

**Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Skills and Employment Generation of Business  
Education Graduates in Public Universities, South-south Nigeria**

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***Abstract***

*The main purpose of the study was to determine the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and employment generation of Business Education Graduates in public Universities, South-South Nigeria. Three questions were answered and three null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of this study comprised all the 352 post-graduates' students, M.Sc and PhD from two successive academic sessions (2021/2022, 2022/2023) from Public Universities (Federal and State) South-South, Nigeria that studied business education. The sample size was 352 respondents from the public universities selected. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for this study. The instruments for gathering data were researcher-developed questionnaire captioned "Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Skills Questionnaire (AESQ)" and Employment Generation of Business Education Graduates Questionnaire (EGBEQ). The 42 structured items were drawn from all the clusters of the independent variables and 10 structured items for the dependent variable. The instruments were face-validated, and Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistics was utilized to determine the internal consistency of the instruments where reliability coefficient index of .78 and .92 were obtained respectively. The distribution of the questionnaire was carried out by the researcher with the help of two research assistants in order to achieve high rate of return. Simple Linear Regression analysis was used to answer research questions as well as testing the research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The findings of the study indicated that there is great and significant extent to which acquisition of creativity, risk taking, strategic thinking, emotional intelligence, time management, innovation, and critical thinking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that the management of public universities should ensure that acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is practicalized by students beginning from the time of compulsory entrepreneurial studies course.*

**Keywords:** Acquisition, Entrepreneurial, Employment, Generation, Skills

## **Introduction**

The pursuit and the desire of every business education graduates is to get employment, create value, recognition of business opportunity and undertaken to initiate, maintain and aggrandize profit by the production or distribution of economic goods and services despite the risks and uncertainties that may be encountered. Based on this, acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is important to students for harnessing natural resources and providing economic stability, thereby creating employment opportunities. Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in employment generation, as successful businesses create jobs and stimulate economic growth. Isiwu and Ibe (2023) recorded that, the National University Commission, (NUC) introduced entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of Nigerian Universities as a tool for effective way of equipping graduates with the desired employability skills and functional skills which would enable them to depend less on government jobs, but relay on their own abilities to provide for themselves the means of livelihood. This is why, United Nation (2016) reported that small and medium- sized enterprises (SMEs) account for approximately 70% of employment opportunities globally.

In the opinion of Oliveria (2018), entrepreneurship is the process of designing, launching, and running a business venture by taking calculated risk, innovation and adapting to changing market conditions. Acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is the process of obtaining technical skills and practical knowledge from an individual, group or institution that can help the individual to performance range of tasks and duties in an occupation. Entrepreneurial skills have been known as the basis of wealth creation and development of any individual and nation, depending on the attainment of the skills acquired as well as the expert use of the skills. Skills acquired through formal training enables students to broaden their knowledge and prepare for greater societal responsibilities in areas such as job creation, sustainable economic development and nation building.

Skill refers to efficiency in performance that is enhanced by practice and training. According to Ekong and Ekong (2016), skill is the capacity to accomplish a task in a systematic and efficient manner, as well as experience gained through a rigorous training procedure. Skill is combination of cognitive-knowledge and ability to learn new information; affective; feeling, emotion and expression of attitude; psychomotor-actions, origination of movement in conscious mental activities that enhance productivity and employment generation.

Dambo and Nwauzor (2023) stated that employment generation refers to the process of generating new job opportunities for individuals within an economy, which is essential for promoting economic growth, social cohesion, and overall well-being. According to McGinn and Oh (2017), employment generation is a conscious process of social development where

business education serves as catalyst for imparting entrepreneurial skills on students for employment generation, facilitate business growth, poverty reduction and economic development.

