# ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AND SOCIAL EFFICIENCY OF TECHNICAL COLLEGE GRADUATES AS PERCEIVED BY TECHNICAL TEACHERS IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

**BY**

**EMMANUEL OKON ESSIEN, Ph.D**
**DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**
**UNIVERISTY OF UYO, UYO AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA**

**AND**

**UDO, CHRISTOPHER TIMOTHY**
**DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**
**YABA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY YABA, LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA**

## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and social efficiency of the technical college graduates in Akwa Ibom State. The study adopted the correlational research design; and a survey instrument titled: Entrepreneurial Skills and Social Efficiency (ESSE) questionnaire was used for data collection. The target population was 168 technical teachers drawn from six public technical colleges in the state. From the target population, a sample size of 114 was determined based on the Krecjcie and Morgan's (1970) model for determining the size of random sample. Three specific objectives and three research questions were posed to guide the study. A statistical tool known as the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed for data analysis in order to provide answers to the research questions. The analysis revealed that a very strong positive relationship exist between technical skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates; substantial positive relationship exist between innovative skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates; and moderate positive relationship exist between business management skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates. It was concluded that entrepreneurial skills are very essential for graduates of any institution of learning for gainful employment or to be self-employed in order to contribute meaningfully to economic growth and development of the society.*

**Key words: Technical Skills, Innovative Skills, Business Management Skills, Entrepreneurship Education and Social Efficiency.**

## INTRODUCTION

The ideology of social efficiency is based on the assumption that human life consists in the performance of specific activities. Hence, education that prepares for life should offer learning experiences that represent these specific activities. Social efficiency is a curriculum based ideology upon which series of experiences which children and youth must have by way of attaining the curriculum objectives by developing abilities to do the things well that make up the affairs of adult life; and to be in all respects what adults should be (Labaree, 2004). For the curriculum to reflect social efficiency conception, the behavioural phrasing of the objectives must reflect the nature of man: the essence of man is expressed in the behavior he can perform. This would express both behavioural conception of man and the conception of man as a bundle specific skill (Ravitch, 2000).

Based on the foregoing, Snedden cited by Labree (2012) advocated that distinct form of curriculum should be created for students with different levels of intelligence and different social trajectories so they could become productive workers in the wide variety of occupations that characterized the new economy (Brooks, 2002). According to the author, this ideological legacy is rooted back to 1900 when David Snedden advocated for a system of public education that should increasingly continue to absorb, not only training for culture's sake but that utilitarian training which looks to individuals efficiency in the world of work. These are skills based training that would enable the individuals see themselves as responsible citizens of productive society. The educational systems should therefore aim to be useful and socially efficient in dealing with the emerging social problems such as high rate of unemployment, kidnapping, armed robbery and other similar vices.

Students or individuals who graduate from technical colleges are expected to have the potentials that should impact positively on wellbeing of the society as follows:

- **Self-Employment/Reliant:** This is a formidable force to equip youths and adults with marketable skills necessary for production of goods and services for survival and eradication of poverty.
- **Reduction of Social Vices:** Such a crime wave, cultism, armed robbery, militancy as well as drug and human trafficking (Ekong, 2005; Anyaoku, 2005).
- **Poverty Alleviation:** While education serves as an excellent instrument for making positive impact on individuals and society at large by placing food on tables, it is also meant to equip our youths with employable skills (Audu, 2005).

Most secondary and tertiary schools graduates constitute the unskilled elements in the labour market. Hence, they do not contribute to the growth of the nation's economy, by not becoming useful members of the productive society. One possible factor that could be responsible to this is the lack of entrepreneurship education and training as an aspect of schools' curricular. Even the aim of building Nigeria as a "self-reliant nation" cannot be achieved without entrepreneurship education.

