

Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Innovations as Driven Tools for Economic Development in Digital Era

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Abstract:

Every country solely depends on innovation, productivity and creativity for them to grow. Entrepreneurship provides the economy with a continuous supply of ideas, skills and innovation necessary to promote competition and the efficient allocation of scarce resources. The study examined skill acquisition and entrepreneurship innovations as driven tool for economic development in digital era. Being survey research, the population include all the entrepreneurs in Osogbo metropolis. Random sampling technique was employed to select 100 entrepreneurs within Osogbo metropolis. The study adopted descriptive statistical tool of mean and standard deviation to determine the opinions of the respondents while T-test inferential statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Result showed that entrepreneurial skill acquisition has a significant influence on sustainable economic development in digital era. It was concluded that entrepreneurial innovation and skill acquisition increase the standard of living of people thereby promoting sustainable economic development in digital era. It was therefore recommended among others that governments at all levels should intervene in postulating good policies to reduce the problems of entrepreneurial through the supply of recent technological and business information equipment and advice. This will go a long way in job creation and poverty reduction in the society.

Keyword: *Entrepreneurship, innovation, skill acquisition, economic development, digital era*

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1.0 Introduction:

In the contemporary global environment, entrepreneurship development in form of creativity and innovation has been regarded as the benchmark for economic and digital development in Nigeria (Anyadike, 2012). Entrepreneurship has been identified as a major avenue of assisting the youth and even adult to acquire desired skills and capacities to be self-dependent or self-

employed, prepare them to be in a position to own ventures and manage them profitably. Entrepreneurship places emphasis on skill acquisition and capacities for self-employment. It holds the key to the realization deploy of science, technology and innovation (Emmanuel, 2018). Entrepreneurship provides the economy with a continuous supply of ideas, skills and innovation necessary to promote competition and the

efficient allocation of scarce resources. Innovation is one vehicle that diffuses and upgrades existing information, thereby acting as a medium for the realization of spillovers of knowledge. Innovation often involves an improvement in the inventory of valuable information through the learning of skills. In Nigeria, entrepreneurship, skill development and creativity have been identified as major determinants of economic growth (Zoltan & Audretsch, 2019).

However, Abubakar (2019) opined that the role of digitalized entrepreneurship cannot be over-emphasized. Entrepreneurship skill acquisition allows people to offer a number of approaches to acquire and offer the opportunities to collaborate online with others from across the world. As the digital transformation is moving ahead, entrepreneurship skills have the potential to change the way we work and interact, which likely to create new innovations and opportunities for people (Thomas, 2019). Entrepreneurship as “self-employment of any sort”, the entrepreneur is willing to manage, organizes and takes up the risk of a business. Clearly, the relationship between entrepreneurship, skill acquisition, innovation and economic development cannot be over emphasized.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate entrepreneurship, innovation and skill acquisition as drivers of economic development in digital era. The specific purposes were:

1. To examine the impact of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on sustainable economic development in digital era.
2. To determine how innovations can drive the economic development in digital era.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the impacts of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on sustainable economic development in digital era?

2. How does innovation contribute to economic development in digital era?

1.3 Research Hypotheses

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

- H₀₁:** Entrepreneurial skill acquisition has no significant influence on sustainable economic development in digital era.
- H₀₂:** There is no relationship between innovation and economic development in digital era.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study will be of benefit to the government at all levels in postulating good policies to reduce the problems of entrepreneurs through the supply of needed technological and business information and advices for the young entrepreneurs. The results of this study can help the federal government of Nigeria to provide securities of life and properties, provision of infrastructural facilities like constant power supply, good road, good health care services, and drinkable water among others for better performance of entrepreneurs at reduced cost.

Furthermore, this study will help policy makers to come up with policies that address the challenges faced by the young graduates when practicing entrepreneurship. This will help to provide the young graduates with a secure business environment and eventually business growth.

Lastly the study will help future researchers to carry out related studies in young graduate entrepreneurship and poverty reduction in Nigeria. The findings of this study will also contribute to new knowledge regarding young graduates’ entrepreneurship and poverty reduction. This can help the government and stakeholders to come up with better strategies of eradicating poverty among the Nigerian Youths.

