



Influence of Planning Skills, Interpersonal Skills and Career Performance Among Self-Employed NCE Business Education Graduates in North-West Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Over the years, government of Nigeria has provided various stimulus packages for local entrepreneurs to rejuvenate and expand their business while setting up new companies. The question is, how talented is the youth in entrepreneurship? This paper sought to review the extant literature on planning skills, interpersonal skills and career performance among self-employed Business Education NCE graduates in North-west Geo-political zone, Nigeria. The present study also employed a cross sectional research design in which data was collected and analyzed within a short period of time. Results using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) supported the hypothesized direct effect of entrepreneurship skills on career performance. Specifically, there was a positive relationship between planning skills and career performance. In line with the finding, it was recommended among others that Planning skills training giving to NCE should help in North-west Geo-political Zone of Nigeria should be maintained as the result of so that they correlated positively with career performance of the entrepreneur studies.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship skills, planning skills, career performance.

Introduction

The issue of entrepreneurship skills has been a common topic in many countries for a long time. The concern of entrepreneurial skills is rooted from the desire to have students who are job makers than job seekers. This need was emphasised by the drive to have Nigeria students introduced to entrepreneurship studies. According to Volkmann (2014) it had been predicted that imparting entrepreneurship skills among higher education students would become a major academic discipline for NCE education in the 21st century. Historically, researchers have viewed entrepreneurship as an important mechanism for economic emancipation due to its association with investment and new market opportunities (Weber, 1930; Schumper, 1934; Cole, 1965). As early 1950's, scholars had noted the need for entrepreneurial capabilities or skills. For example, it has been put by Volkmann (2014) that whereas attention is put on both physical and financial resources, which determine the successful existence of firms, if the proper human capital competencies and structures are in place, they can organise the rest to make the firm exist and survive. This implies that the need for entrepreneurial skills has been established by previous scholars many years back. For example, recognized that the entrepreneurs' business management skills must be given primary attention in handling issues of employment creation and survival of enterprises. Ahmad, Basir & Kitchen (2020) reiterate that if the owner-manager lacks the necessary skills, the business is doomed to fail.

In this 21st century, almost all countries globally have recognised the need for enhancing the performance of higher education graduates, by uplifting their entrepreneurial skills through quality entrepreneurship education and training. It has also been accepted that entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship skills are intertwined and as a result, most countries have established entrepreneurship education centres in many higher institutions of learning, with a goal of imparting entrepreneurial skills among their graduates so as to improve their enterprising attitudes, intentions and capabilities, as well as their employability (Lorraine & Peter, 2017).

In the last decade, there has been growing economic downturns in Nigeria, leading to a drop in the capacity of government and cooperate organisations to provide employment for all NCE graduates. The situation has led to a paradigm shift from relying on government jobs to the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance. NCE graduates with appropriate entrepreneurial skills may have been able to establish businesses and have therefore become self-employed and self-reliant.

Development of skills and competencies among colleges of education graduates in Nigeria became a serious concern for educators and curriculum developers. This compelled Federal Government to introduce compulsory courses on entrepreneurship education that are core in all tertiary institutions

in the country in the year 2006/2007 (NUC, 2015). While public policy makers have long recognised the importance of an entrepreneur as a promoter of economic development and hence supported the development of entrepreneurship education to increase entrepreneurial skills, and whereas there has been a shift from general education to entrepreneurial skills development as a necessary way of developing and empowering the citizens, particularly the youths and indeed many colleges of education have been supported and established entrepreneurship education centres (Abubakar, 2020), no study has been conducted to specifically establish whether the entrepreneurship education centres have imparted the required entrepreneurial skills and whether those skills have enhanced/ boosted the performance of the NCE graduates as employers and employees. This study is done to make a contribution in this line.