Oyedijor (2005) observed that since independence the main thrust of Nigeria's development strategies and objectives had been the development of industrialization, education and a self-reliant economy; but regrettably the human capacity which was expected to support the industrialization process and propel other sectors to maturity has not exhibited the right mix

of knowledge, attitude and skills required to achieve the proposals. Owolabi (2005) identified low level of entrepreneurial skills, poor management practices and shortage of skilled manpower among the problems facing entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

Schumpeterian theory of entrepreneurship describes entrepreneurship as *creative Response.* The theorist assumes that entrepreneurship is a fundamental phenomenon or the decisive factor in the process of economic development on how wide-spread entrepreneurial acts take place in an economy. Entrepreneurial acts in this context refer to those innovative activities of mobilizing productive resources for the purpose of doing new things of doing thing that had already being done in a new way (Schumpter, 2007).

The practical tools for the realization of profit making ideas are found in the educational process. Therefore, entrepreneurship education is about transforming an idea into reality. It is worth mentioning that technical colleges has multifarious areas of occupational specialization of which students may wish to choose and specialize in one based on his or her orientation (interest, aptitude ability etc). On graduation, the technical college students may embark on a business or vocational practice as an entrepreneur using skills he/she had acquired proper knowledge, competence, practical skills and qualities of entrepreneur (Igechukwu, 2000). The entrepreneurial skills required from such individuals include: business organizational skills, technical skills, communication skills, innovative skills, multitask skills, time management skills and human relations skills.

Inyang (2002) conducted a study on Business management skills and failure of small scale businesses. The study revealed that entrepreneurs who lack business management skills failed in their businesses, which means good business management skills could increase productivity. Zisuh (2007) conducted a study on innovative skills for economic development in the city of Kumba, Cameroon. The study revealed that innovative skills contributed significantly to economic development by providing employment and income for the poor. Jones (2009) carried out a study on the need for technical skills and its prospects to organization. The researcher discovered that technical skills bring about new ideas and method of production which would increase productivity. It was also revealed that technical skills are important in solving critical and technical problems that can lead to successful work life.

The major theme of education for social efficiency and entrepreneurship education is "learning to learn". Both variables are assumed to be the concern of vocational education and training within context of the contemporary economic and social realities of Nigeria. There is an assumption that technical college graduates who qualify as craftsmen, artisan or technician are not employed and cannot be self-employed because they lack relevant entrepreneurial skills, hence, could not be socially efficient in the society. Therefore, this study is designed to determine the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study to determine the relationship between;

1. Technical skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates;

2. Innovative skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates; and
3. Business management skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates.

**Research Questions**

The study sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between technical skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates?
2. What is the nature of the relationship between innovative skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates?
3. What is the nature of the relationship between business management skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates?

**Methods**

**Design of the Study**

The correlational research design was adopted for the study. Correlation research design became appropriate for the study because the researcher intended to investigate a presumed relationship between entrepreneurial skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates as perceived by technical teachers in Akwa Ibom State.

**Area of the Study**

The area of the study was Akwa Ibom State. Akwa Ibom is one of the States in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria. It has 31 Local Government Areas and three Senatorial Districts. There are six public technical colleges spread across the three senatorial zones. The technical colleges are managed by the Akwa Ibom State Technical Schools Board. The study covered all the six public technical colleges in the state.

**Population of the Study**

The population of the study was 168 technical teachers drawn from the six public technical colleges in Akwa Ibom State.

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

From the population, 144 technical teachers were randomly selected using simple random sampling random sampling technique by balloting approach. The sample size was based on Krecjcie and Morgan table for determining sample size (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2004).