Despite the vital role entrepreneurship plays on graduates of business education, some still face challenges such as limited access to funding in business, market competitiveness, complex regulatory barriers or environment that hinder business growth, lack of mentorship and support, lack of networking opportunities, skill mismatch where some of the skills acquired may not align with the demand of the job market or the need of the community. According to Akele (2021), business education graduates are expected to advance on their chosen career in master and doctor of philosophy throughout life and can significantly impact employment generation through their expertise in business and education. Postgraduates business education has access to a broad array of opportunities that prepare them for successful careers in various industries. These opportunities span across professional development, networking, practical experience and personal growth. Onojaife (2019) asserted that advanced students like master and doctor of philosophy typically possess a blend of knowledge and skills in business principles and educational methods, technical skills preparing them for careers that integrate students of business acumen with teaching, training and employment generation. Postgraduates students of business education are typically individual who have completed their undergraduates studies and are seeking advance knowledge and skills in business management. Olaoye (2024) maintained that postgraduates students of business education often possess strong analytical and solving skills, excellent communication and teamwork abilities, willingness to take calculated risks and adapt to change desire to network and build professional relationship.

Entrepreneurial skills acquired by business education graduates in South-South has become necessary set of skills required to successfully start a business or add value to work as and generate employment. According to Edokpolor and Somori (2017), acquisition of entrepreneurial skills are competencies required to start a business, and they are seen as core skills; life and career skills; creativity and innovative skills, information skills, media and technology skills. They may also include: communication skills; creative /innovative skills; risk management skills; interpersonal relationship openness to change and business identification skills. Effective used of these entrepreneurial skills can drive economic growth by creating jobs, market competition along with new product opportunities.

Creativity obviously involves some form of display of ability to do something and most often in a new way. According to Abraham (2015), creativity is a mental process that involves the application of divergent thinking, critical thinking and other problem-solving skills to provide solution to problems resulting in the production of statistically in frequent solutions

that are useful to the individual, group or society. Creativity envisions actionable ideas, new concepts, new designs and opportunities. Similarly, Workie *et al* (2019) positioned that creativity is the ability and not activity of bringing something new into existence and requires passion and commitment. Entrepreneurs with creative thinking skills are never hesitant to try solutions that others may overlook because of fear of failure. Such people think out-of-the-box and always seek input from professionals in a different field for understanding a new perspective.

Risk-taking is an entrepreneurial skill that facilitates the growth of new businesses, enhances employment opportunities and career prospects in existing organizations. According to Udukeke (2023), risk-taking is a core competency in entrepreneurship, where individuals must make decisions in uncertain environment, often with incomplete information. This skill involves the ability to evaluate potential outcomes, anticipate challenges, and act despite the risks involved. Entrepreneurs who excel at risk-taking are not reckless because they tend to make calculated risks after careful analysis. Being able to take and calculate intelligent risks is one of the essential entrepreneur skills to learn by business education students.

Strategic thinking skills involve mix abilities of analyzing complex situations, make informed choices, and create effective strategies for guiding a business or organizations. Akpan and Udukeke (2023) maintained that strategic thinking is planned set of activities and processes including innovation, strategic planning and operational planning which involve the ability to create, scrutinizing conventional business approaches and unlocking new perspectives and pathways for functional business for success. This is because the skills help in formulating long-time strategies, setting goals and developing actionable plan to grow the business (Akpan *et al.*, 2022). The major goal of exposing business education graduates to strategic thinking is because it provide unified framework to be followed to achieving it goals and objectives in business.

The compelling need for students to seek self-development and productivity, self-employment and fulfillment has been stressed as a major concern, and business education programme, particularly in relation to small and micro enterprises, is a key vehicle for acquisition of entrepreneurial skills for employment generation. One of the major objectives of business education is to provide knowledge, skills and technical competences to students to have a successful career and to become successful in business. Goddy Mkpa *et al.* (2023) opined that business education is a programme of study that prepares students with knowledge, competencies, marketable skills and attitudes needed to perform and run successfully in business or gainfully employed. Business education holds the prospect of contributing the required entrepreneurial skills to increase in job creation and self employment of graduates.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The persistent challenge of unemployment among business education graduates poses of significant threat to economic development and growth of our nation. Despite the increasing demand for skilled professionals in the business sector, it is observed by the researcher that a substantial number of business education graduates remain unemployed or underemployed, leading to a waste of human capital and a mismatch between the skills acquired through education and the requirements of the labour market.

