

Entrepreneurship Education as Correlate of Postgraduate Employability in Southeast, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the correlation between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in Southeast Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational survey design. The population for this study consisted of all the 8,461 postgraduate students admitted in all the federal universities in South East Zone of Nigeria in the 2017/2018 academic session. A sample of 846 postgraduate students was selected using stratified random sampling technique. The Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire (EEQ) was used as the primary instrument for data collection. The findings of the study revealed a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in Southeast Nigeria. This suggests that postgraduate students who have higher levels of entrepreneurship education are more likely to be employed after graduation. Additionally, the study did not find any significant moderating effect by gender on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability. This study suggests that entrepreneurship education has a strong positive correlation with postgraduate employability in Southeast Nigeria. The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on postgraduate employability and entrepreneurship education, particularly within the context of Southeast Nigeria.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, employability, postgraduate, southeast, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, there are a lot of graduates from different fields of endeavour who are unemployed despite her oil wealth. Unemployment is one of the developmental problems that faces every developing economy in this 21st century, and Nigeria is not exempted. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2010) the rate of unemployment in Nigeria is on the increase. Unemployment rate in Nigeria gets worst every day even in the states that are among the top richest in terms of crude oil production and high federal allocation (National Bureau of Statistic, 2009 and 2010).

This unemployment of graduates in Nigeria has been a source of concern to government, educators, and parents among others. Parents and government are in total agreement that their huge investment in education is not yielding the desired dividend (Adegbite, 2005). This is because all over the country, there is a concensus of opinion about the unemployment of graduates in Nigeria (Adebule, 2015).

In recent years, the employment of graduates in the country makes very unpleasant reading. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2017), report for the year 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017, out of the 1275,330 graduates in Nigerian Federal and States Universities only 325,754 representing 25.54 percent of the entire graduates gained employment. Out of the 1,369,142 graduates that graduated in 2011, only 188,442 got employment in Federal and States ministry. In essence, therefore, only 17 percent of those who graduated were employed, while 83 percent were not employed. Also, in 2012 statistics indicated that only 356981 graduates representing 25.99 percent of 1,373009 graduates got employment in Federal and State ministries. These statistics revealed that this represents unemployment rate of 75 percent. In 2013, artistics showed that only 23 percent of the graduates were employed against 77 percent unemployment in the country.

The 2014 graduates recorded low employment as only 472,906 graduates representing 31 percent of 1540250

that graduated from Federal and States Universities in Nigeria. In 2015, out of the 1672, 224 graduates, 649156 representing 38.81 percent were employed, which is an increase of about 8 percent to the 30.91 percent recorded in 2014. In 2016, out of 1692,435 graduates, 791,227 graduates representing 58.05 percent gained employment. In 2017 out of 1593442 graduates, only 616370 graduates were employed. These analyses of National Bureau of Statistics (2017) invariably shows that there is low employment recorded in Nigeria, Southeast states in particular which calls for ways of improving the situation.

Employability is the capability to move into and within labour markets and to realize potential through sustainable and accessible employment (Department of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment (DHFETE, 2002). To the individual, employability depends on: the knowledge and skills they possess, and their attitudes; the way personal attributes are presented in the labour market; the environmental and social context within which work is sought; and the economic context within which work is sought, (Department of Higher And Further Education, Training And Employment (DHFETE), 2002, p.7).

Operationally, employability refers to the attributes of a person that make that individual able to gain and sustain employment. Employability means possessing the skills to compete in internal and external job markets, it is about having the right skills portfolio as well as possessing the right professional expertise, it means being prepared, knowing training needs, fostering relationships and contacts inside and outside, being aware of skills and accomplishments, balancing home and work and knowing what you can do. Employability can be defined as a set of attributes, skills and knowledge that make postgraduates more likely to gain employment and be successfully in their chosen careers to the benefit of themselves, their employer, the community and the wider economy (Yorke, 2004). The demand for sustained employability and a proactive career agency has led to a renewed interest in the dispositional and psychological attributes of postgraduates like their employability attributes and personality preferences.

