
Effective Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition among Polytechnics' Students in North-Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract

The growing numbers of graduate unemployment has triggered paradigm shift toward creating entrepreneurship centers in all polytechnics across Nigeria. It is against this background that this study was designed to examine the influence of entrepreneurship centers on graduate's skills development and how this influences the level of graduate employment. A sample of 331 respondents was used to collect primary data. The data were collected through the aid of structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using both Pearson correlation and simple regression analysis. The results revealed strong positive relationship between entrepreneurship skills development and graduate employment generation. The study concluded that entrepreneurship skills development has influence on graduate employment. The study recommended that both government and private sectors should invest in programmes and schemes that focus on the development of entrepreneurship education.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship; Employment Generation; Skills Development; Graduate employment*

1.0 Background of the Research

Globally, high rate of unemployment among graduates has become a source of concern to government at all levels. In Nigeria, the Federal government through federal ministry of education national has made entrepreneurial education compulsory in all tertiary education institutions. This strategically aimed at acquisition of appropriate skills and development of needed and effective entrepreneurial competencies that were needed for micro and small business start-up among graduates that may effectively reduce the level of unemployment and influence national economic growth and development.

In fact, Nwagwu (2009) and Olaitan (2009) had postulated that the manpower development of a country is primarily vested on tertiary educational institutions. Therefore, achievement of this primary goal is the achievement of the objectives for which these institutions were established in the first instance. Hence, to achieve the goals of tertiary institutions, they recommended that governments in collaboration with organized private sector should support these institutions with funds, instructional and equipment for successful teaching and learning process.

It is equally significant to mention that National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria FRN, 2012) stressed the need of entrepreneurship development education in National Development by stating that education is the most important instrument for driving technological transformation, as no strategic change can be attained in any country without sound and effective educational policies that revolve around skills and talent development that will influence job and wealth creation that will direct positive impact on the national economy. The present National Policy on Education is a departure from the traditional indigenous education, as outcome of this system of colonial education are directed to the job-seekers in place of job creation. According to Olu-Obafemi and Onajinrin (2014), colonial educational policy targeted on the development of literate nationals who were required to man positions, which would reinforce the colonial administration. Hence, our educational institutions, remained factories for creating clerks, interpreters, forest guards and sanitary inspectors as no entrepreneurial abilities (Esene, 2001).

The educational system that is lacking of entrepreneurial skill acquisition has laid the foundation for unemployment and social evils. Troubled by the growing rate of graduate unemployment which has been put at millions annually. The federal government through ministry of education directed all higher educational institutions in Nigeria to include on its curriculum of studies, Entrepreneurship Development Education (EDE) as a mandatory course for all students with effect from 2008 academic session irrespective of students' study background (Esene, 2014).

This is simply designed to mitigate the rate of high unemployment which is one of the major challenges in the country. For instance, 2020, the figure of unemployed Nigerians stood at 26.9, according to figures gotten from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The rate of unemployment was highest among youths between the ages of 15 and 25, and 30 and 45 and the problem is obvious in the rural areas. The incidence of unemployment was high among youths between the ages of 15 and 24, and 25 and 44 and the problem is more obvious in the in both urban and rural areas of the country as observed by the NBS.

Undoubtedly, this a great cause for worry among the relevant stakeholders in the country. In fact, the current trend of rise in unemployment in recent past, particularly among graduates,

has related to the current challenges of insecurity experienced in the country. Nowadays advance fee fraud, so-called 419, kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, riots, protests, drug and child trafficking mentioned a few, have become more rampant in the country. Therefore, no stone should be left unturned to ensure that the present drive toward entrepreneurship and skill acquisition by higher institutions attains its ultimate goals of producing self-reliant and skillful employable graduates across the country. This will further assist in mitigating the aforementioned crimes.

Entrepreneurship development education (EDE) has been generally considered as exceptional courses taught among higher educational institutions in Nigeria intended at preparing students with needed competencies and skills to make them self-employed and employable after graduation. Okolocha and Ile (2011) perceived that the intention of governments to eliminate poverty and raise the standard of living of nations through effective skills that were lacking previously. It is further argued that while many jobs are awaiting to be done but people with the right skills and educational training are not available.

The findings further revealed that tertiary institutions in Nigeria do not sufficiently and adequately prepare graduates to be self-employed. This unprecedented situation seems to occur because of poor linkage and collaboration between the institutions and private sector where graduates can lay their hands on-the-job experience. In this direction, there is a growing call for the teaching of entrepreneurship development education as a course should be matched with adequate entrepreneurial linkage.

