

## Student Perception of Entrepreneurial Studies and Graduate Employment Prospect in the Polytechnic Ibadan

Mary Oluwatoyin Ajani  
University of Ibadan  
toyin\_ak2002@yahoo.co.uk  
toyin\_ak2002@outlook.com

### Abstract

*This study investigated student perception of entrepreneurial studies as predictor of graduate employment prospect in the polytechnic Ibadan. It has been studied that there is a mismatch between skills and job opportunity in Nigerian education sector. The training which tertiary students receive has not been fully successful in equipping them with desirable skills and competencies required for job creation and self-employment. The study adopted descriptive survey research design of the ex-post facto type. The sample consisted of final year students at OND II and HND II students across the five faculties in the polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. Stratified random sampling techniques were used in selecting a total of five hundred and sixty (560) participants across the faculties in the Polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. A Questionnaire tagged "Student Perception of Entrepreneurial Studies" developed and used to collect data for the study. t-test and regression analysis were used to analyze the data collected. Significant gender different in career prospect among students ( $t(df=546) = 57.474, P < 0.05$ ). Male were not different from female on their perception of being employed after graduation ( $t(df=546) = .422, P > 0.05$ ). Joint influence of entrepreneurial skills acquired by the students contributed significantly to their entrepreneurial intention ( $R = .384; R^2 = .147; F_{(5,7)} = 2.830; p < .05$ ). Findings further revealed that there is significant difference in the career prospects of students based on gender in the Polytechnic, Ibadan, Oyo state. Therefore, it was recommended that Rectors overseeing the affairs of the polytechnics should invest massively in training of specialists in the field of entrepreneurship educations. Experts with practical experience in entrepreneurship from the industry could also be engaged on full or part-time arrangement. It was also recommended that every polytechnic should evolve a culture of entrepreneurship by supporting, training and rewarding their self-reliant graduates.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneur, Prospect, Intention and Graduate

### Introduction

The issue of employment is a general phenomenon in African context most especially Nigeria. Nigerian youth today are unemployed or underemployed despite the fact that their high profile credentials from high flying institutions ranging from colleges of education to universities. Several reasons have been adduced for this, ranging from poor economic environment factors to absence of good educational infrastructure to

mention but few (Akerle 2004) in Adedeji and Pitan (2012). Each year, Nigerian youth are churned-up from tertiary institutions with employment opportunities getting stringently unavailable. Adebisi (2012) opined that these unemployed individuals roam the street without getting jobs or being able to establish or sustain their own business due to the depressed nature of their environment. Today, students are discouraged concerning school whenever the thought of unemployment after school crops up in their minds. Parents are the most worried on the prospects of their investments on children. The issue of unemployment negates the provision of self-reliance as enshrined in Nigeria national policy on education (FRN, 2004).

Also, Ifeoma (2012) is of the opinion that unemployment rate in Nigeria, as at 2011 was 23.9%, while between 2006 and 2011, stood at 14.6% reaching an all-time high of 23.9% by December 2011. The 7.5% acclaimed economic growth rate in the Nigeria economy has not reflected in employments rates. The unemployment rate is rather said to be growing at 16% yearly, while youth unemployment is over 50%. Another perceived cause of this phenomenon is the unfriendly investment climate arising from insecurity that has forced investors such as Exile battery industry, Volk Wagon motor industry etc. that would be employers of labour to flee from Nigeria. According to Bureau of statistics 38% of the population falls within the employment age are unemployed and 65% of Nigerian youths face unemployment as at September 2016 (in Johnson, 2017). Claiming that within a five year period of (2007 -2011), there has been an average of about 1.8 million new entrants into the active labour market per year.

