

## UNDERSTANDING ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET AND DEXTERITY ACQUISITION OF GRADUATES OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*The study investigated Understanding Entrepreneurial Mindset and Dexterity Acquisition of Graduates of Public Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve this purpose, two research questions were raised and two null hypotheses were formulated and tested. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Stratified random sampling was used for the sample of 180 participants across the four faculties of the public universities in the study location. A 12 items questionnaire title; (Understanding Entrepreneurial Mindset and Dexterity Acquisition of Graduates of Public Universities Questionnaire) was developed for data collection. The instrument was subjected for face validity by the experts in the Educational Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability estimate of different segments of the instrument were established which ranged from 0.73 to 0.89. Mean and standard deviation was involved while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analysed the hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at .5 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that Understanding Entrepreneurial Mindset in plethora dimensions is significant predictors of dexterity acquisition of graduates of public institutions. It was concluded that the result has a perfect or strong positive correlation of the variables used in the study. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended, among others that government and tertiary institutions should intensify efforts on dexterity acquisition of practical skills of every student before graduation, irrespective of the course of study in terms of skills acquisition of individuals in the study area.*

**Keywords; Entrepreneurial, Mindset, Dexterity, Acquisition, Graduates**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria economy is bedeviling with high level of unemployment of the working population mostly the energetic working force individuals who are graduates produced from the tertiary institutions annually without meaningful engagements. As a result of this high rate of unemployment, there is urgent need for those young men and women to rethink inward to actively and practically get involves in innovative venture of creativity of what their hands can mostly produced to generate income and put food on the table. By positively participating in acquiring dexterities of plethora trades in schools and after school will guarantee a productive economy where the graduates are busy doing things that might likely reduced unemployment, idle resources and redundancy in the society.

In effort of the government, to re-engineering the curriculum that every school child at the secondary school level must learn and acquired skills before graduation. If this policy is implemented and become operational, it will go a long way to cushioning the unemployment syndrome in the economy. However, dexterity acquisition refers to the process of developing skillfulness, proficiency and expertise in the particular task, activity or profession. In the words of Anderson (2022), defines dexterity acquisition as the process of developing expertise through deliberate practice and feedback. Also, Ericson and Smith (2022), describe it as the acquisition of complex cognitive practice. In consonance with the believe of Hambrick, Oswald and Altmann (2023), emphasizes the role of domain-specific knowledge in dexterity acquisition.

More importantly, many parents, government and other stakeholders are worried about the unemployment rate of graduates that are produced by tertiary institutions who are not evenly productive after graduation thereby adding more dependency pressure on their parents who are suppose to recoup they return of investment after spending so much in the education of their children and wards. It is sad reality that if entrepreneurial measures are not put in place for active engagements of the redundant graduates it may escalate to more crimes in the society such as arm robbery, cyber crime, kidnapping, ballot box snatching, banditry, stealing, drug abuse, smoking and other social vices that may generate insecurity. Understanding entrepreneurial mindset should be holistically introduced in our tertiary

institutions and encourage by lecturers to curb the menace of unemployment as to have a viable society where productivity economy will be high for sustainable living. It is upon this fact that the researcher is motivated to venture in investigation of understanding entrepreneurial mindset and dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **ENTREPRENEURIAL INNOVATIVENESS**

In words of Mohammad, Shehnaz and Constance (2018), conducted a study which findings revealed that there was a significant positive impact of entrepreneurial innovativeness on three types of business performances namely perceived non-financial, perceived business growth and perceived performance relative to competitors. However, based on their findings, increased financial performance was not derived from entrepreneurial innovativeness. The study contributes to the existing literature on innovation by assessing the impact of the most influential innovative practices on the four aspects of SME's performances in the context of wholesalers and retailers. According to Ogbari, Chima, Olokundun, Kehinde and Edewor (2023), whose study reveals that innovativeness embedded in competitive aggressiveness is a predominant predictor of profitability. The study holds that start-up businesses that desire better business performance should adopt innovative entrepreneurial orientation and align it with basic aspects of their income generation and management activities to improve productivity and their corporate image in order to be better positioned.