The problem is further compound by the lack relevant skills, inadequate, industry-academia linkages, and probably unsatisfactory entrepreneurial skills possession. Hence the debilitating consequences of low employment generation is high dependency rate, where a significant portion of the population relies on others for financial support. This situation has not only stifles individual growth but has also exert a disproportionate burdens on the economy. Other consequences include low productivity that results in a corresponding low standard of living perpetual vicious circle of poverty and a limiting opportunities for economic mobility. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to determine the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills on employment generation of Business Education Graduates in public Universities, South-South Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which acquisition of entrepreneurial skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public universities, South-South Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to determine the extent to which acquisition of:

- i. Creativity skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities South-South, Nigeria.
- ii. Risk taking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities South-South, Nigeria.
- iii. Strategic thinking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities South-South, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

- i. To what extent does acquisition of creativity skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent does acquisition of risk taking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria?
- iii. To what extent does acquisition of strategic thinking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria?

### **Research Hypotheses**

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

- Ho<sub>1</sub> Creativity skill does not significantly predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities is not significant.
- Ho<sub>2</sub> Risk takings skill does not significantly predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities is not significant.
- Ho<sub>3</sub> strategic thinking skill does not significantly predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities is not significant.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. This descriptive survey research design is considered most appropriate for this study because questionnaire was used to collect the opinions of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all the 352 post-graduates students, (M.Sc and PhD) from two successive academic sessions (2021/2022, 2022/2023) in public universities (Federal and State) South-South, Nigeria that studied business education. Sample size for the study was 352 post-graduates students, M.Sc and PhD in business education from the public universities selected. Census sampling technique was used to pick the entire population for sample size due to the small population; hence it was not large enough. 352 were gotten from the various selected public university. Stratified random sampling technique was employed to group the public universities into two strata; Federal and State. Purposive sample was used to select 4 Federal Universities and 4 from the State Universities making a total of 8 public universities for the study. Both Federal and State universities were used because they do the same business education programs.

The instruments used for data collection was researcher-structured questionnaire entitled “Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Skills Questionnaire (AESQ)” and “Employment Generation of Business Education Graduates Questionnaire (EGBEGQ)”. The instrument



(AESQ) was sub-divided into Three (3) subsections according to the variables A-G with six (6) items each making total of 42 items to elicit information, while (EGBEGQ) dealt with ten (10) items. A four point rating scale of Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE), Small Extent (SE) and Very Small Extent (VSE) with numerical values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively was used in the instruments. The face validity was established using three experts, where two were from the Department of Business Education while one from the Department of Psychological Foundations of Education, all in University of Uyo. Fifty two (52) items were given for validation to assess the clarity and suitability of the instrument that was used for data collection. Some questions were restructured and still maintained (52) items. All correction and suggestions made were used to improve the final version of the instrument. In order to determine the reliability of the instruments, questionnaire was administered to thirty (30) respondents of Business Education post-graduates students 2023/2024 who were not part of the sample size. The data was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha Statistic to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded reliability coefficient index of .78 and .92 for (AESQ) and (EGBEGQ) respectively.

The researchers met the heads of the departments of business education in the public universities sampled, for permission to contact the M.Sc and PhD students for administration of the questionnaire. Before this time, the researcher has established relationship with the Heads of the Department at the time the researcher visited to get the number of postgraduates students from each university. During the administration of the questionnaire, some of the M.Sc and Ph.D students were contacted during defense while some after lectures. The postgraduates' students were addressed on the purpose of the research by the researchers, thereafter, the questionnaire was administered with two research assistants. The filled questionnaires were collected at the spot. Out of 352 copies of questionnaire distributed, 2 copies were not recovered, while 4 were not properly filled. Therefore, 346 copies were retrieved as authentic and also used for data analysis of the study which (98%) returned rate. Simple Linear Regression analysis was used to answer research questions as well as testing the research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

## **Results**

**Research Question 1:** To what extent does acquisition of creativity skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Summary of Simple Linear Regression analysis showing the extent acquisition of creativity skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria  $n = 346$**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Decision
1	.877 <sup>a</sup>	.769	.768	5.69348	Very Great Extent

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 1 shows simple linear regression analysis of the extent acquisition of creativity skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria. The table reveals R value of .877 and  $R^2$  of .769 which indicated that the prediction between the acquisition of creativity skills and employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria is very great. Additionally, the positive value of the adjusted  $R^2$  indicated positive extent of prediction. The  $R^2$  of .769 implied that the acquisition of creativity skills accounts for 76.9% prediction on employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria.

