

**ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS DELIVERY IN BUSINESS EDUCATION AND GRADUATE STUDENTS' BUSINESS SUCCESS IN RIVERS STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial skills delivery in business education and graduate students' business success in Rivers State. Correlational research design was used. The participants for this study were 187 postgraduate students from the two (2) universities in Rivers State that are running Business Education Post Graduate program. Data were collected mainly through the use of questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson correlation. The findings of the study showed that: there is a significant relationship between creativity and business success of Graduate students in Rivers State; there is a significant relationship between communication skills and business success and lastly, significant relationship between financial management skills and business success of Graduate students in Rivers State. Based on the result, we concluded that delivery of entrepreneurial skills through creativity, communication skills, and financial management skills can greatly enhance the financial success, corporate social responsibility, and customer satisfaction of Graduate students. We suggested that business educators should adopt a blend of delivery mechanisms for the impartation of entrepreneurial delivery skills that are anticipated to promote the business success of students. The implication of this result is that there is possibility of using entrepreneurial skills delivery as a paramount facet of education, training, and impartation of relevant entrepreneurial skills into graduates for economic growth, enhancement and becoming successful in business

**Keywords:** Skills, Delivery, Business. Education and Success

**INTRODUCTION**

Business curriculum content provides students with an elementary theoretical framework for understanding business management through entrepreneurial skills delivery and, at the same time provides students with knowledge and techniques indispensable to starting up and managing small and medium scale business effectively as well as becoming successful in their business operations (David and Fabian, 2019). Entrepreneurial skills delivery can be seen as the training of relevant entrepreneurial skills in business education students that will enable them become successful business operators upon graduation (Alalwany & Saad, 2015). It is also referred to as the ability to effectively

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communicate, share, and teach the various skills and knowledge required to be a successful entrepreneur. These skills are essential for starting, managing, and growing a business or venture.

However, there appears to be inadequacy in entrepreneurial skills delivery across universities in Nigeria. Many business education lecturers still set priorities on having students memorise concepts and produce them during tests and examinations as a means of rating the students. Sadly, many of these students who perform very well during these academic exercises (tests and examinations) cannot successfully handle a business for a month, *let alone* a year or more. Like pure science courses, entrepreneurial skills should be taught with every sense of practicality and not setting priority on theory; success in theory does not imply success in real life experience. Based on the foregoing, Akeke *et al.*, (2022) posited that many Business Education departments across tertiary institutions in Nigeria lack the right tools in delivering course contents to students. This is why even when there is availability of resources to start-up a business, some of these students still find it so difficult to run successful businesses. The intention of introducing entrepreneurial skill delivery seems not to be met as the rate of business failure still persists. Several post graduates of business education in River State are not gainfully employed and cannot even manage their own business successfully, thereby compounding the economic recession. This has brought a lot of worries, which could be as a result of inadequacy in entrepreneurial skills delivery.

Furthermore, there is a knowledge gap on how entrepreneurial skills delivery interacts with graduate students' business success in Rivers State, gives serious concern. To authenticate this claim, Akeke *et al.* (2022) examined the differences between the responses of federal and state universities on entrepreneurial skills required for business education graduates' employability in Cross River State. Similarly, Josephat & Kayisime (2013) carried out a study on impact of entrepreneurship skills development on growth of SMEs in Rwanda". In another study, Otamiri & Otomiewo (2022) examined how smart facilities can enhance instructional delivery of Business Education programme in Colleges of Education in South-South Nigeria; Okoro (2021) examined entrepreneurship skills needed by students/graduates for global relevance in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. Further, Chiekezie *et al.* (2016) investigated the influence of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on job creation in Benin City Metropolis, Nigeria. Conspicuously, none of these studies above was done to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurial skills delivery in business Education and graduate students' business success in Rivers State. This is a clear indication that the relationship between entrepreneurial skills delivery in business Education and graduate students' business success in Rivers State has not gathered ample research attention. Obviously, this is the knowledge gap which

this study seeks to fill. This study decomposed entrepreneurial skills delivery in terms of creativity, communication skills, and financial management skills.

However, the objective of this research is investigate the relationship between entrepreneurial skills delivery in business education and graduate students' business success in Rivers State . The specific objectives are

- i. determine the relationship between creativity and financial success of graduate students in Rivers State.
- ii. determine the relationship between communication skills and financial success of graduate students in Rivers State;
- iii. determine the relationship between financial management skills and financial success of graduate students in Rivers State.

