



RESEARCH ARTICLE

TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE CHALLENGES CONSTRAINING THEIR ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES REQUIRED FOR SELF-RELIANCE UPON GRADUATION IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate technical education students' perception on the challenges constraining their entrepreneurial; competencies required for self-reliance upon graduation in Rivers State. Three research questions guided the study. The study adapted survey research design, the study was carried out in Rives State. The population of the study was eighty six (86) post graduate students' of Rivers State University, Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. There was no sampling due to the small size of the population, The instrument used for data collection was a 39 items structured questionnaire which was face and content validated by four experts. Cranach Alpha reliability method was employed to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded a coefficient of 0.89. Mean and standard deviation were the statistical tools used to answer the research questions,. The result of the study revealed that entrepreneurial competencies required by technical education students in Rivers State for self-reliance upon graduation are been hindered by several challenges. It was therefore recommended among others, that technology education departments of tertiary institutions should be encouraged to establish on campus small business ventured as models and vital components for teaching entrepreneurship and that technical education students should be allowed to actively participate in the organization and administration of such business ventures as to improve their creative and innovative altitudes as well as their desire to become small business operators after graduation.

Keywords: Technical education, students, challenges, entrepreneurial, competences, Self-reliance.

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Technical education programme anywhere in the world over is a training programme aimed at preparing and equipping the learner with employable skills. Technical education according to Amankwa cited in Nwokolo (2019) is the training programme that teaches individual knowledge, skills and mindsets designed to make them more productive in designed occupation or broader cluster of occupations. Bashiru (2024) maintained that technical education is a training programme aimed at producing technically oriented personnel who are to be the initiators, facilitators and implementers of technological development of a nation through adequate training of the citizenry on the need to be technologically literate leading to self-reliance.

Programme in technical education such as Bachelor Degree in Technology (Education), Nigeria Certificate in Education and others was designed to equip students with skills, values, attitude and related knowledge in technology. In the view of Ukachukwu cited in Izendu (2018) technology education programme is designed to equip graduates with skills in instruction and technical areas of technology as to enable them impact same to learners in schools. Gidado (2015)) stressed that in most cases, students that graduated from technical education programmes are without the requisite entrepreneurial competencies that will assist them to become self-reliance upon graduation.

Self-reliance is the ability for one to do or decide things by himself/herself rather than depending on another person for help. According to Barida (2023) self-reliance is the ability for one to engage into private venture rather than working or depending on another person for a paid job. Similarly Akubudike (2022) maintained that self-reliance is the ability for one to establish his or her own privet business that will earn him/her better money that will assist such person to solve his or her own personal problem and other person's problem without depending on another person for survival. In the contest of this study, self-reliance is the ability for any technical education students that specializes in any of the technology education related courses such as in mechanical technology,

electrical/electronic technology, automobile technology, wood work technology, buildings technology and other related trades to establish his or her own business rather than waiting to be employed in the industry for a paid job after graduation from the tertiary institution. It is no longer news that Nigerian government presently has failed to make proper plan in times of making adequate plan for job creation for hundreds and thousands of Nigerian youths that usually graduates from tertiary institutions yearly. Because that there are no job space for these youths to be employed after graduation they still depend on their parents/guardian for financial aid. This situation according to Lawal and Umaru (2025) worsens after graduation when nobody will support them financially. These individual therefore supposed to depend on their ingenuity and creativity to improve their financial status. The opportunity they have is the entrepreneurial competencies possessed by them during their training period in the higher institutions.

According to Kashim (2023) entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on identified opportunities. Barugboye cited in Agunwa (2018) stated that entrepreneurship prepares people, especially youths to be responsible, enterprising individual who will become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers who will be able to contribute to economic



development and sustainable communities. Entrepreneurship according to Ofili (2024) is the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and combining this with management and organizational skills in order to combine people and money, and thereby create wealth. Olaitan cited in Afunwa (2023) stated that entrepreneurship involves the acquisition of business skills required by an individual to function effectively in generating money for an organization, this also requires that the individual must be competent. Ezekwesiri (2024) stated that to be competent means that the individual has acquired the knowledge, skills and attitude required in order to perform successfully at a specified proficient level in a given work. Entrepreneurial competencies required for self-reliance is the knowledge, skills and attitudes to perform successfully at a specified proficiency level in a given work.

