training which is geared towards instilling in individuals, the spirit of entrepreneurship needed for meaningful development. Donli (2014) further stressed that if individuals are given the opportunity to acquire relevant skills needed for self-sustainability in the economy, it will promote their charisma in any work or business situation.

According to Kazilan, Hamzah and Bakar (2019), employability refers to a group of important skills instilled in each individual in order to produce productive workforce. The concept of employability has in recent times remained the focus of government, employers, job seekers and educators. Brown and Hesketh (2014) defined employability as the relative chances of getting and maintaining different kinds of employment. While most people view employability in absolute terms, focusing on the need for individuals to obtain credentials, knowledge and social status; the concept of employability can also be seen as subjective and dependent on contextual factors. Employability not only depends on whether one is able to fulfill the requirements of specific jobs, but also on how one stands relative to others within a hierarchy of job seekers (Brown and Hesketh). Fugate et al (2014) defined employability as a form of an active adjustment of individuals towards certain occupations until they could identify and recognize existing career opportunities in the work place. It takes a skill for a job seeker to be able to identify opportunities where others could not identify. According to Kazilan et al (2009), employability refers to a group of important skills instilled in each individual in order to produce productive workforce. According to Hillage and Pollard (2008) as cited in Hind and Moss (2011), employability refers to a person's capability for gaining and maintaining employment.

Communication as part of office and information management (OIM) is a competence that can be regarded as the ability to interact appropriately and effectively with others (Chen & Starosta, 2016). Communication, which is a vital skill for all professions, is at the core of the teaching profession in terms of teacher-student relationships (Duță, 2015). The teaching profession requires perfect communication skills, because the potential of teachers to develop students is something related to effective communication. Thus, teachers should both communicate effectively with others and carry out technical tasks to be successful professionals (Ihmeideh, Al- Omari & Al-Dababneh, 2010).

Communication is indispensable to any organization's achievement. Communication is a critical point for human resource leaders which must be in alignment with the organization's management and its labour (Naresh, 2017). Communication involves at least two people: the sender and the receiver. There are four types of communication between senders and receivers: writing, speaking, listening, and conducting meetings. Each one is important to your success in the workplace. The four most common types of communication used by managers include interpersonal communication, nonverbal communication, written communication, and oral communication. Communication at its core is the transfer of information from one person to another with the information being understood by both parties. The central function of communication in an entrepreneurial setting is to reach a definite corporate goal. Communication in business conveys to the vital management functions which include planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling. The management process of decision making, coordinating, delegation, centralization and decentralization are all surrounded by communication.

Problem-solving is a crucial skill that affects all life actions, from simple to complex. It leads individuals to find solutions for the problems with the application of previously gained experiences (Korkut, 2012). Problem-solving skills support individuals' ability to cope with behaviour (Heppner., 2012). On the other hand, problem-solving, which is regarded as a challenging process, requires behavioural, affective and cognitive actions to overcome the barriers on the way to the goal (Jonassen, 2020). Individuals who have high levels of problem-solving skills tend to have a democratic attitude, show critical and reflective thinking (Demirel, 2014), and build effective communication (Payne, 2021). Problem-solving is a

multifaceted process with behavioural, affective and cognitive dimensions, and which is essential in handling critical situations (Heppner & Lee, 2012). Hence, teachers' problem-solving skills should be developed, because teachers have to provide the best solution for issues that occur in every condition that they face in educational settings (Tok, Tok & Dolapçioğlu, 2014). It can also be asserted that teaching problem-solving to paccounting neducation students could improve their skills on managing undesirable behaviors in the process of classroom setting. Problem-solving give students and teachers an opportunity to build an appropriate behavior in classroom settings with the help of effective communication (Emmer & Aussiker, 2010). Effective problem-solving skills help them to communicate and interact and understand their roles (Nelsen., 2020). Researches reveal that removing communication barriers has an effect on developing problem-solving skills (Ertürkler, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Entrepreneurial skills are beneficial to both students, public and private office holders because it provides concepts, ideas, skills and knowledge for self-reliance, empowerment and employability.

The challenge in the country today is that graduates of higher institutions lack the skills to face the practical challenges in the labor market and these graduates lack the employability skills. This has made most of the graduates not to be employed because they lack the necessary Entrepreneurial skills needed. Most organizations today lament the lack of employable skills among Nigerian graduates, which means that higher institutions need to train and retrain graduates before they can be fully integrated into jobs. Business Education students really need to be equipped, by acquiring both theoretical and practical entrepreneurship skills since it will make them effective and efficient in their area of specialization and will also enable them to have the mindset of becoming job creators instead of job seekers. Our present day organization stressed that many graduates do not have employable skills, which means that the employers need to train and retrain them again before they can be fully absorbed into jobs or become self-employed and some of these organizations are not interested in retraining these graduates. It is on this ground that this study sought to determine Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in Rivers State Universities. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. To determine the extent to which Problem Solving Skills enhance Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the extent to which Information and Communication Skills as part office and information management (OIM) enhance Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent does Problem Solving Skills enhance Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does Communication Skills as part office and information management (OIM) enhance Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses that guided the study were tested at 0.05 levels of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on the extent Problem Solving Skills enhance Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on the extent Communication Skills as part of office and information management (OIM)

enhance Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria.

METHOD

This study investigated the Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was chosen for the study. Three objectives, three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of this study was 106 Post-graduate students from South-south and South-East, Nigeria. The entire population was used for the study hence there was no sampling. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire titled “Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability Questionnaire” (ESABESEEQ). The instrument was structured on a four-point rating scale of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions, while T-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Research Question 1: *To what extent do Problem Solving Skills enhance Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria?*

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Extent Problem Solving Skills enhance Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria.

