
Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition and Standard of Living of Graduate Students in Kogi State,
Nigeria

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the entrepreneurial skills acquired by graduate students and their subsequent standard of living in Kogi State. The study had two objectives and two research questions. The study employed descriptive design with questionnaire as the main data collection tool. The sample size for the study was 345 students in tertiary institutions in Kogi state. Five 5 Likert Scale structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts. A reliability of 0.73 was obtained after the pilot study. Descriptive statistics of mean was used for answering the research questions. The findings indicated satisfactory entrepreneurship skills acquired by graduate students but with fairly satisfactory standard of living. The study concluded that graduate students have entrepreneurship skills but fear to venture into entrepreneurial activities because of lack of financial resources and experiences in their business of interest. The study recommended that students should do internships and volunteer in companies so as to sharpen their entrepreneurship skills and acquire the courage and experience to start a business venture.

Key words: Entrepreneurship, Skills Acquisition, Standard of Living, Kogi State, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a concept that has become embedded in the Nigerian education system, especially among tertiary institutions. The Federal Ministry of Education has over the years recommended and emphasized embedment of entrepreneurship education across all levels of higher education so as to impart skills in students so that they can be innovative, establish enterprises and develop businesses. The philosophy is to provide the students with basic skills for self-reliance. This drive was taken with the intent of promoting innovativeness, creativity and self-reliance among graduate students. In other words, the graduates would not have to worry even when they do not get employed in the formal sector but can easily be absorbed in the informal sector by starting micro businesses using the skills acquired from universities and colleges of education through entrepreneurship education. Unfortunately the graduates have often been reported unemployment among graduates is at increasing rate, hence coursing escalation in number of poor people in the country with deplorable standard of living (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2016). The standard of living is still deplorable among 69.1% Nigerians who are living below the poverty line of one dollar a day and unable to access quality healthcare services

(Millennium Development Goals (MDG), 2015). Accordingly, this is attributed among other factors to the high level of unemployment in the country. A report by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2016) revealed that the number of the population within the working age who were able and actively looking for work but could not find anywas 79.9 million people. The government has over the years tried to fight unemployment among the youth by promoting programs such as, The Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (You Win) Programme; Train to Work (TRATOW) Initiative; Campaign for Patronage of Made-in-Nigeria Productsetc (Small Medium Enterprises Development Agencies of Nigeria (SMEDAN, 2013). However, these attempts have not yielded the desired results. The numbers of graduates who cannot find jobs keep infiltrating the streets of major towns in Kogi State in search for jobs year after year. This makes one to question the entrepreneurial skills of the graduate students who cannot use such skills to venture into entrepreneurial activities. This study therefore assessed (i) the level of entrepreneurial skills acquisition by graduate students in Kogi State, Nigeria (ii) assess the standards of living of graduate students in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Research Question

- i. To what extent have the graduate students in Kogi State acquired entrepreneurship skills?
- ii. What is the nature of the standards of living of graduate students in Kogi State, Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive design, specifically cross-sectional study because the study was describing phenomena. A cross sectional study is a type of observational study that analyses data collected from a population, or a representative subset, at a specific point in time—that is, cross-sectional data. The researcher preferred this study design because it allows for the study of the population at one specific time and the difference between the individual groups within the population to be compared using quantitative approach (Amine, 2005). The target population included 2,500 graduate students from Federal University, Lokoja; Kogi State University, Salem University; Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa and Kabba; and Federal College of Education, Okene. Solven's formula was used to determine the sample size of the respondents.

$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(\alpha)^2}$; Where n =sample size; N =target population; α =0.05 level of significance.

$$n = \frac{2,500}{1 + 2,500(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 345$$

The sample size for the study was 345 students in tertiary institutions in Kogi state. The major data collection instrument was 5 Likert Scale (5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=not sure, 2=disagree, and 1=strongly disagree). Validity of the instruments was established using the judgments and opinions of experts (i.e. one professor and one associate professor) in the field of entrepreneurship. Reliability was established using test-retest method by administering a pretest twice on a sample of 10 graduate students from Kwara State. Consistency of results on both tests with a cronbach's value of 0.72 and 0.73 respectively indicated reliability of the instruments. Data

analysis was done using inferential statistics (mean and standard deviations). This was because the responses collected were in ranked form hence statistical measures of central tendencies such as mean and standard deviations became appropriate tools. In order to interpret data, the following numerical values and descript were used.

#	Mean Range	Response Mode	Interpretation
5	4.01-5.00	Strongly Agree	Very satisfactory
4	3.26-4.00	Agree	Satisfactory
3	2.51-3.25	Undecided	Fairly satisfactory
2	1.76-2.50	Disagree	Unsatisfactory
1	1.00-1.75	Strongly Disagree	Very Unsatisfactory

