



Influence of Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition on Employability Among Business Education Graduates in Rivers State Universities

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the Perceived Influence of Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition on Employability among Business Education Graduates in Rivers State. Two objectives, five research questions and two hypotheses formulated guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted of 110 post graduate Business Education students in the two Rivers State owned Universities. The sample for the study consists of all the entire population of 110 post graduate Business Education students. The instrument used for the study was "Influence of Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisitions on Employability among Business Education Graduates Questionnaire (IESAEBEGQ)". The IESAEBEGQ adopted a four-point rating scale of Very High Extent to Low Extent. The instrument was validated by three experts two from the Department of Business Education and another from Measurement and Evaluation Department all the Faculty of Education. PPMCC formulae was used for the reliability test which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.78. Out of 110 copies of the questionnaire distributed only 106 copies were properly filled and retrieved which was used for the study. 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 Technical Skills prepare the students for further training in industries and for advanced business courses. Based on the findings conclusion was made that Problem-Solving Skills give opportunity to utilize ones potentials. It was recommended among others that Technical innovation should be emphasised as technology is imperative. This requires a holistic linking of technology to industry through an overhaul of curricula and investment prioritization. The output from various tiers of education should reflect human capital development needs.

Introduction

Education lies at the heart of every society. It is a key and a vital element in the broad development of the nation's youth capacity to address and solve difficulties. Education forms the basis for the proactive and positive economic, social and political changes in the society. Education remains the key to empowerment of the people and the nations as a whole (Olawoluand&Kaegon, 2012). Education consolidates and builds upon basic education to empower the youth to really live, function as a productive member of the society, earning a living, and contributing to societal progress. Education forms the basis for the proactive and positive economic, social and political changes in the society. Koko (2011) noted that education enhances individual's choices in life.

Entrepreneurs are essential bedrock for achieving rapid economic growth of nations. Many economies of the world including Nigeria's economy owed its industrialization and technological advancement to the enthronement of entrepreneurship, Koko, (2014). Entrepreneurship according to Solomon (2017), is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities, to establish and to run an enterprise successfully. To Omolayo and Baba (2013) entrepreneurship is the act of starting a business or company, arranging business ideas and taking risks in order to make profit through the education skills acquired. The entrepreneurship spirit is a pre-requisite to an entrepreneurial society and culture. The authors noted that this spirit is required for the overall economic growth of any nation especially developing ones like Nigeria. The above assertion is in line with the views of Nwangu (2006) and Ojeifo (2013) who depicted that entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual, a firm or an organization to identify an environmental change and exploit such an opportunity to produce goods and services for public consumption.

According to Paul (2015) entrepreneurship is about taking a risk; it is the process of creating new venture that did not previously exist; it is the practice of starting a new organization, especially new business; it involves creation of new wealth through implementation of new concepts. In the same vein, Alugbuo (2013) posited that entrepreneurs are people with visions and ideas. Entrepreneurs are creative and innovative. Nwaiwu (2013) perceives an entrepreneur as a person who has possession of a new enterprise, venture or idea and is accountable for the inherent risks and outcome. An entrepreneur is seen as a person who sees a business opportunity, obtains the needed capital, knows how to put together an operation successfully and has the willingness to take a personal risk of success or failure. Entrepreneurs are pioneers, innovators, leaders and inventors who have the ability to initiate a business enterprise for self-reliance which goes a long way to promote economic development. The concept of entrepreneurship is however associated with a number of activities as it demands the presence of an entrepreneur and enabling

environment (Ayatse, 2013). The objective of any education and training is to change behaviour which is a function of values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills; within the education and training institutions one has to be cleared with what one intends to promote.