**Instrumentation**

The instrument for data collection was developed by the researcher and titled: Entrepreneurial Skills and Social Efficiency Questionnaire (ESSEQ). The instrument comprised two sections. Section A contained the letter of introduction and bio-data of the respondents. Section B contained 40 items structured in a five-point Likert-type Scale as follows: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 5 points; Agreed (A) = 4 points; Undecided (U) = 3 points; Disagreed (D) = 2 points; Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1 point. The items in Section B comprises 10 items related to technical skills such as abilities to design produce, install repair maintain equipment etc. 10 items on innovative skills such as ability to create new concept, redesign, ability to invent etc, another

10 items on business management skills such as ability to produce business plan, ability to create product, market product, keep records of transaction etc. The lost 10 items in the instrument related to social efficiency variables such as utilization of acquired skills, engagement in gainful employment, being self-reliance, good behavioural pattern and adaptability to emerging social challenges etc.

**Validity of the Instrument**

One lecturer from the Department of Vocational Education and two lecturers from the Department of Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counseling all in University of Uyo scrutinized the instrument to ensure face validity.

**Reliability of the Instrument**

The validated ESSEQ was subjected to Cronbach alpha test using 20 technical teachers from the Federal Government Girls Technical College Uyo, who did not take part in the main study. The scores of all the participants for each of the 40 items were obtained and used for the test. The test yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .78.

A commonly accepted rule of thumb by Cronbach and Shavelson (2004) for describing internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha is as follows: $\alpha \geq .9$ = Excellent; $9 > \alpha \geq .8$ = Good; $8 > \alpha \geq .7$ = Acceptable' .7 $\alpha \geq .6$ = Questionable; $.6 > \alpha \geq .5$ = poor; $.5 > \alpha$ = unacceptable. Based on the rule of thumb, a Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of .78 obtained for this instrument was considered acceptable for sue in data collection of this study.

**Method of Data Collection**

The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher and three research assistants. Completed copies were retrieved immediately. Collation of data was done by the researcher after all the research assistants had retrieved completed copies of the instrument from the respondents.

**Method of Data Analysis**

The Pearson Product Moment of Correlation (PPMC) was the statistical tool used to analyze the data that would provide answers to the research questions. The research questions were answered in terms of direction of the relationship thus: r from -1 to 0 was negative relationship; and r from 0 to + 1 was positive relationship. The magnitude of the relationship was interpreted using the following descriptors of correlation values by Davis (1971) as presented by Thomas (2007) and Essien (2014): .00 to .09 = negligible; .10 to .29 = weak; .30 to .49 = moderate; .50 to .69 = substantial, .70 to 1 = very strong.

**Presentation and Analysis of Data**

The data were analyzed to provide answers to the research questions. Of the 114 questionnaires administered, 112 were returned with valid data; this yielded a response rate of 98.25 percent.

**Research Question 1**

What is the nature of the relationship between Technical Skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates in Akwa Ibom State?

The data analysis related to Research Question 1 is presented on Table 1

**Table 1**

**The PPMC Analysis on Technical Skills and Social Efficiency of Technical College Graduates (N = 112)**

| Variables | $\sum X$ $\sum Y$ | $\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$ | $\sum XY$ | r |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tech. Skills (x) | 6964 | 45831 | | |
| | | | 63118 | .86* |
| Social Eff. (y) | 7630 | 528688 | | |

*Very strong positive Relationship

Table 1 shows the PPMC analysis on the relationship between technical skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates. The analysis yields a correlation coefficient of .86 which is described as a very strong positive relationship. This implies that the more technical skills acquired by technical college graduates, the more they become socially efficient.

**Research Question 2**

What is the nature of relationship between Innovative Skills and Social Efficiency of technical college graduates in Akwa Ibom State?

The Summary of data analysis related to Research Question 2 is presented on Table 2.

**Table 2**

**The PPMC Analysis on Innovative Skills and Social Efficiency of Technical College Graduates (N = 112)**

| Variables | $\sum X$ $\sum Y$ | $\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$ | $\sum XY$ | r |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tech. Skills (x) | 4194 | 155358 | | |
| | | | 145722 | .63* |
| Social Eff. (y) | 3932 | 138312 | | |

*Substantial positive Relationship

The analysis on Table 2 shows a correlation coefficient (r) of .63. This indicates that a substantial positive relationship exists between innovative skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates in Akwa Ibom State. It implies that the more innovation skills they acquire, the more their social efficiency will improve substantially.

