

SELF-EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS ACQUISITION AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AMONG GRADUATING BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN CROSS RIVER STATE NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study ascertained the relationship between self-employability skills acquisition and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students in Tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to examine the relationship between ICT skills and managerial skills as the independent variables and sustainable economic development the dependent variable. Two research questions were posed, and two null hypotheses were formulated accordingly to guide the study. Literatures were reviewed in accordance with variables of the study. The design adopted for the study was descriptive survey research design. The area covered by this study is Calabar Metropolis. The population of the study is made up of 1,418 Business Education students, drawn from the University of Calabar and Cross River University of Technology. Sampling technique used in the study was a multistage sampling technique, involving the utilization of stratified random, purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The sample for this study is 142 Business Education students. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-made questionnaire titled Self-Employability Skills for Sustainable Economic Development Questionnaire (SESSEDQ). The questionnaire was a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), with responses scored 4, 3, 2, and 1 point respectively. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Simple regression analysis techniques was employed to test the hypotheses with the source of the regression used to establish the relationship with research questions. The results of the analysis revealed that, there is significant relationship between self-employability skills possessed by business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River state and sustainable economic development in Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that government should make concerted efforts to equip Business Education resource room with all information and communication technology tools including good computer and internet for students learning and practice.

Key word: Self employability, skills, Business Education, Sustainable Economic Development, ICT Skills, Managerial Skills

Introduction

The success of the economic activities of a country depended largely on the skilled labor force, whether under a paid job or self-employed. These skillful individuals are the authors of the economics of any nation. There are knowledgeable producers, problem solvers, and creative thinkers who can apply their skills to improve their lives and

contribute to the societies they found themselves, thereby improving the standard of living for all. Skills for operating a business enterprise are needed for the business to succeed in the competitive market. Skill is the ability to do something well, and is usually gained through training or experience. Skills are the economic tools with which

entrepreneurs acquire to solve societal problems. Skills are practical activities that make one employable, self-reliant, and relevant to society (Okoli, 2013). Any skill that enable the individual to start a business and sustain the business are termed self-employability skills. The application of self-employability skills produces self-employed individuals.

According to Laing (2011) self-employment is starting and running a successful business or social enterprise and is equally a lifestyle choice achievable by setting up a business, either on a full-time basis or alongside a part-time job; working as a freelancer or contractor and buying into a franchise. Self-employment therefore is a situation whereby individual persons engage in any economic activity and manages it on their own. According to Department of Human Services (2017), self-employment is a situation whereby individual operates a business or profession as a sole proprietor, partner in a partnership or Corporation, independent contractor or consultant and draw income from the trade or business while the person must demonstrate that he or she is in business for the purpose of making a profit. The skills required for such business is self-employability skills. These skills prepares business education graduates to either operate their own business. Graduate of business education need different skills such as human relations skills, innovative skills, and problem-solving skills among others to run any kind of business enterprise (Ezenwafor & Olaniyi. 2017).

According Olawoyin (2020), Business Education is a type of education that is designed to inculcate in individuals skills, knowledge, business spirit, and acumen needed to thrive in the world of work and to become self-reliant. Nwaigburu and Eneogwe (2013) opined that Business Education represents a broad and diverse discipline that is included in all types of educational delivery

systems, elementary, secondary and tertiary institutions. It includes education for office occupation, distribution, marketing occupations, accounting, business teaching, business administration, business management, typewriting, stenography, and secretarial education or studies. Business Education will produce responsible, productive, and self-reliant citizens. Ekwere (2020) asserted that most Business Education graduates engaging in self-employment, are doing so without possessing much skills and competences in management of the business activities, marketing and creating awareness of the business products through technologies, and effectively keeping records of the financial statements of the business, that will ensure successful operations of the business; as a result of these attitudes, failure followed instead of success.

