

**Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition among Undergraduate Students of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu, Osun State: Moderating Roles of Autonomous Motivation and Self-efficacy**

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**Abstract**

*The study investigated the perception of undergraduate students of Oduduwa University toward the entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme and also determined the joint contribution of each of autonomous motivation and self-efficacy on the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme of the University. These were with a view to providing information on the factor that could enhance entrepreneurial skills acquisition among the students. The study employed a survey research designed. Sample comprised 300 students selected across four colleges in the university. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select 200 level students who registered for the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme. An adapted instrument namely Questionnaire on Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition among Undergraduate Students (QES AUS) with three scales which measured perception of students on entrepreneurial skills acquisition, autonomous motivation and self-efficacy was used to collect data from the students. Data collected were analysed using percentages, linear and multiple regressions analyses. The results showed that 171 (57%) of the students demonstrated a negative perception of the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme. The result showed a significant influence between autonomous motivation and skill acquisition programme ( $F = 123.73$ ,  $\beta = 0.477$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Also, the result indicated that self-efficacy significantly influenced entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme ( $F = 69.37$ ,  $\beta = 0.335$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Finally, the result showed that both autonomous motivation and self-efficacy jointly influenced entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme ( $F = 68.49$ ,  $\beta = 0.141$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). It was concluded that autonomous motivation was a stronger predictor of entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme among students.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial skills, undergraduate, autonomous motivation and self-efficacy

**Introduction**

It is generally believed that youths of any nation play a significant role in nation-building. Youths are regarded as the engine room and powerhouse of economic, political and social

development of a nation. Youths are the vehicle that can bring about any positive change and reform within a nation. Youths can be regarded as the assets which a country cannot joke with. Youths are regarded as the greatest assets which a serious nation should not joke with. They are equally seen as the future leaders as well as the greatest investment for a country's development. In his submission, Chillegbu (2009) regarded youths as the foundation of a society. He opined that their energy, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pace of development and the security of the nation. Without youths, it may be impossible for a nation to achieve its national development plan. This is envisioned by the World Bank Report which stated that the youth holds the key to achieving the vision (2020).

The general expectation of both the parents and the youths is that such youths after their graduation from higher institutions should be gainfully employed and well established economically so that they can be financially independent of their parents and be able to care of themselves and their parents. However, the above aspiration is far from being realized considering the prevailing rate of unemployment and underemployment among the graduates. In Nigeria, unemployment is one of the most critical problems be devilled youths and graduates. Bassey and Atan (2012) observed that there is a rising incidence of unemployment among university graduates and those of other tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Although the issue of youth unemployment and underemployment has been recognized and acknowledge as a universal phenomenon, the youths in Nigeria are characterized by a high rate of unemployment and underemployment.

According to the International Labour Organisation (2007), unemployment occurs when people are without jobs and they have actively sought a job within the past four weeks. In his own opinion, Oviawe (2010) defined unemployment as a situation in which people who are willing to work at the prevailing wage rate are unable to find jobs. Also, Emeh (2012) referred to unemployment as a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable employment. Whereas, Amaechi (2000) opined that underemployment results when labour is not utilized for a maximum time or to full advantage. In this case, the youths are engaging in the tasks lesser than their qualifications and also getting lesser wages/salaries for the tasks they performed. Besides, unemployment sets in when the members of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs.

In the past, around 70s, there were few graduates in Nigeria. Those graduates were academically sound and could compare with their counterparts elsewhere around the globe. As a result of the above, labour market was not saturated hence there was nothing like unemployment for university graduates then. However, in contemporary time, it is becoming increasingly clear that many graduates who have completed the National Youths Service Corps (NYSC) programme are finding it difficult to secure employment. In fact, the unemployment rate in Nigeria is gradually becoming intolerable. The reason

adduced for the problem is that before and after independence, Nigeria education system is basically designed to prepare students for 'white-collar' jobs (Kareem, Ma'aji & Mohammed, 2016). The situation is even made worst by the parents. For instance, most parents are of opinion that it will amount to a waste of time for their children to go schools to be learning skills like bricklaying, carpentry, furniture making, fashion designing and soap making which they considered may distract their attention from facing their studies.

Available statistics on the rate of unemployment and underemployment among the youths in Nigeria revealed that youth unemployment rate in Nigeria rose from 23.63 percent from 2014 to 38 percent in 2018 (National Bureau Statistics (NBS, 2018). In 2019, the Minister of Labour, Chris Ngige reported that the high unemployment rate of 23.1 per cent, and underemployment of 16.6 per cent by the National Bureau Statistics (NBS) of 2019 report was alarming. Also, NBS (2019) explained that by 2020, the estimated youth unemployment rate of 33.5% is being expected.

