

**Enhancing Entrepreneurial Skills Using ICT among Business Studies Students in Akwa
Ibom State Secondary Schools**

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to investigate ways of enhancing entrepreneurial skills using ICT among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State. The population of the study comprised all business studies students in Akwa Ibom State Secondary schools. The study adopted a correlational survey design, while multi-stage sampling technique was used to select a sample size of four hundred (400) students as respondents. The study made use of two instruments for data collection tagged “Information and Communication Technology Questionnaire” (ICTQ) and “Enhancing Entrepreneurial Skills Questionnaire” (EESQ) which were administered to the respondents. Data collected was analysed using simple regression analysis. The result showed that there is significant influence of ICT on enhancing entrepreneurial skills among secondary school students. It also showed that there a significant influence of ICT on creation of employment opportunities for secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State. Based on the findings, one of the recommendations was

**KEYWORDS: Use of ICT, Enhancing Entrepreneurial Skills, Firm Foundation,
Employment Opportunity and Wealth Creation**

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has been in existence for decades, and is often used extensively in everyday conversation and as a common term in the field of Management and Economics. The goldsmith who stores people valuables and engages in exchange of goods and services is a typical entrepreneur. Again, our forefathers who were doing subsistent farming and later diversified into Craft trade to produce goods and services to satisfy their various needs were also into entrepreneurship without knowing it.

According to Geneva, (2010) there are three main entrepreneurship policy objectives such as firm foundation; employment; and wealth creation. This policy has indeed helped various institutions to incorporate entrepreneurship education into their educational system. Entrepreneurship education is an embodiment of the national innovation system concept which is proposed as a policy framework for Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in developing countries. It is argued that a systemic approach to STI policymaking may be more appropriate to the needs of developing countries than earlier innovation models. The selected indicators capture inputs, outputs, and the impact of innovation, as well as the linkages among public, private and academic actors.

Recently, extremely quick developments in information-communication technology (ICT) can be witnessed. Researchers increasingly believe that investment in ICT and the existence of appropriate ICT support tools make it possible to create some kind of a knowledge repository and foundation for knowledge and learning management at different levels of human interaction (personal, community, society). ICT also allows for teaching the younger generations and for making them aware of ICT tools which might increase their employability or self-employment capabilities. Nowadays, almost all youngsters have basic knowledge about the computers which make it easier to teach them about ICT tools. However, it is important that students have the knowledge about ICT as well as specific ICT tools. Many of such tools can be used free of charge which is another reason, why they might be used for teaching and learning entrepreneurship.

Modern ICT could be used as a means to establish connections between the business and higher education sector. It represents an important opportunity to provide young people with business competencies and entrepreneurship education. This brings benefits to a variety of stakeholders as well but not only the students, faculties, other educational institutions at all levels and enterprises, (Hynes & Richardson, 2007). To achieve continuous improvements of entrepreneurial competencies learning should be implemented effectively. Educators should introduce ICT into entrepreneurship education which could be used to meet the market demands and to provide the students with the set of competencies needed for global challenges. For that reason, the use of ICT tools seems to be the best solution. Entrepreneurship education involve learning of a variety of business related competencies such as improvements of decision-making skills or skills to access information and using different ICT tools for creating a better working space. Entrepreneurship education enables students to be properly equipped with additional knowledge, attributes and capabilities with the aim of using these abilities in setting up enterprises or business. The ultimate goal is to be able to function effectively as an entrepreneur or in an entrepreneurial capacity (Wilson, 2012).

Problem Statement

The Nigerian society is faced with challenges of unemployable graduates from all Institutions of learning. It is a fact that employability is the ability to acquire sustainable employment appropriate to one's qualifications. This situation is also observed as common to Akwa Ibom State students. Also noted is lack of delivery of entrepreneurial skills through

innovative learning strategies. These students are dormant and are not well prepared towards becoming entrepreneurs as they are not given enough exposure in the use of ICT which is the very tool for enhancing entrepreneurial skills. Such tools involve facebook, email, whatsaps which could be used for advertising and purchasing of good and services.