In line with Olu (2017), the results revealed that there is a positive relationship between innovation and product quality as well as a positive relationship between innovation and good corporate image and that both of them significantly affect entrepreneurial success. The study however, pointed that business enterprises should engage more on innovation of their production process to improve their product quality and even enhances good corporate image. This will help them to sustain their position in the face of stiff competition. In agreement with Ibiba (2024), the results showed that entrepreneurial inventiveness and the financial success of small and medium-sized businesses in Rivers State are significantly

correlated. The study concludes entrepreneurial innovativeness positively enhances the business success (market share and sales growth) of small and medium enterprises in Rivers State. This implies that SMEs in Rivers State can enhance their chances of success by fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship within their organizations. Therefore, the study holds that SMEs should foster a culture that values risk-taking and experimentation. Encourage employees to explore new ideas and approaches, even if they involve some level of uncertainty. Create incentives for innovation and recognize and reward employees who contribute innovative solutions.

Megan, Jed, Ben, and Siphwe (2019), carried out a study which the findings from the sampled group of respondents, it appears that Commerce students may be more inclined to pursue entrepreneurial activities than the Law students. The respondents from the Commerce faculty, on average, displayed a higher likelihood to invest their earnings into risky business ventures than did the Law student respondents. The Commerce faculty also appears to foster more educational support for entrepreneurship than the Law faculty does.

Kris and Kristijan (2017), conducted a research that found that the learning motivation strongly correlates with innovativeness, which in return affects the entrepreneurship intention. Second, the educational measures designed for senior year students would be slightly different from those for junior year students, whilst the junior year students may need more facilitation to motivate their learning. Thirdly, the innovativeness of engineering students is found significantly and strongly correlated to self-efficacy and significantly to attitude. The attitude of engineering students is found more significantly contributing to their 'entrepreneurial intention'. The interesting results show that for engineering students, though perceiving higher levels of innovativeness, 'attitudes' and 'entrepreneurial intention', the critical attributes in determining 'entrepreneurial intention' are 'attitudes' and 'self-efficacy'. Fourthly, attitudes seem a lot more influencing to the entrepreneurial intention among female students, whilst 'innovation' is a lot more influencing among male students. It is found that the learning motivation strongly correlates with innovativeness, which in return affects the entrepreneurship intention. Second, the educational measures designed for senior year students would be slightly different from those for junior year students, whilst the junior year students may need more facilitation to motivate their

learning. According to Helena and Ivo (2021), the results of multiple regressions showed that entrepreneurial orientation has a positive impact on innovativeness and business performance. Similarly, this research indicated that market orientation has a positive impact on innovativeness and business performance. As proposed in the hypothesis, the study found that learning orientation has a positive impact on innovativeness and business success. After the completion of the research, both practical and theoretical contribution was provided.

### **ENTREPRENEURIAL CRITICAL THINKING**

Steve (2020), the findings of this research revealed that critical thinking among entrepreneurs has significant influence on youth attitude toward entrepreneurial skills acquisition. The findings further revealed that critical thinking entrepreneurs always seek and evaluate opportunities; they manage risk and learn from outcomes. Critical thinking therefore enables entrepreneurs to conceptualize, observed, analyzed and evaluate before embarking on innovation of products. It was concluded that entrepreneurs need to think critically, as doing that help them seek and evaluate opportunities. There is need for entrepreneurs to think critically of new ideas, seek opportunities and bring new products into existence or add value to existing products or services. Among the best outcomes of critical thinking for an entrepreneurial mindset is innovation. Hamed, Sahar, Hossam and Heba (2022), the results reflected the importance of the study for critical thinking among science students, indicating a significant impact on their attitudes regarding their acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. It was concluded that if today's students are to become entrepreneurs of tomorrow, they must learn to think critically, as this will help them evaluate their opportunities. These findings will be of interest to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers who are working to shape the entrepreneurial intent of university students.

Pudjo, Mohamad, Himwan & Widyarini (2020), the research indicated that entrepreneurial experience and the ability to critically thinking directly effect on the ability to identify business opportunities and also indirectly effect on the ability to identify business opportunities through active information search. It means active information search plays a

significant role in order to improve the ability to identify a business opportunity. Galina, Viada and Arkadily (2021), the study allowed expanding the understanding of the relationship between critical thinking and self-regulation, to reveal the content aspects of critical thinking of entrepreneurs with different levels of self-regulation of behaviour. We found out that in the group of entrepreneurs with a high level of self-regulation of behaviour, there is a high level of volitional self-regulation, perseverance, self-control, information processing skills and critical thinking skills. It was concluded that there are differences at the content and semantic level among entrepreneurs, differentiated by the type of self-regulation. For entrepreneurs with a low level of self-regulation, it is planned to conduct a programme for the development of critical thinking.