The learning outcome and the wide variety of student talents in the average classroom impose a high level of teacher proficiency in approaches of presenting subject matter. According to Davies (2012), a storehouse of schemes will permit the instructor to vary the classroom experience to avoiding monotony and boredom and keep the learning condition fresh and motivating; it will also allow him to personalize the learning technique as well as the content, each based on student requirements and expectations.

The range and diversity of approaches have been significantly improved in recent past by advent of new technology. So great is the constructive media that the role of the teacher is developing from the primitive approach to teaching and learning concept to one of classroom supervisor. As the leader in business selects the finest mixture of resources to maximize output, so does the teacher select the correct and practicable content mix in managing the learning environment to attain the anticipated objectives. Therefore, the teacher need be up to date in both content and evolving methodology. There is no strength to the argument that understanding of subject matter and capability in teaching strategies cannot be under mind and most be embodied by a master teacher.

According to Esene (2012), the task affects the choice of instructional strategies, so do the requirements of the students. Some prefer to be taught in large group classroom. They find small classes not interesting and the crowd is not appealing. Other students much prefer small group situations, for them, the intimacy of the small group is a positive factor in their learning. They also appreciate the recognition that comes from being treated on an individual basis. This presents strategies in three basic groups: the traditional approaches, in which all activity based across the teacher; the informal strategy, in which emphasis is on student participation; and innovations in teaching, which include latest training preparation using experimental organizational pattern influence by new technology (Esene, 2011).

Umoru (2011) Suggested that EDE courses lecturers may adopt the traditional (teacher-method) thereby conducting classroom lessons rather than employing the informal approaches that would permit the student obtain skills that needed for self-employment. Agbamu (2011) stated that lecturers who teach EDE courses should be more practical in their approach to teaching so that students could acquire practical skills and knowledge needed to fit in preset day realities. Regrettably, the application of EDE curriculum fails to stimulate the needed practical entrepreneurial skills. It is against this background this study was designed to examine the influence of entrepreneurship centers on graduate's skills development and how this influences the level of graduate employment.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The current curriculum and course specification, under the present structure, the regulatory body, National Board for Technical Education NBTE has expanded the curriculum of the ND and HND programmes to include new courses called entrepreneurship development education, among others. With this addition, it is expected that lecturers who teach EDE courses will select appropriate teaching strategies and tools that would make students acquire relevant entrepreneurial skills expected at making them to be self-employed in the most ever competitive labour market. However, it is unfortunate to mention that EDE in most of the institutions were not properly taught as it is mostly taught theoretically or handled by incapable hands. There is growing allegation among stakeholders that EDE courses are taught theoretically thereby depriving students of acquiring practical skills needed for self-employment. Therefore, this study seeks among other things to examine the influence of entrepreneurship centers on graduate's skills development and how this influences the level of graduate employment in Nigerian polytechnics.

2.0 Literature

Entrepreneurial skills acquisition centers are necessary for effective skills required for business startup and self-employment. The entrepreneurial skills are pre-requisite skills an entrepreneur needs to effectively run or startup a venture. According to Agu, Chiaha and Ikeme (2013), skills acquisition must be cherished with appropriate education so that it can be pointed toward incubating and inspiring small business development that will benefit the individuals and develop economy at large. Entrepreneurship skills acquisition can be described as those skills that an individual should earn to enable him/her succeed in life. Entrepreneurial skill acquisition influences the ability of individual to create something new with value by devoting time and effort (Hisrich and Peters, 2012). Entrepreneurial skill acquisition is the ability to of an individual to exploit an idea and create an enterprise for self-reliance for both personal and socio-economic developmental benefits (Olagunju,2014).The Proper explanations distinguish entrepreneurial skills acquisition is the ability to be self-employed, self-assurance, firmness and readiness to take expert advice, desire for immediate result, visionary and ability to recognize and utilize available opportunity (Bechard and Gregoire, 2005).

Skill demonstrates the ability of individual to adjust to real life situations (Adeyemo, 2013). Individual attitude and self-employment require necessary and suitable skills to perform that may be acquired either through given practical work experience. In the work place, skill is what the workers give in exchange for wages and salaries. If the skill given is satisfactory, the worker gets satisfaction and the employer gets satisfactoriness in correspondence. This process, if sustained culminates in promotion, retaining and sustained contract that leads to efficiency of labour (Adeyemo, 2013).

Skill is assumed of as a product of performance which does not be contingent merely upon a person's basic, inborn abilities but are earned through constant and continuous training and practical working experience. Though, skills are essentially depending on learning, it also incorporates the thoughts of efficiency and economy in performance. Modern concepts of skill stress the flexibility with which a skilled operator reaches a given end on different occasions according to precise circumstances.

