



ICT SKILLS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION UNDERGRADUATES IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined ICT skills and its influence on entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates in South-West, Nigeria. One research question and one hypothesis guided this study, with descriptive research design adopted. The population comprised 1282 Business Education undergraduates from six Universities in South-West, Nigeria. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select 642 respondents as the sample. A self-developed questionnaire tagged: ICT Skills and Its influence on Entrepreneurial Intention of Business Education undergraduates (ISIIEIBEU) with 0.83 reliability coefficient was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research question any linear regression analysis was hypothesis. The finding of the study indicated that Business Education undergraduates possess ICT skills to a very high extent (mean = 3.38, SD = 0.77). It was further revealed that ICT skills influenced entrepreneurial intention of Business Education Undergraduates significantly ($B = 0.18, t(640) = 4.99, p = 0.000$). The study recommended among others that studies pertaining to

the impact of ICT skills innovative on the profitability of small and medium scale entrepreneurs should be carried out in South-West, Nigeria.

Introduction

In this modern world, any entrepreneur that wants to make it in the world of business should keep abreast of the technological development that have turned the whole world into a global village. The issue of graduate unemployment has been one of the serious problems Nigeria is battling with. This is due to the advancement in technology coupled with the state of the economy of the country, many companies and firms has reduced recruitment of staff to the barest minimum. The problem now is not how to fix the already sizeable unemployment market but the absorption of new entrants into the market because every year our tertiary institutions turned out graduates in their large numbers without a corresponding and sizeable level of employment to absorb these graduates.

Entrepreneurship has been identified as a veritable tools for economic growth and development of a nation. This is so because it (entrepreneurship) is capable of providing jobs for these unemployed graduates. Entrepreneurship is one of the keys to ensuring that individuals are empowered so as to lower the unemployment level (Iro-Idoro & Iro-Idoro, 2016). Entrepreneurship is defined as a process of identifying business opportunities and integrating resources in order to provide profitable products or services. It reflects a positive thinking which emphasizes opportunities over threats. It is equally a way of identifying and converting opportunities into profitable economic venture. Entrepreneurship can be viewed as a process of creating innovation which involves identifying an economic or business opportunities and using personal capabilities to harness resources needed to concretize the opportunities. In the word of Moa-Liberty, Tunde and Tinuola (2016), entrepreneurship is the process of wealth creation and those individuals referred to as entrepreneurs create wealth by innovatively operating competitive businesses.

Despite the benefits of entrepreneurship that accrued to an economy, majority of Nigerian youths still prefer to move from organizations to organizations, ministries to ministries in search of white collar jobs that are very scarce and sometimes not in existence. Nigeria being the giant of African has the largest number of youths who are yet to be properly mobilized and empowered for gainful economic activities (Nwabufo, 2015). The foregoing is an indication that most Nigerian youths/undergraduates seem not to have entrepreneurial intention and are not willing to engage in entrepreneurial activities. This may probably be due to unfriendly business climates, lack of start-off capital and lack of technical know-how. They prefer to be employed by organizations rather than be self-employed. Moreover, extremely planned, hard and unnoticed behaviour could be predicted by intention which is the best indicator. Birds in Bux and Honglin (2015) view entrepreneurial intention as the state of mind which directs and guides the actions of the individual towards the development and implementation of a new business venture. Meanwhile, several factors have been identified in literature to influence the formation of entrepreneurial intention. These factors have been grouped into two broad categories: individual factors and the contextual factors. The former includes such variables as psychological traits, demographic factors, individual skills and prior knowledge, individual network and social ties. The latter encompasses environmental support, environmental influences and organizational factors.

The issue of skill acquisition for self-reliance, youth empowerment and national productivity has been the mission of the Nigerian government for making entrepreneurship education compulsory across tertiary institutions. Higher education institutions have embraced entrepreneurship courses in the hopes of providing their students with the skills they need to establish their own firms. A skill is any established habit of performing a task in a way that is acceptable and ideal for success. According to Jimoh, Adetokunboh and Alaka-Adetokunboh (2017), entrepreneurial skills are those skills that will enable an entrepreneur to manage an

enterprise. Entrepreneurship skills are business skills which enable individuals to function very well when the business climate is not too friendly. They are the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours that enable an entrepreneur to spot business possibilities, foster innovation, and turn concepts into practical and profitable activities for a long-term existence. Without properly established entrepreneurial/business skills, intention to start a business may not surface. Meanwhile, entrepreneurs can be full of passion and have great ideas, but unfortunately pure passion is not enough to guarantee the success of a business (Holwerda, 2018). Therefore, entrepreneurial skills may be one of the predictors of entrepreneurial intention as well as some measures of business success. Such entrepreneurial skills include financial management skills, marketing skills as well as information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