1.5 Study Area

This study examined entrepreneurship, innovation and skill acquisition as drivers of economic development in digital era. The study was limited to 100 entrepreneurs in Osun State. This study covered only this and it does not intend to go beyond.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Skills acquisition

The word "skill" can have a variety of definitions depending on ones believe. According to Adeniyi (2022), a skill is an organized sequence of activities, mastery accomplished and typically presented in a flexible but systematic temporal pattern. It also includes expertise, practical ability, dexterity, and tact. Therefore, a skill is a behaviour pattern that has been practiced through time. It entails acquiring performance capability. To possess a skill, is to prove the habit of acting, thinking, and behaving until a process becomes natural to the person through practice. Adanlawo & Chaka (2022) aver that one is said to be skilled when a procedure is completed flawlessly, effectively, and with an eye toward results. Adeniyi (2022) defined skill as the habit of acting, thinking, and behaving in a certain task in a way that the process becomes second nature to the person through repetition or practice. Skill development is important for utilizing a country's natural resources, and educational institutions, especially higher institutions, play a vital role in this process (Adanlawo, Vezi-Magigaba & Owolabi, 2021). Omidiji & Ogwu (2019) categories skills in any training program into technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills. The authors claim that technical abilities require knowledge of and competence in a particular activity, particularly one that involves methods, processes, procedures, or techniques. Human skills are an individual's capacity to function well in a group setting in order to promote teamwork within the group which he

leads. Understanding the interconnection of an organization's multiple functions is the third one which is a conceptual skill. However, Idris & Mbudai (2017) opines using technical skills in Nigerian schools to empower or prepare young people for the workforce. There is little doubt that learning about entrepreneurship education provides opportunity for students to develop the information and attitudes necessary to take constructive actions, to create, and to become entrepreneurs. Since it is widely believed that gaining the essential skills increases a country's productive potential, Nigerian society is conscious of the need to prepare every citizen to make an effective contribution to the welfare of the nation. Additionally, it has been noted that the greatest welfare is only attained when each person contributes to the fullest extent of their abilities (Idris & Mbudai, 2017; Omidiji & Ogwu, 2018). According to Kabir & Jazuli (2017), developing new skills is one of the most reliable ways for graduates (youths) to enter the workforce. Omidiji & Ogwu (2019) assert that skills acquisition will lead to an increase in the industrious power of a nation. This indicates that a nation whose citizens are well equipped will make a meaningful contribution to the welfare of the nation. As stated by Adanlawo, Vezi-Magigaba & Owolabi (2021),

2.2 Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is defined as, "an activity that involves the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities to introduce new goods and services, ways of organizing, markets, processes and raw materials through organizing efforts that previously had not existed" (Venkataranman, 1997; Shane & Venkataraman, 2018). Entrepreneurship is commonly regarded as the process of creating new ideas towards self-reliance. It encompasses the use of individual abilities, money and other assets in order to achieve profitability and sustainability of the business venture (Edegba, 2022).

Entrepreneurship is said to be the capability and the willingness of a person to seek and utilize investment opportunities. It is actually concerned with creating opportunities and meeting the needs of individuals and a process of identifying gaps in one's immediate community and society at large while bringing together innovative manners to fill these gaps. It is a continuous process of creating wealth through the identification of opportunities and the employment of personal skills and resources. Entrepreneurship is generally viewed as a process of creating something new. Entrepreneurship involves creation process, conscious devotion of time and effort, involves risk and has some rewards (Edegbai, 2022).

According to Agu (2010), entrepreneurship can be viewed from different perspectives. Some people viewed entrepreneurship as business while others see it as innovation.

2.3 Innovation

The ability to innovate is represented by the ability to continuously transform knowledge and ideas into new products, processes and systems, to the benefit of both the organization and the shareholders. Thus, scholars have presented various perceptions of the term 'innovation'. For instance, while Evans (2019), defines innovation as, "the ability to discover new relationships of seeing things from new perspectives and to form new combinations from existing concepts", Simmonds (2016), opines that, "innovations are new ideas that consist of new products and services, new use of existing products, new markets for existing products or new marketing methods". Other scholars, like Slevin (2021), Lumpkin and Dess (2016), and Knox (2022) posit that, "innovation can be defined as a process that provides added value and a degree of novelty to the organization, suppliers and customers, developing new procedures, solutions, products and service and new ways of marketing. Simply

put by Henderson and Lente (2015), innovation may be viewed as the "implementation of innovative ideas". For Rogers (2018), innovation, "involves both knowledge creation and diffusion of existing knowledge". Innovation has its features, some of which vary according to the organization under consideration as some organizational characteristics also vary depending on the type of innovation considered. Down and Mohr (1976) refer to these characteristics as "secondary characteristics of innovation".