In a technological age, information and communication technology skills are very necessary for success in business. According to Esen and Gundogbu (2017), ICT are technologies that people use to share, distribute, and gather information and to communicate through computers and computer networks. Hilty and Aebischer (2015), states that ICT for sustainability can be subdivided into sustainability in ICT and sustainability by ICT. Sustainability in ICT means making ICT goods and services more sustainable over their whole life cycle, mainly by reducing the energy and material flows they invoke. While the Sustainability by ICT means creating, enabling, and encouraging sustainable patterns of production and consumption by means of ICT. In a study carried out by Siddiquah and Salim (2017) noted that majority of the students have access to computers and internet facilities both at home and in the universities, as such, they possess some skills such as knowledge of Microsoft word, Microsoft PowerPoint, searching and browsing on the internet, social

networking, e-mail, uploading file, and video games.

Conversely, amidst these various skills possessed by the students, it is obvious that they lack other skills such as proper usage of e-library, discussion forums and blogging. Odede and Enakerakpo (2014) further added still that, these skills were acquired by the students themselves through handbooks and manuals, friends and courses in their various institutions. Subsequently, Siddiquah and Salim, (2017) stated that the students engage themselves in doing other computer related activities instead of focusing on their academics. This is because, most of the students believed that using ICT ease their learning. Perhaps this is because everything is now at their fingertips courtesy of ICT.

In a study conducted by Oguguo, et al (2020) on information and communication technology (ICT) skills relevant for effective learning possessed by undergraduate students, and found that undergraduate students possessed the relevant ICT skills that will enhance their learning and that the ICT skills of the male students were not different from that of the female. The findings also showed that the ICT skills of undergraduate students differ based on their educational level, particularly, between the 100 level and 500 levels. Equally, the finding reveals that the students face some ICT challenges like non-functional/limited projectors in classrooms, limited e-learning facilities among others. Conversely, Ekwere (2020), examined managerial and ICT skills possessed by Business Education graduating students for entrepreneurial success in Universities in South-South Nigeria. The result of the study showed that the level of managerial and ICT skills possessed by Business Education graduating students in Universities in South-South Nigeria, is quite low.

Managerial skills are those essential skills that are needed to get most jobs that are helpful to employees to stay in a job and

facilitate their promotions. The skills are flexibly adapted, applied and transferred under different contexts necessary for gainful employment (Ibrahim, 2014). According to Halliru (2011) managerial skills include technical skills, human relation skills, conceptual skills, design skills, Critical Thinking and Judgments Skills, Skills in Solving complex, multidisciplinary and open-ended problems, Creativity and entrepreneurial thinking Skills, Communicating and collaborating Skills, Skills in Making innovative use of knowledge, information and opportunities and Skills in taking charge of financial health and civic responsibilities. Managerial skills acquired by a manager/or entrepreneur enable him to scout for a good business, set business objectives and formulate guidelines to achieve them. He is enabled to establish a good organizational structure, well-coordinated with well-established functional relationship among the workers; establishing responsibilities and authorities with proper control of the available resources to attain set objectives (Onwuchekwa in Okoli, 2014).

In a study carried out by Anele and Don-Solomon (2017) on managerial skills considered necessary for the success of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs,) in curbing social vices in Rivers and Bayelsa States of Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that all the identified managerial skills were considered highly necessary by the managers for the success of SMEs for curbing social vices. Also, the managers 'years of working experiences had no effect on their responses. Koko and Chike (2020) sought to ascertain the personal, managerial and problem solving skills needed by Business Education Postgraduate Students for entrepreneurial development in Rivers State. This study found amongst others that communication, caring for others, gathering evidence, tolerance, relating with people, persistence, patience, understanding human behaviour, empathy,

planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, decision making, goal setting, negotiating, making effective recommendations, critical thinking, observation, flexibility and improvising under stress are skills needed by Business Education Postgraduate Students for entrepreneurial development in Rivers State. In a study conducted by Olawoyin (2020) to determine self-employment skills needed by business education students in colleges of education in south-west, Nigeria for national development. The study found that Business Education students needed skills such as time management skills and self-motivation skills for self-employment and national development. Binuomote and Okoli (2015) carried out a research on business education students' perception of skill needed for successful entrepreneurship in Nigeria and revealed that business education students need technical and financial management skills to function well in this time of economic meltdown in Nigeria. In the same vein, Ochogba, Johnwest, Isiodu and Igwe (2017) found that tolerance, communication, creative thinking, problem solving, goal setting, decision making, record keeping, and management are entrepreneurial skills in Technical and Vocational Education and Training and that the acquisition of these skills help graduates who are youths in; making good decision that will benefit a business, effective management of business, keeping good business records and others. Ability for Business Education graduates to acquire the needed skills is an indication that the country is focusing on Sustainable economic development.