To achieve this objective, the hypothesis were stated thus:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between creativity and business success of Graduate students in Rivers State

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between communication skills and financial success of Graduate students in Rivers State.

Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between financial management skills and business success of Graduate students in Rivers State.

### **Concept of entrepreneurial skills delivery**

Appropriate ways or mechanism use in impacting those skills such as problem solving and critical thinking, communication, marketing, financial management etc. in students of business education in order to enable them own and managed a successful business, this is seen in designing curricula in furtherance of entrepreneurial education (Buli & Yesuf, 2015), creative thinking has been identified in past research as a “significant competency of the world’s best executives as it includes: brainstorming, asking the right questions, and random word association. It is the responsibility of universities to deliver an educational system which promotes and encourages culture of entrepreneurial consciousness among students and staff” (Huff, 2014). Entrepreneurial skills are those normally associated with being an entrepreneur, although anyone can develop them. Being an entrepreneur usually means starting and building your own successful business, but people with entrepreneurial skills can thrive within larger organizations, too.

According to Herrity (2022), Entrepreneurial skills can encompass a broad range of various skill sets like technical skills, leadership and business management skills and creative thinking.

Because entrepreneurial skills can be applied to many different job roles and industries, developing your entrepreneurial skills can mean developing several types of skill sets. For instance, to be a successful business owner, you may need to develop your business management skills. Entrepreneurial skills give an individual an edge over his or her peers. One or graduates who have entrepreneurial skills will always be an asset wherever he or she finds him/herself. Its benefits are too numerous to mention but we will touch a few in this research. Inculcation of entrepreneurial skills impels students to put theory into practice transcending mere understanding of what entrepreneurship is about. In so doing, students gain self-confidence and motivation, become proactive, and creative. Nishantha (2009) linked the key traits of need for achievement and risk-taking propensity to development of a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship. Important competitive advantages accrue from entrepreneurship and innovation (Veciana, Aponte, & Urbano, 2005). For graduates to contribute in a knowledge-based global economy, and become successful in business, they must develop an ability to “think well” in an entrepreneurial setting when they confronted with problem solving tasks mandating critical analysis (Jones & English, 2004).

#### **Dimensions of Entrepreneurial skills delivery**

Components of entrepreneurial skills delivery are many but this work is limited to only three, they include:

**Creativity:** Creativity can be explained as production of new ideas; a creative employee is one who can come up with new suggestions/ideas for the services to be constructed, the flood of the communication and understanding it in the same way which would affect the work done by the employee during his working hour (Amabile, 2017). Creativity is explained as a design in which the employee makes such innovative construction in which the work-related problems are resolved in rightful manner with step by step process, some explain it as the ability of the individuals how they can develop useful solution to meet the challenges and overcome the problem them self individually (Amabile, 2017; Young, 2016). Creative thinking allows individuals to develop new or innovative ideas and challenge norms or old ways of thinking (Michael, 2022). Creativity promotes innovation and cognitive development (Akeke *et al.*, 2022).

**Communication skill:** The term communication skill refers to both the tacit knowledge of a language and the ability to use it effectively (Nordquist, 2019). Rickheit and Hans (2018) defined communication skill as the ability to interact well with others. He explains, the term “well” refers to “accuracy, clarity, comprehensibility, coherence, expertise, effectiveness and appropriateness”. A much more complete operationalization is provided by Young *et al.* (2014) when he suggested that

communication competence is best understood as "a situational ability to set realistic and appropriate goals and to maximize their achievement by using knowledge of self, other, context, and communication theory to generate adaptive communication performances". According to Forbes (2021), an entrepreneur needs to be able to communicate well to sell his vision of the future to a wide audience, including investors, potential clients and team members. From the foregoing, communication skill is defined in this work as the ability to relate seamlessly with superiors and subordinates in speech and writing in a way that fosters group cohesion. Communication skill is measured by determining if, and to what degree, the goals of interaction are achieved.

Good communication involves not just relaying information but being able to explain it in a way that ensures the recipient understands you (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023). Skillful communication in a business place helps to mitigate conflict (Skinner & Michael, 2018). Skillful communication does more than just ensure information is accurately received, it also works to connect others and keep open lines of communication between employees and other members of the organization. Skillful communication does more than just ensure information is accurately received (Alhalwachi, 2017). It also works to connect others and keep open lines of communication between employees and other members of the organization.