Entrepreneurial competencies for self-reliance refers to the knowledge, skills and attitude that an individual such as a technical education graduate requires in order to set up his or her own business venture and become self-employed and also to be able to employ others. Shedrack and Peters (2022) indicated that students that specializes in any of the technical related trades must be part of entrepreneurship training that will involves the establishment of mechanisms that identify potential opportunities and describing the extent to which entrepreneurs are dynamic, flexible, self-regulating and engaged in the process of generating multiple decision framework which will focus on generating process of changes in the environment.

Onukwube (2022) stated that entrepreneurial competency that technical education graduates required for self-reliance include; creative thinking and innovative competencies, managerial abilities and risk management competencies, leadership development competences, technical consultation and interview competencies, technical planning and organization strategies. Egesimba (2020) maintained that entrepreneurial competencies that technology education graduates required for entrepreneurial success after graduation are, integrity, conceptual thinking, risk taking, networking, strategic thinking, commercial aptitude, and customer sensitivity. The author further stated that an individual who acquired all the stated competencies during period of training in the tertiary institution stands the chance of doing better in his or her own private business upon graduation.

Despite the tremendous of growth in entrepreneurship education around the world, many challenges are been faced by students who are undergoing entrepreneurship education training in various higher institution in Nigerian which had tend to constrain their entrepreneurial competencies that these students requires for successful livelihood after graduation (Osuaku, 2021). According to Udede and Ofor (2024) challenges of entrepreneurship education that constrain entrepreneurship competencies required by students that undergo different training programme at the higher institutions levels for self-reliance upon graduation include; inadequate information and materials on entrepreneurship education, poor linkage with business, industries, government and non-governmental organization, inadequate equipment, facilities and infrastructures, lack of strong government policy and support, inadequate qualified staff with capacity on entrepreneurship education and training, poor management and maintenance of available resources, inadequate funding and absence of curricular capacity to support entrepreneurship training.

Past research works (Nwakaibe and Udofia, 2022; Ubong and Oriji 2021; Talbort, 2023) indicated that in order to achieve viable entrepreneurship education programme that will enhance sustainable



development in Nigeria, that there should be an effective strategies that must have to be put in place in order to tackle those challenges that tends to constrain entrepreneurship education programme in Nigeria. According to Godwin and Borishade (2022) strategies that must be adopted in order to achieve viable entrepreneurship programme in Nigeria include: to invest local pubic private funds on apprenticeship programme, establishment of school based enterprise where students will identify potential business plan, establishing a small business school were interested students and community members can participate, establishing an enterprise college aimed at fostering the specific skills sets required for entrepreneurship to serve as skill education center for the youth.

The preceding stated strategies have been suggested by different scholars at different meeting and educational gathering at the past to the government for implementation, yet the government has done nothing concerning the implementation of these recommendations, the school authorities also has not done much to improve on the quality of entrepreneurship programme been organized in various tertiary institutions in Nigeria students also seems not to be serious in participating effectively in entrepreneurship education programme. Therefore the problem of this study posed inform of a question is, what is the perception of technical education students' on the challenges constraining their entrepreneurial competencies required for self-reliance upon graduation in Rivers State?

1.1. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate technical education students perception on the challenges constraining their entrepreneurial competencies required for self-reliance upon graduation in Rivers State. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify entrepreneurial competences required by technical education students for self-reliance upon graduation in Rivers State.
2. Identify challenges constraining technical education students entrepreneurial competencies required for self- reliance upon graduation in Rivers state.
3. Identify strategies to be adopted in order to tackle challenges facing entrepreneurship education in Rivers State.

2.0. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1 What are the entrepreneurial competencies required by technical education students for self-reliance upon graduation in Rivers State?
- 2 What are the challenges constraining technical; education students entrepreneurial competence required for self-reliance upon graduation in Rivers State?
- 3 What are the strategies that are needed to be adopted in order to tackle challenges facing entrepreneurship education in Rivers State?

