

**EFFICACY OF TRANSVERSAL SKILLS
ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP STUDENTS' EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS
IN SOUTH-SOUTH UNIVERSITIES OF NIGERIA.**

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the Efficacy of Transversal Skills on Entrepreneurship Students Employability Skills in South-South Universities of Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey of correlation research design. The population of this study covered all the 400 level undergraduate students in Delta State University (DELSU) and University of Benin-Benin City (UNIBEN), Nigeria. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select 110 final year (400 level) undergraduate students in each Universities makes 220 respondents. The instrument for this study is self-Developed questionnaire 'tagged Efficacy of Transversal Skills and Entrepreneurship Students' Employability Skills. Two experts in each university validated the Instrument for both face and content validity. The reliability of the instruments was determined through the spilt-half method and subjected to Cronbach alpha level and the reliability coefficient of 0.80 and 0.77 obtained respectively. Frequency Count and Percentages were used to analyse demographic data of the respondents. The research hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 significant level. The findings of this study revealed that the level of Efficacy of Transversal skills among Students was high; the level of Entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills among Student was moderate. There was significant relationship between efficacy of Transversal skills and Entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills. It was recommended that, Undergraduate students should take transversal skills more important to enhance their entrepreneurial and employability skills such as knowledge, critical thinking, and attitudes towards a successful management and operations of their businesses effectively. The teaching of Entrepreneurship skills should combine theory with practical for more effective on the learners.

KEY WORDS: Efficacy of Transversal Skills, Entrepreneurship and Students' Employability

Introduction

Entrepreneurship drives economic growth by creating jobs, fostering innovation, and promoting community well-being. It plays a pivotal role in ensuring a country's economic viability. It involves the initiation and management of a business endeavour with the objective of generating profits. Entrepreneurship education has emerged as a critical component of modern education, aiming to equip students with the necessary skills, mind-set, and knowledge to pursue entrepreneurial ventures and drive innovation. Entrepreneurship encourages students to adopt an entrepreneurial mind-set, emphasizing traits such as creativity, risk-taking, and resilience. This mind-set allows students to perceive challenges as opportunities and to envision innovative solutions for real-world problems. Through experiential learning and exposure to entrepreneurial role models, students can develop the confidence and motivation to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations (Abas, and Imam 2016). Entrepreneurial skills, such as adaptability, problem solving, and communication, are highly valued by employers. Gibb (2018), States Students with both technical expertise and entrepreneurial knowledge become attractive candidates for various roles in the job market (Gibb, 2018), which will also enhance entrepreneurship students' employability. Employability refers to the set of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and attributes that make an individual suitable for employment and successful in the workplace. Employability is essential for individuals to secure and retain employment, advance in their careers, and contribute effectively to their organizations. Employment ability defined as all qualities a person possesses that can help him/ her obtain, maintain employment and reemployment as well as achieve outstanding performance at work. In the view of (Gibb, 2018), employability refers to the ability of students to obtain employment opportunities and maintain job stability, through school learning and practice, exchanges and cooperation, and further serve the students' life ideals and social values. According to Teijeiro et al, (2013), Eemployability referred to the capability of an individual to secure and retain their job, and contribute effectively to the organization's employability to multifaceted concept that encompasses a range of skills, competencies, and enable individuals to obtain and maintain employment".

Transversal skills" is "transferable skill." These skills are abilities and competencies that can be applied across various roles, industries, or contexts, making them valuable and adaptable assets in a wide range of situations. Transferable skills are essential in today's dynamic and rapidly changing job market. According to Ofosuhene, (2022), they are the