Shafique, Faizah, Wan, Noor, Norasykin and Mahani (2023), the findings suggest that students are indeed aware of their critical thinking skills. Furthermore, findings show that critical thinking impacts student learning performance in several distinctive ways. These include improving their learning styles, strategies, and thinking skills. In the non-academic context, critical thinking provides further exposure and training for individual development in terms of survival skills and self-efficacy. Therefore, it is important for instructors to note the urgency for the inclusion of critical thinking in the teaching and learning process regardless of mode, be it in a physical or online classroom. The paper could benefit educators who seek to inculcate critical thinking in their lessons, programme developers who plan to embed critical thinking within the curriculum, and students themselves who prepare their learning journey with relevant critical thinking strategies

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The alarming rate of unemployment in the economy has eaten deep into the fabric of the society where many are beginning to lose hope of education that is producing individuals of no productive venture as well as those who cannot utilize the opportunities available in Nigerian soil. To create or carve a niche for them but keep wallowing in poverty and investing in crimes rather than positive ventures. Upon this menace, the unemployment rate continues to escalate in the society. These are men and women with energetic physique can

work to provides food and grow the economy in the little way they can better the economy for sustainable living. This however, seems as if the tertiary institutions are training and turning out scholars who cannot help themselves neither the society. But the clear picture is that the graduates tend to be unproductive and half barked products that are unemployable and less productive. As a result of this ugly trend, there is high rate of crime in the society where people cannot sleep with their two eyes closes because of criminality of these youths who lack positive engagements of innovativeness and critical thinking in manipulating the available technologies for sustainable economy.

To make the society a better place, government at all levels and tertiary institutions has tried to established entrepreneurial and skills acquisition centres where every graduates must at least learn and acquire skill even during the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) orientation. There is provision for each graduate to learn one skill at least. Yet, the problem of unemployment persist in the alarming rate which is the researcher concerned with the question of what is the relationship between understanding entrepreneurial mindset and dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria?

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between understanding entrepreneurial mindset and dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State. Specifically the study sought to;

1. ascertain whether there is a relationship between entrepreneurial innovativeness and dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State
2. find out if there is a relationship between entrepreneurial critical thinking and dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**



1 to what extent does entrepreneurial innovativeness relate with dexterity acquisition of graduates of public university in Cross River State?

2 how does entrepreneurial critical thinking relate with dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State?

### **STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES**

1. entrepreneurial innovativeness does not significantly relate with dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities of Cross River State
2. there is no significant relationship of entrepreneurial critical thinking on dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State

### **METHODOLOGY**

This research was carried out in Cross River State, Nigeria and the study area is Cross River State Cross River is one of the 36 states in the Federal Republic of Nigeria bounded by Cameroon. It is located in the South-South geopolitical region of the country with Calabar as the capital city. The state is located on latitude 5o 45”North of the equator and longitude 8o 30” East of the Greenwich meridian. It is a coastal state in the Niger Delta and it occupies 20,156 square kilometres (Cross River State Government, 2014). Cross River State is bound in the North by Benue state, in the West by Ebonyi and Abia states, in the East by Cameroon Republic and in the South by Akwa-Ibom State and the Atlantic Ocean. Established in 1975, University of Calabar, also called Unical is a public higher education institution currently headed by Prof. Florence Banku Obi the first female and the eleventh vice chancellor of the institution. And located in the small city of Calabar (population range of 250,000-499,999 inhabitants), Cross River State. Officially accredited and recognized by the National Universities Commission, Nigeria, a very large (enrollment range: 40,000-44,999 students) coeducational higher education institution. It offers courses and programmes leading to the award of degrees such as bachelor and postgraduate degrees in several areas of study. This 49 years old higher-education institution has a selective admission policy based on entrance examinations and international applicants are eligible to apply for enrollment. Cross River University of Technology, also called CRUTECH now



University of Cross River State (UNICROSS) is a State-owned higher institution with multiplural campuses located in Calabar, Obubra and Ogoja. The University was established in 2002 after the merging of three higher institutions: the Polytechnic of Calabar, Ibrahim Babangida College of Agriculture and Government Technical College Ogoja respectively. The 22 year old Institution offers degree courses at undergraduate and post graduate levels. This study adopted survey research design. This was because the design allowed the researcher to sample the opinions of respondents through the use of questionnaire, describe and interpret the findings based on the information obtained from the sample. It equally allowed the researcher to generalize the findings of the study to other areas that was not covered by the study. This design was chosen to examine how understanding entrepreneurial mindset and dexterity acquisition of graduates correlate.