Also, most of these secondary schools lack funds required to furnish the classroom with up to date facilities and equipment that can measure up with the global demands which is highly technologically bias. Lack of well-equipped ICT laboratories and even where there are some levels of equipment the issue of lack of technical ‘know how’ still rear its ugly head. Lack of experts to manage and maintain the facilities is also among the numerous factors militating against the proper delivery of entrepreneurial skills using ICT. Lack of awareness on the part of the students who are not well informed on the need for acquiring employable skills that will make them good entrepreneurs, which will enhance their relevance in the job market, is a very prominent problem. It is on this ground that this research is carried out to assess the use of information and communication technology (ICT) with respect to e-commerce, e-advertising and e-marketing as tools for enhancing entrepreneurial skills of business studies students in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Objective(s) of the Study

1. To determine the influence of ICT training on acquisition of entrepreneurial skills among Business Studies students in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom state.
2. To find out the influence of ICT training on creation of employment opportunities for Business Studies students in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

1. What is the influence of ICT training on enhancing entrepreneurial skills among Business Studies students in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?
2. What is the influence of ICT training on creation of employment opportunities for Business Studies students in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis will be tested:

1. There is no significant influence of ICT training on enhancing entrepreneurial skills among Business Studies students in Akwa Ibom state secondary schools.
2. There is no significant influence of ICT training on creation of employment opportunities for Business Studies students in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Literature Review

This chapter presents the review of the related literature under the appropriate sub-headings:

Theory of entrepreneurship education, (Mar, 1991)

Theory of entrepreneurship education helps to comprehend the phenomena better. Various theories of entrepreneurship have been propounded by thinkers, one of such is Mar.

Mar (1991) states that the very main spring of the exercise of the entrepreneurial function is the powerful will to assert economic leadership. The entrepreneur is not (necessarily) the one who invents new combinations, but the one who identifies how these new combinations can be applied in production. This line of reasoning implies that a business owner is considered an entrepreneur only if he is carrying out new combinations. The entrepreneur moves the economic system out of the static equilibrium by creating, new products or production methods thereby rendering others obsolete.

Contemporary issues in education and economic development are dominated by three main theories, namely: the human capital, the modernization and the economic dependence theories (Okojie 2008). While human capital theory emphasizes that education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of their cognitive skills, the modernisation theory focuses on how education transforms an individual's value, belief and behaviour with exposure to modernising institutions such as schools, factories and the mass media, and thereby inculcating modern the values and attitudes. The dependence theory arose from Marxist conceptualizations based on the dynamics of the world system that structure conditions for economic transformation in both the core and the periphery of the world economy (Okojie 2008). Thus, the proponents argue that the prevalence of foreign investment capital, the presence of multi-national corporations, concentration on exporting of primary products and the dependence on imported technologies and manufactured goods, constrain long-term economic development. Its critics, however, point to the evidence of widespread unemployment and its negative impact on economic growth. The theory has tended to make people more cautious and skeptical about the presumed positive economic impact of education.

The psychological theories of career development focus on the individual as a crucial variable in the career decision making process. These theories have in common the assumption that the individual has some freedom in the choice of an occupation; that is, he can exert at least a modicum of control over his vocational future by mere fantasy and perception (Ocansey, 2007). They posit that perception and choice are determined, primarily by the characteristics or functioning of the individual and only indirectly by the environment in which he lives. One of the psychological theories of career choice is the trait and factor theory.

The implication of this theory is that the students will see the need of learning with ICT through social means to develop them entrepreneurially. That is why both the teachers and students will find this theory useful to them in their daily teaching and learning.

Entrepreneurship education

Entrepreneurship education which has recently gained wide popularity means different things to different educators. Kourilsky, (1995) defines entrepreneurship education as

opportunity, recognition, marshalling of resources in the presence of risk and building a business venture. Bechard and Toulouse, (1998) defines it as a collection of formalized teachings that informs, trains, and educates anyone interested in business creation or small business development. It also means different things at different levels of education. At the primary and secondary school level the aim is mainly to create awareness for a career option and thus it serves as a vehicle for the development of academic skills and emphasis on the importance of school subjects. This thus leads to mastery of school subjects especially English and Mathematics by the school children. The implication therefore is that the overall purpose of entrepreneurship education is the development of expertise as an entrepreneur. It is the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize business opportunities, the insight, the zeal, the knowledge, the courage and skills to act on them.

Entrepreneurship therefore seeks to prepare people especially youths to be responsible and enterprising individuals; to develop deep thoughts on entrepreneurship and consequently contribute to economic and sustainable development of their communities. It encourages creative thinking and promotes a strong sense of self worth and accountability. Through entrepreneurship education graduates, especially those of tertiary education are equipped to find new methods of doing things and enabled to be their own bosses and job “creators” rather than job “seekers”.

Entrepreneurship education is a product of the rising challenges in the society. Its curriculum content must be responsive enough to address the obvious short comings of our present school system. That is why Ogunkunle (2009) remarked that global changes in recent times call for innovations in the school curriculum. Entrepreneurship education is aimed at meeting the challenges of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) its curriculum must be responsive and relevant to the current and anticipated needs, problems and aspirations of the learner (Emah, 2009). Entrepreneurship education is an aspect of both responsive and functional education whose curriculum contents are mutually interrelating and overlapping.

Why entrepreneurship training

The essence of introducing entrepreneurship training is to equip the students with necessary skills and mindset require for successful entrepreneurship. It is also to instill in the students the self-confidence and assurance required for launching a business.