**Null Hypothesis 1:** Creativity skills does not significantly predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities is not significant.

**Table 2: Summary of Simple Linear Regression analysis on the creativity skills and employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities  $n = 346$**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value	Decision
Regression	37134.968	1	37134.968	1145.584	.000 <sup>b</sup>	Reject $H_0$
Residual	11151.020	344	32.416			
Total	48285.988	345				

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 2 shows the simple linear regression analysis on the creativity skills and employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities. The table revealed the F-value as 1145.584 and P-value of .000 which is less than .05 level of significance. The prediction is significant. Therefore, the research hypothesis 1 which stated



that the extent to which acquisition of creativity skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities is not significant is rejected. Hence, the extent to which acquisition of creativity skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities is significant.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent can acquisition of risk-taking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria?

**Table 3: Summary of Simple Linear Regression analysis showing the extent acquisition of risk-taking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria**  
n = 346

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Decision
1	.710 <sup>a</sup>	.503	.502	8.34876	Small Extent

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 3 represents simple linear regression analysis of the extent acquisition of risk-taking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria. The table reveals R value of .710 and  $R^2$  of .503 which indicated that the prediction between the acquisition of risk-taking skills and employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria is small. Again, the positive value of the adjusted  $R^2$  indicated positive extent of prediction. The  $R^2$  of .503 indicated that the acquisition of risk-taking skills account for 50.3% prediction on employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria.

**Null Hypothesis 2:** Risk taking skill does not significantly predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities is not significant.

**Table 4: Summary of Simple Linear Regression analysis on the risk takings skills and employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value	Decision
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Regression	24308.554	1	24308.554	348.751	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	23977.434	344	69.702		Reject H <sub>0</sub>
Total	48285.988	345			

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 4 shows the simple linear regression analysis on the risk takings skills and employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities. The table revealed the F-value as 348.751 and P-value of .000 which is less than .05 level of significance. The prediction is significant. Therefore, the research hypothesis 2 which stated that the extent to which acquisition of risk takings skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities is not significant is rejected. Hence, the extent to which acquisition of risk takings skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities is significant.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent can acquisition of strategic thinking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria?

**Table 5: Simple Linear Regression analysis showing the extent acquisition of strategic thinking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria** n = 346

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Decision
1	.742 <sup>a</sup>	.550	.549	7.94535	Great Extent

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 5 shows simple linear regression analysis of the extent acquisition of strategic thinking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria. The table reveals R value of .742 and R<sup>2</sup> of .550 which indicated that the prediction between the acquisition of strategic thinking skills and employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria is great. Additionally, the positive value of the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> indicated positive extent of

prediction. The  $R^2$  of .550 implied that the acquisition of strategic thinking skills account for 55.0% prediction on employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria.

**Null Hypothesis 3:** The extent to which acquisition of strategic thinking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities is not significant.

**Table 6: Simple Linear Regression analysis on the strategic thinking skills and employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value	Decision
Regression	26569.764	1	26569.764	420.883	.000 <sup>b</sup>	Reject $H_0$
Residual	21716.224	344	63.129			
Total	48285.988	345				

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 6 shows the simple linear regression analysis on the strategic thinking skills and employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities. The table revealed the F-value as 420.883 and P-value of .000 which is less than .05 level of significance. The prediction is significant. Therefore, the research hypothesis 3 which stated that the extent to which acquisition of strategic thinking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities is not significant is rejected. Hence, the extent to which acquisition of strategic thinking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities is significant.

## Findings

The result of data analyzed revealed the following findings:

- There is very great and significant extent to which acquisition of creativity skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria.
- There is small and significant extent to which acquisition of risk taking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria.
- There is great and significant extent to which acquisition of strategic thinking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study are discussed based on the specific objectives of the study.

