

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS ACQUISITION AND JOB CREATION AMONG YOUTHS IN CALABAR METROPOLIS OF CROSS RIVER STATE

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Abstract

This study sought to determine the extent to which entrepreneurship skills acquisition influence job creation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State. In order to carry out this study objectively, two specific objectives, two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised about 2000 unemployed youths in Calabar Metropolis. Accidental sampling technique was adopted in selecting 200 unemployed youths. A questionnaire with 20 structured items designed by the researchers was used for data collection for this study. Chi square statistics was used in testing the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed entrepreneurship skill acquisition influence job creation while attitude of youths towards entrepreneurship skill acquisition does not contribute to high unemployment rate among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State. Based on the findings, it was concluded that skill acquisition facilitates job creation among youths. It is recommended among others, youths should be encouraged to acquire relevant entrepreneurial skills in order to create jobs for themselves and the general public.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, skills acquisition, job creation

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has contributed greatly in reducing the extent of unemployment and thereby creating employment opportunities among the youth especially university graduates. The development and economic stability of every nation has been shaped and carved by men and women who have taken their destinies in their own hands by perceiving opportunities and risking their resources (money, machines, materials, men) in establishing and operating their own business.

The Nigeria policy on education made it clear on the need for functional, practical and acquisition of appropriate skills and development of competencies as equipment for the individuals to live in and contribute to the development of his/her society (Aladekomo, 2004). Nwangwu (2007); Baba (2013) reported that about 80% of the graduates find it difficult to get employment every year while at the same time much has not been done in trying to bring collaboration between the entrepreneurs and the institutions. The scourge of graduate unemployment in Nigeria is blamed on the university curriculum which has been geared towards stereotyped goals and jobs without adequate practical skills. In other words, graduates from universities acquired knowledge without entrepreneurial skills

which would enable them, on graduation to practice what was learnt in school, create jobs for themselves and others and participate in economic development in Nigeria.

The survival of every society (developed or developing) is a dependent factor on the level of entrepreneurial abilities undertaken. Agada and Ekpa (2007) maintained that countries with less attention to entrepreneurship are likely to be surrounded with the daunting problem of unemployment, poverty, oppression and undue exploitation from the owners of the means of production. Adediran (2004) posited that unemployment problem which is on an alarming rate has become an atrocious phenomenon which has eaten deep into the fabrics of our economy. Researches indicated that people who are commonly affected by the syndrome are the economically active population such as the youths particularly, graduates from tertiary institutions, and also people who are retrenched as a result of economic recession, and sociocultural discrepancies.

According to Elemi (2015) skill acquisition and skill development for successful entrepreneurial practices necessitates the grooming of selected individuals with requisite and identifiable skills for development and equipping them with management techniques to enable them manage businesses profitably for self or others.

Timmons and Spinelli (2009) pointed out that attitude serves as a contributory factor in the life of a flourishing entrepreneur. The attitude an entrepreneur places on his business, will determine the level of his profit. As an entrepreneur continues to perceive and create opportunities, they are bound to face some contingencies and thereby provide means to overcome the challenges in order to attain and achieve a prime over and competitive edge. Anerua and Obiazi pointed out that a successful entrepreneur must have core values, must be consistent, determined relentless and also not be weary by any circumstances. Invariably, the understanding of these attitudes will go a long way in determining and encouraging entrepreneurship within a particular country. Sasaki (2006) in his study adduced that if young graduates of today are better informed of the relevance and challenges of becoming self-reliant and independence, they will not only choose being an entrepreneur as a profession but also complement their efforts in achieving competitive advantage and creating more wealth.

The early 18th century French Economist, Richard Cantillon introduced the term entrepreneurship. In his writings, he formally defines the entrepreneur as the agent who buys means of production at certain prices in order to combine them into a new product. He further defines entrepreneurship as self-employment of any sort where the entrepreneur is the bearer of uncertainty and risk (Kareem, Ademoyewa, Jolaosho, Ojenike and Sodiq, 2015). Entrepreneurship has been recognized as an important aspect of an organization and economies (Baba, 2013). It contributes in an immeasurable way towards creating new jobs, wealth creation, poverty reduction and income generating for both government and individuals. Entrepreneurship is very significant to the growth and development of economies.

Entrepreneurship is the ability to perceive and undertake business opportunities, taking advantage of scarce resources utilization. Entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risk and reserving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence (Hisrich and Peters, 2002).

Entrepreneurship has become the fundamental and valuable way to promote self-reliance and self-employment among young people. Several literatures have indicated that employment for young people can be created by exploiting an invention or more generally an untried technological method of producing a new commodity or producing an old one

in a new way through an active micro-enterprise. When the young people lack the basic entrepreneurial abilities, it therefore becomes difficult for them to succeed and triumph in the world of business Sasaki (2009). Salau (2014) maintained that the concept of entrepreneurship can be explained from two major perspectives or school of thoughts. The first perspective focused on “creating opportunities” and the second perspective is called “innovation”. Entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of adopting innovation to create new value in the market. Adeboye and Olubela (2009) also see entrepreneurship as a dynamic way of perceiving opportunities and introducing changes, innovations and a new order. They added that in entrepreneurship, the concept of innovation and newness should be seen as integral aspects. Therefore, the success of an entrepreneur lies on his ability to identify needs, create value and exploit innovations.