Entrepreneurship education does not only embrace economic life style but help to stimulate economic development. Bandura, (1992) observed that more educational institutions now offer a wide range of entrepreneurial programmed and training activities which appeal to be influencing the students in terms of entrepreneurial interest and engaging in the business of their choice. With the need for new skills created by globalization, there is a search for enhanced competitive advantage. Bandura, (1992) point out that though formal education is necessary, it is not sufficient to meet challenges of the globalized world.

The abundant natural, human and material resources in most developing countries, without entrepreneurship education, as well as people with the psychological disposition, have the tendency of resources of the nation remaining unexploited. Nwangwu (2007) argues that the

failure of tertiary education to inculcate self-reliance in the students have led to wastage of both human and natural resources. Tertiary education is the education provided after secondary education either in universities, colleges of education, monotechnics and polytechnics including those offering correspondence courses. Omolayo (2006) points out that university education was in the past oriented towards making graduates suitable for only white collar jobs. This underscores why many university graduates roam the streets in search of non-existing white collar jobs. Omolayo (2006) points out that Nigeria universities should stimulate economic growth through a deliberate agenda of production of entrepreneurial graduates.

Functional education is that which is imparted on the individual to prepare him/ her to face the challenges of achieving the national goals of the country.

Shai (2009) came out with a three components categorization of Entrepreneurship Education curriculum considered comprehensive enough to equip the products of the school system with the needed skills and capacities of future life.

Personal Development – it should build confidence, motivate progress, strengthen the entrepreneurial mindset, foster a desire to achieve and inspire action.

Business Development – Technical, financial literacy and skills to engage in self employment and in entrepreneurship that can lead to self-improvement. This will include the expected business and functional curricula.

Entrepreneurial skill's development – it should provide training in social skills, networking, creative problem – solving, opportunity seeking, interviewing, presentations, group leadership, community cooperation, seeking dealing with bureaucracy, local cultural norm and how they affect business etc. Every entrepreneurship curriculum must have the above as its integral elements so as to provide the students with the cherished skills and capacities that can make them self sufficient and highly productive in the society.

Information and communication technology equipment and entrepreneurship education of students

The roles played by information and communication technology in the entrepreneurial development of students cannot be over emphasized. Information and communication technology has been seen as very useful equipment for effective preparation of student for skill development and future employment. Suleiman, (2006) observed that with the introduction of information technology in teaching entrepreneurship education, emphases are placed on practicable teaching methods that are more useful in vocational and technical training and the experiencing of realities in the course of learning.

OMANJAF, (2013) reports that Entrepreneurship in Nigeria started when people produced more products than they required such that they had to exchange the surplus. Early Entrepreneurship started with trade by barter even before the advent of any form of money. With colonial masters Modern Entrepreneurship came into place which relegated the Nigerian entrepreneur to the position of middleman ship by becoming retailers of wears and items of the

colonial masters. Also, with the inception of formal education Nigerian became employed in civil service and less attention was given to entrepreneurship thereby increasing the dependence on the colonial masters and their products. United African Company (UAC) being substantially responsible for import and export trade had a policy of dealing directly with producers and rejected the use of services of Nigerian entrepreneurs. The rejection of these services by these expatriates inhibited the expansion and acquisition of the necessary skills and attitude of the local business men. This had a negative result on entrepreneurship in Nigeria which slowed down many entrepreneurs who either folded up or were demoralized. However with more awareness through education and the fact that the government could not employ more school leavers, economic programmes were established to encourage individuals to go into private businesses. For instance People Bank of Nigeria provided funds for Small-Scale Industries (FUSSI), Co-operative Societies and others to help establish entrepreneur in Nigeria (OMANJAF, 2013). Entrepreneurship education is geared towards training students to develop and acquire skills, trade or business that results in being employable, creation of job opportunities for empowerment of individual, society and economic development of the nation at large.

According to Enu, (2012) entrepreneurship education is rebranding education meant to guarantee a comprehensive educational system, reengineering arising from the obvious differences of the existing educational system. It helps to equip the student's requisite skill and competencies needed in the current world of work. Modern ICT could be used as a mean to establish connections between the business and higher education sector. It represents an important opportunity to provide young people with business competencies and entrepreneurship education.

Research Methods

The study adopted a correlational survey design and was carried out in all Secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The population of the study comprised of all business studies students in Akwa Ibom State secondary schools. A sample size of 400 respondents of the total population was used. The sample was determined statistically using Taro Yamane formulae. Multi-staged sampling technique was adopted for this study. A structured instrument called "Information and Communication Technology Questionnaire" (ICTQ) and "Enhancing Entrepreneurial Skills Questionnaire" (*EESQ*) with a 5-point rating scale of very great influence (5points), great influence (4 points), moderate influence (3 points), little influence (2 points) and very little influence (1 point), was developed by the researcher and used to collect data for the study. The instrument was face and content validated by research experts. A reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha analysis. The researcher administered the instrument to the students. Simple Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of ICT training on enhancing entrepreneurial skills among Business Studies students in Akwa Ibom state secondary schools. In order to test the hypothesis simple regression was used to analyse the data, (see table 1).