3.0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Design of the Study

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. According to Rosiky cited in Ifeajuna (2024) descriptive survey design is aimed at collecting data or describing in a systematic manner the characteristic feature or fact about a given population.



3.2. Population of the Study

The population of the was eighty six (86) technology education postgraduate students of Rivers State University, Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolemini Port Harcourt as at 2024/2025 academic session obtained from the office of Heads of Departments.

3.3. Sample and Sampling Technique

The study was a census as the entire population was studied; hence, there was no sampling because the population size was manageable.

3.4. Development of the Research Instrument

The instrument that was used for data collection was a self-structured 39-item questionnaire developed by the researchers titled “Perception of Technical Education Students on the Challenges Constraining their Entrepreneurial Competencies required for self-reliance upon Graduation Questionnaire” (PTESCCECQ). The response category of the instrument adopted four (4) point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

3.5. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was face and content validated by three experts from Industrial Technology Education Department, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State. Their suggestions were used in the modification of the statement of the rating scale.

To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, it was administered on 20 postgraduate students in the department of Industrial and Technology Education who were not part of the study. Cronback alpha reliability technique was used to determine the internal consistency of the items of the questionnaire. The reliability coefficient obtained. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.89.

3.6. Administration of the Research Instrument

A total of eighty six (86) copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents directly by the researchers with the help of five research assistants. The total number of the instrument retrieved after two (2) weeks was 84 representing 97% retrieved rates and was used for data analysis.

3.7. Method of Data Analysis

In answering the research questions a cut-off point of 2.50 was used in taking decision. Any item whose weighted mean is 2.50 and above was regarded as “Required” while any item whose weighted mean is below 2.50 was regarded as “Not Required”. An item that attract an average mean of 2.50 and above was considered as an agreement while an item that falls below 2.50 was regarded as disagreement. The statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) mean and Standard deviation was utilized in the analysis of the data with group mean and standard deviation.

4.0. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



4.1. Presentation of Results

The results of the study are presented in Tables 1-3 in line with the research questions

Research Questions 1: what are the entrepreneurial competencies required by technical education students for self-reliance upon graduation in Rivers State?

The result in Table 1 revealed that technical education students’ required all the 16 entrepreneurial competences for self-reliance upon graduation in Rivers State. Mean scores for each of the 16 items exceeded 2.50 which is the cut-off point. The entrepreneurial competencies had their standard deviation ranged from 0.61 – 0.89. This indicated that the respondents were close to one another in their opinion and were also not too far away from the mean.

Table 1: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation Responses of Respondents on Entrepreneurial Competencies Required by Technical Education Students for Self-reliance upon Graduation in Rivers State.

N=84				
SN	Entrepreneurial Competencies Required	\bar{X}	SD	REMARK
1.	Technical planning and organization strategies.	3.21	0.85	Required
2	Managerial abilities and risk management competencies	3.50	0.8	Required
3.	Time management competence	2.59	0.86	Required
4.	Creative thinking and innovative competencies	3.05	0.76	Required
5.	Product development strategies	2.63	0.65	Required
6.	Interpersonal and industrial related competencies.	2.85	0.65	Required
7.	Small business management competencies	2.75	0.89	Required
8.	Conflict/crisis management and negotiation competencies	3.42	0.79	Required
9.	Leadership development competencies	3.18	0.62	Required
10.	Business law and risk protection competencies	2.62	0.83	Required
11.	Computer appreciation and application competencies	2.71	0.63	Required
12.	Technical consultation and interview competencies	3.21	0.74	Required
13.	Problem solving and decision-making competencies	2.82	0.85	Required
14.	Technical coordination and control strategies for office service and system	2.65	0.75	Required
15.	Office organization and administration strategies	2.53	0.70	Required
16.	Assets management and control strategies	2.71	0.61	Required
Average Means/SD		2.74	0.75	

Source: Author’s Analysis (2026)

Research Question 2: what are the challenges constraining technical education students entrepreneurial competencies required for self-reliance upon graduation in Rivers State?

