

Tertiary Institution Types and Entrepreneurial Behaviour of Graduates in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This ex-post facto study was carried out in the face of serious public sector unemployment to determine the impact of University education vis-à-vis Colleges of Education, Polytechnic and Agriculture on entrepreneurial behaviour of tertiary institutions' graduates in Cross River State, Nigeria. The responses of 89 self-employed University Graduates (UG) to an Employment Self Attitude Questionnaire (ESAQ) were compared to those of 51 self-employed Polytechnic Graduates (PG), 29 self-employed College of Agriculture Graduates (CAG) and 27 self-employed College of Education Graduates (CEG). These were purposively or rationally selected from homes, work places, the books of the National Directorate of Employment, the books of Cross River State Ministry of Commerce and Industry, christian fellowship centres, business premises, schools, etc. in Cross River State. Comparisons of their mean scores using the t-test showed that self-employed University graduates recorded higher entrepreneurial behaviour than their Polytechnic and Colleges of Agriculture and Education counterparts. The study provided some support to the notion that familial connections could present valuable curricula resources that would help graduates gain and reinforce appropriate entrepreneurial behaviour.

Key words: Entrepreneurial behaviour, tertiary institutions, self-employed graduates, Cross River State

INTRODUCTION

Tertiary institutions, the world over, are always as definitive as Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Agriculture and Education. Akin to these are, in some countries, Bible Colleges or Theological seminaries; though in religiously polygamous nations like Nigeria, such inclusion had and would often engender debates (Aghenta, 1984; Arikpo, 2005).

According to Babalola *et al.* (2001), these institutions constitute the third level of education, which is always associated with the offer of high-quality formal education, abilities to acquire and apply theoretical and analytical knowledge and the most profound global transformation, which gives rise to the birth of knowledge societies. This position is supported by Bekomson and Effiong (2000), Fafunwa (1991), Okedara (1984) and Ikpe (2000), who tag them higher levels of education. But to Izuwah (1985), Adeyemi (1997), Yesufu (2000) and UNESCO (1998), they remain not only saddled with the responsibility of providing their recipients and owners with wisdom, but also with the nurture and supply of needed high level manpower, prerequisite to economic progress and cultural renaissance.

However, the constitution of the what, how, why and where provided of labour and wisdom by each of these units of tertiary institutions differ according to their curricula. In Nigeria, these differences are as found in the provisions of the National Policy on Education (2000), the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board Guidelines (2006), the National Universities Commission (NUC) objectives, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) objectives and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) objectives. For the second and third commissions, the differences are as per Federal Government's promulgated Education Decrees (Decree No. 3 of 1989) and (Decree No. 16 of 1985), respectively. These decrees empower them to prescribe minimum intellectual standards for recipients of the training and education of the different tertiary institutions under their control. For the first commission, however, the difference is as per recommendations of the 1969 National Curriculum Conference (Ikpe, 2000; Okorie, 2001; Arikpo, 2005). This authorizes it to set minimum academic standards for entrants into universities under its control (Arikpo, 2005). Therefore, while for recipients of Polytechnics, Colleges of Agriculture and Colleges of Education, the content and context of the tertiary

institution curriculum are to inculcate in them. The right type of values and attitudes and appropriate skills, abilities and competencies that would enable them engage in self-employment, for recipients of university education they are to enable them develop those values, attitudes, understanding and skills that would help them plan, work and act in consonance with others (Okorie, 2001). By implication, the curricula of Polytechnics, Colleges of Agriculture and Colleges of Education nurture in their recipients job potentials whose occupational themes are investigative, artistic and enterprising; whereas that of the University harnesses in its recipients occupational themes which are conventional, social and realistic (Jones and Jones, 1991). This position is confirmed by Adedeji (1998) and Adedeji and Osuagwu (2001). The latter using a descriptive survey, investigated the relative labour market performance of 1998/1999 National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) graduates from Nigerian Polytechnics and Universities in Oyo state. They discovered a significant difference in labour market performance of graduates, from Nigerian Polytechnics and Universities. In an earlier study by Adedeji (1998), this disparity remained attributable to the fact that most PG, CAG and CEG unlike UG had orientation and training in technical and vocational programmes, possessed more technical skills and are practice oriented.