Kor, Mahoney and Michael (2007) adduced that an entrepreneur is one who brings resources and other assets into combination that make their value greater than others. This definition upholds the fact that an entrepreneur is someone who creates and produces needs or values in a new way. In making entrepreneurial decision, it is important to consider the role of risk taking and uncertainty. Timmons and Spinelli (2009) posited that an entrepreneur is a person who is internally motivated to create something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort and also with the enthusiasm for invention, discovery and creativity. Agada and Ekpa (2007) collaborated that an entrepreneur is solely vested with the passion to create value and satisfy needs.

Anerua and Obazi (2009) also supported that Entrepreneurship primarily focuses on value creation and the exploitation of economic innovation. Incremental wealth of value creation cannot be strongly achieved without entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship skills are accompanied with individual’s understanding of similar notions such as newness, organizing, wealth creation and risk taking and also the ability to successfully perform particular responsibilities (Anerua and Obazi, 2009). Basically, it is worthy to reiterate that the significance of entrepreneurship skills cannot be quantified since the knowledge and skills acquired through entrepreneurship will assist the youths and young graduates to be independent, self-reliant or self-employed person and contribute immensely to the economic success of the society at large. Uloka and Ejinkonye (2010) argued that when youths acquired the necessary skills and knowledge through entrepreneurship, that there is a greater chance to use the skills to create something new with value.

Statement of the Problem

Studies have shown that Nigeria is faced with the problems of unemployment, high crime rate and poverty. Even though efforts have been made by government in collaboration with private investors to encourage the practice of entrepreneurship, low progress has been made up to date. This may not be unconnected with the negative attitude, low level of understanding and perceptions among the youth towards entrepreneurship. It is on records that tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria produces millions of graduates each year to the economic that is already overpopulated. The conception of freshest graduates is to get white collar jobs on graduation and successful completion their national youth service year. This has resulted to a good percentage of them roaming about the streets seeking for job that will earn them lucrative salaries. On getting to the labour market they found that the otherwise is the case, they get more distracted and frustrated thereby developing any other means of making ends meet. It was based on this background that the researchers

decided to investigate the influence of entrepreneurial skills acquisition on job creation among youths of Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which entrepreneurship skills acquisition influence employment generation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State. The specific purposes of this study were to:

1. determine the extent to which entrepreneurship skills acquisition influences job creation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State.
2. determine the extent to which the attitude of youths towards entrepreneurship skill acquisition increases the rate of unemployment in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State.

Research Question

1. To what extent does entrepreneurship skills acquisition influence job creation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State?
2. How has attitude of youth towards entrepreneurship skill acquisition contributed to the increase in unemployment in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State?

Research hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the studies:

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of entrepreneurship skill acquisition and job creation for youths in Calabar Metropolis.

H₀₂: There is no significant influence of attitudes of youths towards entrepreneurship skills acquisition on high unemployment rate in Calabar Metropolis.

Research Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used to carry out the study. Survey is a generalized means of data collection through the use of interviews or questionnaire. Osuala (2004) opined that survey design answers questions pertaining to characteristics of people, their belief, opinions, attitudes and behaviours. The population of the study comprises about 2000 unemployed youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State. The sample size used for the study comprised valid 200 respondents. The accidental sampling technique was used for gathering of data. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition and Job Creation among Youths in Calabar Metropolis Questionnaire." (ESAJCYCMQ). The questionnaire contained 20 items. The response options of the questionnaire items were arranged under the rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was divided into two sections; A and B. Section A was designed to gather personal data of the individual such as Age, Sex, Marital Status, Educational Status etc. while section B examined the variable being investigated. Chi-square statistical technique and percentage counts were used to analyze the data at .05 level of significance.

Data analysis and presentation of result

This section presents the analysis of the data gathered for the purpose of answering research questions and testing the null hypotheses formulated for the study.

Research Question 1

To what extent does entrepreneurship skills acquisition influence job creation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State?

Table 1: Mean response of responses of respondents on the extent to which entrepreneurship skills acquisition influences job creation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State. N=200

Responses	N	%
Very Great Extent (VGE)	106	53
Great Extent (GE)	68	34
Low Extent (LE)	20	10
Very Low Extent	6	3

Table 1 show that the percentage score of respondents for Very Great Extent and Great extent are 53% and 34% respectively, and 10% and 3% for Low and Very Low Extents respectively. This indicates that entrepreneurship skills acquisition influences job creation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State.

Research Question 2

How has attitude of youth towards entrepreneurship skill acquisition contributed to the increase in unemployment in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State?

