



# **ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF COUNSELLING ON ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS NEED FOR SELF EMPLOYMENT AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY, KEFFI, NIGERIA**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

The study assessed the impact of counseling on entrepreneurial skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria. The researchers initially defined three objectives which they converted into research questions. Three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study used a sample of 285 undergraduate students from the total population of 3,528 final year undergraduate students. A questionnaire titled "Counselling and Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition Instrument" (CESAQ) was used for data collection. Researchers performed both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses on the collected data. Descriptive statistics through mean and standard deviations responded to the research questions while Chi-square goodness of fit analysis tested the research hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05. The study showed that counseling service had a notable impact on undergraduate students at Nasarawa State University, Keffi regarding their acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. It was recommended, based on the findings that, universities should provide sufficient counseling service to students to develop essential entrepreneurial skills for their postgraduate business endeavors.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Skills Need, Counselling, University students.

## **Introduction**

The growing incidence of graduate unemployment in Nigeria has intensified national discourse on the relevance and quality of higher education, particularly regarding the preparedness of graduates for self-reliant careers. With the traditional job market becoming increasingly saturated, the need for alternative career pathways such as entrepreneurship has become more urgent. Institutions of higher learning are now being challenged not only to equip students with academic knowledge but also to empower them with practical skills for self-employment (Okoli & Babalola, 2023). This challenge has brought into focus the significance of entrepreneurial skills development as a fundamental strategy to combat graduate unemployment and foster sustainable economic growth.

Entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged as a catalyst for innovation, job creation, and wealth generation. However, the ability of university graduates to engage in entrepreneurial ventures depends significantly on the possession of certain core skills. Among these are problem-solving, leadership, and marketing skills collectively considered essential components of entrepreneurial capacity (Salami & Madumere, 2022). Unfortunately, many undergraduates still struggle to acquire these competencies, leading to a gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application.

Counselling, particularly within the educational context, serves as an essential tool in bridging this gap. Through career and entrepreneurial counselling, students are guided to understand their interests, strengths, and potential entrepreneurial paths. Counselling also plays a vital role in building students' confidence, emotional intelligence, and decision-making abilities that are crucial for entrepreneurial success (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2021). More importantly, structured counselling programs in universities can help students cultivate specific entrepreneurial skills by providing mentorship, resources, and psychological support.

Problem-solving is a foundational skill in entrepreneurship, as entrepreneurs frequently encounter dynamic challenges that require analytical thinking and creative solutions. Counselling interventions that focus on developing critical thinking and adaptive reasoning can significantly enhance students' problem-solving abilities (Olowu & Akinola, 2023). Similarly, leadership skills such as communication, team coordination, and strategic planning are vital for managing business operations and motivating others. Counselling services can help nurture leadership traits by promoting self-awareness, goal setting, and collaborative competencies among students (Afolabi & Okonkwo, 2022).

Marketing skills development is crucial in the contemporary business world. An entrepreneur has to appreciate his or her customer's needs, develop proper value offers, and be able to market the products or services effectively. Saddle students with the basic fundamentals of consumer behavior, branding, pricing, and even digital marketing, (Chukwuma & Aliyu, 2022). These skills are critical for the formation of viable and enduring enterprises.

There is a scant empirical literature detailing how counselling therapies shape the entrepreneurial skill acquisition of undergraduates in Nigerian Universities. More specifically, there is inadequate data on the effect of counselling on the development of problem solving, leadership, and even marketing skills on students at Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria. This lack of insight calls for more scrutiny into how counselling can be positioned as an entrepreneurial development tool within university students. With this indent, this study aims to determine the effectiveness of counselling on entrepreneurial skill needs, more so in solving problems, and leading and marketing pertaining to self-employment among undergraduate students at Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria.