#### **Acquisition of Creativity Skills and Employment Generation of Business Education Graduates**

The findings on research question one and hypothesis one revealed that there is very great and significant extent to which acquisition of creativity skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria respectively. This finding could be upheld from the fact that creativity enables the Business Education graduates to act on this changing climate to differentiate them and gain a competitive advantage for their organization. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Nwaukwa *et al* (2018) who maintained creativity skill leads to employment generation in small and medium enterprises such as computer business centers, book binding centers, laminating centers, internet centers (cybercafé), business registration, photocopying centers, reprographic, and printing press among others. This finding is supported by that of Adedeji and Ibironke (2022) who asserted that creativity skills among business education graduates serve as reduction in unemployment rate, diversification of job opportunities, crime reduction, employment generation and national development.

Moreover, this finding is in consonance with the finding of Adebowale (2016) who revealed that creativity was highly and significantly predict employment generation potentials but demographic variables did not significantly moderate this moderation. Based on this finding, the researcher's position is that ability to generate new ideas, good designs in business, collaborating in team work, among others are critical competencies for business set-up as well as expansion of existing businesses.

#### **Acquisition of Risk Taking Skills and Employment Generation of Business Education Graduates**

The findings on research question two and hypothesis two showed that there is small and significant extent to which acquisition of risk taking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria respectively. This finding is undoubtedly proven because opening a new business is embodiment of several risks, and risk-taking fuel entrepreneurship that leads to employment opportunities. This finding is in line with the finding of Asenye *et al.* (2018) who found that entrepreneurial firms exhibiting moderate levels of risk-taking outperform in market as compared to firms exhibiting either very high or very low levels of risk taking. This finding is supported by the finding of Maina and Nyambura (2022) who revealed a positive and significant relationship between risk taking

inclination and entrepreneurship education on students' self-employment intention and subsequent self-employment after graduation.

### **Acquisition of Strategic Thinking Skills and Employment Generation of Business Education Graduates**

The findings on research question three and hypothesis three revealed that there is great and significant extent to which acquisition of strategic thinking skills predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria respectively. This finding could be true since no business survives in today's competitive business environment in isolation of strategic thinking among the owners, managers and employees toward its growth and development. Thus, strategic thinking skills proffer solution to a problem, as well as ability to come up with concrete, reliable and achievable plans of action for proven sources of livelihood. However, this finding is agreed with the finding of Al-Zu'bi and Al-Nawasrah (2017) who opined that strategic thinking is an intentional and rational thought process that focuses on the analysis of critical factors and variables that will influence the long-term success of a business. This finding is supported by the finding of Onoriode (2022) who found that strategic thinking has very strong, positive and statistically significant influence on performance of SMEs.

In addition, this finding is in line with the finding of Shadare and Ilesanmi (2016) who revealed that strategic thinking skills play an important role in business competitiveness, since managing a business involves thinking about the firms past, present and future as related to constraints and unique opportunities that can create value through people. Based on this finding, the researcher indicates that ability to create clear long-term goals, develop practical solution to business challenges, and make informed decisions remain significant for Business Education graduates to generate employment regardless of forces in the contemporary business environment.

### **Conclusion**

This study justifies the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills on employment generation of business education graduates in public universities, South-South Nigeria through the adoption of the required research method that ensures the data suitability from the respondents. Therefore, acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is necessary to overcome the unemployment issues confronting the business education graduates. Based on the findings, it could be concluded that various entrepreneurial skills like creativity, risk taking, strategic thinking, emotional intelligence, time management, innovation, and critical thinking skills greatly

predict employment generation of business education graduates in public Universities, South-South, Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

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

- i. The management of public universities should ensure that acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is practicalized by students beginning from the time of compulsory entrepreneurial studies course.
- ii. The National Universities Commission in collaboration with curriculum planners to see that the entrepreneurship education contents are properly develops to the extent that will help students in the acquisition of strategic thinking skills.
- iii. Graduates students of business education should sustain the innovative skills by finding solution to problems that arise when operating business ventures as well as providing new ideas to promote the existing business.
- iv. University lecturers should endeavor to explore the students' abilities to address the issues and challenges raised that hinder acquisition of critical thinking skills via assessment practice in business education.

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