Postgraduate has to do with relating or engaging in formal studies after graduation or after acquiring first degree. It means a student continuing his/her formal education after graduation from high school or college (Hacker, 2011). When a student continues to study for an advanced degree after earning a bachelor's degree or other first degree he or she becomes a graduate student. It has been referred to as university studies or students at more advanced level than a first degree (Fiona, 2010). Postgraduate education or graduate education involves learning and studying for academic or professional degrees, academic or professional certificates, academic or professional diplomas, or other qualifications for which a first or bachelor's degree generally is required for admission (Bernstson, 2008)., and it is normally considered to be part of higher education (Smith, 2016). Research degrees generally consist of either Masters or Doctorate programmes (Bernstson, 2008).

Postgraduate student means a person who has successfully completed a course of study or training, especially a person who has been awarded an undergraduate or first academic degree. It means a person who has received a degree or diploma on completing a course of study, as in university, college or school (Forester, 2011). It means a student who holds the bachelors or the first professional degree and is still studying for an advanced degree. Postgraduates are students in tertiary institutions who have received a first degree, especially a bachelor's degree. They are tertiary institutional students' who are graduates and still studying for higher degrees (Forster, 2011). They became graduates after high school. Postgraduates are students of Universities and Colleges who have graduated from high school, college and university (Forster, 2011). Postgraduates can be taken to mean college or university student's who have received bachelors' or similar degree. People who studied and graduated from the university or college and still running advanced programmes. They are into postgraduate education.

Skill is the ability to carry out a task with pre-determined results often within a given amount of time, energy, or both. Skills can be divided into domain general and domain-specific skills, for example, in the domain of work, some general skills would include time management, teamwork and leadership, self-motivation and others, whereas domain-specific skills would be useful only for a certain job (Bernstson, 2008). examples of domain-specific skills are communication, collaboration, and problem-solving (ASTD & U.S Department 2012). Skill usually requires certain environment stimuli and situations to access the level of skill being shown and used (ASTD & U.S Department retrieved 2012-03-15). To attain the expertness, the individual or person need to acquire basic training or knowledge levels related to the assignment or task to be performed either

through formal or informal training or a combination of both. The generic skills according to Olaitan and Onuka (2004) are the skills which are needed to conceive, plan, establish and successfully run an enterprise using human and non – human resources.

Skill in the context of this study refers to postgraduate’s knowledge and ability to perform specific tasks successfully. Example of skills therefore, are business skills which one requires to function effectively in the turbulent business environment as an independent or self-employed person in order to improve one’s economic status and the society at large (Anerua & Obiazi, 2009). Through skills acquisition, the establishment of small business which helps to generate substantial amount of employment and income which are essential parts of a country’s Gross National Product (GNP) on one hand again helps to reduce unemployment among postgraduates or the other. For postgraduates to gain employability, they require skills like ICT skills, entrepreneurship education skills among others.

Entrepreneurship is the process of designing, launching and running a new business, which is more often than not, initially a small business, offering a product, process or service for sale or hire. Entrepreneurship has been described as the “capacity and willingness to develop, organize Yetsien; Volpatti; Coskun; Kamrani, Khademhos & Yun, 2015e and manage a business venture along with any of its risks in order to make a profit (Yetsien, Volpatti, Coskun, Kamrani, Khademhos & Yun, 2015). While definitions of entrepreneurship typically focus on the launching and running of businesses, due to high risks involved in launching a start – up, a significant proportion of business have to close, due to “lack of funding, bad business decisions, economic crisis – or a combination of all of these” or due to lack of market demand (Belicove, 2012).

RESEARCH METHOD

Design of the Study

The study is a correlational survey design. Correlational survey design according to Nworgu (2015) is a research design that is interested in establishing the relationship between two or more variables in relation to the population. This research design was chosen because it provides the researcher the opportunity of sampling the opinions of a number of the population considered significant to determine if relationship exists between the independent variable (Entrepreneurship education) and the dependent variables (Postgraduate employability).