abilities that employees can carry from one job to another, across different industries or even when transitioning to entirely new career paths. Transferable skills are things you do, such as teaching, organizing, assembling, designing, and operating. The author further explain that transferable skills are skills that you naturally develop from all aspects of life, especially from activities outside of work, and then transfer to a job. Furthermore, transferable skills are crucial for career changers. Explained by Ofosuhene, (2022), when transitioning to a new field, individuals may not possess domain-specific knowledge, but their transferable skills can bridge the gap and open up opportunities. In a competitive job market, employers seek candidates who can offer versatility and adaptability. Therefore, transferable skills serve as a bridge between different job roles and industries, making individuals versatile and adaptable. They go beyond specific technical expertise and encompass a wide array of interpersonal, cognitive, and communication abilities. Transferable skills have emerged as indispensable assets in the modern job market and the versatility will enable entrepreneur education students to succeed in a wide array of fields and adapt to their ever-changing work landscape. Transferable skills serve as signals that raise the employability of an individual. Thus, this research sought to study the efficacy of transversal skills on Entrepreneurship student's employability. These skills include leadership skills, adaptability, teamwork skills, problem-solving skills, communication skills and Digital skills among others. Digital skills, also known as digital literacy or digital competencies, refer to the ability to use, understand, and navigate digital technologies effectively. These skills enable individuals to access, evaluate, create, and communicate information using digital devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets, and various software applications. According to De Vos, De Hauw, and Van der Heijden, (2011) digital skills is the ability to use ICT to evaluate, create and communicate information both cognitive and technical skills. It explained that a digitally literate person is someone who can critically process media content as well as communicate effectively using digital media content as well as communicate effectively using digital media. García-Álvarez (2022), explained digital skills as the ability to use computers alongside a set of skills such as the ability to use word processors or database software. Students should be able to prepare and present using PowerPoint being that organizations are looking for graduate who has these requisite skills other than the traditional way of presentation, employees require graduate who fit in to these variety of skills because it saves them the cost of training and time. "Graduates who possess knowledge in marketing their products, like those at companies such as Amazon and Alibaba, invest heavily in their supply chains and last-mile delivery systems due to the profound impact of technology.

Therefore, proficiency in ICT skills is non-negotiable for entrepreneurship students who aspire to be employable with excellent communication skills. "Thus, in today's competitive job market, the importance of transversal skills cannot be understated. Both male and female entrepreneurship education students stand to benefit from developing these skills, which can lead to enhanced employability outcomes. While transversal skills have the potential to positively impact gender-based employability disparities, it is essential to recognize that broader societal and organizational changes are also necessary to create truly equitable workplaces. Through education, awareness, and proactive measures, society can move toward a future where gender does not dictate employability, and transversal skills are recognized and rewarded for their universal value. Therefore, entrepreneurship education students need to possess certain transversal skills that will enhance their employability and success in their organization or occupation. These skills should also be easily transferable from one employment context to another. Dealing with the new and complex situations of the contemporary world requires expertise in various ways of thinking, acting, and relating to others, which can be applicable in a wide variety of situations and work settings. The transversal skills essential for their enhancement include fundamental abilities such as communication skills, leadership skills, problem-solving skills, teamwork skills, and adaptability. All of these skills are crucial for employers to consider before making hiring decisions.

Statement of the Problem

Employability in recent times remained the focus of government, employers, job seekers and educators, as the labour market is an arrangement that brings employers and job seekers together. However, unemployment in Nigeria has become endemic, and achieving the goal of becoming an industrialized nation is a mirage due to her teaming youths without or not having enough entrepreneurial practical skills or transversal skills. There could be a misalignment between the transversal skills demanded by employers in the business sector and the skills possessed by entrepreneurship education students. This disparity may contribute to a higher rate of unemployment or underemployment among graduate due to their inability to meet industry expectation. Entrepreneur students may face limited awareness and access to training programs or initiatives specifically designed to develop transversal skills. The survey conducted by Raimi, L. & Adeleke, I. (2010). revealed that Nigerian university graduates lacked fundamental job competencies, oral communication abilities, and managerial skills. This indicates a prominent skill gap among graduates upon their departure from universities. Urgent measures need to be implemented to enhance educational performance, as failure to

address this gap will only widen the disparity between the skill requirements of industries and Small Medium Enterprises, and the skills acquired by graduates. It is through entrepreneurial skills training that individual can acquire practical transversal skills to overcome the current socio-economic challenges of unemployment, poverty, and hunger, ultimately enhancing job competencies and employability. However, there is lack of clear evidence regarding the specific transversal skills required by entrepreneurship students to become self-reliant and employable. Hence, there is an imperative need to determine the efficacy of transversal skills on Entrepreneurship student's employability in north-west universities of Nigeria. Thus, there is lack of clear evidence regarding the specific transversal skills required by entrepreneurship students to become self-reliant and employable. Hence, there is an imperative need to determine the efficacy of transversal skills on Entrepreneurship student's employability in South-South Universities, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The major purpose of the study is to determine the Efficacy of Transversal skills on Entrepreneurship Student's Employability in South-South Universities of Nigeria. Specifically, the study intends to determine:

1. Significant relationship between efficacy of Transversal skills and Entrepreneurship Students Employability Skills in South-South Universities.
2. Significant difference in the Transversal skills among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender
3. Significant difference in the entrepreneurship Students Employability Skills among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were raised to guide the conduct of the study

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between efficacy of Transversal skills and Entrepreneurship Students Employability Skills in South-South Universities of Nigeria

H_{02} : There is no significant difference in the Transversal skills among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender

H_{03} : There is no significant difference in the entrepreneurship Students Employability Skills among Student in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey of correlation research design. This design of study seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables. Usually

such studies indicate the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables. This study covered all the 400 level undergraduate students in both Delta State University (DELSU) and University of Benin-Benin City (UNIBEN) in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This geo-political zone is chosen for this study because many of the educational institutions in the zone engage in research activities that address critical issues facing Nigeria. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select 110 final year (400 level) undergraduate students in both Delta State University (DELSU) and University of Benin-Benin City (UNIBEN) Hence, the sample of this study makes 220 respondents. The self-Developed questionnaires were used for the data collection. Two hundred and twenty (220) copies of the questionnaires administered to the respondents directly in their various institutions by the researcher with the help of four research assistants. Efficacy of Transversal Skills and Entrepreneurship Students' Employability Skills. Each of the questionnaires has 15 items and with four points rating scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Agree (1) respectively. Four experts validated the questionnaires for both face and content validity. two expert from the Department of Agricultural Education, Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education University Benin, Benin city, and two experts from the Department of business Education, Faculty of Education Delta State University (DELSU). The items were in terms of clarity, relevance and appropriateness in addressing the problems in the study. To make concrete suggestions for improving the instrument towards meeting the objectives of the study. To establish the reliability index of Efficacy of Transversal Skills and Entrepreneurship Students' Employability Skills. The instruments were pilot tested using Nnamdi Azikwe University Awka, Anambra State. Fifty (50) copies of the instruments were distributed to both male and female undergraduate students. This university was not part of the sample but form part of the population. The reliability co-efficient of Efficacy of Transversal Skills was 0.80 and Entrepreneurship Education Students' Employability Skills was 0.77. This reliability coefficient was considered adequate for the internal consistencies of the instrument. This was a confirmation of test of reliability which according to Spiegel (1992);an instrument is considered reliable if its reliability coefficient lies between 0 and 1, and that the closer the calculated reliability coefficient is to zero, the less reliable is the instrument, and the closer the calculated reliability coefficient is to 1, the more reliable is the instrument. Therefore, it is confirmed that the instruments used for this study were highly reliable. To analyze the data collected frequency count and percentage were used to analyse the demographic data of the respondents. The hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance

Results

Demographic Data Analyses of the Respondents

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Male | 79 | 36 |
| Female | 141 | 64 |
| Total | 220 | 100 |

Table 1 presents the percentage distribution of respondents based on gender. The table shows the distribution of respondents by gender, the table shows that 79 (36%) of the respondents were male and 141 (64%) of the respondents were female.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Respondents Based on the Institution

| Institution | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------|------------|
| Delta State University (DELSU) | 110 | 50 |
| University of Benin Benin city (UNIBEN) | 110 | 50 |
| Total | 220 | 100 |

Table 2 presents the percentage distribution of respondents based on the Institution. The table shows the distribution of respondents by the Institution, the table shows that 110 (50%) of the respondents were students of Delta State University (DELSU) and 110 (50%) of the respondents were students of University of Benin, Benin City (UNIBEN).

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Respondents Based on the Academic Level

| Academic level | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|------------|------------|
| Delta State University (Delsu) (400 level) | 110 | 50 |
| University of Benin, Benin City (400 level) | 110 | 50 |
| Total | 220 | 100 |

Table 3 presents the percentage distribution of respondents based on Academic Level. The table shows the distribution of respondents by Academic Level, the table shows that 220 (100%) of the respondents were male 400 level students.