With the advancement of technology, ICT skills have become extremely important while discussing the topic of entrepreneurship. ICT is the collection, storage and transmission of data using computer-based information and communication technologies. It is a group of words that encompasses all communication devices and applications such as cell phones, television, radio, electronic mail, computer hardware and software, satellite systems, fax and the myriad services and applications associated with them. Any entrepreneur who wants to succeed must be well-versed in the use of information and communication technology (ICT). The capacity to use current technology tools, particularly computers and its related attachments, in the functioning of a business is known as ICT skills.

The corporate world has been altered dramatically as a result of technological advancement. The world has become a global village just as the global economy has become the center of every nation's marketing interest and activities Umoru (2015). Apps can be installed on thousands of devices at once, internet marketing can reach millions of people, and purchasing can all be done online due to technological advancement. ICT allows a company to be more efficient, effective, and responsive to the need of its customers. ICT can aid business activities in the aspects of design, manufacturing, communication, research and development, distribution and sales as well as feedback. It is not out of place to assert that a person with ICT abilities in the twenty-first century is more likely to be enthusiastic about starting a business. It is no surprise that Holwerda (2018) finds a link between people's talents, especially ICT competencies and their business goals.

Statement of the Problem

One of the major problems Nigeria is battling with is youth unemployment. This is very alarming and frustrating. Youths in their large number are been turned out of the tertiary institutions without a corresponding employment opportunities to absorb them. These youths, instead for them to set up their own business, they prefer to be looking for white collar jobs which is either not enough or not-existing at all. This is an indication that they seem not to be interested in entrepreneurial intention and are not willing to engage in entrepreneurial activities hence the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine Information Communication Technology and its influence on entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates in South-West, Nigeria.

Hypothesis of the Study

One null hypothesis was formulated and was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. **H01:** There is no significance influence of ICT Skills on entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design which involved gathering of data through the use of questionnaire. The population of the study comprised, 1282 business education undergraduates from 6 universities offering Business Education in South-West, Nigeria. Proportionate, sampling technique was used to arrive at 642 business education undergraduates as sample. The research instrument was titled: ICT skills and its influence on Entrepreneurial Intention of Business Education Undergraduates (ISIIEIBEU). The instrument was validated by three experts from the department of Business Education, Kwara State University, Malete. The study utilized a validated four point scale questionnaire with a reliability of 0.83. Crombach Alpha Reliability coefficient was used for the reliability. The researchers with the help of six research assistants administered the instrument and was collected immediately from the respondent. Data collected for the study were analysed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions and linear regression analysis was used for the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Any item with a mean rating of 3.25-4.00 is regarded as very high extent, 2.50-3.24 is regarded as High Extent, 1.75 - 2.49 is regarded as Low Extent, 1.06 – 1.74 is regarded as Very Low Extent. For the hypothesis, null hypothesis would be rejected if the computed significance value is less than the alpha significance ($P < 0.05$) or if otherwise, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Result

Research Question: To what extent do ICT Skills possessed by business education undergraduates in South-West, Nigeria influence their entrepreneurial intention.

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation of responses on ICT Skills

S/N	Item Statements	X	SD	Remark
1.	Ability to operate office computer.	3.31	0.83	Very High Extent
2.	Ability to send bulk messages to customers	3.28	0.81	Very High Extent
3.	Ability to send document electronically.	3.31	0.78	Very High Extent
4.	Ability to use Word packages to manage records.	3.31	0.76	Very High Extent
5.	Ability to use online platform for product marketing.	3.38	0.82	Very High Extent
6.	Ability to use internet banking for payment and money transfer.	3.42	0.77	Very High Extent
7.	Ability to use video conference for discussion.	3.54	0.72	Very High Extent
8.	Ability to type, save and print business documents	3.42	0.69	Very High Extent
9.	Ability to browse and download business information from the internet	3.44	0.70	Very High Extent
10.	Ability to use social media to promote goods or services.	3.40	0.77	Very High Extent
	Weighted average	3.38	0.77	Very High Extent