In his response, Scooper (2019) reported that Nigeria President, Muhammadu Buhari admitted that the major problem which Nigeria is facing is the population growth rate and teeming young people. The aftermath of the large population growth is the unemployment which is rampant among the Nigerian youths (Scooper, 2019). This is even made difficult because of the inability of the nation's economy to absorb the high rapid increase in labour force being graduated every year by the nation's higher institutions (Uddin 2013). For instance, the statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics (2019) indicated that as of 2019, there were 308-degree awarding institutions (134 polytechnics and 174 universities) in Nigeria with an enrolment population of about two million and produce about 600,000 graduates yearly. Less than half of the total number of graduates is usually absorbed by the Nigerian economy every year. According to NBS (2012), about 20% of most graduates from Nigerian universities found it difficult to get employment every year even after their one year National Youths Service Corps assignment. Similarly, Oviawe (2014) reiterated that the massive unemployment of graduates of Nigerian higher education institutions and had traced the problem to the disequilibrium between labour market requirements and lack of essential employable skills by the graduates. The implication of that is that many graduates are chasing a few jobs that are available in the country. This has therefore resulted in wastage of human resources as well as the making the youths become a burden to the society (Ajayi, 2014).

Consequent upon the above points, there has been worried among the researchers on the effects which the unemployment among the youths can bring to a nation. This has led those researchers to investigate the adverse effects of unemployment. It is mostly believed that idleness or joblessness is a foundation of crimes. An idle hand is a devil's workshop. When youths are not rightly engaged, they are likely to be wrongly occupied. The increasing presence of unemployment among the youth spells great adversities for Nigeria in the present and also in the future. While reacting to the above, Alanana (2003) opined that unemployment is potentially dangerous as it sends a disturbing signal to all segments of the

Nigeria society. To Salami (2011), a high rate of youths' unemployment and underemployment serves as one of the dangers to the socio-economic problems of Nigeria. Besides, it was further affirmed that youths' unemployment is concomitant to a high prevalence rate of crimes and criminality, including mass murders, insurgency, militancy, armed robbery, kidnappings and drug abuse, among others (Ogbebor, 2012; World Bank, 2018). In order to establish the above fact, Okakwu a reporter in the Premium Times stated that as of September, 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018, more than half of Nigerians awaiting-trial-prisoners are under the age of 30. Similarly, the NBS (2019)'s report showed that more than 70% of the prisoners in Nigerian Prisons are youths.

In order to make youths and graduates get out of the problem, the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2006, directed Nigeria Higher Education institutions to include entrepreneurship education as a compulsory course for all students with effect from the 2017/2018 academic session which led to the mandatory inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the curricula of all the tertiary education institutions in Nigeria (Aliu, 2008; Akhuesonkhan, Raimi & Sofoluwe, 2013). According to Meziobi (2013), entrepreneurship education is an educational process that creates in an individual the ability and skills to become self-reliant and overcome the dynamic challenges posed by the hash the economy of the nation. Also, Ogbodo and Oraka (2017) defined entrepreneurship skill acquisition as a process whereby a person acquires or learns a particular skill or type of behaviour needed for business through training or education. Skill acquisition, according to Ogbodo and Oraka (2017) is a process whereby a person acquires or learns a particular skill or type of behaviour needed for business through training or education. Through repetition or practice in an occupation, the skill becomes natural and helps the individual to function towards promoting economic development. Obi (2005) stated that without graduates possessing enough technical skills in their various trades, other abilities cannot withstand the test of time. Accordingly, the programme is aimed at equipping students with entrepreneurial skills, attitudes and competencies in order to be job providers and not job seekers (Ibe, 2013; Sata, 2013 ). This implies that the skill can equip the youths to transform their ideas/theories into reality or practical. Besides, it is also to make the graduates be self-reliant.

A preliminary investigation of the Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu showed that the institution has a Centre of Entrepreneurship and Vocational Training. This centre is saddled with the responsibility of overseeing the skills acquisition programme of the students. It is therefore mandatory for all the students before graduation to enrol in one skill of their interest from a variation of over 30 skills such as web designing, catering, events decoration, tailoring, bead making, fishery, poultry and leather work among others. The students are to undergo the training for a period of three months during the summer session under the tutelage of experienced professional trainers. The performance of each student in the programme is one of the requirements for graduation.