2.4 Entrepreneurial Skills

Entrepreneurial skills are important set of skills that are needed to be an entrepreneur. To successfully run a business and add value to work, these skills must be available and used in the right format. Such entrepreneurial skills include; innovative skill, decision making skill, communication skill, problem solving skills, planning and organizing skills, risk management skills, self-management skills, technological/technical skills, teamwork skills, learning skills, initiative skills, enterprise skills, financial skills, managerial skills, marketing/saleable skills, interpersonal relationship skills, integrity skills, practical skills, assertiveness skills, leadership skills, listening skills, openness to change and business identification (Fillis, 2012).

3.0 Materials and Methods

Descriptive survey approach was used to generate data in relation to entrepreneurship, innovation and skill acquisition as drivers of economy development in digital era in Osun State.

3.1 Population

The target population for this study comprised of entrepreneurs who are business owners within Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State, Nigeria. They were selected because they have entrepreneurial skills and have business enterprise within the study area.

3.2 Sampling Techniques

For the purpose of this study, one hundred entrepreneurs were selected from different locations within Osogbo metropolis, Osun State using a random sampling technique.

S/N	NAMES OF AREA	NO OF ENTREPRENEURS
1	Alekuwodo Area	10
2	Ayetoro Area	21
3	Ogooluwa Area	23
4	Oke-baale Area	24
5	Old garage Area	22

3.3 Research Instrument

The questionnaire was designed to answer five questions drawn from each of the two research questions itemized in order to give objectives to all the questions drawn.

3.4 Method of Analysis

Statistical Mean, Standard Deviation and ranking were used to provide answers to the research questions generated, while T-test inferential statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

Shown in Tables 1 and 2 are the results of Impacts of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on sustainable economic development in digital era

Table 1: Impacts of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on sustainable economic development

S/N	Variable	N	FX	Mean	Std. Dev.	Ranks
1	Fish rearing reduces unemployment.	100	245	2.45	1.056	3 rd
2	Making of soap is lucrative.	100	232	2.32	1.076	5 th
3	Dry cleaning service brings reasonable income	100	268	2.68	1.105	1 st
4	Making Adire/tye & die is a profitable business	100	243	2.43	1.089	4 th
5	Fashion designing reduce poverty level	100	251	2.51	1.115	2 nd

In Table 1, the results of item 3 with the highest mean of 2.68 was ranked 1st, and it revealed that dry cleaning services bring reasonable income for people in the study area and promote economic

development, while items 1, 2, 4, 5, (3rd, 5th, 4th, and 2nd) also identify entrepreneurial skills acquisition that promote economic development in digital era.

Table 2: Contribution of innovation to economic development in digital era

S/N	Variable	N	FX	Mean	Std. Dev.	Ranks
1	Entrepreneurial innovations have led to the creation of a whole new product in our firm	100	279	2.79	1.110	1 st

S/N	Variable	N	FX	Mean	Std. Dev.	Ranks
2	Entrepreneurial innovations have led to the upgrade or rebranding of an existing product to better satisfy consumers	100	265	2.65	1.069	3 rd
3	Entrepreneurial innovation increases the standard of living of people	100	276	2.76	1.095	2 nd
4	The revenue of the firm has increased as a result of the new technology employed	100	263	2.63	1.086	4 th
5	New innovations we adopted has ensured our continued existence	100	235	2.35	1.089	5 th

In Table 2, the results of item 1 with the highest mean of 2.79 was ranked 1st and it revealed that Entrepreneurial innovations have led to the creation of a whole new product in firms, while items 2, 3, 4 and 5 also revealed the relationship between innovation and economic development in digital era in Osun State.