Problem Statement

The career performance of NCE graduates in Nigeria has been reported to be low in recent years (Pitan & Adedeji, 2012). It has been observed that majority of the graduates still find it very difficult and impracticable to find their feet on ground as business founders or as employees managing entities to a strong better position (Adeshina, 2014). The levels of creativity, team performance, social networking, tolerance and accountability have been reported to be inadequate. And yet the general performance of entities, including those started by graduates and the none-graduates has also been reported to be poor, as many are not able to survive for longer years (Mohammed, 2020). The continued high unemployed level is also another sign that the graduates are not doing a good job in the field of job creation and expansion (Ibrahim, 2020). The continued incompetence of NCE graduates in Nigeria go with several unfavourable consequences to the country and its nationals, some of which are already being experienced while others may show up if the problem persists. For example, it has been said that the inability of graduates to perform to the expectation has contributed to the high labour turnover in Nigeria, it has also been blamed for low wages in many Nigerian companies, both private and public, lowered company profitability, through bringing in uncalled for or otherwise would be avoidable costs, such as continuous recruitment costs, investment in current personnel development, market losses and could imply a greater workload and pressure on those personnel who can perform. In addition, it may compromise firms' productivity or quality and general competitiveness of the country, which hampers economic growth at macro-economic level.

The persistent low performance level of NCE graduates has been blamed on many factors by different stakeholders and academicians. Two most prominent articles on this issue, have attributed the problem to the inadequate and irrelevant education contents in the curriculum of most programs of study in the country. Among these, Pitan & Adedeji (2012) have attributed it to the big mismatch between the skills imparted among the graduates vis-a-vis those required in the job market, indicating that NCE graduates in Nigeria have been poorly prepared for work in recent years. Adenike (2020) has attributed it to inability of the entrepreneurship education curriculum to meet its introduction objectives, which has resulted into many uncoordinated revisions and changes in the pedagogical structure of the curricula over the years. Other factors blamed include irrelevancy of the content and inadequate funding of the education institutions which see them produce half-baked graduates, who are inadequate in skills. Despite all these concerns, there are no studies in Northern region of Nigeria with empirical evidences on the extent to which the entrepreneurship skills are relevant to the job market and how effectively are imparted to the students and if so how are they impacting on the career performance of NCE graduates. This study was conducted to fit into this gap, to document evidences on the effect of entrepreneurial skills on career performance of NCE graduates in North-west Geo-political zone of Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to determine the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and career performance among NCE graduates in North-West Geo-political zone of Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

- i. establish the relationship between planning skills and career performance among self-employed NCE graduates in North-west Geo-political zone of Nigeria.
- ii. investigate the relationship between interpersonal skills and career performance among self-employed NCE graduates in North-west Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

Literature Review

Theoretical background

There are various theories that explain the factors affecting the productivity, performance and efficiency of employees. Some are humanistic based; others are environmental based while many are skills based. This study was based on the human capital theory of entrepreneurship developed by Schurtz in 1961. Walstad & Kourilski (1999) explained that the theory considers knowledge and skills as indispensable tools of transformation. The choice of this theory was based on the general belief that education/ training is capable of inculcating competencies, skills and values that can stimulate performance of graduates as employers and employees and enables them to transform these organisations. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has examined the impact of entrepreneurial skills on career performance of graduates in Nigeria, within the perspectives of this theory.

Entrepreneurship skills

Hayton (2018) defined entrepreneurship skills as the ability to identify customer needs, market opportunities and pursuing them. He opined that these entrepreneurship skills are part of a broader set of leadership and management skills necessary for efficient business performance. As one of the four factors of production (the other three being land, labour and capital), entrepreneurship is defined differently by different scholars. Some think that entrepreneurs have special individual qualities, while others believe that there are some entrepreneurship skills, which successful entrepreneurs practice. Most of these different scholars each use a concept that tries to describe the qualities of an entrepreneur. For example, Olusola (2021) explained that entrepreneurship is the act of risk taking, while Kurya (2020) explained that an entrepreneur is someone who is quick to realise that an opportunity exists, seizes the opportunity and looks for the necessary ingredients or resources (land, labour, capital) to actualise it.