As beautiful as this programme, it is noted that not many parents and their children are not in support of the programme. There is a negative perception on the part of some parents to the programme. For instance, Nwokomah (2005) revealed that some parents would not want their children to go to schools for the purpose of becoming bricklayers, carpenters, and mechanic. According to Okwilagwe (2007), some students demonstrated carefree attitude toward the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills either by coming late to the class when it is time listen to lectures on skill acquisition or by their frequency of indiscipline behaviour during lectures period. Even, Okoli (2011) observed that students who graduated from business education would also prefer to roam the street searching for white-collar jobs instead of applying what they have learnt in the school to practical form. Besides, Dutse, Mamaki and Djib (2013) believed that some university students developed a negative perception toward the skill acquisition programme of the school because they consider it as too menial and risky, and a diversionary to their attempt at securing a white-collar job. Contrarily, Adediran and Onifade (2013) in their study believed that there was a positive perception of entrepreneurial education among the students who took part in it. In summary, it is argued that when students develop a positive perception of the entrepreneurial skill programme, it would increase their chances of becoming successful entrepreneurs (Ocheja, 2013; De Gobbi, 2014).

Since the introduction of entrepreneurial skill programme into the curriculum of university education, efforts have been made to carry out a series of studies on entrepreneurial skill acquisition among the undergraduate students. Examples of the studies were skills acquisition and unemployment reduction in Nigeria (Ekong & Ekong, 2016) and entrepreneurship programmes in higher institutions in Nigeria (Wordu & Adeeyo, 2019). However, not much has been done to establish how the moderating variables such as autonomous motivation and self-efficacy can influence the intention of undergraduate students on the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. More importantly, the study seeks to investigate the perception of undergraduate students of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu toward the skill acquisition programme being offered by the students of the university as one of the mandatory programmes of the institution.

One of the variables that may influence the intention of students to entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme is autonomous motivation. It is believed that motivation plays a significant role in students' intentions to be entrepreneurs. In the past, educational researchers have examined the impact of motivation on students' motivation and personal beliefs impact their learning. Autonomy may be seen as the perception of choice in learning. Reeve (2015) referred to autonomy as the need to experience self-direction and choice in the initiation and regulation of one's behaviour. Equally, autonomous motivation is defined as engaging in a behaviour because it is perceived to be consistent with intrinsic goals or outcomes and emanates from the self. Iyengar and Ochsner (2010) and Leotti and Delgado (2011) conceived autonomous motivation as the opportunity to exercise control over personal actions and factors that influence one's life that appears to satisfy a basic psychological. It may be described as the ability of an individual to perform an action or

exhibit a behavioural change because of the intrinsic or internal desire or aspiration. There is no concise report on whether the autonomous motivation alone can influence the entrepreneurial intention of students. For instance, scholars like Bernstein and Carayannis (2011) concluded that autonomous motivation and entrepreneurial intention among students are related. Contrarily, Ryan and Deci, (2000) indicated that extrinsic motivation has a stronger effect than intrinsic motivation on students' entrepreneurial intention. However, Al-Jubari, Hassan and Liñán (2018) stated that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation could lead to entrepreneurial intention and eventually actual enactment of such intentions. From the above, it may be important to state that feeling in control and intrinsically motivated can help people feel more committed, passionate, interested, and satisfied with the things that they do. Thus, it is possible that autonomous motivation may be a great moderating variable of the entrepreneurial intention of students.

Lastly, it is possible that when people gain mastery of tasks and learn different skills. It may impose a sense of self-competence in them. When people feel that they have the skills needed for success, they are more likely to take actions that will help them achieve their goals. Therefore, self-efficacy may be another factor that may influence students' entrepreneurial skill acquisition intention. Bandura (2012) argued that self-efficacy is the most influential factor affecting behaviour because it influences behaviour both directly and indirectly through its impact on other processes and factors such as goal setting, outcome expectations. It is believed that students may need entrepreneurial self-efficacy before they can embark on any entrepreneurial task. This possibly may affect their motivation and competence towards a task. Results of research conducted by Ayodele (2013); Jiang, Xiong and Cao (2017) proved that entrepreneurial self-efficacy positively affected entrepreneurial intention. Whereas, Judeh (2012) had earlier explained that self-efficacy and performance of someone in a task did not relate. Nonetheless, the present study is designed to unravel the true situation between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention among undergraduate students. Arising from the above, the study was designed to determine the joint will not jointly influence of autonomous motivation and self-efficacy on the entrepreneurial skill acquisition intention among undergraduate students of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu, Osun State.