These deficiencies the Nigerian government, however, identifies in the self-employment inabilities, which faced UG at the wake of serious unemployment in the mid-1980s. It took a step to ameliorate the situation by introducing the National Directorate of Employment in 1987 (Aziegbe, 1990). The Directorate had programmes like the small-scale industries and graduate employment programmes, the national youth employment and vocational skills development programme and the agricultural programme, the youth empowerment scheme, etc (Arikpo, 2005). These programmes and schemes were to help university graduates in particular set up and run their own businesses, undergo entrepreneurship training, translate business ideas into commercial ventures and maintain a productive economic life (Aziegbe, 1990; Arikpo, 2005).

Despite these deficiencies and the alarming rate of unemployment among university graduates, the proliferation of institutions at the tertiary levels of education has been in Universities rather than the Polytechnics, Colleges of Agriculture and Colleges of Education. For instance, in Nigeria today, outside the 24 Federal universities, there are about 17 state universities and about 8 private universities (JAMB, 2005). In Cross River State, the former Polytechnic,

Colleges of Agriculture and Education have even been converted to campuses of Cross River University of Technology, which was established in 2002.

In all, the investigators contended that if the university graduates, whose institutional curriculum was academic and intellectual than technical and vocational could show forth significantly better entrepreneurial behaviour than their Polytechnic, Colleges of Agriculture and Education counterparts then their labour market opportunities were influenced by familial, social and political connections. They contended this to be highly possible, because of seeming findings of the earlier works by Okedara (1984) and Adeyemi (1997). This contention is further supported by nepotism, statism, tribalism, god-fatherism and religious bigotry asserted to influence job placement in the country by Oku (2001) and Usani (2004) and Oniororo (1993). Inyang (2001), similarly noted the existence of note-syndrom in the country, which allows a potential applicant to get written notes or referrals from influential personalities for presentation to organizations to obtain one's appointment. Entrepreneurial behaviour is defined as the predisposition and opportunity seeking attitude which motivates a tertiary institution graduate to seek self-employment or operate his own business.

Therefore, this study seeks to determine: if there are actually no possibilities of entrepreneurial behaviour in UG as there are in PG, CAG and CEG and if there are differences between UG and PG, CAG and CEG in such entrepreneurial behaviour. The study therefore seeks to provide answers to two research questions and test formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study site: This study was conducted in 2005 in Cross River State. Cross River State is one of the 36 states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The state is located within the tropical rainforest belt of Nigeria. It has a total population of 2,888,966 people according to the National Population Census figure of 2007.

Apart from a federal University, the state has three tertiary institutions-the Polytechnic, Colleges of Education and Agriculture-which were used in the study.

Research questions:

- To what extent is the entrepreneurial behaviour of tertiary institution graduates affected by the type of tertiary institutions they attended?
- How does the entrepreneurial behaviour of University graduates differ from that of Polytechnic, College of Education and College of Agriculture graduates?

Table 1: Number/percentage of various self-employed tertiary institutions' graduates employed in the study

Tertiary institution	UG	PG	CAG	CEG	Total
Number	89	51	29	27	196
Percentage	45.41	21.02	14.80	13.78	100

Hypotheses:

- Ho₁ : There will be no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of University graduates and College of Education graduates in entrepreneurial behaviour.
- Ho₂ : There will be no statistically significance difference in the mean scores of University graduates and Polytechnic graduates in entrepreneurial behaviour.
- Ho₃ : There will be no statistically significant difference in the means scores of University graduates and College of Agriculture graduates in entrepreneurial behaviour.

Research design: The study employed the ex-post facto design.

Sample: One hundred and ninety six (196) tertiary institutions' graduates were used in the study. These were made up of 98 (45.41%) UG; 51 (21.02%) PG; 29 (14.80%) CAG and 27 (13.78%) CEG. The breakdown is shown in Table 1.

The sample was used to standardize and validate the early version of the Employment Self Attitude Questionnaire (ESAQ). Its selection was purposively done and more so on the basis of their self-employment status and institutions type. The empirical evidence that these grades of graduates possessed skills, which were of marked difference from these desired by employers also informed their choice.

Instrument: The instrument used for the study was the ESAQ. It is a 20-item questionnaire that covered all entrepreneurial skills, attitudes, experiences and embodies knowledge that go with entrepreneurial behaviour. These include willingness to be opportunity seeking, initiative taking, persistent, committed to work contracts; evident efficiency and quality output, risk-taking, goal setting, information seeking, systematic in planning and monitoring; persuasive and networking and independent and self-confident. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha. Its reliability was by this formula, 0.91. It is, however a modification of those developed by Hitchin (1996) and Akinboye (2002).

