

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AS A CORRELATE OF GRADUATES' EMPLOYABILITY IN ENUGU STATE**

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### **Abstract**

*The study investigated entrepreneurship education as a correlate of graduates' employability in Enugu State. Two research questions were posed and two null hypotheses formulated guided the study. The Research design used for the study was correlation survey. Sample size was 220 graduates identify in the State. Instrument for data collection were two questionnaire sets titled "Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire (EEQ) and Graduate Employability Questionnaire (GEQ). These were developed by the researchers and validated by three experts in Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The internal consistency reliability coefficient of EEQ and GEQ were determined using Cronbach Alpha statistics and reliability estimate values of 0.92 and 0.90 were obtained for EEQ and GEQ respectively. The data collected were analyzed using Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for research questions, while analysis of variance which are aspects of multiple linear regression was used in testing the null hypotheses at  $p < 0.05$  level of significance. Result of the study indicated that entrepreneurship education relates positively with graduates' employability. Also revealed was that no significant relationship exists between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability as moderated by gender. The implications of these findings were highlighted and some recommendations made.*

### **Introduction**

It has been observed by experts and different educational institutions that Nigeria's educational system is entirely dependent on paper certification and less emphasis on practical skills for self reliance. The effects are that school leavers and graduates of higher institutions stand in long queues for white collar jobs that are few because they lack practical skills for self reliance. Even though, the aim of education in Nigeria as contained in Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) is to equip every citizen with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable him derive maximum benefits from his membership of society. In addition, the FRN (2013) anticipates education to enable the individual live a fulfilling life and contribute towards the development and welfare of the community. This fulfillment can only come into function when the individual have acquired practical skills for self reliance.

Research studies, such as Fulude (2014), Ochi (2015) and Nonye (2016) have showed that there are lots of graduates from higher institutions without gainful

employment. A large number of graduates year after years roam the street looking for white collar jobs. This has led to instances of graduates doing menial jobs like okada riders, taxi drivers to earn a living (Ibeh, 2016). Graduates from higher institutions serve as labourers in construction companies and local building houses (Nze, 2017). This situation has been a serious worry to experts, government and institutions of education. As the issue of employability of graduates being recorded in Nigeria in general and Enugu State in particular which has been explained from a number of view points, prominent among them is the lack of practical skills and over-dependent on the certificates (Fulude, 2014). In Enugu State, the researchers have observed that a lot of graduates are roaming the street looking for employment opportunities. Some of the graduates are found gambling, some riding okada and some join bad gangs. Some of them are involved in electronic media menace like social networking or internet (facebook, browsing) among others with the intension to dupe people of their hard earned money. In support of the above observation, Ugwoke (2015) posit that 70% of graduates every year have no job.

Employability has been variously defined by experts according to their perceptions. According to Dixton (2013) employability can be defined as the ability to gain employment with easy or without stress. It is a range of experiences and attributes developed through higher-level learning (Feldman, 2016). Employability is the ability and skills an individual have acquired to gain employment (Coleh, 2017). From these definitions, it implies that employability has to do with an individual's skills and ability to gain employment. In this study therefore, employability means graduates possession of skills and ability to gain employment.

Graduates to gain employment require skills. According to Charles (2013) graduate means a person who have successfully completed a course of study or training, especially a person who has been awarded academic degree. It is a person who has received a degree or diploma on completing a course of study in a University or College of Education. Graduates undergo series of courses and project works before graduation. People who study and graduate in university are called university graduates, while those who graduate from Colleges of Education are called college of education graduates, likewise other educational institutions.

Educational institutions in Enugu State graduate their students year after year and these graduates area roaming streets without employment. The researchers are thinking that practical skills like entrepreneurship education can reduce this problem of graduates' unemployability. In the support of the above statement, Urema (2014) posits that entrepreneurship education have a positive relationship with graduates creation of job. Also, Udeze (2015) noted that entrepreneurship education have a great impact on graduates creation of jobs. According to Kolawole and Omolayo (2006) many individuals have difficulties developing business ideas and in translating their business ideas into reality and creating new business ventures because of lack of necessary information and skills needed to achieve their targets. The curriculum of

many tertiary institutions is oriented towards making graduates suitable only for white collar jobs (Urema, 2014). This explains why millions of our youths and a lot of university graduates roam the streets of major cities and towns in search of white collar jobs (Kalu, 2014).