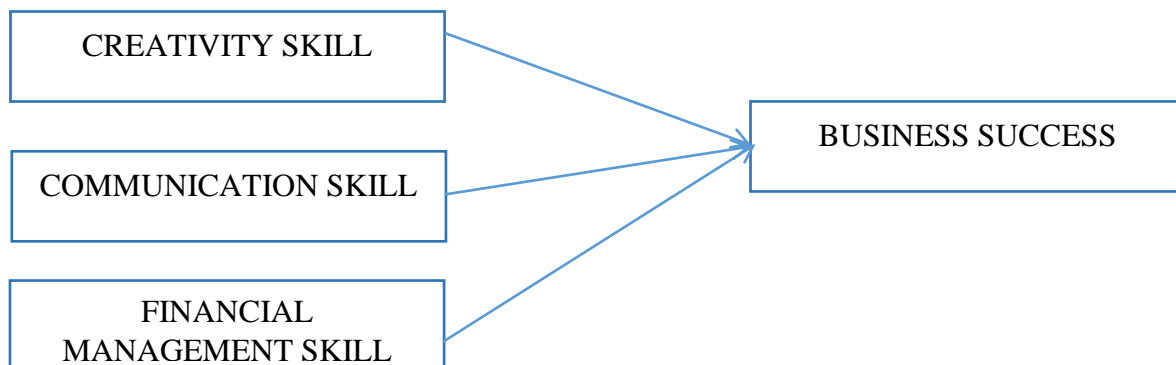
**Financial Management Skills:** Financial management is finding the proper source of funds at the lowest cost, controlling the company's cost of capital and not letting the balance sheet become too highly leveraged with debt with an adverse effect of its credit rating (Diaz, 2022). A good entrepreneur must develop a skill that will enable him or her manages and increases its capital effectively.

Must be able to invest and reinvest, know where the capital goes and if the venture invested produces a profit. Must manage the day-to-day flow of cash, the sales book, account records, purchases or inventory records, doing where the money goes how many sales is being made the income and the organization expenses makes you a competent business owner. The basics of financial management is that an entrepreneur should have basic knowledge on money management. This is to help properly manage the establishment's finances and take important decisions. Every idea requires finances in order to generate results. You need to know how to collate account books straight, from fixed capital to investments, compare the return on investments (ROI) to initial investments and so on. Finance is a rudimentary skill that is essential for an entrepreneur to have for the growth of his or her business. A successful business person is one who, among other things, possesses financial management acumen.

### Concept of Business Success

Business success refers to the achievement of favorable outcomes and goals within a commercial enterprise (Carvalho, 2015). It encompasses a range of factors that contribute to the viability, profitability, and overall prosperity of a business. Success in business is often measured by both financial and non-financial indicators, as well as the satisfaction of stakeholders.

The conceptual framework on the study of the relationship between entrepreneurial skills delivery in business education and graduate students' business success is shown on fig 1 below:



### METHODS

In order to achieve the objective of the empirical study, a quantitative design using a cross-sectional survey was adopted because it enabled the researcher to collect data from a large population (Wellman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2009). The participants of this study were 187 postgraduate students from the two (2) universities in Rivers State that are running Business Education Post Graduate programme. The respondents included 103 postgraduate students from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and 84 postgraduate students from Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. These are the only two universities in Rivers State with Post Graduate Business Education students. The study employed the census sampling technique. The reason is because the population was not too much for the researcher to handle. This implied that the entire population of 187 Post Graduate Business Education students also served as the sample size for this study. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for the collection of information for measuring the relationship between entrepreneurial skills delivery and graduate student business success in Rivers State.

The questionnaire on the relationship between entrepreneurial skills delivery and graduate student business success was divided into two sections: questions relating to entrepreneurial skills delivery (such as Creativity, Communication Skills and Financial Management Skills) and questions relating to business success. The questionnaire was constructed using a 4-point rating scale with the

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following response options: Strongly Agree (SA) 4; Agree (A) 3; Disagree (D) 2; and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyze data.

In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, the contents of the instrument were subjected to a statistical analysis using Cronbach alpha in order to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. The adoption of Cronbach alpha in ascertaining the reliability of the instrument is based on the fact that Cronbach alpha has the statistical ability to measure the internal consistency of instruments. Nunnally’s (1978) criterion of 0.70 will be used as the benchmark for determining the reliability level of the questionnaire items. Thus, items that yield Cronbach coefficient below 0.70 will be deemed to be unreliable, while those with Cronbach coefficient of 0.70 and above will be considered acceptably reliable. The reliability test output is presented in table 1 below:

**Table 1: Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test Results**

Variables	Dimensions/Measures	Items	Alpha
Entrepreneurial Skills Delivery	Creativity	5	.834
	Communication Skills	5	.852
	Financial Management Skills	5	.790
Graduate Students’ Business Success	Financial Success	5	.803
	Corporate Social Responsibility	5	.781
	Customer Satisfaction	5	.769

**Source: SPSS Output, 2024.**

## RESULTS

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between creativity and business success of Graduate students in Rivers State.

