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Contemporary Entrepreneurial Competencies Among Undergraduates In Rivers State Polytechnics

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated contemporary entrepreneurial competencies among undergraduates in Rivers State Polytechnics. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population was 2,555 with a sample size of 332, using Krechie and Morgan Table for determining a sample of a known population. Self-developed questionnaire of five point rating scale was used. Face and contents validity were established using the opinions of three experts with trial-test on 20 students. Data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha with a coefficient values of .90. Out of 332 copies of questionnaire distributed, 260 were correctly filled, retrieved, and used for data analysis. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used to analyze data from research question and spread in respondents' views. Inferential statistics of Analysis of Variance (One-way ANOVA) was used to test the null hypothesis. A Tukey Post Hoc Test of multiple comparisons was further conducted. Findings revealed that the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates was at low level and the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates in Rivers state polytechnics were based on (funding, self-management experience and education). Among other things, it was recommended that students should ensure that they go into private certificates programmes in contemporary entrepreneurial competencies with focus on self-management competencies, and parents should create room for self-management competencies experience via internship placement and education.
Keywords: contemporary, entrepreneurial competencies, undergraduates, Rivers State polytechnics.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is globally acknowledged as an instrument for achieving economic growth and development through employment creation. Consequently, entrepreneurship development is emphasized in parts of the world such as USA, UK, Malaysia, Japan, China and a host of others. In a country like Nigeria where unemployment and poverty are high, the importance of entrepreneurship cannot be undermined.

Entrepreneurship is the individual's ability to translate ideas into action. It encompasses creativity, innovativeness and risk taking, as well as ability to plan and direct action towards the achievement of goals (Ken, 2013). Akpotohwo, Watchman and Ogeibiri (2016) saw it as the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas, combining them with management and organizational competencies in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and thereby create wealth. This

means that entrepreneurship is the process of designing, launching and running a new business, which is often initially a small business. Contributions of entrepreneurship are quite obvious and visible in economic transformation, poverty reduction and most importantly, reduction in the rate of youth unemployment. Okoro (2014) observed that in the past, various administrations in Nigerian have introduced some measures such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) Scheme, Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)) to curb the menace of unemployment. However, Oduwaiye (2011) observed that the problem, instead of reducing, has assumed a critical dimension and affecting graduates of tertiary institutions (polytechnics inclusive).

Entrepreneurial success requires training to acquire relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes for identifying opportunities or needs in the environment, mobilizing needed resources, starting the enterprise and suitably applying the resources for its survival and growth. This is why the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) emphasized the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies, (both mental and physical) as equipment for individuals to live in and contribute significantly to the development of the society. According to Mbarushimana and Kuboja (2016) competency is the capability to choose and apply an integrated combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes with the intention to realize a task in a certain context, while personal characteristics such as motivation, self-confidence, and willpower are part of that context. Competence is the capacity to accomplish up to standard the key occupational tasks that characterize a profession. A competent professional shows a satisfactory performance.

Contemporary entrepreneurial competencies are key occupational tasks competencies required for accomplishing tasks that are characteristic for a profession system. The general concept of contemporary entrepreneurial competence can be understood through a set of appropriate competencies uesd to accomplish a key occupational tasks at a satisfactory or superior level. Contemporary entrepreneurial competencies are directly linked to key global occupational tasks and are integrated clusters of domain of specific and generic competencies needed by entrepreneurs for global business success. An entrepreneur who wants to succeed in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) should possess contemporary entrepreneurial competencies in areas like time management, creativity, innovativeness and problem-solving (Madatta, 2011). This is because, time management competencies can help an entrepreneur to arrange activities to be performed within a given time through use of diaries and time charts. This also help in avoiding over-scheduling. Similarly, creative and innovative competencies can help an entrepreneur to create new ideas, solutions, and approaches to ongoing business challenges. In the same vein, problem-solving competencies can help an entrepreneur to effectively handle business challenges arising from the day-to-day operation (Olaniyi, 2016). Enhancing these competencies could be important in developing an entrepreneur capable of starting up his own business and succeeding in it.