Sustainable economic development is a national initiative built on local economic unique assets to address their individual challenges and provide quantifiable real-world benefits. It is a practical implementable toolkit that tailors strategies to work for local people, businesses and institutions that is elements of an anti-poverty programme and

may be common from place to place, but solutions must be grounded in the political, social and economic reality of a location if they are to create real change (Bernstein, 2020). Ike, Okanya and Opeyemi (2020), examined the contributions of TVET to sustainable economic development in workforce development, poverty reduction/wealth creation and to societal peace and security in Enugu State of Nigeria. The findings revealed 31 contributions of TVET to economic development with respect to workforce development, poverty reduction/wealth creation and global security. It was recommended that proper administration of TVET is needed in Enugu State in order to facilitate the achievement of the objectives that are set for the programmes and that more effort should be made toward planning, organizing, controlling, directing, implementing and evaluation of TVET programmes for the realization of sustainable economic development and global peace and security.

Statement of problem

Going by the objectives of Business Education as a type of education that is designed to inculcate in individuals' skills, knowledge, business spirit, and acumen needed to thrive in the world of work/business and to become self-reliant. Business Education graduates who have gone through the undergraduate program in tertiary institutions are expected to have acquired self-employment skills such as managerial skills, ICT skills, time management skills, self-motivation skills, interpersonal skills, financial management skills, human resource management skills, planning skills, marketing skills and customer service skills that will enable them to own and manage their businesses and become employers of labor.

Unfortunately, this is not the case, cankerworm called unemployment that is ravaging Nigerian graduates from all

profession still affect Business Education graduates. Business Education graduates are roaming the streets in search of white-collar jobs that are rarely available. This circumstance has a resultant effect on the standard of living on those affected by this snare. With the lack of these skills, Business Education graduates roam about the streets of Nigeria in search for white collar jobs that are not obtainable. The above situation is worrisome, it means that Business Education which is meant to equip the individual these saleable and self-employment skills has failed in its mandate. It can be concluded that the existing Business Education academic program drawn up for tertiary institutions in Nigeria no longer seem to sufficiently contain the needed skills for actualization of successful business activities in the present-day job market. Hence the need to carry out this study that sets out to determine self-employability skills possessed by business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River state for sustainable economic development.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between self-employability skills acquisition and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to determine the relationship between:

1. ICT skills acquisition and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students in Cross River State Nigeria.
2. Managerial skills acquisition and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students in Cross River State Nigeria.

Research questions

1. What is the relationship between ICT acquired and sustainable economic

development among graduating business education students in Cross River State Nigeria?

2. What is the relationship between managerial skills acquired and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students in Cross River State Nigeria?

Research hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between ICT skills acquired and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students in Cross River State Nigeria
2. There is no significant relationship between managerial skills acquired and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students in Cross River State Nigeria.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research designs are employed in exploratory and preliminary studies to permit the study to collect information, summarize, present and construe for the principle reason of clarification (Orodho, 2012). Survey design is used to find out what situations, events, attitudes or opinions are occurring in a population. It tries to address issues of distribution of some phenomena in a population or among sub groups of a population (Isangedighi, 2012). The method also enables the researcher to gather information about variables rather than information about individuals (Ndiyo (2005) in Ateboh-Briggs, 2013). This research work is within the provisions of descriptive survey research design because the researcher will gather data and report the state in which things are without changing any variables.

The area covered by this study is Calabar Metropolis. Calabar is the capital city

of Cross-River state; the city is divided into Calabar Municipality and Calabar South Local Government Area in South Senatorial District of the State. Calabar is bounded in the North by Akamkpa, on the South by the estuary of Cross River that flows into the Bight of Biafra, on the West by Odukpani and on the East by Akpabuyo Local Government Area. The people of Calabar Metropolis are mainly civil-servants, subsistence farmers, petty trader and businessmen. The predominant religion is Christianity. The area is rich in sea foods. The main cash crops are oil palm and rubber trees. Their staple food are garri and yam. It has several tertiary institutions such as the University of Calabar, Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH), School of Nursing, School of Health Technology etc.