With the rising tide of unemployment if unchecked, grave consequences await Nigeria as crime rates likely to rise, death rate will increase and illiteracy will rise too since these are natural indices of poverty and by extension unemployment. The problem could be articulated better when an examination is conducted on the national policy on education (FRN 2004). In the document, the national objectives of education as shown on (FRN, 2004) Federal Republic of Nigeria reads ... acquisition of competences necessary for self-reliance... again in section 8 of the (FRN, 2004:30) subsection 59 (d) it states... acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant useful members of the society. It therefore becomes pertinent to find out what makes an individual self-reliant? Is education part of it, how and when? Self-reliance is synonymous with self-sufficiency. It means doing thing for ourselves rather than having things done for us. It builds the kind of character needed to live independently and freely in the community with others. Obanya (2004) submitted that an education that is only meant to obtain teachers, engineer and administrator that earn higher wages cannot be describe as self-reliant. Education for self-reliance should work the common good of self-foster cooperation, and promote equality.

The author further advocates that a self-reliant education is that which stresses

concepts of equality, responsibility and provides learner with skills and special abilities in vocation such as agriculture, technology, service provision to mention but few. To accelerate self-reliance, the Nigerian national policy on education (FRN, 2004) emphasized the need for graduates to be self-reliant. The present situation in Nigeria requires a radical approach hence this study is seeking to examine if vocational studies could bring about a solution to graduate unemployment. The concept and issue of vocational education thoroughly conceptualized long ago in secondary schools, it has not been so in tertiary institution. In recent times, private and public tertiary institutions are beginning to use entrepreneurship and acquisition of vocational skills as a key to solving unemployment.

The polytechnic as an institute of learning plays an important role in developing an entrepreneurial society. They are capable of instilling in their students at both ordinary national diploma (OND) and higher national diploma (HND) levels, a sense of understanding of risk and reward of business creation and its cause of failures. They can also play a role in developing entrepreneurial trait in students and provide the necessary support for entrepreneur as well as providing legitimacy to their endeavours. As polytechnic culture changes, it would become more important to understand student's entrepreneurial aspirations in order to achieve an institutional 'fit' between higher education offering and the needs of student (Collins, Hannon and Smith; 2006).

In Nigeria, entrepreneurial education is still at its infancy. Nwangwu (2007) discovered that only few researches has been conducted to assess entrepreneurial impact on According to Heinonen and Poikkjoiki (2006), the entrepreneurial directed approach is well suited for gaining a better understanding of the concepts of entrepreneurship especially about the importance of the entrepreneurship process, with the polytechnic campuses, attempts have been made to clarify the nature of education they offer to students and subsequently the potential contribution to the society. This study intends to investigate the correlation between student's perception of entrepreneurial studies and their employment prospect after graduation. This will go a long way to provide clues on the best way to curb the menace of graduate unemployment among youth in Nigeria and to identify the gap between the students taking the course and their intention of becoming entrepreneur. There is a growing body of literature arguing that perception plays a very relevant role in the decision to start a new business.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Youth unemployment is a global problem affecting both the developed and developing countries. But while the developed countries are taking the threat seriously and developing their education, and social security system to abate its growth, Nigeria seems not to be doing enough. It is not more a news that the reason

for high enrolment in postgraduates studies in universities is due to the absence of employment opportunities. It has been studied that there is a mismatch between skills and job opportunities in Nigerian education sector. The training which tertiary students receive has not been fully successful in equipping them with desirable skills and competencies required for job creation and self-employment. There are other reason adduced which established the fact that there is a gap or lag period between Nigerian graduates' certification and first employment. While this study does not argue against all these findings, it is of the view that the introduction of some courses in Nigerian polytechnics could ameliorate the problem of self-reliance. These studies intend to find out the effectiveness of these courses on Nigerian Polytechnic graduates. This study therefore attempts to examine the perception of students about entrepreneurial education in the Polytechnic, Ibadan with a view to predict their employment prospects.

### **Purpose of the study**

The major purpose of this study is to examine student perception of entrepreneurial studies and graduate employment prospect in the Polytechnic Ibadan. In specific terms, the study will:

1. Investigate whether there is gender difference in career prospect of the students in the Polytechnic of Ibadan.
2. Examine whether students' perception of being employed will differ based on gender upon graduation.
3. Find out whether entrepreneurial skills acquire by students will predict their employment certainty after graduation

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised in the course of this study to find solution to the problems under study

1. Is there significant difference in the career prospects of students based on gender in the Polytechnic of Ibadan?
2. Is there is significant difference in students' perception of being employed after graduation based on gender?
3. Will entrepreneurial skill acquired by students of the Polytechnic of Ibadan predict employment certainty after graduation?