The author, however, lamented that Nigerian graduates (especially business graduates) lacked these contemporary entrepreneurship competencies and affirmed that it is an obvious gap in the curriculum. Similarly, Olusegun (2012) highlighted other competencies such as financial management, communication, marketing, information and communication technology, risk-taking and decision-making as important for business graduates desiring to be successful entrepreneurs. Furthermore, self-management and leadership competencies could be very important tools of successful entrepreneurs. According to Agbim and Oriarewo (2012), studies have examined some competencies which business students in the tertiary institutions need for success in entrepreneurship. The authors, however, observed that self-management, leadership, financial, ICT and marketing competencies have not been brought to the fore as necessary for polytechnics undergraduates to be successful entrepreneurs upon graduation.

Self-management competencies are the application of the four key functions of management into managing oneself. It includes methods, skills and strategies that assist entrepreneurs with opportunities to plan, organize, coordinate and control themselves towards attaining both personal and business goals. Hughes (2016) pointed out that self-management competencies help entrepreneurs to minimize business

and personal stress and stay motivated in their entrepreneurial endeavours. This, according to the author is the reason many managers of SMEs emphasized importance of self-management to successful entrepreneurship.

Leadership competencies involve the ability to present a vision, make commitment among followers and accept risk when faced with opportunities that cause efficient use of available resources. Leadership competencies help entrepreneurs to gain competitive advantage and outshine rivals (Agbim, Oriarewo & Owutuamor, 2013). Leadership competencies entail pro-activeness, innovativeness and risk-taking. Pro-activeness means being able to influence and lead the future rather than waiting to be influenced by it. Innovativeness, on the other hand, is the ability and tendency to think creatively, develop novel and useful ideas in opportunity recognition, resource utilization and problem-solving. Risk-taking entails willingness to absorb uncertainty and take the burden of responsibility for the future.

Financial management competencies include ability to: source for capital to start a business, improve as well as develop basic skills in arithmetic, determine where and when to invest, manage money well, prepare sales, cash, and production budget, detect fraud, interpret financial reports, keep and control stocks, and avoid unplanned expenditures. To succeed as an entrepreneur, there is need to source for funds from the right sources at the right time and the right cost of capital. Funds include long term capital and working capital. Marketing competencies on the other hand entail the ability to: utilize the marketing mix, identify customer's needs, handle customer complaints satisfactorily, negotiate sales, draw up good marketing plan, and solve marketing problems. Marketing competencies will keep the entrepreneur informed, knowledgeable and confident as to determine the most efficient method of physical distribution of goods and services.

Information and communications technology (ICT) competencies are necessities for success in entrepreneurship ventures in this computer age. ICT competencies cover knowledge and ability to send and receive e-mail, use e-business, e-commerce with word processors, send and receive fax messages, use collating machine, produce accounting jobs using spreadsheet software among others. ICT competencies are paramount to enable entrepreneurs offer right product to targeted customers, cost and determine product price which will be acceptable to the customers, based on their perception of the value and a cost that allows for profit making.

The contents scope of this study focuses only on self-management competency because it is the first and one of the most essential competencies required for entrepreneurial success. The moderating factors are undergraduates factors. The undergraduates factors are those factors that emanated from the students (undergraduates) which may affect and influence their contemporary entrepreneurial competencies for success. They are factors that may or may not be under their control but are related to them and their family background. Factors such self-management competencies training before and during schooling may influence and affect students` entrepreneurial experience and self-management experience. Also, personal factors such as age, gender, education, vicarious leadership training and funding may as well influence their entrepreneurial competencies (Amofah and Saladrigues, 2022; & Trivedi, 2017). The justification for this topic " contemporary entrepreneurial competencies among undergraduates in Rivers State Polytechnics " was because, although there are related literature to this study, there is no exact study like this in contents and scope with the same moderating factors. Therefore, this investigation is exceptional among others and a new path in the body of knowledge.

