

Assessment of Entrepreneurship Skills for the Establishment of Small and Medium Scale Businesses: Gender Perspectives of Science, Technical and Vocational Schools' Teachers in Enugu State

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Abstract

The study appraised how well female and male technical and vocational school students in Enugu State, Nigeria, acquired the entrepreneurship skills needed for the establishment of small and medium-scale businesses. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive survey design was used. 152 female and male technical and vocational school teachers in Nsukka and Obollo Educational Zone constituted the population, and a sample of 110 respondents. Three professionals (Business Education & Measurement and Evaluation Lecturers) validated developed instrument for data collection tagged "Questionnaire for Assessment of Entrepreneurship Skill (QAES)". The instrument's reliability was 0.77. The mean, standard deviation, and t-test with a 0.05 level of significance were used to analyze the study's data. Finding revealed that there was gender variance in the technical and vocational school teachers mean opinions on the business opportunity skills in favour of the females. Nevertheless, there was no gender variance in the technical and vocational school teachers mean opinions on the creativity skills. According to the findings, we recommended retraining of technical and vocational school teachers on the use of business opportunity skills and creativity skills in their instruction delivery to ensure students' acquisition of requisite skills for self-employment.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurship Skills, Small and Medium Scale Business.

Introduction

Technical and vocational education provides the necessary business, economic, knowledge, skills and competencies needed to teach technical and vocational subjects in schools. Technical and vocational education helps to attain a sustainable level of economic development through embarking on entrepreneurial activities by the teachers and students of the institutions based on skill acquisition (Anorue & Madu, 2020). Technical and vocational education prepares students to improve their skills, manage their business affairs, and function intelligently as citizens in a business economy

(Inegbedion et al., 2015). Technical and vocational education prepares individuals for gainful employment and workable livelihood as well as development in terms of knowledge and skills (Saidu et al., 2017). Kanno and Onyeachi (2011) suggested that well-treasured objectives of technical and vocational education cannot be achieved if the emphasis is not laid on the importance of entrepreneurship skill acquisition while implementing the curriculum at the technical and vocational education level. However, Essia (2012) and Nwazor (2012) have decried the failure of the education

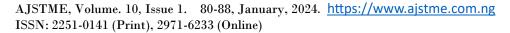


offered in institutions to prepare students and possible graduates for real-life situations. In congruence, Obadaiki (2009) in Okoli & Okeke (2021) noted that the cause of the increased rate of unemployment among graduates is manifested in the lack of functional education that will bring about the training of the abundant human resources to be creative, innovative, entrepreneurial and business opportunity seekers that will transform opportunities and material resources into goods and services. It is pertinent to note that trainees' activities that convert ideas into economic opportunities lie in the middle of entrepreneurship education (Afolabi, 2015).

Entrepreneurship education is an emerging trend to develop an entrepreneurial mindset worldwide. Entrepreneurship is considered the backbone of a country's economy (Neneh, 2022). Institutions worldwide offer multiple degrees, courses, and certifications to produce graduates with entrepreneurial competencies and mindsets (Turner & Gianiodis, 2018). Entrepreneurship education research results are meaningful in emerging nations to produce quality entrepreneurs (Iqbal et al., 2022). Previous studies have remarked that entrepreneurship education cultivates young talents and develops entrepreneurial intention among individuals to become entrepreneurs (Jena, 2020). Jiatong et al. (2021) argued that with an increasing number of university graduates, appropriate job searching has become a serious concern in the higher education system. In conclusion, Kalyoncuoğlu et al. (2017) views entrepreneurship education as associated with nurturing opportunity skills and creative skills that can be applied in real life.