As a dynamic process, entrepreneurship helps in creating incremental wealth. This wealth is created by individuals to satisfy the needs of others; therefore the entrepreneur needs to be equipped with skills to work with people; he needs to possess social poise, self-assurance and confidence (Ibrahim, 2010). Ibrahim indicates that this entrepreneur needs to have consideration for others, exhibit self-control, be tactful, be able to make decisions, maintain high standards of professionalism, in addition, to being honest, objective, persuasive, enthusiastic and having a high concern for communication.

The major goal of entrepreneurship education is to promote creativity, innovation and self-employment potentials among the citizens through the inculcation of entrepreneurial knowledge, competences and attitudes in the learners. Akande (2021) affirms that "the goal of entrepreneurship education is for learners to acquire entrepreneurial capacities and skills that will make them self-reliant and self-employed". Entrepreneurial capacities include the ability to take risks, create opportunities and resources, manifest undaunted commitment to a goal, cope with change and generally act with entrepreneurial mind-set.

Planning Skills and Career Performance

Previous researches support theoretical assertions of a positive relationship between planning skills and career performance. For example, Hayton (2015) identified a positive relationship between entrepreneurship skills and some measures of business performance. In line with these authors, Hayton (2015) indicated that leadership skills and entrepreneurship skills combine to influence strategy formalization and responsiveness; factors that are positively associated with performance and growth. One potential implication of Hayton's findings contained in Lorraine & Peter (2017) report is that successful interventions to improve entrepreneurship skills are likely to result in improved graduate's performance, not only among the graduates but also among a wider group of entrepreneurs for whom entrepreneurship skills might be improved as employees as well as entrepreneurs.

There is a clear connection between a good business plan, a clear goal and resource mobilization, as already indicated by Musiime (2017). Indeed if a goal is clear, the actions to be taken to achieve the goal are also clear and so the resources required carry out those actions are also clear. This gives the business manager or owner clear direction on resource mobilization. There has been a big attachment between successful business operation and resource mobilization capacity of the manager or owner. Many researchers and even common daily talks strengthen the belief that many businesses in Africa fail because of resource constraints (Barreira, 2014). It is of importance that graduates in higher education are also inducted on the ways of mobilizing resources to finance their dreams and attain their goals. Their goals cannot be achieved, however good they may be, without a clear strategy to mobilize the required resources.

The above view is also confirmed by Tegarden *et al* (2020), adding that resource availability are vital in firms' abilities to compete in the market. Therefore entrepreneurs with great inability in mobilizing resources find it harder to grow their ventures and may take long to take off. And as indicated by Kunene (2018), the longer a business takes to take-off, the harder it becomes for it to survive. Tustin (2018) put it that without good resource mobilization skills, it becomes impossible for entrepreneurs to put their ideas into practice. This connects to the big problem in many poor countries, where most graduates fail to implement the ideas they acquire from school, giving one common reason of lack of capital (Rwigema & Venter (2020) and Pretorius & Shaw (2020). Indeed, many people these days are beginning to believe that it is not lack of financial capital, as many think, rather it is lack of mental capital, which in this case is lack of resource mobilization skills. It is not enough for one to plan or to make a plan with clear goals, it is also important to think of techniques of resource mobilization in order to implement the idea.

Msoka (2019) reports a significant positive relationship between marketing skills and performance of small businesses. In his findings, it is indicated that marketing skills lead to increased sales. He indicates that although most small business owners do not carry out marketing, they agree that marketing is important in enhancing business performance. There are various marketing strategies which small business owners can apply to boost their sales, and among these, Msoka (2019) indicates that his respondents admitted that they increased their sales whenever they communicated to their friends and clients, carried out display of the best products and when they hire boys to shout to the customers about the products.