Ayatse, (2013) envisaged that skill which is one of the objective of any education and training is the ability to do a task expertly. Bolt-Lee and Foster (2013) posited that skill is the art of possessing the ability, power, authority, or competency to do the task required of an individual on the job. An entrepreneur who will succeed in business required a synergy of skills. Successful entrepreneurs become successful because they invest time and resources to develop their entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurship is simply the willingness and ability of individuals or group of persons to search for investment opportunities, establish and run business units successfully. The need to stay connected to the rest of the world and ability to transact business online and make payments make it imperative for an entrepreneur to acquire ICT skills. Oyelola, Ajiboshin, Raimi, Raheem and Igwe (2013) stated that development of entrepreneurial skills married with excellent knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is an additional key to entrepreneurial successes. 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; May, 2017; Otero, 2009).

Business Education is an educational programme that prepares students for entry and advancement in jobs within business and to handle their business affairs as well as to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. Osuala (2014) defined Business Education as that aspect of vocational education, which emphasizes job competency, career preparation and work adjustments. It involves acquisition of special skills in business subject areas. Njoku (2016) defined Business Education as an educational programme that equips individuals with functional and sustainable skills, knowledge, attitude and value that would enable the individuals operate in the environment such individuals find themselves. The technical skills basically involve the use of knowledge methods and techniques in performing the job effectively, Okorie (2010). Technical skills are specialised knowledge and expertise which is utilised in dealing with day-to-day problems and activities. For example engineers accountants computer programmes and system analysts all have technical skills in their areas and these skills are acquired through education and training These skills are highly necessary at the lower level of management and as one moves to higher levels of management the relative importance of technical skills usually diminishes . This is so because unlike first level supervisors managers at higher levels have less direct contact with technical operating problems and activities at the lower level of an organization Technical skills are those skills needed to accomplish a specific task. It is the 'how to' skill set that allows a manager to complete his or her job. These skills are the combination of formal education, training, and on-the-job experience. Most employees expect their managers to have a technical skill set above their own so that, when needed, an employee can come to their manager to find out how to do something specific to their individual job. Technical skill: the ability and efficiency of a particular type of activities that is consistent with the methods, procedures and techniques related to the activity. This skill required specific information, analytical talent and expertise to create and use of the working tools (Osinem&Nwoji, 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, 2008; May, 2007; Otero, 1999).

Communication is a competence that can be regarded as the ability to interact appropriately and effectively with others (Chen & Starosta, 1996). 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 (Koontz & O'Donnel 1955). The management process of decision making, coordinating, delegation, centralization and decentralization are all surrounded by communication. McShane and Von Glinow (2015) describes

communication as the process by which information is transmitted and understood between two or more people. Ilesanmi (2010) mentioned what an entrepreneur requires for effective communication skills to include how communication process helps the entrepreneur effect the managerial functions of planning, organizing, staffing, influencing, interacting, controlling, and co-ordinating. In terms of information flow within an organization, it moves indifferent directions depending on the employee hierarchy within the organization. In the contemporary business setting, information flows faster than ever before. This is required since the advent of the internet era where such mediums, both for social and business are highly employed in business organizations. Such media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Google+, LinkedIn, YouTube, among others. Information needs to flow faster now than ever before. Slightest shortage in information flow could be very costly. In present-day business world, information must flow uninterruptedly as information stoppage on a fast-moving production line can cause a huge damage in terms of output as well as loss of customer goodwill.