Entrepreneurship skills are business skills which trainees acquire to enable them function effectively in a turbulent business environment as an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship skills as skills relating to identifying business opportunities and receiving a sustainable income from these opportunities (Agbonifoh & Elimimian, 1999) in (Akbarov, 2022). Entrepreneurship skill develops, in trainees, skills such as creativeness, self-independence, inventiveness and action orientation (Anorue & Madu, 2020). Davidsson & Honig (2003) in Cao & Shi (2021) maintained that entrepreneurship skills development is a human capital development and requisite for instilling and preserving an entrepreneurial ambience in an economy. Most entrepreneurial skills come from learning and practicing (Erhurum, 2017). These skills consist of the effective utilization of ideas, information, and facts that help a trainee develop competence and become an

entrepreneur or a productive employee of an organization (Mbanefo & Eboka, 2017). Brouwer (2002) opined that the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills means possessing the ability to find and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources, initiate appropriate actions to ensure success and implement actions to take advantage of opportunities for rewarding outcomes. Amadi and Chuku (2021) added that the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills means combining personal characteristics, and financial resources within one's environment, and taking advantage of them for a rewarding outcome. Risk reduction, search for new sources of innovation, utilization of creative tools, and learning from the market are skills that every prospective entrepreneur needs to have (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). In order for trainees to be successful in executing effective small and medium-scale businesses to its fullest, certain entrepreneurial skills are required to be put in place for small and mediumscale business enterprises over a long time (Saidu et. al., 2017). In this vein, Umunadi (2014) stated that entrepreneurship skills are business opportunity skills and creativity skills which trainees acquires to function effectively as entrepreneurs and be self-reliant. Business opportunity skills enable trainees to explore business opportunities after careful deliberations such as reorganizing certain seasonal patterns in market behaviour, subtle differences in the quality of goods and ways to identify whether resources are being used efficiently (Holcombe, 2021). Creativity skills, on the other hand, equips trainees to accept change and newness, a willingness to play with ideas and possibilities, a flexibility of outlook, and the habit of enjoying the good while looking for ways to improve it (Harris & De Bruin, 2018). When these entrepreneurial skills are adequately put into use, the possibility of the existing small and medium-scale business venture to prosper over time will be highly effective and can sustain the owner for a long period of time, thereby contributing to government revenue and employability (Saidu et al, 2017). Nevertheless, entrepreneurship skills embedded in technical and vocational schools need to be explored and learned by their prospective graduands for them to succeed as later entrepreneurs (Amadi & Chuku, 2021). Hence, entrepreneurship skills are required to enable technical and vocational trainees to turn ideas into deeds which is the basis for building skills development in technical and vocational education.





Studies carried out in Nigeria on the assessment of entrepreneurship skills showed that poor inculcation of the requisite entrepreneurship skills culminate to the trainee's inability to become an effective entrepreneur. It could be observed that in all the reviewed studies. none considered the influence of gender in the acquisition of the entrepreneurial skills. However only few studies considered gender, but were not situated on the opportunity and creativity skills acquired by female and male entrepreneurs. Thus, the need for this study, which investigated the entrepreneurship skills acquired by female and male technical and vocational school students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses in Enugu State. The question here is can exposure of female and male technical and vocational school students to opportunity skills and creativity skills alleviate the plight of unemployment prevalent among Nigerian graduates by equipping them with the necessities of small and medium scale businesses?

Research Questions: The following research questions guided the study:

- 1. What are the mean ratings of the opportunity skills acquired by female and male technical and vocational school students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses?
- 2. What are the mean ratings of the creativity skills acquired by female and male technical and vocational school students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses?

Hypotheses: The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- There is no significant difference in the mean opinion ratings of female and male technical and vocational school teachers on the opportunity skills acquired by their students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses.
- 2. There is no significant difference in the mean opinion ratings of female and male technical