Many other scholars also agree to this notion; for example, Tsvetanka (2020) emphasizes the need to treat the clients with the utmost respect, if one is to succeed in their business careers. He indicates that clients always want to know that they are valued and treated with the dignity. Many customers want to buy from where they are given undivided attention and attentively listened to in what they are saying. This according to Tsvetanka (2020) will not only result into repeated action (buying) but also into repeated referrals, all of which will result into improved business performance. This therefore suggests that individuals with this kind of awareness will manage to maintain their customers and even attract more new ones. While there are studies relating planning skills and performance of business enterprises, few studies have related it to career performance of the self-employed graduates and even among these few, none was conducted in North-West Geo-political zone of Nigeria, a gap which this study intended to close.

Interpersonal Skills and Career Performance

Extant research has also empirically supported a positive relationship between interpersonal skills and career performance. For example, Msoka (2019) indicated that interpersonal skills are critical in helping entrepreneurs to express problems effectively and thus improve their career performance. Relatedly, drawing from a sample of 230 independent sales contractors (i.e., entrepreneurs) from mid-western state in the United States, Baron & Markman (2019) showed that interpersonal skills help entrepreneurs to interact effectively with others and may also play a role in their career performance.

According to George & Johns (2021), a successful entrepreneur requires a set of skills which include human relation skills, leading skills, networking skills, team building skills, communication skills and delegation skills.

Another important skill, which affects performance of business-related activities are delegation. Few empirical studies have been done on delegation and its impact on business performance. Never the less, a few have been done. For example, a study by Msoka (2019) indicated that there is a positive relationship between delegation skills and performance in business related careers. One aspect explained in this study is that delegating the running of some business activities to other people below the manager maintains effectiveness. This means that delegating the running of some business increases effectiveness of the business.

Some other scholars, like Meager (2011) have also agreed to the notion that delegation relates positively with business career related performance. Meager (2011) however recognizes the need for proper delegation skills, arguing that it is common, that small entrepreneurs do not know how to delegate and so delegation is the hardest thing for most of them. On many occasions, owners do not want to trust new employees, that is the reason why they fail to delegate. This indicates that many people still recognize that delegation is a key skill that is critical to business success.

Career Performance

A career is the achievement realised by a person in a job, or job experiences that a person has acquired. Career performance has to do with the productivity of a worker, as it focuses on actual contributions, results and achievements from the skills acquired by the worker. Wickman (2021) defined career performance as actions, behaviour and outcomes that employees engage in or bring about that are linked with, and contribute to, organisational goals. In essence, career performance has to do with what the worker does in the workplace or in line of work. Msoka (2019) stated that career performance has to do with what is expected of an entrepreneur in the world of competitive environment.

A career is built through training, education and practice. For example entrepreneurs in order to execute their career efficiently have to be trained in the field of business management and that is why different countries worldwide developed programs for entrepreneurship education (Jane & Sze, 2020). It was indicated by Terry (2015) that entrepreneurial ventures need managers or staff who are formally trained in business management, rather than in technical fields if they are to run their businesses successfully. They indicated that in high performing firms, 37% of the employees had completed a formal training in business management related fields, compared to 17% in low growing firms. Universities are one place where extensive business management training is provided to students, who then become business professionals or entrepreneurs managing business ventures. Through entrepreneurship education, students are inducted in various business concentrations such as accounting, financing, marketing, human resource management among others. So graduates are an invaluable asset for venture creation and management.