The result in Table 2 revealed that the challenges constraining technical education students’ entrepreneurial competencies required for self-reliance upon graduation had their mean ranging from 2.63 to 3.35. Mean scores for each of the 14 items exceeded the 2.50 cut-off point. The respondents agreed on all the 14 items as challenges containing technical education students entrepreneurial competencies requires for self-reliance upon graduation in Rivers State. The standard deviation ranged from 0.62 to 0.91. This indicated that the respondents were close to one another in their opinion and were also not too far from the mean.



Table 2: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation Responses of Respondents on Challenges constraining Technical Education Students’ Entrepreneurial Competencies Required for Self-reliance upon Graduation in Rivers State.

N=84

S/N	Challenges	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
17.	Lack of strong government policy and support	3.21	0.87	Agreed
18.	Absence of curricular capacity to support the training	2.63	0.71	Agreed
19.	Inadequate or outright lack of funding	2.57	0.69	Agreed
20.	Poor state of infrastructure	3.41	0.89	Agreed
21.	Hasty preparations	3.27	0.81	Agreed
22.	Lack of skill manpower	2.82	0.70	Agreed
23.	Inadequate research and development on entrepreneurship	3.24	0.88	Agreed
24.	Poor management and maintenance of available resources	3.35	0.91	Agreed
25.	Lack of incentives to motivate the educators and instructors	2.81	0.62	Agreed
26.	Poor organisation and supervision of SIWES.	2.65	0.66	Agreed
27.	Lack of model small business establishment and laboratories in the institutions for practice	2.58	0.68	Agreed
28.	Inadequate qualifies staff with capacity in entrepreneurship educators and training.	3.01	0.73	Agreed
29.	Poor linkage with business, industries and government and non-government an non-government organization	3.22	0.76	Agreed
30.	Inadequate information and materials for entrepreneurship education	2.75	9.64	Agreed
Average Means/SD		2.96	0.78	

Source: Author’s Analysis (2026).

Research Question 3: what are the strategies that are needed to be adopted in order to tackle challenges facing entrepreneurship education in Rivers State?

The result in Table 3 revealed that strategies to be adopted in order to tackle challenges facing entrepreneurship education had their mean ranged from 2.53 to 3.23. Mean sources for each of the 9 items exceeded that 2.50 cut-off point. The respondents agreed on all the 9 items as strategies that needed to be adopted in order to tackle challenged facing entrepreneurship education programme in Rivers State. The standard deviation ranged from 0.61 to 0.87. This indicated that the respondents were close to one another in their opinion and were also not too far away from the mean.

The standard deviations revealed that the respondents were closely together in their options on the challenges constraining technical education students entrepreneurial competencies required for self-reliance upon graduation in Rivers State.



Table 3: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation Responses of Respondents on Strategies to be Adapted in order to Tackle Challenges Facing Entrepreneurship Education in Rivers State.

N=84				
S/N	Strategies	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
31.	Government should create an economics friendly environment which will center on reduction of taxes on small scale businesses.	3.21	0.87	Agreed
32.	Government should establish an enterprise college aimed at fostering the specific skills required for entrepreneurship	3.12	0.76	AGREED
33.	Government should develop entrepreneur internship programme by matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly established education programme	2.59	0.62	Agreed
34.	Government should establish small business schools where interested students and community members can participate.	2.72	0.65	Agreed
35.	There should be school based enterprise where students will identify potential business, plan, create and operate small business by using the school as mini-incubatory	3.05	.079	Agreed
36.	There should be some form of genuine school work based learning incorporated in some studies as part of the material economic development strategies	2.53	0.61	Agreed
37.	Provision of adequate learning resources in tertiary institutions	2.64	0.68	Agreed
38.	Government should ensure that adequate found is been provided to organize entrepreneurship education	2.72	0.74	Agreed
39.	Government should ensure that strong policy and support are been put in place for entrepreneurship education programme.	3.23	0.87	Agreed
Average Mean/SD		2.87	0.73	

Source: Author’s Analysis (2026)

4.2. Findings of the Study

The following are the findings of the study:

1. Sixteen entrepreneurial competencies were identified by technical education students as entrepreneurial competencies that are required for their self-reliance upon graduation in Rivers State.
2. Fourteen challenges constraining entrepreneurial competencies required for self-reliance by technical education student upon graduation in Rivers State were identified by technical education students.
3. Nine strategies to be adopted in order to tackle challenges facing entrepreneurship education programme in Rivers State were been identified by technical education students.