However, it is necessary and possible that Nigerian tertiary institutions can stimulate economic growth as deliberate agendum for production of entrepreneurial graduates. Hence, in order to boost entrepreneurship development among the youths, the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC, 2007) in its Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards for undergraduate programmes in Nigerian Universities introduced two courses on Entrepreneurship Education in the curriculum of Nigerian Universities, one theory and the other practical. Bassey (2013) identified the goals and objectives of the entrepreneurship education programme to include the following: to help students to define and develop a bankable business plan for any enterprise, to equip them with effective management strategies in their chosen enterprise business among others.

Entrepreneurial education is about seeing opportunities and bringing about changes. It is a practice of starting new organizations or revitalizing organizations, particularly new businesses generally in response to identified opportunities (Bassey, 2013). Dixton (2013) defined entrepreneurship as a dynamic process of vision change and creation; and integrated concept that permeates an individual's business in an innovative manner. Entrepreneurship therefore in this study is graduates willingness and ability to find out an investment opportunity, apply the energy towards the creation of an enterprise and convert a new idea into a successful innovation achieved through education.

Entrepreneurship education is a catalytic agent in the economic development process (Bassey, 2013). Entrepreneurship education applies to a broader range of problems (Hynell, 2006). Countries that practice entrepreneurship education played a vital role in industrial revolution and affected changes in the socio-economic conditions of nations (Matlay, 2008). This implies that with introduction of entrepreneurship education in universities, there will be more entrepreneurs to bring about entrepreneurial development, job creation, wealth generation and global competitiveness.

Another factor that could affect graduates' employability is gender. Nobelus (2004) stated that gender refers to masculine and feminine characteristics. Also, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) stated that gender refers to behaviours, roles, expectations and activities which the society or culture delineates as masculine or feminine. Also, Berk (2003) stated that gender is a social construction that has to do with behaving according to type. Therefore, in this study, gender refers to behaviours and activities of graduates' boys and girls with regards to employability. Regarding the behaviour of boys and girls, Alison (2016) found out that there was significant difference between male and female university graduates on job creation.

On this note, therefore, it was the interest of this study to determine whether entrepreneurship education would relate to graduate employability as moderated by gender or not.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aims at investigating entrepreneurship education as correlate of graduates' employability. Specifically, the study sought to:

- (1) Determine the relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability.
- (2) Determine the relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability as moderated by gender.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- (1) What is the relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability?
- (2) What is the relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability as moderated by gender?

### **Hypotheses**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability as moderated by gender.

### **Method**

The research design used for the study was a correlation survey design. The population for the study was 220 graduates. The entire population for the study was used as sample. This is because the number can be managed. The instruments used for data collection were two sets of questionnaire titled: Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire (EEQ) and Graduates' Employability Questionnaire (GEQ). This instrument were developed by the researchers and validated by three experts in Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The internal consistency reliability co-efficient of EEQ and GEQ were determined using Cronbach Alpha statistic and reliability estimate values of 0.92 and 0.90 were obtained for EEQ and GEQ respectively. The data for the study were collected through personal administration of the instrument by the researchers. The data collected were analyzed using coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for research questions while analysis of variance which are aspects of multiple linear regression was used in testing the hypotheses as  $p < 0.05$  level of significance.

## Results

### Research Question One

What is the relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability?

**Table 1: Regression analysis on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability**

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability	0.67	0.45

(R<sup>2</sup>) = Coefficient of Determination

The result on Table 1 shows that the coefficient between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability was 0.67. This means that, there exist a high positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability. Table 1 also revealed that the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.67 was 0.45. This coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) indicates that, 45% of variation in graduates' employability is attributed to entrepreneurship education.

### Research Question Two

What is the relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability as moderated by gender?