4.2 Testing of Hypothesis

Tables 3 and 4 show the results of the research hypotheses.

Hypothesis one: Entrepreneurial skill acquisition has no significant influence on sustainable economic development in digital era

Table 3: T-test Summary of the influence of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on sustainable development

Gender	N	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation (S.D)	T-cal(t)	T-crit.	Degree of Freedom (df)	Level of Significance (p)	Decision
Entrepreneurial skill acquisition	100	4.03	7.63	2.83	1.98	147	≤0.05	Rejected
Sustainable economic development	100	4.05	7.67					

Table 3 presents the results of the influence of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on sustainable development during digital era. The results reveal that there is significant influence between entrepreneurial skill acquisition and sustainable economic development during digital era (**t-cal = 2.83, t-crit. = 1.98, df = 147, $p \leq 0.05$**). The table also indicates entrepreneurial skill acquisition (**Mean = 4.03; S.D. = 7.63**) is lesser to that of the

sustainable economic development (**Mean = 4.05; S.D. = 7.67**). Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that entrepreneurial skill acquisition has no significant influence on sustainable economic development in digital era is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There no relationship between innovation and economic development in digital era.

Table 4: T-test Summary of the relationship between innovation and economic development

Gender	N	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation (S.D)	T-cal(t)	T-crit.	Degree of Freedom (df)	Level of Significance (p)	Decision
Innovation	100	3.81	8.02	3.72	1.98	147	≤ 0.05	Rejected
Economic development	100	4.05	7.62					

Table 4 presents the results of the relationship between innovation and economic development in digital era. The results reveal that there was a significant relationship between innovation and economic development in digital era ($t\text{-cal} = 3.72$, $t\text{-crit.} = 1.98$, $df = 147$, $p \leq 0.05$). The table also indicates that innovation ($Mean = 3.81$; $S.D. = 8.02$) is significantly lower than the economic development ($Mean = 4.05$; $S.D. = 7.62$). Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that there no relationship between innovation and economic development in digital era is hereby rejected.

4.3 Discussion

Research Question one identified the impact of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on sustainable economic development in digital era. Finding also shows that dry cleaning services bring reasonable income to entrepreneurs within Osun state. These findings concurred with the report of Fakomogbon and Adegbija (2019), entrepreneurial skill is the expertise or ability to developed in the course of training and experience. Skill acquisition is a process where the youths through learning of necessary skills that will enable them to be self-reliance becomes useful to the society by embarking on profitable entrepreneurship programme. Among the factors of production, only human beings are capable of learning, adapting or changing, innovative and creative. The human factor affects production immensely. Entrepreneurship equips the youths to imbibe entrepreneurial spirit and embrace the government entrepreneurship programs necessary for their empowerment. It inculcates six (6) empowerment elements into the youth. They

include; psychological, community, organizational, economic, social and cultural.

Research question two established the contribution of innovation to economic development in digital era in Osun State. Finding reveals that entrepreneurial innovation has led to the creation of a whole new product in different firms. The result is in line with Oluwaseun, Opeyemi and Oluwaseun (2019) identified that the adoption of new innovation as a veritable pathway for the growth and sustenance of not only the manufacturing sector but also the nation as a whole, thus providing the conclusion that a significant, casual relationship exist between entrepreneurial innovation and business performance.

5.0 Conclusion

Entrepreneurial skills acquisition has been perceived by many as being synonymous with innovation in digital world. Nigeria is blessed with abundant talents in the area of innovation and skill acquisition. To enable their continuing relevance in the world of work, the use of entrepreneurial technology will assist them and make their work more efficient. The study concludes that entrepreneurial innovation and skill acquisition increase the standard of living of people thereby promoting sustainable economic development in digital era. Innovation is often associated with success but not all innovations yield the desired outcome.

6.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. Governments at all levels should intervene in postulating good policies to reduce the problems of entrepreneurial through the supply of recent technological and business information equipment and advice. This will go a long way in job creation and poverty reduction in the society.
2. Technological entrepreneurship which abounds across the country should be identified with a view to giving it both technical and financial boost.
3. The effort to support technological entrepreneurship should be carried out meticulously as some innovative experiences are counter-productive.

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