RESULTS

Table 1: Level of Skills Acquired by Graduate Students in Kogi State, Nigeria

Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
Computer literacy skills			
I can use graphics to design wedding cards, flyers, business cards, billboards etc	3.73	1.051	Satisfactory
I can network computers.	3.70	1.112	Satisfactory
I can design simple enterprise software/database	3.67	1.019	Satisfactory
I can design website for a company/organization/institution	3.65	1.115	Satisfactory
Average mean	3.69	1.074	Satisfactory
Technical skills			
I can troubleshoot and repair a computer.	3.81	0.988	Satisfactory
I can repair a photocopier/printer.	3.80	1.056	Satisfactory
I can repair a motor bike/car.	3.79	1.080	Satisfactory
I can make/repair furniture.	3.75	1.139	Satisfactory
Average mean	3.79	1.066	Satisfactory
Financial Management skills			
I know how to keep financial records of a business properly.	4.03	.976	Very satisfactory
I know how to manage a business budget properly.	3.92	1.013	Satisfactory
I can forecast expenses in a business.	3.91	1.064	Satisfactory
I can evaluate risks in a business.	3.40	1.122	Satisfactory
Average mean	3.82	1.044	Satisfactory
Organizational skills			
I can manage risks within a business.	3.96	1.034	Satisfactory
I know how to research and plan for a good business.	3.90	1.067	Satisfactory
I can meet deadlines in case it is necessary.	3.88	1.053	Satisfactory
I know how to control and management people properly.	3.72	1.125	Satisfactory
Average mean	3.87	1.070	Satisfactory
Overall average	3.79	1.064	Satisfactory

Table 1 shows a satisfactory level of skills acquisition by the graduate students (overall average mean=3.79, Std = 1.064). This is attributed to the satisfactory organizational skills acquired (average mean = 3.87, Std = 1.070); financial management skills (average mean=3.82, Std = 1.044); technical skills (average mean = 3.79, Std = 1.066); and computer literacy skills (average mean=3.69, Std = 1.064).

Table 2: Standard of Living of Graduate Students in Kogi State, Nigeria

Standard of living	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
Household expenditure			
I can afford three meals a day.	4.02	0.948	Very satisfactory
I spend a lot on food items such as beans, posho, cassava, yams etc	2.55	1.715	Fairly satisfactory
I spend a lot on other food items such as milk, fruits, beef, liver, chicken, fish etc.	2.48	1.801	Unsatisfactory
Average mean	3.02	1.488	Fairly satisfactory
Housing Conditions			
I live in a rented house.	3.07	1.316	Fairly satisfactory
The house I live in has cemented floors and tiled.	2.93	1.295	Fairly satisfactory
The house I live in is well ventilated with a ceiling board and roofed with good iron sheets.	2.89	1.278	Fairly satisfactory
The house I live in has both toilet and bathroom inside.	2.69	1.399	Fairly satisfactory
The house I live in is spacious enough.	2.38	1.412	Unsatisfactory
Average mean	2.90	1.322	Fairly satisfactory
Access to healthcare services/facilities			
I can afford to buy medicine from a private health facility when I fall sick.	2.43	1.687	Unsatisfactory
I always consult a qualified medical doctor when I fall sick.	2.34	1.589	Unsatisfactory
I do regular check-ups, every three months to ascertain my health status.	1.52	0.588	Unsatisfactory
Average mean	2.10	1.288	Unsatisfactory
Overall average mean	2.67	1.366	Fairly satisfactory

Source: primary data (March-April), 2017

Table 2 revealed that the standard of living of the graduate students of Kogi State was assessed as fairly satisfactory (overall average mean=2.67, Std=1.366). This was attributed to the unsatisfactory level of access to healthcare services/facilities (average mean=3.02, Std=1.488), coupled with the fairly satisfactory household expenditure and housing conditions (average mean=2.90, Std=1.322).

DISCUSSIONS

The study found a satisfactory level of skills' acquisition by the graduate students in Kogi State. The graduate students revealed having acquired computer literacy skills, technical skills, financial management skills and organizational skills during their years of education. This therefore implies that with this kind of skills, they can be able to venture into entrepreneurial activities for self-employment purposes. This is because entrepreneurship education that they did while at University or College, engaged them in a wide range of activities that required them to be informed, skilled, thoughtful and adaptable. In other words through practical and real-life contexts, students are able to plan and set goals when carrying out collaborative tasks and evaluate progress. They work together to locate and record information from a range of sources and learn to discriminate between fact and opinion and question the reliability of evidence. Crucially, through experimenting with their own and others' ideas, they become skillful and confident in entrepreneurial thinking, willing to take risks with ideas.

Donli (2004) agrees with the findings of this study when he reveals that skills acquisition is manifested when ideas and knowledge through training (in this case entrepreneurship education) is birthed into entrepreneurship. Magbagbeola (2004) also contends that in order to get involved in entrepreneurial activities, one must accumulate the required skills so as to enhance task performance through the integration of both theoretical and practical forms of knowledge. However, even with the above mentioned skills, the study found that the standard of living of the students was fairly satisfactory. In other words, they hardly have any better household expenditure, housing conditions or access to healthcare services/facilities. This simply signifies that even when armed with entrepreneurial skills, graduate students cannot earn a living from their skills. The questions one would commonly ask would be, why they not are not using the skills acquired to engage in life changing business venture even when they fail to get formal jobs. The answer as echoed by Olannye (2010) would be lack of financial resources, fear of business failure due to lack of experience, preference for formal employment, and other factors that both political and environmental.

CONCLUSION

In spite of the skills acquired by the graduate students in Kogi State, their standard of living is still deplorable. This is because most of them did not find formal employment while others did not use such skills to venture into entrepreneurial activities. This has made their unemployment worsen to their poverty level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need for the graduate students to be encouraged to enroll for internship in business entities so as to sharpen their skills level and ignite entrepreneurial interests through experiences got from such trainings.

Similarly, graduate students should be encouraged to volunteer to work in organizations of their specialization so as to gain experience and improve their knowledge which they can use for entrepreneurial advantages.

In addition, graduate students should be encouraged to form groups which will research and innovate better solutions for problems in their local areas. They can then write a detailed business plan to concerned government bodies or private institutions for funding hence solving unemployment and improving standards of living.

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