The population of the study is made up of 1,418 Business Education students, drawn from the University of Calabar and Cross River University of Technology. The breakdown of the population is shown in Table 1. Sampling technique used in the study was a multistage sampling techniques, the method involves the utilization of stratified random, purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Stratified random sampling was used to group the students into institutions and years of studies while purposive sampling technique was used to select ten percent (10%) from the total population who actually participated in the study. The choice for 10% is in agreement

with Ali (2006) who states that in a definite population, a choice of 10-30% is reasonable.

Simple random sampling technique was used to determine from each year who should participate in the study in order to give them equal opportunity of being selected, the researcher wrote the names of students on slip of papers. Each slip was rolled into a paper ball and put into a container, and five lecturers each from the two universities were used to draw them from the container in order to establish the sample. The sample for this study is 142 Business Education students. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-made questionnaire titled Self-Employability Skills for Sustainable Economic Development Questionnaire (SESSEDQ). These were to elicit appropriate responses from Business Education students on statements related to the hypotheses of the study. The questionnaire was a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The researcher in order to ensure a hundred percent return of completed questionnaires, goes personally to administer the questionnaires to the respondents in all the business premises with the help of four research assistants. The respondents were informed of the exercise and the need to give objective responses to the items. Data collected was subjected to analysis using simple linear statistical tool with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Table 1: Population and sample distribution by Institution and Years of studies

YEARS	UNICAL	CRUTECH	TOTAL	UNICAL	CRUTECH	TOTAL
	Population	Population	Population	Sample	Sample	Sample
1	115	170	285	12	17	29
2	160	196	356	16	20	36
3	118	234	352	12	23	35
4	145	280	425	14	28	42
Total	538	880	1,418	54	88	142

Source: Field survey 2022

Presentation of results

The result of this study is presented in two folds; the research questions answer and the test of hypotheses.

What is the relationship between ICT skills and Sustainable economic development among graduating Business Education Students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria.?

Research question one

Table2: The relationship between ICT skills and sustainable economic development among graduating Business Education Students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
	.279	.756	.755	.454	.756	25.366	2	139	.000	.485

The result presented in Table 2 shows the relationship between ICT skills acquired and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students with a coefficient of .75.6. This means that there was a high and positive relationship between the ICT skills acquired and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River state. The coefficient of determination associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.75.6 is 0.75.5. The coefficient of determination shows that 75.6% of sustainable economic development is

attributed to ICT skills possessed by business education students. This is an indication that 24.4 % of sustainable economic development is attributed to other variables outside ICT skills possessed by business education students.

Research question two

What is the relationship between managerial skills and Sustainable economic development among graduating Business Education Students in tertiary institutions in Cross River state, Nigeria?

Table 3: The relationship between managerial skills and Sustainable economic development among graduating Business Education Students in Tertiary institutions in Cross River state, Nigeria

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
	.246	.891	.886	.809	.891	61.466	2	139	.000	.484

The result presented in Table 3 shows the relationship between the managerial skills acquired and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students with a coefficient of 0.89.1. This means that there was a high and

positive relationship between the managerial skills possessed by business education students and sustainable economic development. The coefficient of determination associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.89.1 is 0.88.6. The coefficient of determination shows that 89.1% of

sustainable economic development is attributed to the managerial skills possessed by business education students. This is an indication that 10.9% of sustainable economic development is attributed to other variables order than the managerial skills possessed by business education students.