**Table 2: Regression analysis of relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability as moderated by gender**

Model	Gender	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>
1	Male	100	.68	.46
2	Female	120	.56	.31

The result in Table 2 revealed that the coefficients (r) of .68 and .56 with associated coefficients of determinant (r<sup>2</sup>) of .46 and .31 were obtained for male and female graduates respectively between their employability and entrepreneurship education. The obtained coefficients of determinant of .46 and .31 indicate that 46% and 31% variation in graduates' employability is attributed to entrepreneurship education for male and female graduates' respectively. The difference in the variation of male and female as predicted by entrepreneurship education is jointly 15% in favour of the male graduates. Hence, gender moderated 15% of the variation in graduates' employability in favour of the males than their female counterparts.

### Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability.

**Table 3: Regression analysis of significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability**

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	.312	1	.313	2.001	.003 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	83.422	218	.156		
Total	83.736	219			

The result on Table 3 shows that an F-ratio of 2.001 with associated exact probability value of 0.003 which is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. The researchers therefore, conclude that, there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability.

#### **Hypothesis Two**

There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability as moderated by gender.

**Table 4: t-test analysis of significant difference between the correlation coefficients of male and female graduates in the prediction of their employability and entrepreneurship education**

Variable (Gender)	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>	df	t-value	p-value
Male	100	.68	.46	218	.152	.879
Female	120	.56	.31			

To test hypothesis two, t-test analysis of significant difference between two samples correlation coefficients (*r*) of male and female graduates' employability and entrepreneurship education. Result on Table 4 shows the t-test for independent samples assuming equal variance revealed that  $t_{218} = .152, p > 0.05$ . Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted since the p-value of .879 was greater than 0.05 level of significant. The researchers therefore conclude that there is no significant difference in relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability as moderated by gender.

#### **Discussion of the Findings**

The table one result shows that the correlation coefficient between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability was high. This means that,

there exists high positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduate employability. By implication, the coefficient of determination with a 45 percent variation in the graduates' employability can be attributed to entrepreneurship education. It means that increase in entrepreneurship education leads to increase of graduates' employability.

Further analysis of the relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability reveals that at the associated probability, the calculated value of F, is less than the level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability.

The findings of this study is in support of the study of Urema (2014) who carried out a study on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates creation of job and found that entrepreneurship education have a positive relationship with graduates creation of job. In the same vein, Udeze (2015) noted that entrepreneurship education have a great impact on the graduates creation of job. The finding of this study shows that graduates who acquire entrepreneurship education can create employment. This finding suggests that graduates should acquire entrepreneurship education for creation of employment and self reliance.

This study also shows that a positive correlation exists between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability of male and female graduates respectively with male graduates' employability being higher than that of female employability. This obtained variation in coefficients of determination of graduates' employability could be attributed to cultural gender bias for entrepreneurship education for males than female graduates respectively. Hence, graduates' employability is in favour of male than their female counterparts.

Furthermore, this study shows that there is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability as moderated by gender. This finding is in agreement with the study of Alison (2016) who found that there was no significant difference between male and female university graduates on creation of job. However, the findings of this study suggest that the entrepreneurship education lead to graduates' employability, but there was no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability and gender. In other words, gender is not a factor on graduates' employability.

## **Conclusion**

The research emanated from the need to seek solution for graduates' high employability rate in Nigeria. Consequently, the study investigated the relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability. The study revealed that relationship exists between entrepreneurship education and graduates' employability. Therefore, entrepreneurship education should be vigorously pursued in schools to facilitate graduates to be self-reliance and employability opportunities.

### **Implication of the Findings**

The result of the study indicated that entrepreneurship education relates positively to graduates' employability. By implication, school counsellors should counsel undergraduate students to acquire entrepreneurship education to enable them gain employment and be self-reliant.

### **Recommendations**

- (1) School guidance counsellors should counsel undergraduates to acquire entrepreneurship education to help them gain employment and be self-reliant.
- (2) School guidance counsellors should organize workshops on entrepreneurship education at regular intervals in the society to enable graduates gain employment.

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