**Table 2: Computation of Relationship between Creativity and business Success of Graduate Students**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	$\sum X^2$	$\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	Df	r-cal	r-crit.	p>0.05	Dec.
C	164	3.49	.62	16848	16800	16820	162	0.999**	0.441	0.05	Rejected
FSGS	164	3.37	.56								

**Source:** Data Analysis, 2024.

Table 2 reveals r-calculated value of 0.999 which is greater than the critical r value of 0.441 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated r value of 0.999 is greater than the critical r value of 0.441, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a very strong positive relationship between creativity and financial success of Graduate students in Rivers State.

**H02:** There is no significant relationship between communication skills and business success of Graduate students in Rivers State.

**Table 3: Computation of Relationship between Communication Skills and business Success of Graduate Students**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	$\sum X^2$	$\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	Df	r-cal	r-crit.	p>0.05	Dec.
C	164	3.6	.66								
				16970	18692	17773	162	0.996**	0.441	0.05	Rejected
FSGS	164	3.37	.56								

**Source:** Data Analysis, 2024.

Table 3 reveals r-calculated value of 0.996 which is greater than the critical r value of 0.441 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated r value of 0.996 is greater than the critical r value of 0.441, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a very strong positive relationship between communication skills and financial success of Graduate students in Rivers State.

**H03:** There is no significant relationship between financial management skills and business success of Graduate students in Rivers State.

**Table 4: Computation of Relationship between Financial Management Skills and business Success of Graduate Students**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	$\sum X^2$	$\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	Df	r-cal	r-crit.	p>0.05	Dec.
C	164	3.5	.62								
				15095	16949	15945	162	0.688**	0.441	0.05	Rejected
FSGS	164	3.37	1.56								

**Source:** Data Analysis, 2024.

Table 4 reveals r-calculated value of 0.688 which is greater than the critical r value of 0.441 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated r value of 0.688 is greater than the critical r value of 0.441, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between financial management skills and financial success of Graduate students in Rivers State.

### Discussion of findings

The test of hypothesis one revealed that there is a very strong positive relationship between creativity and graduate students' business success in Rivers State. This finding implies that the ability of a student to bear innovative and problem-solving skills makes them capable of handling business successfully. Creative thinking allows individuals to develop new or innovative ideas and challenge norms or old ways of thinking (Michael, 2022). By engaging in these activities, companies may

produce goods, services, and other offers that set them apart from the competition and creatively satisfy customer needs. In order to handle shifting markets and consumer trends, it is critical for businesses to swiftly evaluate new circumstances and devise methods to traverse them. Businesses can think ahead and overcome current obstacles by being creative. Regular use of brainstorming or creative-thinking techniques may help people keep coming up with novel ideas that cater to the wants and needs of their target customers, both now and in the future.

As opined by Akeke *et al.* (2022), innovation and cognitive growth are facilitated by creativity. The act of presenting and using novel concepts or ideas is referred to as innovation. People with creative thinking are able to see things from several angles and come up with something original. Businesses that encourage innovation both internally and internationally may create buzz about their products and set themselves apart from rivals. Exercises involving creative thinking may include enjoyable or stimulating tasks that pique people's interest and improve cognitive growth. In addition to inspiring people to search for ideas in novel ways, creativity also makes them more likely to notice subtleties or patterns in a procedure, approach, or final result. Making these observations might assist people in finding possible areas for improvement or as a source of inspiration for new ideas.

The test of hypothesis two showed that there is a strong positive relationship between communication skills and graduate students' business success in Rivers State. As a business-minded individual, the ability to articulately bear ones' thought and as well as listen keenly listen to other persons' ideas imparts the individual ability to do better in their business. In order to guarantee that the other person understands you, good communication requires not only conveying information but also being able to explain it (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023). This kind of communication is the only way for a firm to grow significantly. An effective and profitable firm is largely dependent on effective workplace communication. It guarantees that everyone is aware of their roles and responsibilities, fosters positive customer and staff interactions, and maintains staff engagement and productivity. If business owners want to guarantee employee happiness and encourage great performance, they should give good communication top priority in their company.