Hypotheses testing

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between ICT skills acquired and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students

Table 4: Simple Linear Regression analysis of the relationship between ICT skills acquired and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F-ratio	Sig.
Regression	675.27	2	337.635	61.466	.000
Residual	763.55	139	5.493		
Total	1438.82	141			

$\alpha = 0.05, S = Significant$

The result in Table 4 shows the regression analysis on relationship between ICT skills acquired and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students. The Result shows that an F-ratio of 61.466 with associated or exact probability value of 0.00 was obtained. This exact probability value of 0.00 was less than 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no relationship between ICT skills possessed by business education students in tertiary institutions in

Cross River state and sustainable economic development was therefore rejected. Inference drawn is that, there is relationship between ICT skills possessed by business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River state and sustainable economic development.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between managerial skills acquired and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students

Table 5: Simple Linear Regression analysis of the relationship between managerial skills acquired and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F-ratio	Sig.
Regression	699.57	2	349.785	65.774	.000
Residual	739.25	139	5.318		
Total	1438.82	141			

$\alpha = 0.05, S = Significant$

The result in Table 5 shows the regression analysis for the relationship between managerial skills possessed by business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River state and sustainable economic development. Result shows that an F-ratio of 65.774 with associated or exact probability value of 0.00 was obtained. This exact

probability value of 0.00 was less than 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between managerial skills possessed by business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River state and sustainable economic development was therefore rejected. Inference drawn is that,

managerial skills possessed by business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River state significantly relates sustainable economic development.

Discussion of findings

Findings from the research question one analysed revealed that there is a significant relationship between ICT skills acquired and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students. These findings are in line with the work of Ike, Okanya and Opeyemi (2020) who examined the contributions of TVET to sustainable economic development in workforce development, poverty reduction/wealth creation and to societal peace and security in Enugu State of Nigeria, and found 31 contributions of TVET to economic development with respect to workforce development, poverty reduction/wealth creation and global security. Also, the finding was supported by Olawoyin (2020) who found that Business Education students needed skills such as time management skills and self-motivation skills for self-employment and national development.

The finding from the hypotheses shows that the variables considered for the study significantly relate to sustainable economic development in Nigeria. Finding from hypothesis one revealed that there is relationship between ICT skills possessed by business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River state and sustainable economic development. This finding agrees with the finding of Siddiquah and Salim (2017) stated that majority of the students have access to computers and internet facilities both at home and in the universities, as such, they possess some skills such as knowledge of Microsoft word, Microsoft PowerPoint, searching and browsing on the internet, social networking, e-mail, uploading file, and video games. Also, Oguguo, et al (2020) agrees that undergraduate students possessed the relevant

ICT skills that will enhance their learning and that the ICT skills of the male students were not different from that of the female. On the contrarily, Ekwere (2020), found that the level of ICT skills possessed by Business Education graduating students in Universities in South-South Nigeria, is quite low.

Finding from hypothesis two shows a significant relationship between managerial skills acquired and sustainable economic development among graduating business education students in Cross River State, Nigeria. This finding is in consonant with the findings of Anele and Don-Solomon (2017) who found all the identified managerial skills were considered highly necessary by the managers for the success of SMEs for curbing social vices. The finding was further supported by Koko and Chike (2020) found amongst others that communication, caring for others, gathering evidence, tolerance, relating with people, persistence, patience, understanding human behaviour, empathy, planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, decision making, goal setting, negotiating, making effective recommendations, critical thinking, observation, flexibility and improvising under stress are skills needed by Business Education Postgraduate Students for entrepreneurial development in Rivers State.

Conclusion

The researcher concluded that there was significant relationship between ICT skills and managerial skills possessed by Business Education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River state for sustainable economic development. This implies that self-employability skills possessed by business education students plays pivotal roles in sustainable economic development in Nigeria. Skills possessed Business Education can go a long way to reduce the hardship faced by many in Nigeria today, this is because with the number of graduates that Business Education programme turned out to the

employment market on yearly basis, if all can acquire self-employment skills upon graduation, they will be able to start up their own businesses which will help to provide for themselves, their families and contribute to the society. This will cumulate to sustaining the economic development of the country.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should make concerted efforts to equip Business Education resource room with all information and communication technology tools including good computer and internet for students learning and practice.
2. Lecturers and instructors should engage students with challenging and practical activities that will help them prepare their managerial skills, and they should from time to time role-play manager's responsibility to help develop their skills. And should be made to from time to time role-play manager's responsibility in order to gain mastery on the training to acquire managerial skills.

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