Even though, it must be stressed that basic human abilities are not adequate to generate skills, they shape the necessary foundation of their development. Skills signify specific means of exercising abilities in relation to occupational realities, with individuals and external factors at a given time which collectively create a working system (Adeyemo, 2013). Skill equally is the promptness, accuracy, proficiency demonstrated through mental and professional repetition of performance of a process. Eonyeaku (2018) argued that skill is the ability of a person to undertake a job within anticipated precision and certainty.

Similarly, skill includes an applied experience in mixture with clarity, knowledge and capability to perform a task which could be acquired or learnt in the school or vocational training canters through practical experience. The engine of development of any nation is rooted on the bases of how industrious and inventive the youths are. Therefore, all stakeholders have the obligation to ensure that the youths are empowered with need pre-requisite skills ready to be self-employed. There are apparent economic and social challenges in the midst of our so-called oil reach nation.

The challenges of Nigerian educational policies are the emphasis on the value on certificate rather than the skills needed for self-reliance. In fact, individuals struggle hard through any means to attain the golden fleece which is the certificate rather than the knowledge and skills which should make them self-reliant and more productive to the economy.

3.0 Methodology

Quantitative research design was employed in current study. The populations of this study are polytechnics students, a sample size of 421 respondents was selected using Taro Yamane formula. The process of data collection was quite interesting and tasking such that; the students were contacted to collect data through personal-administrated questionnaires in their school. However, 331 usable questionnaires out of the 421 copies of questionnaires administered were duly filled and returned. A 5-point Likert scale was adopted with answers ranging from 5 point strongly agreed to 1 point strongly disagreed to elicit response from the target respondents.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

H1: There are no effective teaching methods and strategies teachers currently employ in teaching entrepreneurship.

H2: There is no effective evaluation system used appropriate to the intended outcome of producing potentially active graduate entrepreneurs.

H3: There are no available teaching facilities that are effective in teaching of entrepreneurship.

3.1 Model specification

Hypothesis One

There are no effective teaching methods and strategies teachers currently employ in teaching entrepreneurship.

$$Y = F(X1)$$

The mathematical form of the model is given as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta X + \mu \text{ Where } \beta_0 \text{ is the constant,}$$

β_1 is the coefficients of the parameter estimate

Y: Entrepreneurship talent

X1: Effective teaching methods and strategies

μ : Stochastic or Error term (it is used to capture other factors that can affect youth employment generation not included in the model)

Hypothesis Two

There is no effective evaluation system used appropriate to the intended outcome of producing potentially active graduate entrepreneurs.

$$Y = F(X1)$$

The mathematical form of the model is given as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta X + \mu \text{ Where } \beta_0 \text{ is the constant}$$

β_1 is the coefficients of the parameter estimate

Y: Active graduate entrepreneurs

X1: Evaluation system used appropriate

μ : Stochastic or Error term (it is used to capture other factors that can affect youth employment not be included in the model)

Hypothesis Three

There are no available teaching facilities that are effective in teaching of entrepreneurship.

$$Y = F(X1)$$

The mathematical form of the model is given as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta X + \mu \text{ Where } \beta_0 \text{ is the constant}$$

β_1 is the coefficients of the parameter estimate

Y: Teaching of entrepreneurship

X1: Active graduate entrepreneurs

μ : Stochastic or Error term (it is used to capture other factors that can affect productivity of business establishment not be included in the model)

4.0 Data presentation and analysis

Table 1. Effective teaching methods and strategies teachers currently employ in teaching entrepreneurship.

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	21	6
<i>Disagree</i>	13	4
<i>Undecided</i>	11	3
<i>Agree</i>	123	39
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	153	48
<i>Total</i>	331	100

The table above shows that 21 (6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the evaluation system used is not appropriate during training improved their skills on how to manage businesses effectively, 13 (4%) of them disagreed, 11 (3%) were of no opinion, most 123 (39%) of the respondents agreed, and 48 (48%) strongly agreed that the evaluation system used is appropriate during training knowledge they acquired during training improved their skills on how to manage businesses effectively. This analysis shows that most of the respondents agreed that the evaluation system used is appropriate during training knowledge they acquired during training improved their skills on how to manage businesses effectively. This implies that the efficient and effective running and management of a business requires appropriate evaluation training tools.