Procedure: The investigators visited the Cross River State Ministry of Commerce and Industry; the National

Directorate of Employment, Federal Secretariat Complex, Calabar, homes, the Full Gospel Businessmen Fellowship, the Graduate Fellowship, secondary schools and business premises. This was to enable them discuss with leaders of these organizations for permission to allow them rationally or purposely select and use those members of their organizations who were self employed tertiary institution graduates for the study. At the grant of the permission, members were selected and served the ESAQ to complete. Twelve research assistants were employed to help in administration and collection of the questionnaire. The exercise lasted 3 month.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

T-test statistics was used to quantify or analyze the data collected. The statistical analysis was done at 0.05 level of significance. Table 2-4 were used for the statistical summarization of the tested hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: There will be no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of UG and CEG in entrepreneurial behaviour.

The results in Table 2 above showed that self-employed UG obtained a higher mean score ($\chi = 82.77$) than self-employed CEG ($\chi = 64.83$) on entrepreneurial behaviour. The mean difference was 17.61 and it was statistically significant (t-cal = 9.66; t-crit = 1.960; d.f. = 114; $p > 0.05$). Null Ho₁ was rejected. It was not accepted. From the finding self-employed UG and self-employed CEG differ significantly in their entrepreneurial behaviour. Thus, the hypothesized similarity between the self employed university graduate and the self employed College of Education graduate in entrepreneurial behaviour was rejected; signifying that tertiary institution type was a significant factor in the acquisition of entrepreneurial behaviour by both UG and CEG.

Hypothesis 2: There will be no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of UG and PG in entrepreneurial behaviour.

Table 3 showed that self-employed UG obtained a higher mean score ($\chi = 82.44$) than self-employed PG ($\chi = 75.11$) on entrepreneurial behaviour. The mean difference was 8.33 and it was quite significant (t-cal = 4.77; t-crit = 1.960; d.f. = 138; $p > 0.05$). The null hypothesis Ho₂ was rejected. Since the self-employed UG and the self-employed PG differ significantly in their entrepreneurial behaviour, the hypothesized similarity between self-employed UG and PG in self-employment seeking behaviour was rejected.

Table 2: T-test comparison of means scores of University self-employed and College of Education self-employed graduates in entrepreneurial behaviour

Self-employment							
status of graduates	N	\bar{x}	S.D.	d.f.	t-cal	t-crit	p-value
UG	89	82.77	9.07	114	9.66	1.960	0.00*
CEG	27	64.83	8.05				

* = Statistically significant at $p = 0.05$

Table 3: T-test comparison of means scores of self-employed UG and self-employed PG in entrepreneurial behaviour

Self-employment							
Status of graduates	N	\bar{x}	S.D.	d.f.	t-cal	t-crit	p-value
UG	89	82.44	9.07	138	4.74	1.960	0.00*
PG	51	75.11	8.66				

* = Statistically significant at p

Table 4: T-test comparison of means scores of self-employed UG and self-employed CAG in entrepreneurial behaviour

Self-employment							
status of graduates	N	\bar{x}	S.D.	d.f.	t-cal	t-crit	p-value
UG	89	82.44	9.07	166	9.04	1.960	0.00*
CAG	29	66.28	8.14				

* = Statistically significant at p

Hypothesis 3: There will be no statistically significant difference in mean scores of UG and CAG in entrepreneurial behaviour.

Table 4 above showed that self-employed UG obtained a higher mean score ($\bar{x} = 82.44$) than self-employed CAG ($\bar{x} = 66.28$). The mean difference was 16.18 and it was statistically significant ($t\text{-cal} = 9.04$; $t\text{-crit} = 1.960$; $d.f. = 166$; $p > 0.05$). Null hypothesis H_0 was therefore rejected. Since critical $-t$ is lower than calculated $-t$ self-employed UG and self-employed CAG differed significantly in entrepreneurial behaviour, the hypothesized similarity between them in entrepreneurial behaviour was rejected.

The summary of the t-test above shows that self-employed UG differ significantly from self-employed, PG, CAG and CEG in their entrepreneurial behaviour; this finding signifies that tertiary institution type is a significant factor in the acquisition and development of entrepreneurial behaviour by tertiary institutions' graduates.