### **Significance of the Study**

Considering the alarming rate of unemployment in Nigeria, a study of this type is of high significance, not only as a research work but also as benefit to both unemployed graduate and undergraduate students. This study will go a long way in inciting the polytechnic students towards self-reliance through self-employment. Policy makers, educators and practitioners in the field will be provided with new insights for

curriculum development among students. Also, it will serve as eye opener to the educational bodies in Nigeria to further strengthen the compulsion placed on entrepreneurial studies in higher institutions across the length and breadth of the country. This study will be highly important to the government at all levels, the parents, educational planners, decision and policy makers as well as other stakeholders in education, as findings in this study will help to foster policy that will reduce high rate of unemployment. It is important to note that findings in this study will also serve as a source reference for other researchers who may want to conduct the same or similar study in other subjects or part of the country.

### Methodology

Expo-facto design of cross-sectional study was adopted for the study. The target population for this study comprised the total number of final year students in OND II and HND II of the Polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo state. Stratified sampling techniques was used for selecting a total of five hundred and sixty (560) participants across the faculties in the Polytechnic of Ibadan for the study. In all, fifteen per cent (15%) of student from each study level was sampled and used for the study. The instrument titled Entrepreneurial Studies in the Polytechnic Questionnaire (ESPQ) was developed and used for the study. ESPQ is designed to elicit response from final year students of the polytechnic of Ibadan on their perception of entrepreneurial studies with respect to employment prospect. ESPQ is structured into four (4) sessions A-D, sections A elicits Reponses on demographic data while section B contains items to measure students' perception of the concept of entrepreneurial studies. Section C targets the curriculum content while section D entails the employment prospects of students in the Polytechnic sampled. The reliability of the instrument was estimated to be 0.72 and the data collected were analyzed using independent t-test and multiple regression analysis at  $p < 0.05$ .

### Results and Discussions

The result and the discussion of the findings were presented as follows

#### Research Question 1

Is there significant difference in the career prospects of students based on gender in the Polytechnic of Ibadan?

**Table 1: Gender Different in Career Prospect among Students**

Variables	N	Mean	Std. deviation	df	t <sub>cal</sub>	t <sub>tab</sub>	Remark
Male	237	3.05	0.231				
Female	311	4.32	1.648	546	57.474	1.96	significant

Table 1 shows that there is a significant difference in the career prospects of students based on gender ( $t_{cal} = 57.474$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). A good look at the table revealed that career prospects of female students (Mean = 4.32) perform better than career prospects of male students (Mean = 3.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is significant difference in the career prospects of students based on gender. Hence, there is no significant difference in the career prospects of students based on gender is therefore rejected at 0.05 significance level. Since  $t_{cal}$  is greater than table value of  $t$  (1.96).

### Research Question 2

Is there is significant difference in students' perception of being employed after graduation based on gender?

**Table 2: Students' Perception of Being Employ Based on Gender**

Variables	N	Mean	Std. deviation	df	$t_{cal}$	$t_{tab}$	Remark
Male	237	3.05	0.231				
Female	305	3.23	0.886	546	0.422	1.96	Not significant

Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference in students' perception of being employed after graduation based on gender, ( $t_{cal} = .422$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). A cursory look at the table shows that male students' perception of being employed after graduation (Mean 3.05) perform slightly better than female students' perception of being employed after graduation (Mean = 3.23). However, this difference is not statistically significant, hence, there is no significant difference in students' perception of being employed after graduation based on gender. Since  $t_{cal}$  of 0.422 is less than the table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance.

### Research Question 3

Entrepreneurial skill acquired by students has no significant effect on employment certainty after graduation.