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## Statement of the Problem

The increasing rate of unemployment among graduates is becoming a pressing issue in Nigeria. The expansion of higher educational facilities and entrepreneurship education initiatives have not really assisted self-employment and entrepreneurship on a larger scale. Like many other institutions, students at Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria, are provided with basic skills such as the ability to take on entrepreneurship roles, but not the necessary practical skills or the mindset to become successful entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurial gap indicates that additional inclusive approaches like counselling might be more beneficial. Although counselling services are tailored towards assisting students to develop informed choices concerning their career paths and personal growth, their impact on the development of competencies in enterprise such as entrepreneurial problem solving, leadership, or marketing skills is largely unexplored. Quite a number of learners suffer from a lack of courageous solutions that result from performing business operations, entrepreneurial initiatives, and effective idea marketing. This points toward a gap in the effectiveness or scope of the university's counselling services as the reason for the ineffectiveness. More so, there seems to be a drawback in research aimed at studying the impact of counselling on entrepreneurial skills that are indispensable for self-employment and entrepreneurship among undergraduate students.

Absence of such data impairs the development of well-structured, evidence-informed counselling programs which can integrate meaningfully into national objectives towards youth empowerment and economic diversification. Hence, this study seeks to evaluate the impact of counselling on the entrepreneurial skills of self-employment among undergraduates at Nasarawa State University, Keffi. Through assessing the entrepreneurial level of undergraduate students in terms of problem-solving, leadership, and marketing, the study seeks to unlock important paradigms on counselling processes tailored toward fostering entrepreneurship among the youth.

## Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of entrepreneurial skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Investigate the impact of counseling service on problem solving skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria.
- Examine the impact of counseling service on leadership skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria.
- Assess the impact of counseling service on marketing skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria.

## Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the impact of counselling service on problem solving skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria?
- How does counselling service impact leadership skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria?
- What is the impact of counselling service on marketing skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria?

## Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at a .05 level of significance.

- $H_{O1}$ : Counselling service has no significant impact on problem solving skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria.
- $H_{O2}$ : Counselling service has no significant impact on leadership skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria.
- $H_{O3}$ : Counselling service has no significant impact on marketing skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria.

## Methodology

This study was conducted at Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria. The research utilized a descriptive survey research design. The study involved all final year students across the seven faculties of the university, amounting to 3,528 undergraduate students. The researchers selected 285 undergraduate students from the total population through purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The researchers developed an instrument called “Counselling and Entrepreneurship Skills Need Instrument” (CESNQ) which was used for data collection. Two Guidance and Counselling experts from Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria conducted face and content validity checks on the instrument. The experts judged the items and content coverage based on their appropriateness and wording suitability. The modifications to the items for the data collection standard were based on their feedback. The Cronbach Alpha calculation was used to assess the internal consistency of the measurement instrument. This yielded the reliability index of .86. Researchers performed both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses on the collected data. The research team calculated mean values and standard deviations to address research questions while Chi-square goodness of fit analysis tested the research hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05.

## Results

Table 1 answer research question 1

**Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Impact of Counselling Service on Problem-solving Skills Need for Self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria**

S/NO	Statement	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
	Demonstrating high level of commitment to customers' needs	2.85	0.98	Agree
	Recognizing individual employee's needs and desires	3.18	1.07	Agree
	Assisting individual employees in developing their strengths	3.21	1.09	Agree
	Assessing the availability of raw materials	3.11	0.74	Agree
	Formulating specific objectives for the enterprise	2.56	0.92	Agree
	Identifying and providing solutions to technical issues	3.06	1.08	Agree
	Assessing the operational performance of business	3.32	0.80	Agree
	Cluster Mean/SD	3.04	0.95	Agree

Table 2 answer research question 2

**Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Impact of Counselling Service on Leadership Skills Need among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria**

S/NO	Statement	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
	Ability to run an enterprise effectively	3.25	0.89	Agree
	Evaluation of the operational performance	3.17	1.06	Agree
	Maintaining the staff strength of the enterprise	3.33	0.75	Agree
	Effective communication of new innovations	3.31	1.10	Agree
	Maintaining good relationship with staff	3.06	0.92	Agree
	Organizing trainings for the staff of the enterprise	3.30	0.80	Agree
	Ability to maintain the organizational records	3.40	1.13	Agree
	Cluster Mean/SD	3.26	0.95	Agree

Table 3 answer research question 3

**Table 3: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Impact of Counselling Service on Marketing Skills Need among Undergraduate Students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria**