Area of the Study

This study was carried out in South East Nigeria. South East Nigeria has five states viz, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all the 8461 postgraduate students admitted in all the federal universities in South East Zone of Nigeria in the 2017/2018 academic session.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for the study was 846 postgraduate students admitted in 2017/2018 academic session in the whole federal universities in South East, Nigeria. The sample was composed using Proportionate Stratified Sampling Technique. Firstly, the population was stratified based on federal universities in South East, Nigeria. In each of the university 10% proportion was used to select sample from each of the federal universities viz: 572 for University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN); 98 for Federal University of Science and Technology Owerri (FUTO); 117 for Nnamdi Azikiwe Univerisy Awka (NAU); 54 for Micheal Opkara Federal Univeristy of Agriculture Umudike; and 5 for Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instruments for data collection were three, these are (EEQ) Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire.

The instrument was designed by the researcher after detailed review of the literature. The EEQ is made up of two sections A and B, section A is on personal data of the respondents while section B contained 14 structured items on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The response options have assigned values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 point respectively.

Validation of the Instrument

The experts were requested to scrutinize the items in the instruments with regards to their appropriateness and comprehensiveness in addressing the specific purposes of this study, research questions and the null hypotheses formulated. They were requested to make their observations for modifications of the items where necessary. For example, they touched the research questions, null hypothesis, canceled and restructured some of the items that could not meet the expectations among others; contributions made by the experts were used to improve the instruments respectively. Corrections and suggestions made by these experts were reflected on the final copies of the instruments before they were administered to the respondents.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instruments was established using the Cronbach Alpha method to ascertain the internal consistency of the items. This was done by administering the questionnaire to 30 respondents randomly sampled from Federal University, Otuoke, Bayelsa in South-South Nigeria. The place was chosen because it has almost the same characteristics as the location of the study. Cronbach Alpha statistics yielded reliability index of 0.88 for Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire (EEQ).

Method of Data Collection

Copies of the questionnaire were administered personally by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. The research assistants were instructed on what to do in helping the researcher to distribute the research questionnaire to the respondents in the various universities in South East, Nigeria. A face to face method were adopted in the distribution and retrieval of the questionnaire copies. This direct method ensured a prompt return of the filled questionnaire and also ensured a high return rate.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed in line with the research questions posed and null hypotheses formulated. Regression Analysis was used to answer research questions. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 probability level.

RESULTS

Table 1: Regression analysis of the responses on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in South-East, Nigeria

Variables	R	R ²
Entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability	0.68	0.46

(R²) = Coefficient of Determination

Result on Table 1 shows that the correlation coefficient between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in South-East, Nigeria was 0.68. This means that, there exist a high positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in South-East, Nigeria. The Table also revealed that, the coefficient of determination (R²) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.68 was 0.46. This coefficient of determination (R²) indicates that, 46% of variation in postgraduate employability is attributed to entrepreneurship education. This is an indication that 54% of the variation in postgraduate employability is attributed to other factors other than entrepreneurship education.

Table 2: Regression analysis of relationship between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in South-East, Nigeria as moderated by gender

Model	Gender	N	R	R ²
1	Male	341	.67	.45
2	Female	505	.68	.47

The result in Table 2 revealed that the correlation coefficients (r) of .67 and .68 with associated coefficients of determinant (r²) of .45 and .57 were obtained for male and female postgraduates respectively between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in South-East, Nigeria. The obtained coefficients of determinant of .45 and .47 indicate that 45% and 47% variations in postgraduate employability are attributed to entrepreneurship education for male and female postgraduates respectively. The difference in the variation of male and female postgraduate as predicted by entrepreneurship education is jointly 2% in favour of the female postgraduates. Hence, gender moderated only 2% of the variation in postgraduate employability in South-East, Nigeria in favour of the females than their male counterparts.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in South-East, Nigeria

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	33.407	1	33.407	252.448	.000 ^a
	Residual	111.689	844	.132		
	Total	145.096	845			

The result on Table 3 shows that F-ratio of 252.448 with associated exact probability value of 0.00 was obtained. This probability value of 0.00 was compared with 0.05 set as level of significance for testing the hypothesis and it was found to be significant because 0.00 is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. The researcher therefore, concludes that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in South-East, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in South-East, Nigeria as moderated by gender.