In this study, career performance of the graduates can be measured on two major dimensions; i) according to expectations of the individual (the graduate) and this dimension may include aspects like sales volume, profitability, number of customers and so on; ii) according to community expectations. The community in this case may involve the different stakeholders at different levels, for example, the citizens, the trainers/trainers/mentors, sponsors and parents. When a student undertakes a course, each of these stakeholders expects to see improvement in the performance of that student after graduation and these expectations may or may not be similar for all stakeholders. Such expectations may include things like employing the people of the community, long term survival, quality management, creativity and socialisation among others. In the next part of this sub-section, we discuss the meaning and measurement of career performance on the two dimensions;

Methodology

Survey research design was used in the study. It is relevant due to its ability to study both large and small group of people or population. Its strength is based on its ability to measure large sectional samples. The population of this study involved NCE graduates executing their careers as self-employed entrepreneurs in the North-west Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. The study targeted all NCE graduates from both federal and state Colleges, who graduated between 2018 to 2023 who are currently self-employed and are registered with each state's ministry of commerce and industry within the study scope. The minimum sample size for this study was arrived at using Slovic's formula. To arrive at this kind of sample size, which is representative and not biased, the researcher employed multi-level sampling using stratified, purposive and systematic random sampling techniques. In the first place, respondents were stratified into seven groups following the seven states found in the North-west Political Zone of Nigeria.

The instrument used to collect data for this study is a four point Likert scaled questionnaire designed by the researcher using concepts from literature. This instrument has three sections labelled as A, B and C. Section A is made up of questions on entrepreneurship skills (independent variable) and this is broken down into three sub-sections as per study conceptual Framework. There are 28 instrument items on planning skills, 31 instrument items on interpersonal skills and 16 instrument items on financial management skills. Section B is on Career Performance (dependent variable), with 20 instrument

items. Section C is made of nine instrument items intended to collect data on some profile characteristics of respondents. All questions in section A and B are based on a four point Likert scale ranging between 4 – 1, where 4 was for strongly agree, 3 for Agree, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree.

The researcher requested for an introductory letter from the College(s) authority, seeking for permission for the researcher to collect data for the study. The researcher produced copies of the questionnaire which was distributed to the respondents. The researcher briefed research assistants on the methods and techniques of data collection and administration of the questionnaire.

On the receipt of the completed copies of the questionnaire, the researcher analysed the data using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for the data screening and PLS path modelling for the main analyses.

Before the actual survey, the research instrument for the three variables was subjected to pre-test and pilot test to ensure for instrument validity and reliability. Thus, as recommended by Yaghmale (2009), and Polit and Beck (2006), experts in the field were contacted to examine the face validity and content validity of the instrument. Specifically, the experts were required to check for wording, format of the instrument, simplicity, ambiguity, relevance of the items to the respective constructs intending to measure, and coverage of the items with respect to operational definition of the constructs. The study adopted the Smart Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (SmartPLS-SEM version 4.9.2) statistical tool to analyse the data. Although Rönkkö and Evermann (2013) argue that SmartPLS has some shortcomings with respect to estimating SEM, as well as the capacity to correct measurement error, this statistical tool has attracted much attention in recent time due to its crucial role in research that aims at examining cause-effect relationship between constructs, as well as evaluating the correlation between constructs (Hair et al., 2017).

Results

Regression analysis for Planning Skills and Career Performance

The following equations were used to predict the dependent variable (career performance) using the five constructs of planning skills (goal setting, business plan development, resource mobilization, marketing skills, customer service skills) as the predicting (exogenous) variables;

Functional equation

$$\text{Career Performance} = f(GSs, BDs, RMs, Ms, CSs) \dots \dots \dots 1$$

From equation 1, the mathematical equation was formed as;

$$\text{Career Performance} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GSs_1 + \beta_2 BDs_2 + \beta_3 RMs_3 + \beta_4 Ms_4 + \beta_5 CSs_5 \dots \dots 2$$

Where;

β_0 = constant, or the level of career performance at which the self-employed graduate was expected to be, when his or her planning skills are taken to be zero;

GSs, BDs, RMs, Ms and CSs refer to goal-setting, business plan development, resource mobilization, marketing skills and customer service skills respectively, also called the predictors or the independent variables in this study.

