ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR GRADUATE SELF EMPLOYMENT: IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN CROSS RIVER STATE

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Abstract: **This study undertakes entrepreneurship education for graduate self-employment: in the administration of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The study dwells on the understanding that the introduction of entrepreneurship education in schools was originally meant to provide graduates with the needed skills for self-employment upon graduation from school. The study made use of four research questions and four research hypotheses. The research design adopted was the survey research design. Population of 6,482 graduates of tertiary institutions in Cross River State was used to draw a sample of 300 graduates through purposive sampling technique. Findings of the study showed that skills acquired by graduates has significant positive impact on graduate self-employment. The study drew recommendations to include that entrepreneurship/ skills centres should be equipped with facilities to enhance practical teaching and learning of entrepreneurship skills in schools.**

Keywords: **entrepreneurship education, graduate self-employment, tertiary institutions, entrepreneurship skills in schools.**

1. INTRODUCTION

All over the world, entrepreneurship has been widely acclaimed to be a panacea for sustainable economic growth and development, thus, it has been the major source of job growth and economic development in developed, emerging and developing economies in this 21st century. According to Farkas and Gubik (2016), a country's economic performance highly depends on successful entrepreneurship. Nigeria government had acknowledged this fact decades ago, thus, series of entrepreneurship development programmes had been introduced by federal government in the country's tertiary institutions with the primary objective of enhancing the skills of Nigerian graduates. However, the unemployment level in Nigeria has persistently been on increase level. As at April, 2018, the unemployment rate in Nigeria stood at 18.80%. This figure is relatively high if compared with countries like India (3.4%), Mexico (3.20%), Indonesia (5.50%), Turkey (10.40%), and Brazil (12.60%) (Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics, 2018).

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Unemployment among tertiary institution graduates has been a major concern in the country. Entrepreneurship development has been identified by Nigeria government and policymakers as one of the sustainable sources of job creation. Dixxon, Meier, Brown, and Custer (2005) argued that 'Entrepreneurship programs enhance graduates' entrepreneurial skills, and encourage them to create new businesses. Entrepreneurs have played a vital role in both poverty reduction and economic growth around the world over the past decades. Entrepreneurial activity creates new opportunities, increases employment, and provides access to new markets and services (Haftendorn & Salzano, 2003).

Literature revealed that the probability of graduates starting their own businesses after attending entrepreneurship programmes is very high (Umar & Abubakar, 2015; Akarue & Eyovwunu, 2014; Agbim, Oriarewo & Owocho, 2013; Oyewumi & Adeniyi, 2013). It is also a consensus among scholars that entrepreneurial activities increase productivity and available products, advance innovation and technological developments, generate job opportunities, and overall, makes significant contribution to economic development (Ambad & Damit, 2016).

Nigeria governments and her agencies had introduced various intervention programmes to boost entrepreneurship development in Nigeria, notable among these are the introduction of entrepreneurship development courses as compulsory in the tertiary institutions by National University Commission (NUC) Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurial Development (SAED) established by National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). The sole objective of these programmes is to encourage the Nigerians generally, and Nigeria youths particularly, to involve in entrepreneurial activities thereby creating jobs. However, the rapid growing of unemployment level in the country has underscored this scenario. The focus of entrepreneurship activities in Nigeria has been on tertiary institution students with the belief that their knowledge of entrepreneurship are most likely to shape their inclination to start their own businesses in the future.

Large number of degree graduates roams about the villages and streets of cities without jobs to engage them. Some have resorted to crimes of different degrees to make ends meet. The state of these graduates is a problem to entire village communities and town dwellers. Also, School Infrastructures are over used without effort in maintaining them either by school authorities or governments. This tend to make training programmes in schools not achieve their desired objectives. Therefore, the possibility of students acquiring dependable skills in the form of entrepreneurship education is a mirage. In this regards, graduates turn out to graduate without the skills needed to either get them gainful employments.

It is based on the above problem that this study became necessary.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine entrepreneurial skills and graduate self-employment in Nigeria. Specifically, the researcher seeks to:

i.   Ascertain the quality of skills acquired by graduates in schools and how these skills can afford self-employment.

ii. Examine the possibility of graduates establishing business at the end of school.

iii. Assess the extent to which schools entrepreneurship training centres contribute in employment opportunities for graduates.

iv. Determine the availability of qualified entrepreneurship lecturers in universities.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised for they study;

i.   To what extent does quality of skills acquired by graduates enable them to be self-employment?

ii. To what extent does governmental effort made it possible for secure self-employment?

iii. To what extent does entrepreneurship training centres in schools assist students to be self-employment or starting a business?

iv. To what extent does qualification of entrepreneurship lecturers impact entrepreneurial skill on graduates?

Research hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

i.   There is no significant relationship between quality of skills acquired by graduates and graduate self-employment.

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ii. There is no significant relationship between governmental effort and graduate self-employment.

iii. There is no significant relationship between students activities in entrepreneurship centres and graduate self-employment.

iv. There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship lecturer qualification and graduate self-employment.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research design employed for this study was the survey design. The survey design is useful here as it makes for the use of instruments such as questionnaire and interviews to obtain data which is used for analysis from which appropriate inference about the study are drawn

The population of the study was made up of graduates of tertiary institutions in Cross River State which as of 2019/2020 academic session were about 6,482 graduates from the various institutions in the state. The graduates consisted of male and female drawn from five higher institutions in the State.