### **Research Question**

1. What is the perception of undergraduate students of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu on the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme of the university?

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant influence of autonomous motivation on the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme of the university.

2. There is no significant influence of self-efficacy on the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme of the university.
3. There is no significant joint contribution of each of autonomous motivation and self-efficacy on the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme of the university

## **Methodology**

A survey research design was employed to collect quantitative data. The population of the study was 815 undergraduate students of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu as at 2017/2018 session. The sample comprised 300 students who were selected from 200 level students across four colleges in the institution. A proportionate sampling technique was used to select 300 students from the four colleges. The breakdown of the students selected from each college showed that 34 were from Engineering and Technology, 139 from Management of Social Sciences, 93 from Natural and Applied Sciences and 34 from College of Environmental Design Management. The instrument was administered on the students at the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Vocational Studies during training entrepreneurial training programme. A self-developed instrument namely Questionnaire on Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition among Undergraduate Students (QESAUS) with three scales titled Perception of Students on Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition (PSESA), Autonomous Motivation Scale (AMS) and self-efficacy Scale (SeS) was used to collect data from the students. The results of the reliability tests conducted on the three scales revealed that PSESA, AMS and SeS yielded Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.77, 0.71 and 0.94 respectively. Data collected were analysed using percentages, linear and multiple regressions analyses at 0.05 level of confidence.

**Research Question:** What is the perception of undergraduate students of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu on the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme of the university?

The answer to the above research question was provided by analysing the data with percentages. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Perception of Undergraduate Students on the Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition Programme

<b>Perception</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Negative	171	57.0
Positive	129	43.0
Total	131	100

Table 1 showed the perception of undergraduate students in the study area toward the skills acquisition programme of the university. The results showed that 171(57.0%) of the students had a negative perception towards the programme while the remaining 129(43.0%) demonstrated positive perception towards the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme. From the results, it is pertinent to state that more students did not have belief or interest in the programme.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant influence of autonomous motivation on the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme of the school. To test the above hypothesis, the data collected were subjected to linear regression analysis as found in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
 Linear Regression Analysis on the influence of Autonomous Motivation on the Skill Acquisition Programme

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	t	
1 (Constant)	13.712	1.323		10.360	0.000
Autonomous Motivation	0.477	0.043	0.542	11.12	0.000

The coefficient of determinant ( $R^2$ ) for the regression model value ( $R^2 = 0.293$ ) indicated that 29% of the variance in entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme can be explained by autonomous motivation. The significant F-value ( $F = 123.73, p < 0.05$ ) as observed in the Table indicated that the model predicted the outcome accurately. Table also showed the constant or intercept term and the regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for the independent variable. The constant value (13.712) represented the intercept, which is the predicted on the dependent variable. The unstandardized beta value of ( $\beta = 0.477$ ) for autonomous variable showed that there is a significant predicted increase of 47.7% in skills acquisition programme among the students. This indicates that there is a significant influence of autonomous motivation on the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme of the school. The regression equation therefore is:  
 “Entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme” = 13.712+ 0.477 (Autonomous motivation)”

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant influence of self-efficacy on the skill entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme of the university.

Data collected on the above subject-matter were analysed using linear regression. The Table below provided the answer

**Table 2**

Linear Regression Analysis on the influence of Self-efficacy on the Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition Programme.

	Unstandardized		Standardized		
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	t	Sig.
R = 0.434					
R <sup>2</sup> = 0.189					
Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.186					
F = 69.37*					
1 (Constant)	19.583	1.065	18.380	0.000	
Self-efficacy	0.335	0.040	0.432	8.330	0.000

The above result showed that R value of 0.434, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.189. This indicated self-efficacy contributed 19% of the variance in skill acquisition. Also, the F-value of 69.37 showed a significant influence between the two variables. This implies that the model predicted the outcome accurately. Table 2 also showed the constant or intercept term and the regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for the independent variable. The constant value (19.583) represented the intercept, which is the predicted on the dependent variable. The result also showed that the unstandardized beta value of ( $\beta = 0.335$ ) for autonomous variable indicated a significant prediction increase of 33.5% in skills acquisition programme among the students. Consequently, there is a significant influence of self-efficacy on the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme of the school. The regression equation therefore is:

$$\text{“Entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme”} = 19.583 + 0.335 (\text{Self-efficacy})”$$

**Hypothesis Three:** Autonomous motivation and self-efficacy will not jointly influence the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme.

