

Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Job Creation Potentials among Students in Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract - The study was carried out to determine the impact of entrepreneurial skills acquisition and job creation potentials on students of tertiary institution in Cross River State, Nigeria. Three (3) hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and relevant literature was reviewed. A survey research design was adopted which made use of a sample of 2010 (300-level) students of tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Two (2) research instruments namely; entrepreneurial skills acquisition questionnaire (ESAQ) and an oral interview. Data analysis technique used was simple linear regression analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. The results revealed positive significant impact of computer literacy skills, fashion and design entrepreneurial acquisition skills and poultry enterprise skills on job creation potentials of the students. Computer literacy and vocational soft skills acquisition programme were recommended to be included in curriculum of all tertiary institution in the country.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial skills acquisition, job creation potentials, and students of tertiary institution.

I. Introduction/Background of Study

One of the major goals of economic development strategies pursued by successive Nigerian Government has been the reduction of unemployment through job creation. [8] Emphasized that entrepreneurial skill acquisition is a necessary ingredient for stimulating growth and development. The author also opined that entrepreneurs orchestrate this transformation by creating new channels for economic activity, job creation and employment. Thus, all countries that wish to pursue continued development must encourage entrepreneurship. In Nigeria, entrepreneurial skill acquisition has therefore gained increased prominence and importance as a key factor in job creation, economic growth and development.

The rate, at which higher institutions in Nigeria are producing potential employable graduates in this competitive

and challenging 21st century world, is attracting the interest of scholars, policy makers, educationist, and curriculum planners globally.

Yet, the present curriculum of Nigerian universities and colleges is not producing enough quality graduates with the required skills to confront and proffer immediate solutions that are needed to meet the challenge of graduates to be fully employed. This currently leads to the yearly choking of the labour market with countless unemployed graduates.

[9], Emphasized that entrepreneurial skills acquisition becomes the best and most viable alternative for job creation. This is so because job creation is capable of reducing poverty, empower the citizenry to develop and own businesses, pursue their achievable dreams and positively contribute to increase national growth and development.

The major problems confronting the Nigerian youths today is joblessness. These youths constitute greater fraction of Nigerian economically active population. This implies that a lot of energies that would have been used to generate revenue and improve the economy are being wasted. Youths, like other classes of the population have needs to meet [5] but the important roles of the youths have continued to suffer set back as they can hardly engage themselves in meaningful work. The consequence is frustration expressed through various vices that constitute security in the country.

[33] Believes that the Nigerian educational system still place emphasis on certificates for graduates who in most cases are trained to be job seekers as evidenced in the present high unemployment rate in the country. This is also based on the fact that tertiary institutions in Nigeria base a greater portion of their teaching on theory, and thus the students lack prerequisite practical knowledge and skills needed to take up pay employment neither do they demonstrate initiatives to generate or create jobs.

Giving this unemployment problem, it becomes necessary for these university and college students to be equipped with entrepreneurial skills to be useful to themselves

and the society through self-employment and job creation for the attainment of economic growth and development. According to [26], job creation has continued to pose so many challenges to the survival of the Nigerian Nation. The severe unemployment of Nigerian University and college graduates in the country, especially in Cross River State can be linked to disconnect between labour market requirement and the available skills the graduates possess. These skills deficit inhibits regional or national development since over half of the Nigerian population constitutes the youths. As a result of this, the lack of job creation potential makes crime an option for some of these unemployed graduates; such desperation drives them to crimes such as armed robbery, pipeline vandalism, oil bunkering, kidnapping, prostitution and so on.

The importance of entrepreneurial skills in our society today cannot be overemphasized [22]. Indeed, there is a paradigm shift in the labour [28]. Therefore, there is need to acquire and develop specific entrepreneurial skills become it is vital to job creation and indeed a special form of self-employability for graduates.

Entrepreneurial skills according to [13] can be obtained through various avenues such as attending entrepreneurial training classes development programme, seminars, workshop, job rotation, special or intensive training, apprenticeship, organizational training, research development institutions, consultants, professional bodies etc.

Skill is very important in the life of every individual. [5], opined that technicians easily get jobs and earn more than university graduates because they acquire more practical skills than the theoretical aspects.

Skill acquisition is the ability to be trained on a particular task or function and become expert in it. [1], asserted that lack of entrepreneurial skills is the major cause of unemployment by our vibrant youths.

[5], Asserted that vocational education provided by universities and colleges has the primary objective of acquisition of skills and attitudes for job creation in specific occupation or professional area. The need to link training by colleges and universities in vocational acquisition to job creation is at the base of all the best practices and approaches observed throughout the world. National policy on Education (2007) saw vocational education as a delivery system that is to be placed to train the skilled and unskilled workforce that the nation needs to create jobs for graduates.