The population of the study consists of final year undergraduates students. Census and stratified random sampling techniques were used. However, A total of 180 (30 percent) of the 600 final years undergraduate students from four Faculties (Social Science, Education, Sciences, and Management Sciences) in Unical and Unicross were randomly sampled to assess their opinions. The final year undergraduate students were sampled for the study because the researcher believed that they could provide unbiased information, and they have understanding of the labour market. A 12-item questionnaire was designed on a four-point modified Likert scale and titled: Understanding Entrepreneurial Mindset and Dexterity Acquisition of Graduates of Public Universities in Cross River State Questionnaire (UEMADAGPUQ) were used to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation as well as Educational Management Department of the University of Calabar. The reliability 0.73 to 0.89 was established using Cronbach alpha method. This value was considered appropriate for the instrument to be used for the study. Data obtained were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

The instrument was administered by the researcher directly to the participants upon permission obtained from the Deans and Departmental Heads At the end of the whole exercise, all copies of the questionnaires were collated for analysis. Thus, data collected

were also coded and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.

## Results

### Hypothesis one

Entrepreneurial innovativeness does not significantly relate with dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State

Descriptive statistics and Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used to analyze this hypothesis as presented in Table 1

Table 1; descriptive statistics and Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between Entrepreneurial Innovativeness and Dexterity Acquisition of Graduates of Public University in Cross River State

TABLE ONE

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	R	SIG
Entrepreneurial innovativeness	180	16.09	2.829	178	1.00	259
Dexterity acquisition	180	15.44	2.101	178	1.00	259

\*\*Significant at .05 level

Based on the statistical evidence, the result on Table one above shows there is a strong positive relationship between entrepreneurial innovativeness and dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State ( $r = 1.00$ ) which implies that there is perfect positive correlation of entrepreneurial innovativeness to dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. And a strong correlation when the ( $p$ - value = 259) in line with the available statistical proof on table as depicted. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted (retained).

TABLE TWO

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	R	SIG
Entrepreneurial critical thinking	180	15.07	2.334	178	1.00	231
Dexterity acquisition	180	15.43	2.101	178	1.00	231

\*\*Significant at .05

The statistical evidence provided on Table two above depicts a strong positive significant relationship between entrepreneurial critical thinking and dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State ( $r = 1.00$ ) that implies a perfect positive correlation of the statistical result. However, there was a strong correlation when the ( $p - \text{value} = 231$ ) with the available statistical indication. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted or retained.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This study investigated Understanding Entrepreneurial Mindset and Dexterity Acquisition of Graduates of Public Universities of Cross River State, Nigeria. The result of the hypothesis one revealed that there was a strong statistical positive correlation between entrepreneurial innovativeness and dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State. The implication of the findings revealed that there is perfect positive correlation of entrepreneurial innovativeness to dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The result of the hypothesis is in view of Mohammad, Shehnaz and Constance (2018), conducted a study which findings revealed that there was a significant positive impact of entrepreneurial innovativeness on three types of business performances namely perceived non-financial, perceived business growth and perceived performance relative

to competitors. However, based on their findings, increased financial performance was not derived from entrepreneurial innovativeness. The study contributes to the existing literature on innovation by assessing the impact of the most influential innovative practices on the four aspects of SME's performances in the context of wholesalers and retailers. According to Ogbari, Chima, Olokundun, Kehinde and Edewor (2023), whose study reveals that innovativeness embedded in competitive aggressiveness is a predominant predictor of profitability. The study holds that start-up businesses that desire better business performance should adopt innovative entrepreneurial orientation and align it with basic aspects of their income generation and management activities to improve productivity and their corporate image in order to be better positioned.