The result presents no degree of assurance in the efficacy of tertiary institutions to serve as potent formal environment for enhancing the entrepreneurial behaviour of their entrants. In fact, studies elsewhere (Arikpo, 2005; Adeyemi, 1997), have demonstrated that motivation, attitude, interest, environmental contingencies, reward, age, sex and family backgrounds rather than tertiary institution types could foster the development and acquisition of long lasting entrepreneurial behaviour. Studies by Ake and Kalu (1993), Okedara

(1984), Godstein and Turner (1996), Vishwanath and Kaufman (2001) and Forest (1994) have also identified its occupation of a privileged position, which either politically or economically helps the individual to, while still in employment, purposefully engage in private enterprise.

Perhaps one disadvantage that tertiary institutions have is that their curricula do not offer their entrants unique opportunities to acquire and develop entrepreneurial behaviour through content and context materials that bring them in direct contact with the environment that is familiar to them. Members also have no greater access to literature that would otherwise still be easily available to them. Moreover, such tertiary institutions do not provide their recipients' opportunities to act individually; a situation, which would have encouraged their recipients or entrants to take entrepreneurial behaviour action. Such an action would in turn have led to their entrants' or recipients' greater perception and exposure to self-employing opportunities of their immediate environment. These, of course, are the lapses in the tertiary institution curriculum, which the Federal Government of Nigeria tried at the outbreak of unemployment among tertiary institution graduates to address through the National Directorate of Employment and its numerous schemes.

Communication is semi-vertical. By this, tertiary institution graduates' entrepreneurial behaviours are consequent upon the advent of factors rather than the tertiary institution curriculum. Some of these Okedara (1984), Gelatt (1962), Hershenson and Roth (1966), Hilton (1979) and Arikpo (2005) identify as personal connections, family connections, friends' intermediation, political connections and divine intervention or connection. These factors whether the labour market approves of them or not are recognized by the Nigerian society as official mouth pieces of the employment seeking graduates therefore, they constitute a separate official communication system between the labour market and the employment seeking graduate. These factors take up matters concerning the working opportunity and welfare of the employment-seeking graduates with the labour market after consulting with the employment seeker. When agreement is reached on the job opportunity being discussed, they report it directly to the employment-seeking graduate without following the hierarchy as established by the organizational chart of the labour market situation, or the tertiary institution curriculum (James *et al.*, 1992).

The theory that underlies entrepreneurial behaviour is to this end, the social learning theory. This theory emphasizes the self-efficacy paradigm. By this paradigm,

development and acquisition of entrepreneurial behaviour by the Nigerian tertiary institution graduates are a function of expectations about the outcomes of his or her engaging in a self-employing behaviour and expectation about his or her ability to engage in the self-employing behaviour.

Be it as it may, what this study has shown within its limits is that self employed UG demonstrate better entrepreneurial behaviour than self-employed PG, CAG and CEG. Though it was limited to measuring only tertiary institutions' influences on entrepreneurial behaviour, it has also revealed that familial contacts result in self-employment opportunities more to UG than PG, CAG and CEG. If tertiary institutions can in their curriculum provide for these familial contacts, then it would be reasonable to expect that they would most likely nurture appropriate entrepreneurial behaviour than the pure formal classroom-based curriculum content and context.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the study, was to determine the impact of the curricula of Universities (academically standardized), the Polytechnics and Colleges of Agriculture and Education (intellectually standardized) on entrepreneurial behaviour of graduates in Cross River State, Nigeria. Using a sample of 196 self-employed tertiary institutions' graduates 89 of whom were UG, 51 PG, 29 CAG and 27 CEG, the study found a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of University self-employed graduates vis-à-vis those of the Polytechnic and Colleges of Agriculture and Education self-employed graduates, in entrepreneurial behaviour-with the University self-employed having higher mean scores than their counterparts.

It was inferred from the findings that tertiary institution curricula do not serve effective formal environments of engendering entrepreneurial behaviour among tertiary institution graduates. While the findings of the study do not by any means underplay the critical role of tertiary institutions in the inculcation of entrepreneurial behaviour on their entrants, or recipients, they nevertheless still point to the fact that such formal modes could still be complemented, with great benefit, by familial ones. If the aim of tertiary education is to develop or stimulate in its recipients investigative, artistic and enterprising occupational themes and nurture in them articulate entrepreneurial behaviour, then the familial strategy or social and public relations must be encouraged at all levels of Nigeria tertiary education level.

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