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data in Table 1 show the mean and standard deviation of responses on the ICT skills possessed by business education undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria. The table reveals that the respondents indicate that they possess the ability to operate office computer, ability to send bulk messages to customers, ability to send document electronically and ability to use Word packages

to manage records to very high extent (mean = 3.31, 3.28, 3.31 and 3.31 respectively). Same way the respondents indicate that they possess the ability to use online platform for product marketing; ability to use internet banking for payment and money transfer and ability to use video conference for discussion to very high extent (mean = 3.38, 3.42, 3.54 and 1.67 respectively). In addition, the respondents indicate that they possess the ability to type, save and print business documents; ability to browse and download business information from the internet and ability to use social media to promote goods or services to very high extent (mean = 3.42, 3.44 and 3.40 respectively).

All the 10-item constructs have standard deviation ranging from 0.69 to 0.83. This means that the responses of the respondents are not wide spread as they are close to the mean. Table 6 shows a grand calculated weighted average mean and standard deviation of 3.38 and 0.77. this implies that business education undergraduates possess ICT skills to a very high extent (mean = 3.38, SD = 0.77).

Hypothesis: There is no significant influence of ICT Skills on entrepreneurial intention of Business education undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria.

Table 2: Summary of Regression analysis of the influence of ICT Skills on entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates

Model	N	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F-cal.	P-value
1	642	0.194	0.037	0.036	24.899	0.000

Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Intention

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 2 summaries the regression result of influence of ICT skills on entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates. The result indicated that there was a positive relationship between ICT skills and entrepreneurial intention (R = 0.194) while R-squared is 0.037 which means that the independent variable (ICT skills) explained 19.4% variations of the dependent variable (entrepreneurial intention). Thus, this is an accurate reflection that, ICT skills significantly relate with entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates students (F640 = 24.90 p = 0.00).

Table 3: Test of Significance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.871	.120		23.935	.000
	ICT skills	.175	.035	.194	4.990	.000

Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Intention

Source: Field Survey 2024

The test of significance result presented in Table 3 shows that, ICT skills significantly influence entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates (B = 0.18; t(640) = 4.99, P = 0.000). It indicated that at 5% level of significance, it is evidenced that the regression equation specified that ICT skills significantly influences entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates. Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that ICT skills has significant influence on entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates in universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that business education undergraduates possess ICT skills to a very high extent (mean = 3.38, SD = 0.77). This finding might be as a result of the courses offered such as use and application of computer, word processing and keyboarding offered by business education students. These courses are meant to equip business education students with relevant ICT skills needed to function in this knowledge and technological world. This finding is in consonance with the report of Okoro (2021) that ICT skills must be possessed by students/graduates including skills for accessing contra vision electronic software, deleting and merging mails, keying in data, copying, pasting and inserting in appropriate locations. Also, Oyerinde (2016) reported that business education graduates possessed ICT skills such as computer application skills, computer operations skills and multi-media communication skills for the global standard. Similarly, the findings of Jimoh et al (2017) further corroborated that ICT skills are required and possessed by prospective business education graduates for sustainable enterprise operation.

The study also found that ICT skills significantly influence entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates ($B = 0.18$; $f(640) = 4.99$, $P = 0.000$). This result is connected to the fact that marketing knowledge and skills will give prospective entrepreneurs confidence they need to utilize in successful marketing of product or service for successful operation of business outfit. The finding is in line with the report of Ingwe et al (2023) that there is significant influence of ICT skills on entrepreneurial intention of graduating students for self-reliance. The report of Abaddi (2023) that a significant negative relationship was found between digital skills and entrepreneurial intention of last-year undergraduate students in Jordanian university and that of Mohamad-Fazil, et al (2022) results that that technical digital skills and social-emotional digital skills have a positive and significant impact on Accounting undergraduates' entrepreneurship intention are also consistent with the findings of this study.

Conclusion

The study concluded that business education undergraduates possess ICT skills to a high extent in South-West, Nigeria. This means that business education undergraduates acquired the necessary employability skills (ICT) required for successful entrepreneurial activities. The study also concluded that there is a significant influence of ICT skills on entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates in South-West, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Studies pertaining to the impact of ICT skills innovative skills, environmental factors social network on the profitability of small and medium scale entrepreneurs should be carried out in South-west of Nigeria.
2. Academic institutions and government should create additional incubator programmes to help encourage a greater commitment to entrepreneurship with the students' body.

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