Statement of the Problem

Unemployment among Nigerian graduates has continued to escalate and appropriate measures to curb the menace through contemporary entrepreneurial competencies become imperative. Enterprises are floated here and there in Nigeria year after year but only few succeed while others fail. This failure could be attributed to several extrinsic and intrinsic factors such as lack of relevant competencies by individuals who venture into entrepreneurship. Chinwokwu (2013) reported that graduates of vocational education in Nigeria are not establishing and running their own small businesses for self-reliance as expected due to inadequate entrepreneurial competences. This supports the earlier position by Ekpenyong and Ojo (2008), that business graduates lacked relevant entrepreneurship competencies in the areas of financial

management, self-management, ICT, marketing and leadership needed to operate their chosen businesses. The authors concluded that this is cause of the high rate of business failure. The problem of this study is that, despite the fact that entrepreneurship training has been included in tertiary education programme for years now; the graduates are not succeeding in entrepreneurship as expected. It is against this backdrop that this study "contemporary entrepreneurial competencies among undergraduates in Rivers State Polytechnics" was conceived.

Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine contemporary entrepreneurial competencies among undergraduates in Rivers State Polytechnics. The objective of this study is to find out:

1. Level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates in Rivers state polytechnics.

Research Question

The following research question guided the researcher, from the perception of undergraduates:

1. What is the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates in Rivers state polytechnics?

Hypothesis

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

There is no statistical significant difference in the mean rating on the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates in Rivers state polytechnics based on (funding, self-management experience and education).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design was deemed appropriate for this study since it sought to ascertain views of the students on "contemporary entrepreneurial competencies among undergraduates in Rivers state polytechnics" The population of this study was numbered 2,555 which consisted of National Diploma I and II, and Higher National Diploma I and II of Captain Elechi Amadi and Ken Sarowiwa Polytechnics. The two departments chosen were Business Administration and Management (BAM) and Office Technology and Management (OTM).

Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic has 925 while Kenule Beeson Sarowiwa polytechnic has 1630. In Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, department of Business Administration and Management has 700 (ND I was 300 while ND II was 400). Office Technology and Management has 225 (ND I was 105 and ND II was 120). In Ken Sarowiwa Polytechnic, Business Administration and Management has 1160, while Office Technology and Management has 480. In Business Administration and Management (NDI was 320, NDII was 310, HNDI was 270 while HNDII was 250). In Office Technology and Management (NDI was 100, NDII was 150, HNDI was 130 and HNDII was 100), (OTM and BAM Depts., 2022). The sample size was 332, using Krechie and Morgan Table of 1979 for determining a sample of a known population of 2,555. Below is a further summary display of the population with their respective percentages (%) of the study using exploded pie in 3 D:

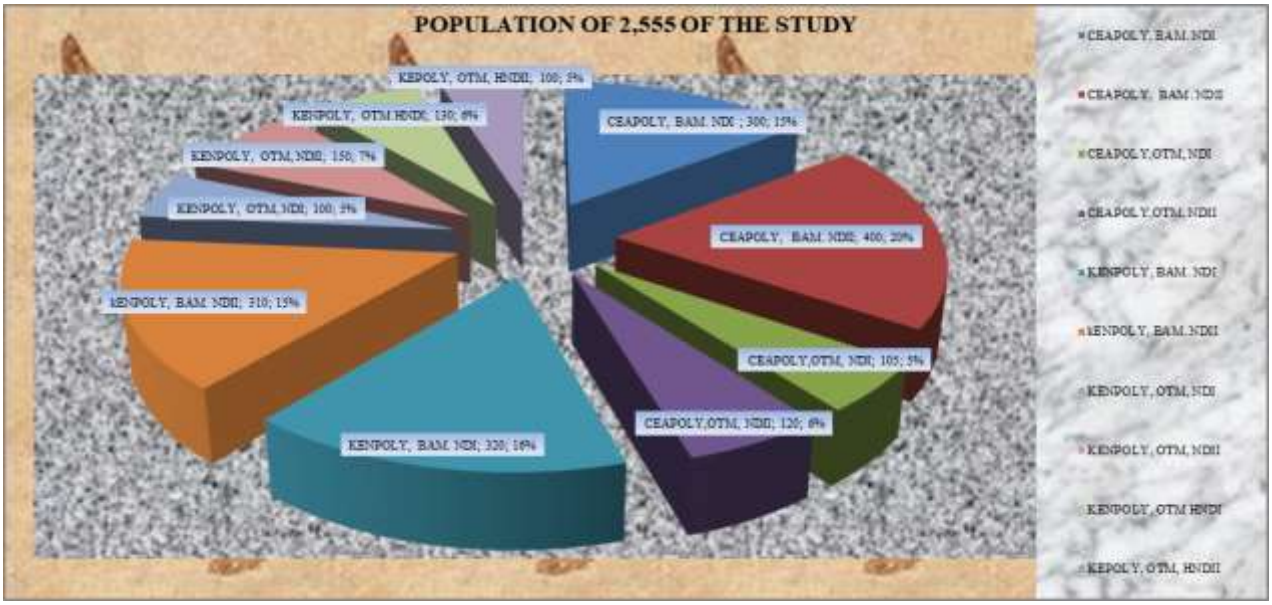

Figure 1.1: Population of 2,555 for the study

The instrument for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire based on the reviewed related literature and research question posed. The instrument was titled: "Contemporary entrepreneurial competencies among undergraduates in Rivers state polytechnics (CECAU)", with five point rating scale of the following options: Very High Level (5), 4.50 - 5.00, High Level (4), 3.50-4.49, Moderate Level (3), 2.50-3.49, Low Level (2) 1.50-2.49 and Very Low Level (1) 0.50-1.49. The face and contents validity of the instrument were established using the opinions of three experts from the departments of Business Administration and Management and Office Technology and Management of Captain Elechi Amadi and Ken Sarowiwa Polytechnics. The questionnaire was trial-tested using 20 students from Federal Polytechnic, Nekede who were not part of the study. Data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha which yielded coefficient value of .90. The high reliability value indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study. The researchers personally administered copies of the questionnaire to the respondents in their schools with the help of two research assistants. The research assistants were adequately briefed on the modalities for administration and collection of the questionnaire items. On the spot completion and time gap of one week were used for those who could not fill the questionnaire immediately. Out of 332 copies of questionnaire distributed, 260 were correctly filled, retrieved, and used for data analysis. The arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used to analyze data from the only research question and determine the homogeneity and heterogeneity of respondents' views, while the inferential statistics of Analysis of Variance (One-way ANOVA) was used to test the only null hypothesis. The justification for adopting Analysis of Variance (One-way ANOVA) was because the null hypothesis has one categorical independent variable. A null hypothesis was rejected where the calculated significant (Sig.) value, (p-value) was greater than or equal to ($\geq$) the alpha value of 0.05. Otherwise, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The data analysis were carried out using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

A Tukey Post Hoc Test of multiple comparisons was further conducted. The motivation for advancing a Tukey Post Hoc Test of multiple comparisons was to show if there was a honest statistical significant difference in the means and significant (sig.) values. A Tukey Post Hoc Test of multiple comparisons also indicated where the difference actually existed between funding, self-management experience and education which was not indicated by ANOVA results conducted. Tukey Post Hoc Test of multiple

comparisons was additionally helpful to take a definite decision about the result analysis and interpretation.

RESULT PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1

What is the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates in Rivers state polytechnics?

Table 1

Respondents' mean ratings on level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates

S/N	Self-management competencies	$\bar{X}$	SD	N = 260 Remarks
1	Ability to manage time	2.30	.43	Low level
2	Ability to plan one's daily activities to avoid interference with business schedules	2.40	.44	Low level
3	Present oneself crisply and impressively to customers	2.50	.45	Moderate level
4	Ability to demonstrate self-confidence in business goals accomplishment	2.51	.44	Moderate level
5	Ability to approach business challenges with a " can-do-attitude	2.30	.43	Low level
6	Ability to establish personal goals	2.40	.44	Low level
7	Ability to act appropriately in different business settings	2.50	.45	Moderate level
8	Ability to control ones actions regarding the business	2.51	.44	Moderate level
9	Ability to develop strategies for successful entrepreneurship	2.46	.45	Low level
10	Ability to balance job demands and family life	2.40	.44	Low level
	Cluster mean	**2.42**		**Low level**

Table 1 shows that 6 out of 10 listed items have mean scores ranged within 2.30 to 2.46. This means low level. The remaining 4 items have mean score ranged within 2.50 to 2.51, meaning moderate level. The cluster mean was 2.42, meaning low level. This means that the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates was at a low level. The standard deviations for the 18 listed items ranged within 0.43 to 0.45 which shows that respondents were homogeneous in their views that the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates in Rivers state polytechnics was at a low level.