**Table 3**

Multiple Regression Analysis Showing Joint influence of Autonomous Motivation and Self-efficacy on the Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition Programme

	Unstandardized		Standardized		
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	B	T	Sig.
R = 0.577					
R <sup>2</sup> = 0.316					
Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.311					
F = 68.49*					
1 (Constant)	12.907		1.331	9.700	0.000
Autonomous Motivation	0.384	0.052	0.436	7.420	0.000
Self-efficacy	0.141	0.045	0.4183	3.110	0.002

The Table above showed the joint influence of autonomous motivation and self-efficacy on the entrepreneurial skills acquisition of the students. As shown in table 3, autonomous motivation had a t-value of 7.420 and a beta weight of 0.436. Also, the self-efficacy

yielded a t-value of 3.110 and beta value of 0.4183. The implication of the result was that autonomous motivation contributed more than self-efficacy of students. Also, the result showed that there is a significant influence between the independent variables and the dependent variable. However, autonomous motivation contributed more than self-efficacy in predicting students' entrepreneurial skills acquisition. This is represented below:

'Entrepreneurial skills acquisition = 12.907+ 0.436 (autonomous motivation) + 0.4183 (self-efficacy)''

### **Discussion**

One of the findings from above has shown that more than half of the students demonstrated a negative perception toward the entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme. The finding was supported by Okwilagwe (2007) that some students demonstrated carefree perception toward the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills either by coming late to the class when it is time to listen to lectures on skill acquisition or by their frequency of indiscipline behaviour during lectures. While corroborating the above, Okoli (2011) revealed that even the students who graduated from business education preferred to pursue white-collar jobs instead of putting into practice what they have learned in the school. This was also supported by Dutse, Mamaki, and Djib (2013) that some university students developed a negative perception toward the skill acquisition programme because of their beliefs that such tasks are too menial and risky. However, the finding was refuted by Adediran and Onifade (2013). The duo reported in their finding that there was a positive perception of entrepreneurial education among the students who took part in it.

Another finding from the study was that there was a significant influence of autonomous motivation on the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme of the school. While supporting the above, Bernstein and Carayannis (2011) affirmed that autonomous motivation and entrepreneurial intention among students are related. However, Al-Jubari, Hassan and Liñán (2018) stated that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation could lead to entrepreneurial intention and eventually actual enactment of such intentions. This means that students who are intrinsically motivated may have the determination to succeed at all cost.

Moreover, the finding revealed a significant influence of self-efficacy on the entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme of the school. Whereas, Judeh (2012) had earlier explained that self-efficacy and performance of someone in a task did not relate. Ayodele (2013); Jiang, Xiong and Cao (2017) studies confirmed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy positively affected entrepreneurial intention. From the above, it is believed that students with high self-efficacy may be more engaged, persisted when confronted with challenges and be determined do well in a task than a student with low self-efficacy.

Finally, it was revealed that autonomous motivation had a stronger influence on students' entrepreneurial skills acquisition than self-efficacy. This implies that an individual may need to develop internal thought or feeling towards a task or programme before developing competence in him/herself. Apart from that, when an individual feels that he/she is intrinsically motivated, he/she may be committed, passionate and satisfied thereby have the feeling that he/she can succeed in any giving task.

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

It can be concluded from the study that most students in the study area had a negative perception toward the entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme. It was also concluded that both autonomous motivation and self-efficacy predisposed students to the entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme. However, it was equally concluded that in the study that autonomous motivation was a better predictor of students' entrepreneurial skill acquisition intention programme than self-efficacy.

As a result of the findings, the study highlighted a few practical recommendations: since it is believed that perception or attitude is a strong predictor of intention and interest. It is imperative for the educators and policy-makers to create more awareness programmes and incentives to make entrepreneurship looks attractive and advantageous to the students. The more the value of entrepreneurial activity is valued, the more likely we can see enterprising individuals in the society.

Furthermore, policy-makers and educators who are involved in promoting entrepreneurial behaviours among students may need to focus more attention on developing students' intrinsic motivation towards the programme. This is to make such students be more creative and persistent in the programme. Above all, there is a need for the students to develop self-confidence among themselves. Students who have a high belief among themselves will be encouraged to create interest in entrepreneurial intention.

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