S/NO	Statement	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
	Ensure that customers understand the market trend	3.27	0.93	Agree
	Influence the employees through motivation	3.30	1.10	Agree
	Correct the deviations so ensure that organizational goals are achieved	3.18	1.06	Agree
	Instil in the employees the spirit of teamwork	3.14	0.85	Agree
	Allocating available funds accordingly to meet organizational needs	3.40	0.93	Agree
	Ascertaining sources of credit facilities with moderate interest rate	3.08	0.78	Agree
	Cluster Mean/SD	3.22	0.94	Agree

**Table 4 analyses research hypothesis 1****Table 4: Chi-Square analysis of the impact of Counselling Service on Problem-solving Skills Need among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria**

Response	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level Frequency	$\chi^2_{cal}$	p.val	Decision of Sig
SA	126	126	3	0.05	147.947 <sup>a</sup>	.000	H <sub>0</sub> Rejected
A	180	126					
D	76	126					
SD	14	126					

$\chi^2_{cal} = 147.947^a$ , df=3, P=0.05>0.000

**Table 5 analyses research hypothesis 2****Table 5: Chi-Square Analysis of the Impact of Counselling Service on Leadership Skills Need among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria**

Response	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level Frequency	$\chi^2_{cal}$	p.val	Decision of Sig
SA	137	126	3	0.05	136.082 <sup>a</sup>	.000	H <sub>0</sub> Rejected
A	192	126					
D	61	126					
SD	6	126					

$\chi^2_{cal} = 136.082^a$ , df=3, P=0.05>0.000

**Table 6 analyses research hypothesis 3****Table 6: Chi-Square Analysis of the Impact of Counselling Service on Marketing Skills Need among Undergraduate Students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria**

Response	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level Frequency	$\chi^2_{cal}$	p.val	Decision of Sig
SA	129	126	3	0.05	124.534 <sup>a</sup>	.000	H <sub>0</sub> Rejected
A	202	126					
D	63	126					
SD	2	126					

$\chi^2_{cal} = 124.534^a$ , df=3, P=0.05>0.000

## Discussion of Findings

The analysis results of research questions and hypothesis testing led to the organization and discussion of findings in a manner that is easy to comprehend.

The finding from hypothesis one revealed a significant impact of counselling service on the problem solving skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria. This implies that when undergraduate students receive proper guidance to develop problem solving skills through counseling service, these skills may enable them to start their own businesses after graduation instead of seeking government employment. The study confirmed the results from Olowu and Akinola (2023) who submitted that entrepreneurs require problem solving skills. Therefore, an entrepreneur is required to have some level of understanding of the relevant problem solving skills in order to evaluate the business processes and resolve the arising issues among entrepreneurship activities. The finding also aligns with Salami and Madumere (2022) who established that there is a significant impact of counselling service on problem solving skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students.

The second finding revealed that there is significant impact of counselling service on leadership skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria. The result implies that counselling service has appreciable effect on the acquisition of marketing skills by students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria. This means that undergraduate students who are rendered adequate counselling service towards acquiring entrepreneurial leadership skills need will positively persevere and implement their self-employment plans. The finding is in consonance with the work of Afolabi and Okonkwo (2022) who submitted that leadership skills are one of the essential skills of an entrepreneur. This is because leadership skills enable entrepreneurs to identify and provide solutions to technical issues. This finding also agrees with Eze and Nwajiuba (2020) who found that leadership skills are necessary for self-employment among graduate students.

The last finding showed a significant impact of counselling service on marketing skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students in Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria. This means that undergraduate students who benefited from counselling service increased in their ability to acquire marketing skills. This also implies that undergraduate students who receive proper entrepreneurship education counseling will develop marketing abilities enabling them to explain market conditions to customers and communicate their market decisions effectively. This finding aligns with the finding of Umar and Yahaya (2022) who showed a significant impact of counselling service on marketing skills need for self-employment among undergraduate students. This finding also aligns with Chukwuma and Aliyu (2022) who confirmed that marketing skills are required by business related graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that counselling service has impact on the development of entrepreneurial skills, including technical skills, marketing skills and communication skills among undergraduate students.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study and the conclusion reached, the study suggests that universities should provide sufficient counseling service to equip students with the essential entrepreneurial skills for their future business endeavors after completing their degrees.

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