and vocational school teachers on the creativity skills acquired by their students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design since the opinions of respondents were sought. The study was carried out in Nsukka and Obollo Educational Zone of Enugu state. 152 (104 female and 48 males) technical and vocational school teachers from the Nsukka Educational Zone (eight co-educational and one female dominated) and Obollo Educational Zone (six co-educational) of Enugu state comprised the study's population for the academic year 2022/2023. Taro Yamane formular was used to select 110 female and male technical and vocational school respondents as sampling size for the study. The structured instrument, Questionnaire on the Assessment of Entrepreneurship Skill (QAES), used for data collection has two parts: section "A" focused on the respondent's demographic data; section "B" contains two clusters, B1 and B2 with 16 items covering the research questions and structured on a 4-point rating scale. The instruments' face validity was established by two experienced Business Educators from the Department of Business Education and another from the Department of Measurements and Evaluation, all from the School of Education, Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu, Enugu State. The instrument was trial tested on a sample of 35 technical and vocational school teachers under the Enugu Educational Zone which was not part of the sampled technical and vocational schools. A reliability coefficient of 0.77 was obtained for the nondichotomously scored item using Cronbach Alpha formula which indicates that the instrument was reliable for the study. 100 copies short of 110 copies of the questionnaire distributed were correctly filled and used for the study. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 23 was used for the data analyses in this study. Mean and standard deviation were utilized to answer the research questions while independent samples t-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.



Results

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on opportunity skills acquired by female and male technical and vocational school students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses.

Items/Statements				Std.	
	Gender	N	Mean	Deviation	Interpretation
Recognize the demands of the populace.	Female	42	3.29	1.00	Averagely
		72	3.29	1.00	Acquired
	Male	56	2.80	.92	Averagely
		50	2.00	.72	Acquired
Discern a shift in the market behavior.	Female	42	3.38	.73	Averagely
		12	3.30	.75	Acquired
	Male	57	2.98	.95	Averagely
		51	2.70	.,,	Acquired
Preserve data on business opportunities.	Female	42	3.29	.77	Averagely
					Acquired
	Male	57	2.90	.88	Averagely
			, 0	.00	Acquired
Choose business strategies.	Female	43	3.14	.80	Averagely
	3.6.1			.00	Acquired
	Male	57	2.83	.91	Averagely
	- 1				Acquired
Analyze upcoming developments.	Female	43	2.93	.83	Averagely
	3.6.1				Acquired
	Male	56	2.82	1.03	Averagely
Engage with the clients, partners, and	F 1.				Acquired
	Female	43	2.88	.91	Averagely
lenders of the stakeholder.	Male				Acquired
	Maie	57	2.60	1.10	Averagely
Invent business ventures.	Female				Acquired
mivent business ventures.	remaie	43	2.77	.97	Averagely Acquired
	Male				Averagely
	Maic	56	2.86	1.12	Acquired
Take advantage of the chance to benefit.	Female		2.72	1.03	Averagely
Take advantage of the chance to benefit.	1 cmarc	43			Acquired
	Male				Averagely
	TVILLIC	56	2.79	1.02	Acquired
Overall	Female	43	24.16	3.89	rioquirou
O . 0.3844	Male	57	22.37	4.26	
Grand (Mean and Std. Deviation)	Female	٠,			Averagely
Samu (Marin min Stut Devintion)	1 Ciliaic		3.02	0.49	Acquired
	Male		• • •	o	Averagely
			2.80	0.53	Acquired

Note: Highly Acquired (HA-4 points); Averagely Acquired (AA-3 points); Acquired (A-2 points); and Not Acquired (NA-1 point) *Source: Field Survey*, 2023

Result in table 1 above indicatives that the mean of the opportunity skills for female and male

technical and vocational school teachers ranged from 2.72 to 3.38 and from 2.60 to 2.90 respectively. Grand



mean score of 3.02 and 2.80 for the female and male respectively indicates that the eight items were agreed upon as opportunity skills acquired by female and male technical and vocational school students for the

establishment of small and medium scale businesses. This was further weakened by the supportive null hypothesis.

Table 2: Independent t-test statistics on the opinion of female and male technical and vocational school teachers on the opportunity skills acquired by their students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses

Variable	Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Err.	Df	t – $_{cal}$	P-value
	Female Tech. & Voc.	43	24.163	3.8848	0.5924			_
Gender	Sch. Teachers.					98	2.166	0.033
	Male Tech. & Voc. Sch.	57	22.369	4.2579	0.5640			
	Teachers.							