**Table 3: Influence of Students Employability skills on Employment Certainty after Graduation**

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.169	2	2.234	2.830	.021
	Residual	64.728	558	.789		
	Total	75.898	560			



**Model Summary**

Model	1
R	.384
R Square	.147
Adjusted R Square	.895
Std. Error of the Estimate	75.04213

The results in Table 3 indicated that with the predictor variables (Employment Certainty) entered into the regression model at once, there was a significant prediction of entrepreneurial skill ( $R = .384$ ;  $R^2 = .147$ ;  $F_{(5,87)} = 2.830$ ;  $p < .05$ ). This showed that the variables accounted for 89.5% of the variance in entrepreneurial skill. It also showed that the remaining 10.5% contribution would be accounted for by other variables which are not within the scope of the variable. Based on this analysis, entrepreneurial skill acquired by students has no significant effect on employment certainty after graduation. This indicates that entrepreneurial skill acquired by students at the Polytechnic level has significant effect on employment certainty after graduation.

**Discussion of Findings**

With response to hypothesis one which states that, there is no significant difference in the career prospects of students based on gender, the result obtained from the analysis shows that there is a significant difference in the career prospects of students based on gender ( $t_{cal} = 57.474$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. The findings indicated that there is significant difference in the career prospects of students based on gender. This study is in agreement with Adebisi (2012) who opined that unemployed individuals irrespective of gender roams the street without getting jobs or being able to establish or sustain their own business due to the depressed nature of their environment. Today, students are discouraged concerning school whenever the thought of unemployment after school crops up in their minds.

The result obtained from the analysis conducted with respect to hypothesis 2 shows that male students' perception of being employed after graduation (Mean 3.05) perform slightly better than female students' perception of being employed after graduation (Mean = 3.23) but not significant. The result therefore indicated that there is no significant difference in students' perception of being employed after graduation based on gender. However, the findings of this study was consistent with those of earlier researchers such as (Ifedili and Ofoegbu, 2011); Gabadeen and Raimi, 2012) who reported that a bigger headache slowing down the progress of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is students' erroneous perception that

entrepreneurship education as an elective or general courses forced on them by government just to increase their academic workloads. Their preconceived mind set, discourage many learners from showing the necessary zeal and enthusiasm to all entrepreneurship activities in the classrooms and outside the classrooms.

Finally, the result obtained from the test of hypothesis 3 shows that with the predictor variables (Employment Certainty) entered into the regression model at once, there was a significant prediction of entrepreneurial skill ( $R = .384$ ;  $R^2 = .147$ ;  $F(5,87) = 2.830$ ;  $p < .05$ ). The finding indicated that entrepreneurial skill acquired by students has significant effect on employment certainty after graduation. This finding agreed with Oyelola (2010) who submitted that the policy thrust of entrepreneurship education in the polytechnic system is the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by students, so as to be self-reliant and self-employed after graduation.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the result of the findings and the discussions of the study, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions about the study. It could be concluded that the polytechnic as an institute of learning plays an important role in developing an entrepreneurial society. It would become more important to understand student's entrepreneurial aspirations in order to achieve an institutional 'fit' between higher education offering and the needs of student. The entrepreneurial directed approach is well suited for gaining a better understanding of the concepts of entrepreneurship especially about the importance of the entrepreneurship process, with the polytechnic campuses attempting to clarify the nature of education they offer to students and subsequently the potential contribution to the society. With rising population growing at geometric proportion relative to job placement that is growing at arithmetic progression, it became obvious that the nation's formal education is fuelling unemployment, crime and cycle of poverty as graduates could not be absorbed.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, discussions and conclusion drawn from this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. In addition to the learnt profession at the Polytechnic level, students should acquire skills in the trade or other self-employ professions.
2. Both male and female undergraduate students of the Polytechnic of Ibadan should be exposed to equal opportunities and experience so that there will be no gender difference in employment certainty upon graduation.
3. In order to foster employment certainty among graduates of the Polytechnic of Ibadan, Polytechnic curriculum should be developed in response to the needs in labour market.



4. Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of Education in consultation with relevant agency should reinvent the one-year National Youth Service as a period for putting into practice the entrepreneurship education learnt in the polytechnics.

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