The sampling technique adopted by this study was the purposive sampling technique. During this case, the researcher personally visited the institutions and asked questions on who to meet as a graduate of the 2019/2020 session which due to corona virus pandemic and tertiary institution workers strike were still in school until 2022. Thereafter, the researcher was opportuned to find a good number of graduates for this set in the process of their final clearance.

However in each of the institutions visited the first 100 graduates met were eligible to respond to the questionnaire. This was also irrespective of the Department Graduated because entrepreneurship Education/Studies is a course that is compulsory to all Departments in the three tertiary institutions. The same sampling technique was adopted in the selection of the institutions for the study.

Sample size of the study was 300 respondents selected from the total population of 6,482 graduates from the state. Three schools were randomly selected through a simple random sampling technique and the sample size of the various institutions were made up of graduates among male and female.

Table 1

S/N	NAME OF SCHOOLS	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1	Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH)	50	50	100
2	University of Calabar (Unical)	50	50	100
3	College of Education Akamkpa	50	50	100
	Total	150	150	300

Instruments used for data collection was entrepreneurial skills and self-employment of graduates questionnaire (ESSEG). The model chosen for this study was modified Likert scale model with a five-point scale rating. The questionnaire was sub-divided into two sections, section (A), which consisted of demographic variables of respondents such as gender, age, and socio-economic status, and section (B) which consisted of items statements relating to graduates with four (4) point rating scale – namely.

A	-	Strongly Agree	(SA)
B	-	Agree	(A)
C	-	Undecided	(UD)
D	-	Disagreed	(D)
E	-	Strongly Disagree	(SD)

Respondents were required to choose from the above options.

3. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Hypothesis one- There is no significant relationship between quality of skills acquired in schools and graduate self-employment

Table 2: Relationship between quality of skills acquired and graduate self-employment

Variable	ΣX	ΣY	ΣX2		
	ΣY2	df	ΣXY	r-cal	
Quality Skills acquired			12.63	154	
		196	1.8945	0.61	
Self-employment		0.150	0.0225		
Significant at 0.05 level, r-critical= 0.137, df=196					

The result in table 2 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.61 is higher than the critical r-value of 0.137 at 0.05 level of significance with 196 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore means that there is a significant positive relationship between the quality of skills acquired by graduates and self-employment.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship between government effort in empowerment and graduate self-employment.

Table 3: Relationship between government empowerment and graduate self employment

Variable	ΣX	ΣY	ΣX2		
	ΣY2	df	ΣXY	r-cal	
Government empowerment			4052	58894	
		196	73286	0.05	
Self-employment		3210	39970		
Significant at 0.05 level, r-critical= 0.137, df=196					

The result in table 3 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.5 in higher than the critical r-value of 0.137 at 0.05 level of significance with 196 degree of freedom with this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore means that there is a significant positive relationship between government effort in empowerment and graduate self-employment.

Hypothesis three

There is no significant relationship between students activities in school entrepreneurship centres and graduate self-employment.

Table 4: Relationship between student activities in school entreprneurship centres and graduate self employment

Variable	ΣX	ΣY	ΣX2		
	ΣY2	df	ΣXY	r-cal	
Problem associated with starting a business	3848	54986			
		196	71886	0.68	
Self-employment		0.05	39970		
Significant at 0.05 level, r-critical= 0.137, df=196					

The result in table 4 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.68 is higher than the critical r-value of 0.137 at 0.05 level of significance with 196 degree of freedom with this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore mean that there is a significant positive relationship between student activities in school entrepreneurship centres and graduate self-employment.

Hypothesis four

There is no significant relationship between lecturer qualification and graduate self-employment.

Table 5: Relationship between lecturer qualification and graduate self-employment

Variable	ΣX	ΣY	$\Sigma X2$	
	$\Sigma Y2$	df	ΣXY	r-cal
Lecturer qualification			5032	4052
		196	72161	0.61
Self-employment		3101	38970	
Significant at 0.05 level, r-critical= 0.137, df=196				

The result in table 5 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.61 is higher than the critical r-value of 0.137 at 0.05 level of significance with 196 degree of freedom with this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore means that there is a significant positive relationship between lecturer qualification and graduate self-employment**.**

4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1) The state of skill acquired by graduates has significant positive impact on graduates self-employment.

2) Effort of the government in empowering graduates has a significant positive relationship with graduate self-employment.

3) The availability of entrepreneurship centres in tertiary institution has a significant relationships with graduate self-employment.

4) Lecturer qualification has a significant relationship with graduate self-employment.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the study, the following conclusions were reached:

i. The state of skills acquired by graduates has a significant relationship with self-employment university graduates.

ii. The possibility of graduate ability to establish a business has a significant relationship between self-employment of university graduates.

iii. The problems associated with graduates starting a business has a significant relationship between self-employment of university graduates.

iv. The impact of utilization of entrepreneurial skills has a significant relationship between self-employment of university graduates.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

i) Entrepreneurship and skills training centres should be enhanced in Tertiary institutions in Cross River State and equipped with state- of- the art facilities to help the graduates acquire the needed skills for self-employment during the course of their study

ii) Due to higher rate of unemployed graduates, the curriculum of tertiary institutions should encompass vocational education to provide graduates with the basic skills to engage new ventures as entrepreneurs.

iii) Students of various tertiary institutions in the state and country should be trained to be creative and innovative.

iv) Over dependence on paid white-collar jobs as provided by government and other public or private sector should be discouraged. From school, students should be re-orientated towards self-reliance and establishing a business of their own. This reorientation should form a focal culture of tertiary institutions.

v) To ease the burden of equity capital formation both state and federal government should design programmes of financial assistance for the graduates to start up their own business.

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