Table 2: Percentage response of responses of respondents on the extent to which entrepreneurship skills acquisition influences job creation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State

Responses	N	%
Very Great Extent (VGE)	113	56.5
Great Extent (GE)	71	35.5
Low Extent (LE)	12	6
Very Low Extent	4	2

Table 2 show that the percentage score of respondents for Very Great Extent and Great extent are 56.5% and 35.5% respectively, and 6% and 2% for Low and Very Low Extents respectively. This indicates that the attitude of youths towards entrepreneurship skills acquisition influences job creation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant influence of entrepreneurship skill acquisition on employment generation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State.

Table 3: Chi Square (χ^2) Analysis of the influence of entrepreneurship skill acquisition on job creation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State. N=200

Responses	Observed Frequencies (O)	Expected Frequencies (E)	$(O - E)^2 / E$	$\chi^2 =$	χ^2 Crit
VGE	2116	2111.06	0.75		
GE	1023	1023	5.80	46.31	21.03*
LE	198	197.99	10.51		
VLE	31	31	29.25		

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 3 reveals that the calculated χ^2 -value of 46.31 is greater than the critical χ^2 -value of 21.03 at .05 level of significance with 12 degree of freedom. This shows that the result of the analysis is significant since the calculated χ^2 -value is greater than the critical χ^2 -value. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of entrepreneurship skill acquisition on job creation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant influence of Attitudes of youths towards entrepreneurship skills on high unemployment rate in Calabar Metropolis.

Table 3: Chi Square Analysis of the influence of Attitudes of youths towards entrepreneurship skills on high unemployment rate in Calabar Metropolis N=200

Responses	Observed Frequencies (O)	Expected Frequencies (E)	$(O - E)^2 / E$	χ^2 -cal	χ^2 Crit
VGE	2268	2295.01	1.67		
GE	1062	1061.99	2.92	36.26	21.03*
LE	118	118	27.89		
VLE	20	20	3.78		

*Significant at $p < .05$, $df = 12$, χ^2 - crit = 36.26

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 4 shows that the calculated χ^2 -value of 36.26 is greater than the critical χ^2 -value of 21.03 at .05 level of significance with 12 degree of freedom. This shows that the result of the analysis is significant since the calculated χ^2 -value is greater than the critical χ^2 -value. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of attitude of youths towards entrepreneurship skill acquisition on high unemployment rate among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State.

Discussion of Finding

The results of hypothesis one shows that there exists significant influence in the opinion of respondents on the extent of influence of entrepreneurship skills acquisition on job

creation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State. The agreement on the level of influence of entrepreneurship skill acquisition on job creation among youths is shown in the answer to research question 1 where 106 respondents representing 53% agreed that there is great extent of influence of entrepreneurship skills acquisition on job creation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State. This is in line with the study of Agada and Ekpa (2007) who maintained that countries with less attention to entrepreneurship are likely to be surrounded with the daunting problem of unemployment, poverty, oppression and undue exploitation from the owners of the means of production. This finding is also in line with Eleme (2015) who maintained that skill acquisition and skill development for successful entrepreneurial practices necessitates the grooming of selected individuals with requisite and identifiable skills for development and equipping them with management techniques to enable them manage businesses profitably for self or others. In the same view, Uloka and Ejinkonye (2010) argued that when youths acquired the necessary skills and knowledge through entrepreneurship, that there is a greater chance to use the skills to create something new with value.

The finding on hypothesis two indicates that there is significant influence of attitude of youths towards entrepreneurship skill acquisition on high unemployment rate among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State. There is also very great extent of influence of attitude of youths towards entrepreneurship skill acquisition on high unemployment rate among youths as revealed in the answer to research question 2 where 113 respondent representing 56% ticked very great extent. This is in line with Timmons and Spinelli (2009) who pointed out that attitude serves as a contributory factor in the life of a flourishing entrepreneur. The attitude an entrepreneur places on his business, will determine the level of his profit. In support to this result, Anerua and Obiazi pointed out that a successful entrepreneur must have core values, must be consistent, determined relentless and also not be weary by any circumstances. Invariably, the understanding of these attitudes will go a long way in determining and encouraging entrepreneurship within a particular country.

Conclusion

This study examined the entrepreneurship skills acquisition and job creation among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State, Nigeria by subjecting the output arising from the analysis to the attendant implications on the sustainability of the Nigerian economy. Based on research findings, it was concluded that entrepreneurship skills acquisition had effect on self-reliance among youths in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State. This empirically further justifies the compulsory inclusion of entrepreneurial education by the Federal Ministry of Education with a view to stemming the tide of joblessness, strengthen and create a culture of self-reliance as well as enhancing sustainable development of Nigeria economy. Thus, it is not a gain say that, an improved sustainable development of the economy hinges on encouraging youths to engage in entrepreneurial skill acquisition programmes irrespective of academic qualification in order to create jobs for themselves and other members of the public.

Recommendations

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

1. Youths should be encouraged to acquire relevant entrepreneurial skills that will make them self-reliant and employers of labour.
2. The government at all levels should periodically organize seminars, career talks, etc. that will emphasize positive attitudinal change of youths towards

entrepreneurship skill acquisition in order to the reduce unemployment rate among youths.

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