Table no. 2. Effective evaluation system used appropriate to the intended outcome of producing potentially active graduate entrepreneurs

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	19	6
<i>Disagree</i>	15	5
<i>Undecided</i>	13	4
<i>Agree</i>	121	38
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	152	47
<i>Total</i>	331	100

Table no. 2 shows that 19 (36%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that evaluation system used is no appropriate for intended outcome of producing potentially active graduate entrepreneurs, 15 (5%) of them disagreed, 13 (4%) were of no opinion, 121 (38%) of the respondents agreed, and majority 152 (47%) of the respondents strongly agreed that youth entrepreneurship will help reduce unemployment. These results show that most of the respondents agreed that for intended outcome of producing potentially active graduate entrepreneurs. This simply implies that when students are empowered through entrepreneurship, they start their own business after graduation and this reduces unemployment rate.

Table no. 3. Available teaching facilities that are effective in teaching of entrepreneurship

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	21	6
<i>Disagree</i>	10	3
<i>Undecided</i>	14	4
<i>Agree</i>	164	50
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	122	37
<i>Total</i>	331	100

Table no. 3 shows that 21 (6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that no available teaching facilities are effective in teaching of entrepreneurship and skills that will create self-employment will bring about job creativity in place of job seeking, 10 (3%) of them disagreed, 14 (4%) were of no opinion, 164 (50%) of the respondents agreed, and most 122 (37%) of the respondents strongly agreed that no available teaching facilities are effective in teaching and this will improve skills that will create self-employment. This implies that when youth acquire entrepreneurship skills through training, they can create jobs of their own by simply using their skills.

Test of research hypotheses

H1: There are no effective teaching methods and strategies teachers currently employ in teaching entrepreneurship.

Table no. 4. Model Summary

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
1	.472	.223	.218	3.83451

❖ Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurship skills development

The coefficient of determination (R Square) 0.223 in Table no. 4 implies that effective teaching methods and strategies account for 22.3% variation in student's employment generation, while the remaining 78.7% are explained by other factors that are not included in the model. This is further justified by the 21.8% result of the Adjusted R Square.

Table 5. Correlations

		<i>Teaching Methods</i>	<i>Talent Development</i>
<i>Teaching Methods</i>	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>.447**</i>
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		<i>.000</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>331</i>	<i>331</i>
<i>Talent Development</i>	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	<i>.447**</i>	<i>1</i>
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>.000</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>331</i>	<i>331</i>

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As shown in Table 5, Pearson correlation was conducted to determine the relationship that exists between entrepreneurship teaching methods and talent development. The result showed that skills development is positively related to talent development $r(331) = 0.447, p = 0.000 < 0.05$. This implies that at p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (critical value), the 22.3% variation in talent development caused by entrepreneurship talent development as shown in the result of R Square is positively significant. In simple terms, the increase in entrepreneurship talent development will result to increase in graduate's employment generation.

Table no. 6. ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	<i>1045.655</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1045.655</i>	<i>44.416</i>	<i>.000</i>
Residual	<i>3036.971</i>	<i>321</i>	<i>23.542</i>		
Total	<i>4082.626</i>	<i>322</i>			

- ❖ Dependent Variable: Students Employment Generation
- ❖ Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurship Talents Development

The f-test result in Table 6 presented that there is a joint significant relationship between talent development and students employment generation. This is justified since the p-value which is 0.000 is less than 0.05 (critical value), the null hypothesis is then rejected. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative accepted. Thus, it can be said that there is a positive significant relationship between entrepreneurship talent development and student's employment generation.

H2: There is no effective evaluation system used appropriate to the intended outcome of producing potentially active graduate entrepreneurs

Table 7. Model Summary

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
1	.546	.243	.225	3.9765

❖ Predictors: (Constant), Effective evaluation system

The coefficient of determination (R Square) 0.546 in Table 7 showed that the model has a good fit. This indicates that Effective evaluation system accounts for 54.0% variation in student's employment, while the remaining 46% are explained by other factors that are not captured in this study. This is further justified by the 54% result of the Adjusted R Square.

Table 8. ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1045.655	1	1045.655	44.416	.000
Residual	3036.971	321	23.542		
Total	4082.626	322			

❖ Dependent Variable: Students Employment

❖ Predictors: (Constant), Effective evaluation system

The f-test result in Table 8 showed that there is a joint significant relationship between Effective evaluation system and students' employment. This is justified since the p-value which is 0.000 is less than 0.05 (critical value), the null hypothesis is then rejected. Therefore, Effective evaluation system has significant effect on student's employment.