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \dots \beta_5$ were the regression parameters, measuring predictive strength the respective explanatory (independent) variables had on career performance (dependent variable). Thus, β_1 was the parameter measuring the predictive power goal setting skills had on career performance, β_2 was the parameter measuring the predictive power business plan development skills had on career performance β_3 was the parameter measuring the predictive power resource mobilization skills had on career performance, and so on. Actual regression analysis was done using SPSS, results of which were presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Regression Analysis for Planning Skills and Career Performance

Variables Regressed	Adjusted r ²	F-value	Sig.	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
Planning Skills vs. CRF	.346	33.734	.000	Significant effect	Rejected
Coefficients	Beta	T			
(Constant)	3.195	16.281	.000	Significant effect	Rejected
Goal setting skills	.038	1.152	.250	No significant effect	Accepted
Business Plan Dev't Skills	.020	.519	.604	Insignificant effect	Accepted
Resource Mobilization Skills	-.020	-.755	.451	No significant effect	Accepted

Marketing Skills	-.322	-6.796	.000	Significant effect	Rejected
Customer Service Skills	-.086	-2.607	.010	Significant effect	Rejected

The results from Table 1 suggested that all the elements of planning skills taken together significantly affected career performance of the graduates ($F=33.734$, sig. = 0.000). These results indicate that all the five elements of planning skills taken together accounted for over 34.6% towards variances in career performance of the graduates (adjusted $R^2=0.346$). This means that the remaining 65.4% was the contribution of other factors not included in this study.

According to the findings, planning skills were responsible for more than one-third of the variations in career performance of the graduates in the North-West Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. Based on these results, it was important to examine further which elements of planning had the strongest influence on career performance. For that reason, the researcher considered the coefficients to further analyse and understand the strength of planning skills in influencing career performance of the graduates. Thus from the coefficients section of Table 1, results revealed that only two elements of planning skills significantly influenced career performance of the graduates and these were marketing skills customer service skills. It was indicated from these results that marketing skills (Beta = -0.322), had more predictive powers on career performance than customer service skills (Beta = -0.086). The remaining three aspects of planning skills were not found to significantly affect career performance. Thus it can be deduced from the regression model that, considering other factors constant, a one-unit increase in one's marketing skills is likely to decrease career performance by 0.322 and customer service skills is likely to decrease career performance by a smaller margin of 0.086.

However, the postulations of the theory suggested positive relationship rather than a negative one, as results of this study revealed. This defeat to theory and common sense can be attributed to the type of the skills given to the graduates and their relevance vis-a-vis what is needed in the market. As found out by Pitan & Adedeji (2012), there was a big difference between the skills graduates possessed and what the employers wanted. This mismatch may not only affect the employers who employ those graduates, but also the graduates when they establish their own ventures. This may therefore explain the unexpected negative relationship between some elements of planning skills and career performance of the graduates, suggesting that some of the skills given in this line were not necessary.

Testing Hypothesis Two

In line with the second objective, the researcher hypothesized that interpersonal skills related positively and significantly with career performance among self-employed NCE graduates in North west Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

Regression analysis for interpersonal Skills and Career Performance

Table 2 Regression Analysis for Interpersonal Skills and Career Performance

Variables Regressed	Adjusted r^2	F-value	Sig.	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
Interpersonal Skills vs. CRF	.082	5.570	.000	Significant effect	Rejected
Coefficients	Beta	T			
(Constant)	1.637	9.530	.000	Significant effect	Rejected
Human Relations Skills	-.018	-.319	.750	No significant effect	Accepted
Leadership Skills	.145	3.722	.000	Significant effect	Rejected
Networking Skills	.118	1.996	.047	Significant effect	Rejected
Team building Skills	-.131	-2.466	.014	Significant effect	Rejected
Communication Skills	.030	.785	.433	No significant effect	Accepted
Delegation Skills	-.017	-.392	.695	No significant effect	Accepted

The regression results in Table 2 indicated that all the elements of interpersonal skills taken together positively and significantly affected career performance of the graduates ($F=5.570$, sig. = 0.000). The results further indicated that all the six aspects of interpersonal skills taken together contributed only 8.2% towards variation in career performance of the graduates (adjusted $R^2=0.082$). This means that the remaining 91.8% was contributed by factors other than interpersonal skills.