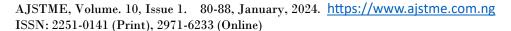
*Not Significant at P = 0.05

Result of an independent sample t-test statistics in Table 2 showed that there is a significant difference (p < .05) between the mean opinions of female and male technical and vocational school teachers on the opportunity skills acquired by their students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses since the t(98) = 2.166, P = 0.033 < 0.05.

Consequently, we reject the null hypothesis at alpha level (0.05). The inference drawn is that the opinion of female technical and vocational school teachers is more preferred than that of the male counterpart on the opportunity skills acquired by their students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on creativity skills acquired by female and male technical and vocational school students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses

Items/Statements				Std.	
	Gender	N	Mean	Deviation	Remarks
Come up with novel solutions for already available local products.	Female	43	2.84	1.02	Averagely Acquired
	Male	57	2.88	.95	Averagely Acquired
Reassemble resources to create new items to replace existing local products.	Female	42	2.74	.96	Averagely Acquired
	Male	57	2.67	.87	Averagely Acquired
Enhance local products or services.	Female	43	2.74	.82	Averagely Acquired
	Male	57	2.77	.87	Averagely Acquired
Use innovative packaging designs to increase product marketability.	Female	42	2.69	.90	Averagely Acquired
merenet product managements.	Male	57	2.58	.94	Averagely Acquired
Devise novel strategies of action.	Female	43	2.88	1.03	Averagely Acquired
	Male	57	2.51	.89	Averagely Acquired
Plan your approach to competing.	Female	42	2.79	.98	Averagely Acquired





	Male	57	2.58	.96	Averagely Acquired
With the right tactics, add value to goods and services.	Female	43	2.61	.96	Averagely Acquired
	Male	57	2.61	.98	Averagely Acquired
Make decisions based on pertinent information.	Female	43	2.72	1.03	Averagely Acquired
	Male	57	2.61	.96	Averagely Acquired
Overall	Female	43	21.81	4.66	1
	Male	57	21.21	4.21	
Grand (Mean and Std. Deviation)	Female		2.73	0.58	Averagely Acquired
	Male		2.65	0.53	Averagely Acquired

Note: Highly Acquired (HA–4 points); Averagely Acquired (AA–3 points); Acquired (A–2 points); and Not Acquired (NA–1 point). *Source: Field Survey, 2023*

Result in Table 3 depicts that the mean of the creativity skills for female and male technical and vocational school teachers ranged from 2.61 to 2.88 and from 2.51 to 2.88 respectively. The grand mean score of 2.73 and 2.65 for the female and male respectively indicates that the eight items were agreed upon as

creativity skills acquired by female and male technical and vocational school students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses in Enugu state. This was further strengthened by the supportive null hypothesis.

Table 4: Independent t-test statistics on the opinion of female and male technical and vocational school teachers on the creativity skills acquired by their students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses

Variable	Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Err.	Df	$t{cal}$	P-value
-	Female Tech. & Voc.	43	21.814	4.6561	0.7100			
Gender	Sch. Teachers					98	0.678	0.499
	Male Tech. & Voc. Sch.	57	21.211	4.2077	0.5573			
	Teachers							

^{*}Not Significant at P = 0.05

Result of an independent sample t-test statistics in Table 4 showed that there was no significant difference (p > .05) between the mean opinions of female and male technical and vocational school teachers on the creativity skills acquired by their students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses since the t(98) = 0.678, p = 0.499 > 0.05. Consequently, we fail to reject the null hypothesis at alpha level (0.05). The inference drawn is that the opinion of female technical and vocational school teachers is at par with that of the male counterpart on the creativity skills acquired by their students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses.