Entrepreneurial skill is craft oriented. This is echoed by [23], when he stated that it is work based learning perceived as a continuous process grounded with experiences. It plays the role of equipping graduates with skills, knowledge and

attributes that will enable them to engage in a life-time productive work and retraining of employees so as to fit into jobs offering them with entrepreneurial skills. It is evident today that people who acquired one or more of these skills and knowledge are self-employed.

[15], Carried out a study to examine the impact of fashion and design on job creation by youths in Port-Harcourt, River State in which the hypothesis was formulated thus; fashion and design does not significantly impact on job creation by youths. Analysis of variance was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The result clearly showed that fashion and design has significant impact on job creation by youths. The result also indicated that a greater number of youths venture into this vocational career.

Recently, graduates including non-animal science students are also inclining towards job creation potentials on poultry and fishery enterprise as a complementary solution. However, issues underlying poultry and fishery entrepreneurship/enterprise are not fully addressed in the context of complex set of challenges such as lack of institutional arrangement, which becomes a barrier to promote and realize the potential of self-employment.

[18], Emphasized that entrepreneurial skills acquisition is about developing the power, skill, knowledge and experience of people as individuals and in groups, thus enabling them to undertake initiative of their own to combat social, economic and environmental problems. The researcher also maintained that because entrepreneurial skills improve one's wellbeing and economic independence, students in tertiary institutions should be made to know about such skill acquisitions before graduation.

1.1 Statement of the research problem

The everyday sight as observed by many researchers such as [2], [4], and [6] concerning the growing army of jobless youths roaming the streets with despair written all over their faces attest to the gravity of the job market situation in Nigeria. Unemployment has reached a frightening level [2]. Year in year out, the tertiary institutions turn out tens of thousands of degree and diploma holders but only a tiny fraction gets job. Tertiary institutions on their part have tried to bridge this deficiency gap by reviewing the curricula and tilting towards practical oriented courses. In spite of these attempts not much has been achieved, since the unemployment rate is still high. In an effort to address this problem perhaps, the Federal Government rather recently by established new universities and polytechnics which invariably have increased the number of jobless youths. The private sector agencies and even governments at all levels have initiated programmes to alleviate this problem but to no avail. The question is; could it

be that graduates from Universities and Colleges are not job creative? It is in line with this that the researchers wish to examine entrepreneurship skills acquisition and job creation potentials among tertiary students in Cross River State of Nigeria.

1.2 Aims and objectives of the research

Aims of the research

The overall aim of this research work is to find out the impact of entrepreneurial skills acquisition and job creation potential among students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria.

1.3 Research objectives

The following specific objectives have been derived from the above aim

- i) To determine the influence of computer literacy skills on job creation potentials among students of tertiary institutions in Cross River State.
- ii) Examine the impact of poultry enterprise skills on job creation potentials among students of tertiary institutions in Cross River State.
- iii) To determine the influence fashion and design skills and hairdressing acquisition skills on job creation potentials among students of tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested in this study.

- i) Computer literacy skill does not significantly influence job creation potential among students of tertiary institutions in Cross River State.
- ii) There is no significant influence of fashion and design skills on job creation potentials among students of tertiary institutions in Cross River State.
- iii) Poultry enterprise skills do not significantly influence the job creation potentials among students of tertiary institution in Cross River State.

1.5 Justification/significance of the study

Extensive empirical research work has been done on entrepreneurial skill acquisition, school related variables and job creation potentials of students in tertiary institutions by various researchers notably: [2],[7], and [32], what is perhaps new is the application of skills acquired by these students while in school and the awareness of the fact that the skills acquisition is what is needed in the world of work. Thus, this research work sought to examine the impact of entrepreneurial

skills acquisition and job creation potentials among students of tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

Based on this, the research is important for the following reasons:

It is hoped that the results will help Governments at all levels to adequately plan for graduates from the universities and colleges in the county and to equally put the necessary machinery in place geared towards repositioning the educational system to be responsive to the needs of the society. It will equally serve as an “eye opener” to graduates who are not informed about the skills they are supposed to possess.

1.6 Scope of the study

This research work is limited to Cross River State, Nigeria. Therefore, any generalization of the results should be done in context of any geopolitical area having similar characteristics. Also, the research is limited in scope to the variables namely; entrepreneurial skills acquisition, job creation potentials and students of tertiary institution in Cross River State of Nigeria.

II. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Computer literacy skills and job creation potentials among students of tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria

Computer literacy is a force that has changed many aspects of people’s ways of life. This is a skill that lets people manipulate information in words, numbers, images or sounds. It can be used to connect any part of the world in a matter of seconds. This point buttresses the contribution of [10], who observed that the pervasive influence of computer literacy has brought about a rapid technological, social, political and economic transformation which has paved way to networking making the whole world a global village.

Today, in most developed countries, nearly every aspect of human life including the labour market is driven by computer literacy. One of the reasons the potential job seekers are not being employed easily according to [30] is that of lack of computer literacy. This implies that the world as a global village requires the employee to be computer literate as well as good face-value certificate for him/her to function effectively and efficiently in the labour market.

[32], Also pointed out that to be job creative or stand a chance to be self-employed an individual need to be exposed to computer literacy skills. We should also realize that the importance of computers as the heart of modern organization

like banks, factories, communication companies, the military and transportation systems cannot be ignored.

The assumption that computer literacy is worthwhile and even essential is rarely challenged. [7] Emphasized that the most cited reasons for teaching and learning computer literacy are:

- Computer job skills are needed by everyone.
- Computing is good for the mind, improving general thinking skills.
- Computer literacy is a fundamental life skill.
- Computer literacy in education provides students with employable skills.

The concern of stakeholders in policy formulation sector is to enhance job creation potentials of students that will produce citizens to sustain the society's growth and development desire. Entrepreneurship therefore becomes the needed catalyst towards achieving this objective. Many notably empirical research scholars like; [20], [24], [18], [12] and [14], have come out with studies concerning computer literacy, entrepreneurship and job efficiency.

The result in all these have indicated that computer literacy is both skill and craft oriented, and that it plays the role of equipping graduates with skills, knowledge and attributes that will enable them to engage in a life-time of productive work and be self-employed.

To meet the heightened need for graduates to be employable, the focus has shifted from academic literacy to computer literacy. [32] And [2] emphasized that a lack of required background and orientation relevant to computer literacy on the part of students leads to unemployment. In a related development, [12] conceptualized that the wellbeing of today's students could depend heavily upon how competent they are in understanding and using computer technology.

The author argued that when you become computer literate as a student, you will know two (2) important things:

- What things a computer can do.
- How to tell a computer to do the things you want it to do.

The acquisition of skills concerning computer literacy involves training in data operation and processing, software development, hardware repairs and maintenance, computer networking and a host of others. Most business organizations and even governmental agencies are now adopting office automation, also referred to as e-office. This innovation therefore is a challenge to students and the unemployed. The curriculum must be reviewed to embrace computer literacy or else, Nigerian universities would be producing graduates

whose certificates are absolutes. This will be so because the skills they have so acquired while in school may not fit appropriately into the current demands in the world market.

[33], Emphasized that in an era of high competition for scarce job opportunities, there will be no place for students who have no knowledge of these technologies because employers are out to employ and retrain only the best that are functional in order not to waste scarce resources.

[35], Carried a study on the impact of knowledge on job creation among college students in Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa. The sample size was one hundred (100) final year students of Business Education. The analysis of data obtained based on one (1) hypothesis, using one-way ANOVA at 0.05 alpha level revealed that knowledge of computer is a prerequisite for job placement in Nigeria at the moment. On the other hand, result also showed that knowledge of computer poses a serious challenge to job seeking since many applicants do not have the basic knowledge of computer.

2.2 Fashion and design skills and job creation potentials of students of tertiary institution in Cross River State

Fashion design skill is concerned with creating awareness about career opportunities in clothing and textiles, the use and maintenance of equipment for sewing, development of clothing production skills as well as development of appropriate work ethics in the clothing and textiles industry. This means that the training focuses on providing skills in specific areas where emphasis is laid on students practical experiences with the view to create jobs in that field.

[3] Conducted a study on students' knowledge of fashion and design in Kaduna, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted, and the sample size was 80 respondents comprising 62 polytechnic students, 12 entrepreneurs and 6 teachers. Data was obtained using open-ended interview guides and questionnaire. It examined available career opportunities and how curriculum content reflects the needs of industry. Data was analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The result revealed that students were not aware of some career opportunities in both the textile and garment industries, although the curriculum content reflected the needs of the industry. It was recommended among others that teachers should expose students to careers in the field through career guidance.

Similarly, [1] carried out a study to examine the impact of fashion and design on job creation by youths of tertiary institution in Port-Harcourt of Nigeria. The hypothesis stated thus; fashion and design does not significantly impact on job creation among youths in Port-Harcourt. Analysis of variance

was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The result showed that fashion and design has a greater number of youths who go into meaningful income raising ventures with a mean of 5.763.