Table 9. Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	5.836	2.024		2.883	.005
Effective evaluation system	.579	.048	.714	12.594	.000

❖ Dependent Variable: Students Employment

Substituted coefficient

$$Y = 5.836 + 0.569 + \mu$$

The result of the test in table 9 above shows that there is a positive relationship between Effective evaluation system and student employment. This means that a unit increase in Effective evaluation system will result in a corresponding unit increase in student's employment. The test of statistical significance using t-test and standard error showed

that at p-value of 0.000 which is relatively less than 0.05 (critical value), personal, technical, Effective evaluation system have a significant effect on students' employment. The t-calculated is 12.594 while the t-tabulated is 1.99 at 5% significance level. Since the t-calculated is greater than the t-tabulated, it can be concluded that personal, technical, Effective evaluation system have a positive significant effect on student's employment. This is further justified by the standard error estimate (0.048) which is less than half ($1/2 \times 0.579 = 0.2883$) of the parameter estimate.

H3: There are no available teaching facilities are effective in teaching of entrepreneurship

Table 10. Model Summary

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
1	.545	.263	.235	3.8754

❖ Predictors: (Constant), available teaching facilities

The coefficient of determination (R Square) 0.545 in Table 10 showed that the model has a good fit. This implies that entrepreneurial skills development account for 54.0% variability of available teaching facilities, while the remaining 46.5% are explained by other factors that are not explained in this study. This is further justified by the 26.5% result of the Adjusted R Square.

Table 11. ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1045.655	1	1045.655	44.416	.000
Residual	3036.971	321	23.542		
Total	4082.626	322			

❖ Dependent Variable: Students Employment
 ❖ Predictors: (Constant), available teaching facilities

The f-test result in Table 11 above showed that a joint significant relationship exists between entrepreneurial talent development and available teaching facilities. This is explained by the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 (critical value), the null hypothesis is then rejected. Therefore, available teaching facilities has significant impact on the student's employment.

Table12. Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	5.836	2.024		2.883	.005
Effective evaluation system	.579	.048	.7035	12.594	.000

❖ Dependent Variable: Students Employment

Substituted coefficient

$$Y = 18.825 + 1.357 + \mu$$

The result of the test in table 12 showed that there is a positive relationship between available teaching facilities and business establishment. This means that a unit increase in entrepreneurial talent development will cause a corresponding unit increase in business establishment. The test of statistical significance using t-test and standard error showed that at p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (critical value), entrepreneurial talent development has a significant impact on business establishment. The t-calculated is 7.035 while the t-tabulated is 1.88 at 5% significance level. Since the t-calculated is greater than the t-tabulated, it can therefore be concluded that entrepreneurial talent development has a positive significant impact on business establishment.

Conclusion

Findings relating to entrepreneurship talent development amongst graduates, the results of the analysis have brought to light that entrepreneurship talent development is a key determinant of graduate employment, and the extent to which more jobs are created depends on the availability and effectiveness of talent to start-up business.

The study has established the fact that entrepreneurship talent development is positively related to graduate employment generation. The more their entrepreneurship talents are developed, the more they effectively perform in their enterprises and the more they create employment opportunities for others.

The study has also shown that personal, technical, business and management skills positively affect graduate employment. These skills are vital requirements to successfully run a venture. The absence of personal, technical, business and management ideas will hamper the abilities of entrepreneurs to perform the simple and complex operations in their enterprise and manage their businesses well towards achieving their predetermined objectives.

Finally, entrepreneurial talent development has impact on small business creation. In a market characterized by competition, continuous delivery which is dependent on productivity is what will keep businesses at the top. This is not achievable without the presence of a workforce with up-to-date talents appropriate in operations and management. Therefore,

entrepreneurial talent development is a good call for increase in entrepreneurial development in the country.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in line with the conclusions drawn from the discussions of the study findings:

1. Relationship between entrepreneurship talent development and graduate employment generation. This study recommends that entrepreneurs should develop good mindset towards talent development in all concerned aspects of entrepreneurship to help in improving and increasing their capacity for job creation.
2. There is need for sound and continuous entrepreneurial education to awaken interests of people and guide them towards investing in small business and giving them the necessary entrepreneurial orientation because of its invaluable contribution to the economy.
3. Though, there are private sectors involved in entrepreneurial skills development, Government and all stakeholders with larger capacities also should invest in entrepreneurial development schemes and programmes. The creation and sustenance of these programmes is not only beneficial to the entrepreneurs but also the economy at large because societal resources will be maximized and tons of jobs will be created, all towards economic development.
4. The importance of such skills as technical, business, personal and management, government in all its entrepreneurial programmes and institutions should integrate the acquisition of these skills and emphasize their importance in all learning activities.
5. Entrepreneurs should endeavour to study and understand the interaction of these skills and the relationship that exists amongst them, as the understanding of their relationship and interaction will in turn help successfully manage efforts in businesses and thereby direct efforts to effective utilization of business resources.

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