From the findings in Table 4, all interpersonal skills constructs taken together were responsible for less than 10% of the variations in career performance of the graduates in the North-west Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. This contribution was on surface, smaller than the minimum suggested by Falk & Miller (1992), So it is important to examine other factors, which could have had a bigger influence in explaining variations in career performance of the graduates. For that reason, the researcher considered a structural equation model to examine the cross relationships among the study variables, as indicated later in figure 4.5, to further understand the strength of the different aspects of interpersonal skills in influencing career performance of the graduates from different directions.

It is also important to note that from Table 2, three elements of interpersonal skills out of six had a significant effect on career performance of the graduates; leadership skills (Beta = .145), networking skills (Beta = .118) and team building skills (Beta = -.131). The remaining three aspects of interpersonal skills were not found to be significant predictors of career performance. Thus from the regression Table 4, considering other factors constant, a one unit increase in one's leadership, networking, and team building skills is likely to increase career performance by 0.145, 0.118 and 0.131 respectively.

Discussion

The first research question was intended to establish whether planning skills can significantly explain career performance among NCE Business Education graduates in North -west Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. The hypothesis derived from this research question, tested using PLS path modelling, revealed a significant positive relationship between planning skill and career performance among the self-employed NCE Business Education graduates in North-west Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

This finding was not surprising because it is consistent with prior empirical studies. Specifically, the positive relationship between planning skills and career performance was consistent with the findings by Qureshi *et al.* (2016) who indicated that possession of adequate planning skills results into enhanced career performance of entrepreneurs. Likewise, Etonyeaku *et al.* (2014) found results similar to those of this study. They reported that planning skills, such as those related to co-ordinating business resources, significantly and positively influenced career performance of secretarial education graduates of Colleges of Education in Enugu State, Nigeria.

The second research objective and question was on whether interpersonal skills can significantly explain career performance of NCE Business Education graduates in North-west Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. From the findings of this study, the hypothesis supported the fact that interpersonal skills can significantly predict career performance of the self-employed graduates. The findings indicated that interpersonal skills are among the significant factors that have been empirically supported by various studies to have positive influence on career outcomes. For example, practice of good interpersonal skills was found to have a strong power predicting organizational commitment among employees (Ahmad, Basir, & Kitchen, 2010; Bambacas & Patrickson, 2008). Increased employee commitment had a strong attachment to customer satisfaction and loyalty to the service providers (Guenzi & Pelloni, 2004; Murakami, Imanaka, Kobuse, Lee, & Goto, 2010).

Conclusion

The thrust of this study was to identify the process or mechanism that explains the relationship between entrepreneurship and career performance. Taken together, the present study provided additional evidence to the growing body of knowledge concerning the effect of entrepreneurship skills on career performance among self-employed NCE Business Education graduates of North-west Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. The research reveals a significant positive relationship between planning skills, interpersonal skills and career performance among individuals in North West Nigeria. This suggests that individuals who possess strong planning, interpersonal, and financial skills are likely to perform better in their careers in this region. These findings highlight the importance of these skills in enhancing career performance and suggest that efforts to improve these skills among individuals in North West Nigeria could lead to better career outcomes."

Recommendations

1. Planning skills training giving to NCE should help in North-west Geo-political Zone of Nigeria should be maintained as the result of so that they correlated positively with career performance of the entrepreneur studies.
2. Inter-personal skills training give to NCE student in North west Geo-political Zone of Nigeria should be maintained as the result so that they related positively and significantly with career performance of the entrepreneurs studied.

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