Statement of the Problems

Presently, there is huge challenge in the increase in unemployment in the country at large. There should be a need for creation of jobs and also creation of skills for the youths in order to reduce the rate of unemployment in the society. But employers of labour still laments of graduates not being able to possess the needed competencies to face the practical challenges in the labour market when employed, this may be as a result of graduates not having the employability skills and problem due to its financial involvement, equipment, tools and the human resources needed for the training. So many graduates moving around the street of major city in search for white collar jobs which are readily not available and also making graduates job creators and not job seekers, since unemployment rate is high. Skills and technical knowledge are targeted at unemployed graduates become self-employed and have business creation capacity. It was against this background that this study examined the Influence of Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition on Employability among Business Education Graduate in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the Influence of Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition on Employability among Business Education Graduate in Rivers State. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent technical skills acquired influence Business Education graduates employability in Rivers State.
2. Determine the extent Communication Skills acquired influence Business Education graduates employability in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent does Technical skills acquired influence Business Education graduates employability in Rivers State?
2. To what extent do Communication Skills acquired influence Business Education graduates employability in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education graduates in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent Technical skills acquired influences their employability in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education graduates in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent Communication Skills acquired influences their employability in Rivers State.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study and the population of the study comprises of all postgraduates in the department of Business Education in Rivers State Universities. The entire population was used as sample since is of a manageable size and good enough for the study. The instrument used for this study was a self-developed questionnaire by the researcher titled "Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisitions of Employability among Business Education Graduates Questionnaire (ESAEBEGQ)". The instrument consisted of two sections, part A and B, part A contained the personal data of the respondents, while part B was designed to gather information of the research questions posed in chapter one and a four points rating scale of High Extent (HE) = 4Points, Moderate Extent (ME) = 3 Points, Low Extent (LE) = 2Points, and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1 Point was used to elicit information from the respondents. To establish validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by three experts. Two from Business Education Department and one from educational foundations, all in the Faculty of Education Rivers State University Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, copies of the questionnaire were administered to 20 postgraduate Business Education students in University of Port Harcourt who were not part of the respondents. Test-re-test was used to test the reliability of the instrument, while Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to get the reliability index of 0.78. A total of 110 copies of the questionnaire were administered to postgraduate students in the Department of Business Education, Faculty of Education, Rivers State University Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt. This was done by the researcher and two research assistants, out of the 110 copies administered, 100 were retrieved from the respondents which signifies 95%

retrieval. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics, while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In taking decision, a mean score of 4.50 – 5.00 was accepted as High Extent (HE), Mean score of 2.50 – 3.49 was accepted as Moderate Extent (ME), Mean Score of 1.50 – 2.49 was accepted as Low Extent (LE) while mean score of 0.50 – 1.49 was accepted as Very Low Extent (VLE). Also, the decision for the hypotheses testing was based on the fact that if the t-cal is higher than the table or critical t-value the hypotheses was rejected and if the calculated t-cal is lower than the t-crit value, the hypotheses is reject.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does Technical skill acquired influences Business Education graduates employability in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Extent Technical skill Acquired Influence Business Education Graduates Employability in Rivers State (N = 106)

S/N	Items	IAUE =47			RSU =59		
		\bar{x}	SD	Remarks	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1	Technical Skills prepare the students for further training in industries and for advanced business courses in institutions of higher learning.	3.32	0.97	High Extent	3.53	0.79	High Extent
2	Technical Skills help the Business Education post Graduates students to acquire relevant skills in specific business subject area to make him employable after graduation.	2.34	1.26	Low Extent	3.14	1.06	High Extent
3	Technical Skills help the Business Education post Graduates students to diversify the business area	3.45	0.85	High Extent	3.25	0.88	High Extent
4	Technical Skills help the Business Education post Graduates students to create and develop national and international networks.	2.74	1.23	High Extent	3.42	0.98	High Extent
5	Technical Skills help the Business Education post Graduates students to have an awareness and understanding of the various business occupations	2.83	1.93	High Extent	3.51	0.79	High Extent
Total Mean & SD =		14.68	6.24		16.85	4.5	
Grand Mean & SD =		2.93	1.24		3.37	0.9	

Source: Field Survey, (2022)

The results in table above shows that all the items on the table were rated high extent by the Postgraduate Business Education students. It is generally concluded that Technical Skills help the Business Education postgraduates students to diversify the business area. Technical Skills prepare the students for further training in industries and for advanced business courses in institutions of higher learning to a high extent, with a grand mean of 2.93 and 3.37 for IAUE and RSU respectively.

Research Question 2: To what extent do Communication Skills acquired influence Business Education graduates Employability in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Extent Communication Skills Acquired Influence Business Education Graduates Employability in Rivers State (N = 106).