2.3 Poultry enterprise skills and job creation potentials among students of tertiary institutions in Cross River State

Making a critical analysis of poultry enterprise as a factor for job creation, [19], [13], and [7] maintained that poultry enterprise business has become the most profitable enterprise and an avenue for job creation. Career options for tertiary students have been to be employed in governmental, NGO, or private organizations.

[11], Emphasized that, in order to fully address the poultry entrepreneurship and realize its potential as a job creation option for students, support services including technical skills and science-based information, technologies and strategies that link the rules of all stake holders need to be in place in the interest of the students as well as growing demand of poultry commodity.

In fact, higher institutions need to equip students with the skill of creating job opportunities for themselves and others to promote the development of the private sector in the areas of their enterprise.

III. Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

The survey research design was chosen for this study. According to [17] survey research design focuses on interest about a phenomenon, conceived with addressing questions about what is happening, why it is happening and how it is happening. In other words, this design systematically collects data about a group of individuals that have similar data about similar characteristics. This method accurately and objectively describes existing conditions of the particular situation at the time of investigation. It also depends basically on questionnaire and interviews as means of data collection.

3.2 Area of the study

The study area is Cross River State which is one of the 36 states in Nigeria. Its capital is Calabar with a total land mass of 21,156 km² and a population of 4,104,446 people. The state comprises of five (5) major ethnic groups namely; Efik, Yakurr, Ejagam, bette, and Bekwara. Educationally, the state has five (5) tertiary institutions, with many public and private primary/secondary schools across the three (3) senatorial zones. Cross River has tourist sites like, the National Parks in Boki and Akamkpa, Obudu Ranch Resort, Afi mountains, Nkarassi Monoliths in Ikome, the Kwa falls in Oban etc. the

people are engaged in diverse occupations for livelihood most of which are farming, business, fishing among others. Finally, Cross Riverians are pluralistic in spoken/written languages ranging from Efik, Ejagham, Bekwara etc.

3.3 Population of the study

The population of the study comprised of all the 300-level students of tertiary institutions in Cross River State of Nigeria. The estimated population is 8,850 students of tertiary institution drawn from five (5) schools namely; university of Calabar, Cross River university of Technology, Calabar, Health Technology Calabar, Cross River College of Education Akamkpa and Federal College of Education, Obudu, for the 2022/2023 academic session.

3.4 Sample and sampling technique

The sampling technique adopted was stratified random sampling. Stratified sampling procedure was used because of the heterogeneity of the population. Thus this was done for fair representation of all elements in the sub-groups and to increase statistical precision or reduce sampling error.

Since the number of students in each institution are not the same, a uniform proportion was adopted giving a sample size of 2010 (300-level) students from among the five tertiary institutions.

Table 1: Distribution of school sample characteristics

S/N	Institution	Male sample	Female sample	Total
1	University of Calabar	195	207	402
2	Cross River University of Technology, Calabar	200	202	402
3	College of Health Technology, Calabar	120	282	402
4	Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa	190	212	402
5	Federal College of Education, Obudu	200	202	402
	Total	905	1,105	2010

Source: Researchers field work, 2023

3.5 Instrument for data collection

The following research instruments were used to collect data.

- 1) Entrepreneurial skill acquisition questionnaire (ESAQ).
- 2) Oral interview with the subjects using tape-recorders concerning students entrepreneurial skills acquisition and job creation potentials.

3.5.1 Validity and reliability of the instrument

The instruments were subjected to preview and independent expert judgment for face and content validity. The Cronbach coefficient alpha method was used to analyze data that were trial-tested.

The internal consistency of the sub-scales obtained were high enough to justify the use of the instruments.

3.6 Statistical analysis of data techniques

The data obtained from the field was analyzed using simple linear regression analysis and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). All hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1 General description of variables

There are two (2) main variables in the study; entrepreneurial skills acquisition (independent variable) and job creation potentials (dependent variable). The study population involved 300-level students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State of Nigeria.

The sub-variables of the independent variable were; computer literacy skills, fashion design skills and poultry enterprise skill. Table 2 shows the mean score and standard deviations of all the dimensions of the independent and dependent variables used in the study.

Table 2: Mean scores and standard deviation of the study variables

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Computer literacy skills	600	28.72	3.052
Fashion and design skills	670	37.20	2.166
Poultry enterprise skills	740	39.48	0.880
Job creation potentials	2010	53.00	21.432

4.2 Presentation of results

Hypothesis one (1); computer literacy skill does not significantly influence job creation potential among students of tertiary institutions in Cross River State of Nigeria.