Table 4.1: Simple regression of influence of ICT training on enhancing entrepreneurial skills among Business Studies students in Akwa Ibom state secondary schools.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.89a	0.79	0.79	0.65	0.79

***Significant at 0.05 level; df = 398; N = 400; critical r-value = 0.113**

The table 1 shows that the calculated R-value 0.89 was greater than the critical R-value of 0.113 at 0.5 alpha level with 398 degree of freedom. The R-square value of 0.89 predicts 89% of the influence of ICT training on enhancing entrepreneurial skills among Business Studies students in Akwa Ibom state secondary schools.

This rate of percentage is highly positive and therefore means that there is significant influence of ICT training on enhancing entrepreneurial skills among Business Studies students in Akwa Ibom state secondary schools.

It was also deemed necessary to find out the extent of the variance of each class of independent variable as responded by each respondent (see table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Analysis of variance of influence of ICT training on enhancing entrepreneurial skills among Business Studies students in Akwa Ibom state secondary schools.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	629.88	1	629.88	1513.63	.000 ^b
Residual	165.62	39	0.416		
Total	795.49	39			

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Skills

b. Predictors: (Constant), ICT

The above table 4.4 presents the calculated F-value as (397.51) and the critical f-value as (000). Being that the critical f-value (000a) is below the probability level of 0.05, the result therefore means that there is significant influence exerted by the independent variables ICT on the dependent variable which is Entrepreneurial Skills.

Hypothesis Two

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of ICT training on creation of employment opportunities for Business Studies students in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. In order to test the hypothesis simple regression was used to analyse the data, (see table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Simple regression of the influence of ICT training on creation of employment opportunities for Business Studies students in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.93a	0.86	0.86	0.53	0.86

***Significant at 0.05 level; df = 398; N = 400; critical r-value = 0.113**

The table 1 shows that the calculated R-value 0.93 was greater than the critical R-value of 0.113 at 0.5 alpha level with 398 degree of freedom. The R-square value of 0.86 predicts 86% of the influence of ICT training on creation of employment opportunities for Business Studies students in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

This rate of percentage is highly positive and therefore means that there is significant influence of ICT training on creation of employment opportunities for Business Studies students in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

It was also deemed necessary to find out the extent of the variance of each class of independent variable as responded by each respondent (see table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Analysis of variance of influence of ICT training on creation of employment opportunities for Business Studies students in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	673.32	1	673.32	2380.14	.000 ^b
Residual	112.59	39	0.28		
Total	785.91	39			

a. Dependent Variable: Employment

b. Predictors: (Constant), ICT

The above table 4.4 presents the calculated F-value as (2380.14) and the critical f-value as (000). Being that the critical f-value (000a) is below the probability level of 0.05, the result therefore means that there is significant influence exerted by the independent variables ICT on the dependent variable which is Employment.

Discussion of the Findings

The result of the data analysis in table 1 was significant due to the fact that the calculated R-value 0.79 was greater than the critical R-value of 0.113 at 0.05 level with 398 degree of freedom. The result implies that there is significant influence of ICT training and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills among graduating students. The result therefore is in agreement with the

research findings of Shai (2009) who came out with a three components categorization of Entrepreneurship Education curriculum considered comprehensive enough to equip the products of the school system with the needed skills and capacities of future life. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

The result of the data analysis in table 3 was significant due to the fact that the calculated R-value 0.86 was greater than the critical R-value of 0.113 at 0.05 level with 398 degree of freedom. The result implies that there is significant influence of ICT training on creation of employment opportunities for graduating students of the institutions of higher learning in Akwa Ibom State. The result therefore is in agreement with the research findings of OMANJAF, (2013) who asserted that entrepreneurship education is geared towards training students to develop and acquire skills, trade or business that results in being employable, creation of job opportunities for empowerment of individual, society and economic development of the nation at large. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore, concluded that

There is significant influence of ICT training and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills among graduating students. There is significant influence of ICT training on creation of employment opportunities for graduating students of the institutions of higher learning in Akwa Ibom State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research work, the following recommendations were deemed necessary:

1. Educators should introduce ICT into entrepreneurship education which could be used to meet the market demands and to provide the students with the set of competencies needed for global challenges.
2. The government should ensure an adequate electricity power supply that will enable digital and electronic devices functioning.

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