The result also, is in line with Olu (2017), the results revealed that there is a positive relationship between innovation and product quality as well as a positive relationship between innovation and good corporate image and that both of them significantly affect entrepreneurial success. The study however, pointed that business enterprises should engage more on innovation of their production process to improve their product quality and even enhances good corporate image. This will help them to sustain their position in the face of stiff competition. The findings are in agreement with Ibiba (2024), the results showed that entrepreneurial inventiveness and the financial success of small and medium-sized businesses in Rivers State are significantly correlated. The study concludes entrepreneurial innovativeness positively enhances the business success (market share and sales growth) of small and medium enterprises in Rivers State. This implies that SMEs in Rivers State can enhance their chances of success by fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship within their organizations. Therefore, the study holds that SMEs should foster a culture that values risk-taking and experimentation. Encourage employees to explore new ideas and approaches, even if they involve some level of uncertainty. Create incentives for innovation and recognize and reward employees who contribute innovative solutions.

This study investigated Understanding Entrepreneurial Mindset and Dexterity Acquisition of Graduates of Public Universities of Cross River State, Nigeria. The result of the hypothesis two revealed that there was a strong statistical positive correlation between entrepreneurial critical thinking and dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State. The

implication of the findings revealed that there is perfect positive correlation of entrepreneurial critical thinking to dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The result of the hypothesis is in tandem with the study of Shafique, Faizah, Wan, Noor, Norasykin and Mahani (2023), the findings suggest that students are indeed aware of their critical thinking skills. Furthermore, findings show that critical thinking impacts student learning performance in several distinctive ways. These include improving their learning styles, strategies, and thinking skills. In the non-academic context, critical thinking provides further exposure and training for individual development in terms of survival skills and self-efficacy. Therefore, it is important for instructors to note the urgency for the inclusion of critical thinking in the teaching and learning process regardless of mode, be it in a physical or online classroom. The paper could benefit educators who seek to inculcate critical thinking in their lessons, programme developers who plan to embed critical thinking within the curriculum, and students themselves who prepare their learning journey with relevant critical thinking strategies.

The findings also, agrees with Steve (2020), the findings of this research revealed that critical thinking among entrepreneurs has significant influence on youth attitude toward entrepreneurial skills acquisition. The findings further revealed that critical thinking entrepreneurs always seek and evaluate opportunities; they manage risk and learn from outcomes. Critical thinking therefore enables entrepreneurs to conceptualize, observed, analyzed and evaluate before embarking on innovation of products. It was concluded that entrepreneurs need to think critically, as doing that help them seek and evaluate opportunities. There is need for entrepreneurs to think critically of new ideas, seek opportunities and bring new products into existence or add value to existing products or services. Among the best outcomes of critical thinking for an entrepreneurial mindset is innovation.

The result of the finding aligned with Hamed, Sahar, Hossam and Heba (2022), the results reflected the importance of the study for critical thinking among science students, indicating a significant impact on their attitudes regarding their acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. It was concluded that if today's students are to become entrepreneurs of tomorrow, they must learn to think critically, as this will help them evaluate their opportunities. These findings will be of interest to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers who are working to shape the entrepreneurial intent of university students. The result of the finding is in alignment with

Galina, Viada and Arkadily (2021), the study allowed expanding the understanding of the relationship between critical thinking and self-regulation, to reveal the content aspects of critical thinking of entrepreneurs with different levels of self-regulation of behaviour. We found out that in the group of entrepreneurs with a high level of self-regulation of behaviour, there is a high level of volitional self-regulation, perseverance, self-control, information processing skills and critical thinking skills. It was concluded that there are differences at the content and semantic level among entrepreneurs, differentiated by the type of self-regulation. For entrepreneurs with a low level of self-regulation, it is planned to conduct a programme for the development of critical thinking.

## **CONCLUSION**

It was concluded from the results of the findings obtained that there was a perfect significant positive correlation of the statistical evidence entrepreneurial innovativeness, entrepreneurial critical thinking and dexterity acquisition of graduates of public universities cross river state, Nigeria. This further implies a strong positive relationship of the findings. The study evidence revealed that if the students and the graduates are given the right entrepreneurial innovativeness, entrepreneurial critical thinking training in the course of their studies, they will do well by creating jobs opportunities to reduce idle resources in the economy.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Government and tertiary institutions should intensify efforts on dexterity acquisition of practical skill of every student before graduation irrespective of the course of study.
2. Government and higher institutions should ensure timely monitoring, supervision, evaluation and adequate implementation of entrepreneurship centres to encourage students participation in skills acquisition.

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