4.3. Discussion of Findings

Discussion of the findings of the study were made according to the research questions posed in the study



Entrepreneurial Competencies Required by Technical Education Students for Self-Reliance upon Graduation in Rivers State

The findings from Table 1 revealed that all the 16 entrepreneurial competencies are required by technical education students; for self-reliance upon graduation were required by technical education graduates for self-reliance's upon their graduation. These finding are in consonance with Ezekwesirir (2019) that to be competent means that the individual has acquired the knowledge, skills and attitudes required in order to perform successfully at a specified proficiency level in a given work. The finding from Table 1 were also in consonance with the study by Onukwuba (2018) that entrepreneurial competencies that technical education students required for self-reliance include; creative thinking and innovative competencies managerial abilities and risk management competencies, leadership development competencies, technical consultation and interview competencies, technical planning and organisation strategies

Challenges Constraining Technical Education Students Entrepreneurial Competencies Required for Self-Reliance upon Graduation in Rivers State

The findings from Table 2 revealed that all the 14 challenges constraining technical education students entrepreneurial competencies required for self-reliance upon graduation where agreed as constraints for graduates of technical education students' for their entrepreneurial competencies required for self-reliance in Rivers State. The finding is in line with Osuaku (2021) that despite the tremendous of growth in entrepreneurship education around the world that many challenges are been faced by students who are undergoing entrepreneurship education training in various higher institutions in Nigeria which has tend to constrain their entrepreneurial competencies that these students required for successful livelihood after graduation. The finding from Table 2 were also in agreement with Uded and Ofor (2019) that challenges of entrepreneurship education that constrain entrepreneurial competencies required by students of technology education programme for self-reliance upon graduation include, inadequate information and materials on entrepreneurship education, poor linkingage with business, industries, government and non-governmental organisation, inadequate equipment, facilities and infrastructure, lack of strong government policy and support, inadequate qualified staff with capacity in entrepreneurship education and training, poor management and maintenance of available resources.

Strategies that are Needed to be Adopted in order to Tackle Challenges Facing Entrepreneurship Education in Rives State

The findings from Table 3 revealed that all the 9 strategies needed to be adopted in order to tackle challenges facing entrepreneurship education in Rivers state were agreed by technical education students as strategies that are needed to be adopted in order to tackle challenges facing entrepreneurial education programme in Rivers State. The finding is in conformity with the view of Godwin and Borishade (2022) who stressed that strategies that must be adopted in order to achieve viable entrepreneurship education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions include, that government should invest local public private funds on apprenticeship programme, that there should be establishment of school based enterprise where students will identity potential business plan, that



government should establish a small business school were interested students and community members can participate, that government should establish an enterprise college aimed at fostering the specific skill sets required for entrepreneurship to serve as skill acquisition centre for the youth.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

At this period of unemployment problem facing Nigerian youth, entrepreneurial competencies' development is a programme of human capital that can develop technical education graduates by instilling and preserving entrepreneurial climate for self-reliance upon their graduation. However, entrepreneurship competencies development in technology education of affiliated institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria is still very low due to many challenges such as low level of funding of business and entrepreneurship education, poor linkage with industries, government and non-government organizations, lack of incentives to motivate the educators of entrepreneurship development and inadequate research development in entrepreneurship.

5.2. Recommendations

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

1. Graduates of technical education programme should possess entrepreneurial competencies in order to secure a job, open their own workshop and create job opportunity for others and reduce unemployment.
2. Government should ensure that lectures in technology education trade should be retrained for entrepreneurial competencies to ensure that graduates of technology education are well prepared for self-reliance
3. Entrepreneurial competency in technology education is increasingly seen as crucial to economic development as such the Federal and State Ministries of education and the agencies involve in technology education should ensure that the training institutions are provided with enabling facilities for the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies.

Compelling Interests

The authors have declared that no conflicting interest exist in the manuscript.

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