(N = 106)							
S/N	Item Statements	Male =47			Female =59		
		\bar{x}	SD	Remarks	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to team up with experts in solving problems	3.32	0.90	High Extent	3.37	0.94	High Extent
2	Courage to take extreme measures to identified problem	3.49	0.82	High Extent	1.59	0.93	low Extent
3	Ability to implement a plan of action to resolve problem.	2.79	1.22	High Extent	3.37	0.90	High Extent
4	Problem-Solving Skills gives opportunity to utilize ones potentials.	3.19	1.00	High Extent	2.98	1.11	High Extent
5	Ability to believe that a solution exists for every problem	3.47	0.92	High Extent	2.95	1.13	High Extent
Total Mean & SD		=	16.26	4.86	14.26	5.01	
Grand Mean & SD		=	3.25	0.97	2.85	1.00	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The results in table 1 above shows that all the items on the table were rated high extent. It is generally concluded that Problem-Solving Skills gives opportunity to utilize ones' potentials, courage to take extreme measures to identified problem and ability to implement a plan of action to resolve problem to a high extent, with a grand mean of 3.25 and 2.85 for IAUE and RSU respectively.

Research Question 2: *To what extent do Information and Communication Skills as part of office and information management (OIM) enhance Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria?*

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Extent Information and Communication Skills as Part of Office and Information Management (OIM) enhance Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria.
(N = 106)

S/N	Items	Male =47		Remarks	Female =59		Remarks
		\bar{x}	SD		\bar{x}	SD	
6	Ability to retrieve saved document	3.23	0.83	High Extent	3.10	0.97	High Extent
7	Ability to make business transaction on line	2.96	1.20	High Extent	3.19	0.98	High Extent
8	Ability to Independently operate personal computer systems	3.26	1.04	High Extent	1.69	0.93	Low Extent
9	Ability to Perform data analysis with a computer package	3.34	0.86	High Extent	3.31	0.89	High Extent
10	Ability to Access and use information from the internet	3.32	0.97	High Extent	3.22	0.98	High Extent
Total Mean & SD		=	16.11 4.9		14.51	4.75	
Grand Mean & SD		=	3.22 0.98		2.90	0.95	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The results in table 2 shows that all the items on the table were rated high extent. It is generally concluded that Communication Skills as part of office and information management (OIM) helps students to perform data analysis with a computer package and to retrieve saved document to a very high extent, with a grand mean of 3.22 and 2.90 for male and female respectively.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on the extent Problem Solving Skills enhance Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria.

Table 4: T-test Analysis on the Mean Responses of Male and Female Respondents on the extent Problem Solving Skills enhance Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria.

Respondents	N	\bar{x}	SD	DF	A	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	47	3.25	0.97	104	0.05	0.65	1.96	Accepted
Female	59	2.85	1.00					

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the t–test in table 4, the t–calculated value of 0.65 is greater than t–critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 levels of significance at 104 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on the extent communication Skills enhance Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria.

Table 5: T-test Analysis on the Mean Responses of Male and Female Respondents on the extent Information and Communication Skill as Part of Office and Information Management (OIM) enhances Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability in South-south and South-East, Nigeria.

Respondents	N	\bar{x}	SD	DF	α	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	47	3.22	0.98	104	0.05	1.66	1.96	Accepted
Female	59	2.90	0.95					

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the t – test in Table 5, the t-calculated value is 1.66 while the t – critical value is 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The t-calculated value is less than t– critical value, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings revealed that Problem-Solving Skills gives opportunity to utilize ones potentials. Courage to take extreme measures to identified problem and ability to implement a plan of action to resolve problem to a high extent. This finding is in agreement with the view of Reeve (2010) who opined that Problem-solving is a crucial skill that affects all life actions, from simple to complex. Problem-solving skills support individuals’ ability to cope with behavior. In agreement with the view of Funke, (2010) opined that problem-solving, which is regarded as a challenging process, requires behavioural, affective and cognitive actions to overcome the barriers on the way to the goal. Problem-solving is a multifaceted process with behavioural, affective and cognitive dimensions, and which is essential in handling critical situations and coping with problems.

Findings revealed that Communication Skills helps students Perform data analysis with a computer package and ability to retrieve saved document to a high extent. This finding is in agreement with the view of Abdulkarim (2012), who opined that Communication is the activity of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, visuals, signals, writing, or behavior. It is the meaningful exchange of information between two or more living creatures. The need for good communication skills, behaving appropriately in business situations and addressing situations in a professional manner are skills that businesses are looking for. In line with the view of Chen and Starosta, (2016) who opined that communication is a competence that can be regarded as the ability to interact appropriately and effectively with others. Communication, which is a vital skill for all professions, is at the core of the teaching profession in terms of teacher-student relationships. The teaching profession requires perfect communication skills, because the potential of teachers to develop students is something related to effective communication. Thus, teachers should both communicate effectively with others and carry out technical tasks to be successful professionals.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis in the study, findings and discussion made. The researchers concluded that Communication Skills helps students Perform data analysis with a computer package and Ability to retrieve saved document. It was concluded that Problem-Solving Skills gives opportunity to utilize one’s potentials. Courage to take extreme measures to identified problem and Ability to implement a plan of action to resolve problem.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Higher institution curriculum should seek to produce graduates that are critical and creative thinkers, with real skills, those who are ready to challenge the status quo, ready to make mistakes and learn from them. Graduates, who are not afraid to put forward novel ideas, listen to others and be ready to compromise where necessary.
2. Entrepreneurship education in the universities should be adequately funded. This can be achieved through increase in the budgetary allocation to the universities by the government. With adequate funding, universities will be able to establish entrepreneurial development centers for practical work and the provision of training/instructional material for the programme.

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