Testing of Null Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

There is no statistical significant difference in the mean rating on the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates in Rivers state polytechnics based on (funding, self-management experience and education).

Table 2: Summary of ANOVA on the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates.

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-cal.	Sig. (P-value)	Decision
Between Groups	8.682	2	6.641	6.633	.094 Significant	H_{O1} Rejected
Within Groups	75.980	257	3.248			
Total	**84.062**	**259**				

Data on Table 2 shows a calculated F-value of 6.63 with a significant (sig.) p-value of 0.09 which is greater than the alpha value of 0.05 (0.09 > 0.05) at degrees of 2 and 257. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{O1}) was rejected. This means that there is statistical significant difference in the mean rating on the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates in Rivers state polytechnics based on (funding, self-management experience and education). The descriptive statistics table showed funding with mean score of 2.42, self-management experience was 2.44, while education was 2.45, all indicated low level. The total mean was 2.46, also signifying low level. This shows that the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates based on (funding, self-management experience and education) was at a low level. The standard deviations for funding, self-management experience and education were 0.66, 0.65 and 0.64. This means that the respondents were homogeneous that the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates based on (funding, self-management experience and education) was at a low level

The Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances shows that there was no variances in the samples to account for possible means differences. Since the p-values (sig.) of 0.09, 0.09, 0.93 and 0.93 were greater than 0.05 alpha level, this possibly accounted for the rejection of the null hypothesis. Also, since the ANOVA value of F was 6.63, with a significance p-value or (sig. of 0.09) was greater than the 0.05 alpha level, this further supported the rejection of the null hypothesis. Nonetheless, the ANOVA test did not indicate which pair of the means of the undergraduates factors that had statistical significant difference. This necessitated a Tukey Post Hoc Test of multiple comparisons which showed that there was no honest statistical significant difference in means of funding and self-management experience. Their p-values were 0.99 and 0.99, which were greater than 0.05 alpha level. The Tukey post hoc test furthermore showed that there was a honest statistical significant difference between funding and education with p-value of 0.33, or between self-management experience and education with p-value of 0.25.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Level self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates

Findings of the study in Table 1 showed that the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates was at a low level. Finding of this study concurs with the views of Chinwokwu (2013) who reported that graduates of vocational education in Nigeria are not establishing and running their own small businesses for self-reliance as expected due to inadequate entrepreneurial competences. This also supports the earlier position by Ekpenyong and Ojo (2008), that business graduates lacked relevant entrepreneurship competencies in the areas of financial management, self-management, ICT, marketing and leadership needed to operate their chosen businesses. The authors concluded that this is the cause of the high rate of business failure. It implies that learners may not be able to acquire the needed contemporary skills and that the high rate of unemployment will continue. The findings from the null hypothesis disclosed that there is statistical significant difference in the mean rating on the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates in Rivers state polytechnics based on (funding, self-management experience and education).

This findings agrees with Amofah and Saladrigues (2022); and Trivedi (2017) who averred that factors such as self-management competencies training before and during schooling may influence and affect students` entrepreneurial experience and self-management experience. Also, personal factors such as age, gender, education, vicarious leadership training and funding may as well influence their entrepreneurial competencies, the author added.

Summary of Findings

From the results of the analysis presented, findings of the study are summarized as follows:

1. The level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates in Rivers state polytechnics was at low level
2. There is statistical significant difference in the mean rating on the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates in Rivers state polytechnics based on (funding, self-management experience and education)

CONCLUSION

From the summary of the findings, it was concluded that self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates was at low level, and that the level of self-management competencies acquired by undergraduates in Rivers state polytechnics was based on (funding, self-management experience and education).

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Students should ensure that they go into private certificates programmes in contemporary entrepreneurial competencies with focus on self-management competencies. Parents should as well create room for self-management experience before and during schooling via funding and internship placement.
2. Management of polytechnics, States and federal governments should ensure that teachers teach learners self-management competencies in practical forms. More so, adequate welfare packages and facilities should be provided to support teaching and learning of self-management competencies for learners to acquire a very high level of competencies for employment creation.

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Table for Determining the Sample of a Known Population 2,555

Table 3.1

Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	1000000	384

Note: N is Population Size; S is Sample Size *Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970*