**Research Question 3**

What is the nature of relationship between Business Management Skills and Social Efficiency of technical college graduates in Akwa Ibom State?

The data analysis related to Research Question 3 is presented and summarized on Table 3.

**Table 2**

**The PPMC Analysis on Business Management Skills and Social Efficiency of Technical College Graduates (N = 112)**

| Variables | $\sum X$ $\sum Y$ | $\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$ | $\sum XY$ | r |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tech. Skills (x) | 3976 | 145264 | | |
| | | | 139068 | .48* |
| Social Eff. (y) | 3918 | 138510 | | |

*Moderate positive Relationship

The analysis on Table 3 yields a correlation coefficient (r) of .48. This shows a moderate positive relationship between business management skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates. It means the social efficiency of technical graduates would improve moderately as they acquire more business management skills.

**Major Findings**

The study reveals that:

1 Very strong positive relationship exists between Technical Skills and Social Efficiency of Technical College Graduates in Akwa Ibom State.

2 Substantial positive relationship exists between Innovative Skills and Social Efficiency of Technical College Graduates in Akwa Ibom State.

3 Moderate positive relationship exists between Business Management Skills and Social Efficiency of Technical College Graduates in Akwa Ibom State.

**Discussion of Findings**

The study reveals that a very strong positive relationship exists between technical skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates in Akwa Ibom State. This result is supported by Jones (2009) who discovered that technical skills increase productivities of entrepreneurs. The researcher also discovered that technical skills are important in solving critical and technical problems and could lead to successful occupational practices. Any technical college graduate who acquires adequate technical skills can be gainfully employed or become self-employed thereby contributing significantly to the economic activities of the productive society.

It is also revealed in the study that a substantial positive relationship exists between innovative skills and social efficiency of technical college graduates in Akwa Ibom State. The result is supported by Zisuh (2007) who conducted a study on innovative skills and economic development in the City of Kumba, Cameroun. The researcher discovered that innovative skills contribute significantly to economic development by providing employment and income for the poor. Innovative skills are in high demand in the world of work because of the dynamics of economic activities occasioned by the emerging technologies and global competiveness. The goal of innovation is positive change, invention and introduction of new ideas that lead to increased productivity which is the fundamental source of increasing wealth in an economy.

Business management skills have been found in the study to have a moderately positive relationship with social efficiency of technical college graduates in Akwa Ibom State. This result is supported by Inyang (2002) who discovered that entrepreneurs who lack business management skills failed in their businesses. The researcher explained that business management skills are essential for success and increased productivity in any business venture. Accordingly, a graduate with management skills would lead by example, have passion and enthusiasm, be well organized, take ownership and responsibility, communicate effectively, be a good listener etc.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that technical college graduates require adequate entrepreneurial skills in order to become socially efficient in the society. It is lack of entrepreneurial skills that make most of technical college graduates not to be successfully self-employed. Entrepreneurship education is therefore necessary as curriculum component of the technical colleges in the country as this is a sure way of realizing the potentials of entrepreneurship development for the economic growth, reduction of crime and poverty margin of the nation.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that;

1 Reforms in the technical education system at all levels should deemphasize entrepreneurial training in the schools' curricula.
2 National Directorate of Employment should organize orientation courses for technical college final year students on how to become entrepreneurs with the knowledge and skills they acquire from the colleges as soon as graduation.
3 Government should shop for technical college graduates who are innovative and inventive and help them to improve on their ideas and talents to the extent of becoming productive adults of the society.
4 Attitudinal change from education for paid employment to education for self-employment should be encouraged by parents, teachers and relevant government and non-governmental agencies.
5 Training facilities should be made adequately available by government so that entrepreneurial training can be carried out in a real life situation and not to be taught as an abstract concept.

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