Simple linear regression statistical analysis was first used to ascertain whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis. The result is shown in table 3.

Table 3: Simple linear regression analysis of influence of computer literacy skill on job creation potentials of the subjects of the study

(N = 2010)

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted r ²
1	.853 ^a	.727	.726

ANOVA					
Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	p-value
1 Regression	6584.543	1	9053.976	434.626	.000 ^b
Residual	2469.433	2010	30.200		
Total	9053.976	2011			

The result of analysis as presented in table 3 rejected the null hypothesis, indicating that computer literacy has significant influence on job creation potentials of the students. The correlation coefficient r of .853 shows a high correlation between computer literacy skills and job creation potentials of the students. The ANOVA table shows $F(1)$ of 434.266 with p -value of .000 which was significant at 0.05. This result also implies that there is high positive correlation between computer skills and job creation potential of the students.

Hypothesis two (2); there is no significant influence of fashion and design skills on job creation potentials of students of tertiary institutions in Cross River State of Nigeria.

The main variables in Null hypothesis two (2) are; fashion and design (independent variable) and job creation potentials (dependent variable). This was tested using 2010 students from among five (5) tertiary institutions in Cross River State of Nigeria.

Simple linear regression statistical analysis was used to ascertain whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis two (2), the result is shown in table 4.

Table 4: Simple linear regression analysis of the influence of fashion and design skills on job creation potentials in tertiary institutions in cross river state

(N = 2010)

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted r ²
1	.884 ^a	.781	.779

ANOVA					
Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	p-value
1 Regression	2059.919	1	2059.919	403.974	.000 ^b
Residual	576.203	670	5.099		
Total	2636.122	671			

Results of the analysis as presented in table 4 shows the correlation coefficient of 0.884 which is high positive relationship between fashion and design acquisition skills and job creation potentials of the students. Also, the coefficient of determination r^2 which was .781 indicates that 78.1% of the job creation potentials variable is being influenced by fashion and design skill acquirable variable. From the table of ANOVA, P -value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 ($p < .05$) with f (1) value of 403.974. This result indicates that there is a significant high influence of fashion and design skills on students' job creation potential.

Hypothesis three (3); Poultry enterprise skills do not significantly influence job creation potentials of students of tertiary institutions in cross River State of Nigeria.

The null hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression analysis. Main variables are; poultry enterprise

skills (independent variable) and job creation potentials (dependent variable). Table 5 represents the result of analysis.

Table 5: Simple linear regression analysis showing influence of poultry enterprise skills on job creation potentials of the subjects

(N = 2010)

Mode	R	R ²	Adjusted r ²
1	.734 ^a	.539	.535

ANOVA

Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	p-value
1 Regression	1459.093	1	1459.093	138.081	.000 ^b
Residual	1246.899	740	10.567		
Total	2705.992	741			

Table 5 presents the result of analysis showing influence of poultry enterprise skills on job creation potentials of tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The correlation coefficient of .734 indicates strong relationship between poultry enterprise skills and job creation potentials of students of rejecting the null hypothesis three (3).

4.3 Discussion of findings

The primary objective of this research work was to determine the impact of entrepreneurial skills acquisition on job creation potential of students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State of Nigeria.

The result of first hypothesis tested revealed that there is a positive significant influence of computer literacy skills on students' job creation potentials. $F(1, 499) = 45934.158$, $r = .995$, $r^2 = 989$, $P < 0.05$.

This result implies that gaining computer literacy skills is an added advantage in being self-employed. The findings agree with the study conducted by [18], [30] and [14]. These researchers all emphasized that availability of basic computer literacy skills has great impact on academic and life success of individuals, as well as career achievement. [12], Also stated that computer literacy skills significantly influences productivity of students and equally influences employability of job seekers.

The findings on both the second and third hypothesis all showed significant positive influence on fashion and design skills as well as poultry enterprise skills on job creation potentials of students of tertiary institutions in Cross River State of Nigeria.

This finding was in support of the previous works of scholars notably, [34], [25], and [33]. The researchers stressed that entrepreneurship and vocational skills in general are necessary for job creation/job seeking.

V. Summary and Conclusion

Based on the statistical analysis of the hypothesis that direct the study the following conclusions were drawn; computer literacy skills, fashion and design skills and poultry enterprise skills significantly influence job creation potentials of students of tertiary institutions in Cross River State of Nigeria. It was also concluded that each of the entrepreneurial skill variables in this study is important in helping an individual to become self-employed and by extension, an employer of labour after graduation.

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