Discussion of Findings

Results revealed that business opportunity skills which were averagely acquired by female and male technical and vocational school students include recognizing the demands of the populace; discerning a shift in the market behavior; preserving data on business opportunities; choosing business strategies; analyzing upcoming developments; engaging with the clients, partners, and lenders of the stakeholder; inventing business ventures; and taking advantage of the chance to benefit. Furthermore, a supportive hypothesis revealed that there is gender disparity in the opinions of female and male technical and vocational school teachers on the business opportunity skills acquired by their students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses with the male technical



and vocational school teachers lagging behind their female counterparts in their opinions of the business opportunity skills. This finding may be due to the fact that female technical and vocational school students are proactive in brainstorming new business ventures and expanding an existing business idea that are capable of driving business growth than their male colleagues. It may be for this reason that Akeke et al., (2022) believed that business management skills are needed for successful entrepreneurship training of federal and state university students. This study's findings are consistent with those of Amadi and Chuku (2021) who discovered that senior secondary school students typically develop business potential skills for starting small enterprises. This study's finding concurs with those of Jones et al., (2000) in Nife (2016), who identified some of the entrepreneurship skills needed by graduates to include technical, human, conceptual and business management skills. Contradicting the study's findings, Ugwoke et al. (2014) found no significant difference between male and female teachers on the benefits of entrepreneurship education in senior secondary schools in Enugu state. Differing on the study's findings, Mohammed et al. (2020) found no significant difference in the mean opinions of male and female senior secondary school teachers on the role of entrepreneurship education for community development.

Results also revealed that creativity skills which majority were averagely acquired by female and male technical and vocational school students comprise enacting novel solutions for already available local products; reassembling resources to create new items to replace existing local products; enhancing local products or services; using innovative packaging designs to increase product marketability; devising novel strategies of action; planning our approach to competing; adding value to goods and services with the right tactics; making decisions based on pertinent information; use of innovative packaging designs to increase product marketability; and planning one's approach to competing. In addition, a supportive hypothesis revealed that there is no gender bias in the opinions of female and male technical and vocational school teachers on the creativity skills acquired by their students for the establishment of small and medium scale businesses with the female and male technical and vocational school teachers at the same footing in their opinions of the creativity skills. This may have arisen from the fact that male technical and vocational school students are not more enterprising in generating and implementing novel ideas towards establishing a new

business venture than their female counterpart. The study's conclusion corroborates with those of Amadi and Chuku (2021) who established that senior secondary school students typically develop creative talents for starting small enterprises. The study's findings are consistent with those of Okoro (2021) who found a significant difference between entrepreneurship skills needed by students graduates and attributed it to the fact that graduates realized the importance of entrepreneurship skills during the national youth service year than their undergraduate counterparts. The study's findings correspond with those of Anorue and Madu (2020) who believed that entrepreneurship skill acquisition involves the mastery, development of unconventional talents and expertise in key areas such as creativity, determination, competitiveness and knowledge. The study's findings are in consonance with those of Ugwoke et al. (2014) who found no significant difference between male and female teachers on the benefits of entrepreneurship education in senior secondary schools in Enugu state. The study's findings are in agreement with those of Mohammed et al. (2020) who found no significant difference in the mean opinions of male and female senior secondary school teachers on the role of entrepreneurship education for community development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It was discovered that to a large extent business opportunity skills and creativity skills are averagely acquired by female and male technical and vocational school students. There was gender disparity in the opinions of technical and vocational school teachers on the business opportunity skills in favour of the female technical and vocational school teachers. Nevertheless, there was no gender disparity in the opinions of technical and vocational school teachers on the creativity skills. The suggestions were made in light of the findings and judgement reached:

- a) Science Technical and Vocational Schools Management Board (STVSMB) should retrain technical and vocational school teachers by organizing seminars and workshops on business opportunity skills and creativity skills.
- STVSMB should incorporate business opportunity skills and creativity skills into their curriculum instructional delivery to prepare students for self-employment.



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