Testing of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between efficacy of Transversal skills and Entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills in South-South Universities of Nigeria

Table 4: Showing Correlation between efficacy of Transversal skills and Entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills in South-South Universities

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | Df | Cal .r - Value | P- value | Decision |
|----------------------|-----|-------|-------|-----|----------------|----------|----------|
| Transversal skills | 220 | 22.57 | 11.18 | 218 | .202 | .000 | rejected |
| Employability Skills | 220 | 20.46 | 10.09 | | | | |

P>0.05

Table 4 revealed that the calculated r-value is (.202) greater than the p-value (.000) at 0.05 level of significance and 218 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between efficacy of Transversal skills and Entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills in South-South Universities of Nigeria, is rejected. This indicated that there is a significant relationship between efficacy of Transversal skills and Entrepreneurship Students Employability Skills in South-South Universities of Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the Transversal skills among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on the difference in the Transversal skills, among Student in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender

| Gender | N | Mean | SD | Df | Cal .t - Value | Critical t - value | Decision |
|--------|-----|-------|-------|-----|----------------|--------------------|----------|
| Male | 79 | 24.17 | 18.10 | 218 | 1.99 | 1.96 | rejected |
| Female | 141 | 23.15 | 18.05 | | | | |

P>0.05

Table 6 revealed that the calculated t-value (1.99) is greater than the Critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and 218 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there was significant difference in the Transversal skills among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender

H₀₃; There is no significant difference in the entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender

Table 6: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on the difference in the entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills, among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender.

| Gender | N | Mean | SD | Df | Cal .t - Value | Critical t - value | Decision |
|--------|-----|-------|-------|-----|----------------|--------------------|----------|
| Male | 79 | 25.12 | 19.09 | | | | |
| Female | 141 | 23.14 | 17.07 | 218 | 1.98 | 1.96 | rejected |

P>0.05

Table 6 revealed that the calculated t-value (1.98) is greater than the Critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and 218 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there was significant difference in the entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills among Student in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender

Summary of finding

The finding of this study summarized as follows;

1. There was significant relationship between efficacy of Transversal skills and Entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills in South-South Universities of Nigeria.
2. There was significant difference in the Transversal skills among Student in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender.
3. There was significant difference in the entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills among Student in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender.

Discussion of Findings

Efficacy of Transversal skills among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria was high. The findings of study agree with Ofosuhene, (2022), who found the level of

transversal skills among students in higher tertiary institutions. It further confirms that transversal skills seek to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial studies in a variety of setting. This objective of entrepreneurship education is laudable and attained in the universities. Level of Entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria was moderate. The finding of this study corroborate with Abas, and Imam, (2016), who found that level of employability skills and competence of students in higher institutions was high.

Hypothesis 1 revealed that there was significant relationship between efficacy of Transversal skills and Entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills in South-South Universities of Nigeria. The finding of this study corroborate with García-Álvarez (2022), who found that there is positive relationship between Transversal skills, level of competences and Student's Employability Skills.

Hypothesis 2 found that there was significant difference in the transversal skills among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender. The finding do not agree with (Gibb, 2018), who found that there is no significant difference in the transversal skills based on gender of the respondents. This means that transversal skills among male students are higher than the female undergraduate students.

Hypothesis 3 revealed that there was significant difference in the entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender. The finding of this study agrees with Martina. (2014), who found the there is significant difference in the Student's Employability Skills among Students in Universities based on gender. This implies that male students have higher level of entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were reached; that the level of Efficacy of Transversal skills among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria were high. The level of Entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria were moderate. There was significant relationship between efficacy of Transversal skills and Entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills in South-South Universities of Nigeria. There was significant difference in the Transversal skills among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on

gender. There was significant difference in the entrepreneurship Student's Employability Skills among Students in South-South Universities of Nigeria based on gender.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Undergraduate students should take transversal skills more important to enhance their entrepreneurial and employability skills such as knowledge, critical thinking, and attitudes towards a successful management and operations of their businesses effectively.
2. The teaching of Entrepreneurship skills should combine theory with practical to leave a lasting effect on the learners. It should involve visitation to some industries within the locality and use of professionals from those industries.
3. As the bedrock of any educational program, teachers of Entrepreneurship Educational Program should be increased in numbers to cope with the number of students, with adequately trained and developed.
4. Government and other stakeholders in education should expose the students to other skill acquisition subjects in addition to entrepreneurship programmes. These will make them acquire the skills that will help them to be self-reliant as to contribute to both self and national development.

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