Table 4: t-test analysis of significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in South-East, Nigeria as moderated by gender

Variable (Gender)	N	R	R ²	Df	t-value	P-value
Male	341	.67	.45	844	-.089	.929
Female	505	.68	.47			

To test hypothesis four, t-test analysis of significant difference between two samples correlation coefficients (r) of male and female postgraduates in prediction of entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability. Result on Table 4 shows the t-test for independent samples assuming equal variance revealed that a $(844) = -.089$, $P > 0.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was not rejected since the P-value (.929) is greater than 0.05 level of significant. The researcher, therefore, concludes that, there is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in South-East, Nigeria as moderated by gender.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed there was a significant positive high relationship between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in South-East, Nigeria. The finding further revealed that variation in postgraduate employability was attributed to entrepreneurship education. The finding is not surprise because entrepreneurship education is an educational programme that provides the students with knowledge, skills and motivation needed to start up small and medium scale businesses. In other words, it promotes innovation, introduces new products or services and market strategies which help the student to become outstanding entrepreneurs. This is why Arogundade (2011) opined that entrepreneurship education equips students especially at the tertiary level with skills to self-reliant as well as improving and sustaining global economic development. This is because entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of setting.

The findings agree with the findings of Hardy, Zanariah and Hardi (2016) whose study revealed a positive significant relationship between entrepreneurship education effectiveness and the skills needed for graduate employability. The finding is also in consonance with the findings of Afolabi, Kareem, Okubanjo, Ogunbanjo and Aminkan (2017) whose study indicated that entrepreneurship education has strong positive relationship with self-employment initiatives. Also, in line with the findings of the study was the study conducted by Osorochi and Ovute who reported that entrepreneurship education is contributing meaningfully towards the preparation of the students for global labour market competitiveness.

The findings are also in line with the views of Fayolle (2004), Bhandari (2006) and Nwangwu (2007) that entrepreneurial education equipped students with adequate skills and training that are useful in identifying noble business opportunities. The result also agreed with the findings of Ogundele, Akingbade and Akinlabi (2012), study was on entrepreneurship training and education as strategic tools for poverty alleviation in Nigeria and reported entrepreneurship training and education are significantly related to the youth empowerment and social welfare services. Literature further shows that entrepreneurial values, attitudes, knowledge and skills enable students to cope with the current turbulent changes in the labour market as they provide an enriching educational experience that ensures graduates' success in the labor market (Charney & Libecap, 2000).

The findings of the study revealed no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability in South-East, Nigeria as moderated by gender. One may not be surprised that there is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and postgraduate employability. This is because business ownership is one avenue through which men and women can break through the glass ceiling encountered within organizations. This may be the reason why Lemchi (2005) declared that entrepreneurship is a concept that is attracting a lot attention presently in the country which male and female postgraduate students are embracing which may be as a result of persistent unemployment in the country especially among the youths.

The findings of the study are in agreement with the findings of Díaz, Hernández and Raposo (2007) who noted no dependence between gender and the desirability of creating a business, though they found a higher percentage of men with a serious intention of doing so. The findings are in line with the view of Sanchez-Cañizares and Fuentes-Garcia (2013) who opined that women seem to harbour a higher degree of pessimism when it comes to their perception of opportunities as well as a greater fear of failure. Also in agreement was the findings of Sanchez-Cañizares and Fuentes-Garcia (2013) who reported no statistically significant gender-related difference was recorded in the students' perceptions of their own willingness to generate initiatives and

ideas and put them into practice at work. However, the study disagrees with the findings of Aponte (2002) who detected a lower willingness to take risks among women.

CONCLUSIONS

The research emanated from the need to seek for solution to the existing unemployment of postgraduate students. Consequently, the study investigated entrepreneurship education as correlate of postgraduate employability. The study revealed that entrepreneurship education relates positively to postgraduate employability. Therefore, entrepreneurship education should be employed for postgraduate employability.

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