Effective communication reduces conflict in the workplace (Skinner & Michael, 2018). Effective communication guarantees more than simply that information is understood correctly (Alhalwachi, 2017). Additionally, it fosters relationships and maintains channels of communication between staff members and other organization members. In the end, this improves employee engagement, which may result in higher employee satisfaction and a more positive workplace culture. Effective communication is important in the workplace for everyone, not just the company's staff.

Client interactions are directly impacted by effective communication as well. Companies that prioritize client communication are more likely to create strong connections and keep clients than those that don't. This is especially true for organizations that communicate effectively with their consumers or clients. Consumers are more devoted to businesses that they have a connection with and that appreciate their relationship with them, as well as those who keep them informed of developments. A positive working culture is also largely maintained through good communication. People of many ethnicity, cultures, and religious views work together in many companies, and when there are this many variances, conflict often arises. An environment where everyone feels valued and understood is created by an open communication culture. All of these suggest that good communication fosters a productive and positive work environment, both of which are important for a company's success.

In the test of hypothesis three, it was revealed that there is a very strong positive relationship between financial management skills and graduate students' business success in Rivers State. This result is in tandem with the findings of Diaz (2022) that many businesses fail miserably for the lack of financial management skills. The majority of businesses incur losses and have negative cash flows when they first launch. Effective money management is crucial at this time. Even if they are spending more money than they are bringing in during the first few months of the firm, managers still need to make sure they have enough cash on hand to pay suppliers and staff. This implies that in order to determine how much money will be required to finance the firm until it becomes profitable, the owner must predict these negative cash flows financially.

A firm will require more funding to support its expansion as it develops and grows. It is essential to plan and budget for these monetary requirements. Financial managers make the choice of whether to borrow money from outside lenders or fund expansion internally. Finding the right funding source at the lowest possible cost, managing the cost of capital for the business, and preventing the balance sheet from being too burdened with debt that might lower the company's credit rating are all parts of financial management (Diaz, 2022). During regular business operations, an organization offers a good or service, closes a deal with a client, takes payment, and repeats the cycle. The goal of financial management is to effectively move funds through this cycle. This entails keeping an eye on the ratios of completed items to raw material stocks, selling to clients and promptly collecting receivables, and then restarting by making new raw material purchases. The company has to pay its suppliers, workers, and bills in the interim. Cash is required for all of this, and wise financial management is required to ensure that the funds are allocated effectively. Although economies have

historically increased throughout time, there are also times when they see severe decreases. Companies should prepare to have adequate cash on hand to weather these economic downturns; otherwise, they risk having to close due to cash flow issues.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study has shown that people grow by learning; the more a person learns, the better they become in whatever dimension of life the learning is taking place. Through the study, it has been revealed that the delivery of entrepreneurial skills through creativity, communication skills, and financial management skills can greatly enhance the financial success, corporate social responsibility, and customer satisfaction of graduate students. It behooves on business educators to adopt the right or mix of delivery mechanisms that will aid them impart creativity, communication skills, and financial management skills, so as to promote the business success of graduate students. Therefore, the study concludes that the impartation of creativity, communication skills, and financial management skills on graduate students inspires their ability to succeed in business, especially in the areas of financial success, corporate social responsibility, and customer satisfaction. It becomes incumbent on the government, university authorities, and business educators to create the right environment for the passage of these knowledge, so as to flood the society with sound business magnates.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the result, we recommend the following:

- i. Business educators should impart in students the ability to creatively set up businesses that are focused on customer satisfaction.
- ii. Business education students should be taught communications that will entail articulate thought, listening skill, and writing skill, as these will empower them to succeed in business.
- iii. As a financial management skill, cash flow analysis should be taught devotedly by business educators to enable students develop business acumen.

## **PRACTICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION**

The objective of the study was to determine the relationship entrepreneurial skills delivery in business education and graduate students' business success in Rivers State. The results of the correlation regression analysis conducted to test the hypothesis whether entrepreneurial skills delivery in business education relate with graduate students' business success in Rivers State reveals that the sub-variables used to proxy the entrepreneurial skills delivery (creativity, communication skills, and financial management skills) have a relationship with students' business success. The implication of

this is that there is possibility of using entrepreneurial skills delivery as a paramount facet of education, training, and impartation of relevant entrepreneurial skills into graduates for economic growth, enhancement and becoming successful in business.

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