S/N	Items	IAUE =47			RSU =59		
		\bar{x}	SD	Remarks	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to retrieve saved document	3.23	0.83	High Extent	3.10	0.97	High Extent
2	Ability to make business transaction on line	2.96	1.20	High Extent	3.19	0.98	High Extent
3	Independently operate personal computer systems	3.26	1.04	High Extent	1.69	0.93	Low Extent
4	Perform data analysis with a computer package	3.34	0.86	High Extent	3.31	0.89	High Extent
5	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, (2022)

The results in table 2 shows that all the items on the table were rated high extent by the Postgraduate Business Education students. It is generally concluded that Communication Skills helps Postgraduate Business Education students 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 IAUE and RSU respectively.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education graduates in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent Technical skills acquired influences their Employability in Rivers State.

Table 3: t-test Analysis on the Mean Responses of Business Education Graduates in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the Extent Technical Skills Acquired influences their Employability in Rivers State

Respondents	N	\bar{x}	SD	DF	α	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
IAUE	47	2.93	1.24	104	0.05	-2	1.96	Accepted
RSU	59	3.37	0.9					

Source: Field Survey, (2022)

From the t – test in Table 3, the calculated value is -2 while the t – critical value is 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The z – cal value is less than z– critical value, the null hypothesis is therefore Accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of Business Education graduates in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent Technical skills acquired influences their employability in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education graduates in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent Communication Skills acquired influences their employability in Rivers State.

Table 4: t-test Analysis on the Mean Responses of Business Education Graduates in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent Communication Skills Acquired Influences their Employability in Rivers State

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

Source: Field Survey, (2022)

From the z – test in Table 4, the z-cal value is 1.66 while the z – crit value is 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The t – calculated value is less than z– crit value, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of Business Education graduates in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent Communication Skills acquired influences their employability in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The Discussion of findings was done according to the research question in Chapter one

The findings revealed that Technical Skills help postgraduate Business Education students to diversify the business area. Technical Skills prepare the students for further training in industries and for advanced business courses in institutions of higher learning to a very high extent. The findings is in line with the view of Ademiluyi (2007) who opined that 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) asserted that, it takes special skills to succeed as an entrepreneur most especially the female folks. In line with the above view, Okorie (2010) opined that Technical skills are specialised knowledge and expertise which is utilised in dealing with day-to-day problems and activities. For example engineers accountants computer programmes and system analysts all have technical skills in their areas and these skills are acquired through education and training’. Theseskills are highly necessary at the lower level of management and as one moves to higher levels of management the relative importance of technical skills usually diminishes. This is so because unlike first level supervisors, managers at higher levels have less direct contact with technical operating problems and activities at the lower level of an organization,technical skills are those skills needed to accomplish a specific task. It is the ‘how to’ skill set that allows a manager to complete his or her job. For individuals, employability depends on the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) they possess, the way they present those assets to employers and the context (e.g. personal circumstances and labour market environment) within which they seek work (Hind & Moss, 2011). Employability or employability skills are the skills needed by individuals to function effectively and efficiently in the world of work either as an employee or an employer of labour. The employability skills of a job seeker will go a long way in determining the relative standing of the individual in the labour market.

Secondly, the findings also 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 behaviour. In agreement with the view of Jonassen, 2000; 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. 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. It can also be asserted that teaching problem-solving to preserve teachers could improve their skills on managing undesirable behaviours in the process of classroom setting. Problem-solving give students and teachers an opportunity to build an appropriate behaviour in classroom settings with the help of effective communication (Emmer & Aussiker, 2010). Effective problem-solving skills of teachers help them to communicate and interact with students and understand their roles in classroom (Nelsen et al., 2010). Research reveal that removing communication barriers has an effect on developing problem-solving skills (Ertürkler, 2009).

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion made, the researchers concluded that Technical Skills help the Business Education post Graduates students to diversify the business area. Technical Skills prepare the students for further training in industries and for advanced business courses in institutions of higher learning. Communication Skills helps Post Graduate Students Perform data analysis with a computer package and Ability to retrieve saved document.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made by the researcher, that

1. Technical innovation should be emphasis as technology is imperative. This requires a holistic linking of technology to industry through an overhaul of curricula and investment prioritization. The output from various tiers of education should reflect human capital development needs.
2. 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.

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