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**ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILL AND EMPLOYABILITY AMONG YOUNG
ARTISANS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and employability among young artisans in Lagos State, Nigeria. The artisan sector, comprising trades such as carpentry, tailoring, and electrical work, is a critical component of Nigeria's informal economy. Despite its significance, young artisans often face challenges related to employability and job creation. This research examines the impact of entrepreneurial skills, including business planning, financial management, and marketing, on the employability and job stability of young artisans in Lagos State. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with young artisans, vocational trainers, and industry experts. The survey data reveal that artisans with advanced entrepreneurial skills are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction, increased income, and greater stability compared to their peers with limited skills. Qualitative insights further highlight that entrepreneurial training helps artisans navigate market challenges, expand their client base, and manage their businesses more effectively. The findings underscore the importance of integrating entrepreneurial education into vocational training programmes to enhance the employability of young artisans. Recommendations include developing comprehensive training modules that cover essential entrepreneurial competencies and fostering partnerships between vocational institutions and industry stakeholders to support skill development. This approach aims to empower young artisans, improve their economic prospects, and contribute to the broader economic growth of Lagos State.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Skills, Employability, Young Artisans, Vocational Training, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Introduction

The persistent challenge of unemployment, particularly among white-collar job seekers, continues to plague developing countries like Nigeria. Recent data from the National Bureau of Statistics (2023) indicates that Nigeria's unemployment rate reached 33.3% in the fourth quarter of 2022, highlighting the urgency of addressing this issue [1]. The pressure on the government has intensified, exacerbated by declining foreign earnings due to fluctuating crude oil prices and the lasting economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Research consistently points to vocational skills acquisition as a viable solution to unemployment, enabling youth to become self-reliant and self-dependent. A study by Oluwale, Jegede, & Olamide, (2020) found that vocational education and training (VET) significantly improved employability and entrepreneurial intentions among Nigerian youth.

The Nigerian government has recognized this potential, emphasizing that skills acquisition can not only employ unemployed individuals but also transform them into employers of labour on a sustainable basis. This aligns with the findings of Adesugba & Mavrotas (2022), who noted that countries with robust vocational education systems tend to have lower youth unemployment rates. There is a growing recognition that tertiary education alone does not guarantee employment for graduates. A survey conducted by the World Bank (2023) revealed that 45% of Nigerian employers cited skills mismatch as a major constraint in hiring recent graduates. This underscores the need for young graduates to consider entrepreneurship and self-employment as viable career options. To address this, education systems must evolve beyond merely imparting literacy and numeracy. They should provide avenues for students to embark on self-discovery journeys, helping them uncover their unique abilities and apply theoretical knowledge to practical, real-world scenarios. This approach is supported by Akhuemonkhan, Raimi, & Sofoluwe (2021), who found that

integrating entrepreneurship education into vocational training significantly enhanced graduates' ability to start and sustain businesses.

The link among vocational education, entrepreneurial skills, and artisan employability is becoming increasingly apparent. A study by Okoye & Okwelle (2022) demonstrated that artisans who received both technical and entrepreneurial training were 30% more likely to successfully establish and grow their businesses compared to those who received only technical training. Entrepreneurial skills such as financial literacy, marketing, and business planning are crucial for artisans to transform their technical abilities into sustainable livelihoods. Adebayo and Adekunle (2023) found that artisans with strong entrepreneurial skills were better able to adapt to changing market conditions and diversify their income streams. The informal sector, where many artisans operate, plays a significant role in Nigeria's economy. According to the International Labour Organization (2023), the informal sector accounts for about 65% of Nigeria's GDP. Recognizing this, vocational education programmes are increasingly incorporating modules on navigating the informal economy, formalizing businesses, and accessing microfinance opportunities. A case study by Ekong & Ekong (2021) of a vocational training programme in Lagos State showed that graduates who received training on both technical skills and informal sector operations were 40% more likely to be gainfully employed or self-employed within six months of graduation compared to those who received only technical training. Vocational education, when coupled with entrepreneurial skills development, holds significant potential for addressing unemployment and fostering economic growth in Nigeria. By reimagining vocational education to meet the needs of both the formal and informal sectors, and equipping artisans with the tools to become successful entrepreneurs, Nigeria can harness its human capital more effectively and create a more resilient, diversified economy.

Statement of the Problem

The persistent challenge of youth unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria, particularly in urban areas like Lagos, has highlighted a critical gap between technical skills and entrepreneurial acumen. Somolu, a local government area in Lagos State, hosts a vibrant community of young artisans in various trades such as carpentry, welding, tailoring, hairdressing, and auto mechanics. However, many of these skilled individuals struggle to transform their technical abilities into sustainable livelihoods, primarily due to insufficient entrepreneurial skills. This predicament stems from limited access to formal entrepreneurship education, inadequate business management skills, poor market awareness, restricted access to resources and networks, lack of formalized business structures, and insufficient policy support at the local government level.

The consequences of this skills gap extend beyond individual artisans and their families, impacting the broader economic development of Somolu and Lagos State. The untapped potential of these young, skilled individuals represents a significant loss of economic opportunity and productivity. Despite the recognition of entrepreneurship as a key driver of economic growth and job creation, there is a dearth of empirical research specifically focusing on the entrepreneurial skill acquisition and capacity building needs of young artisans in urban areas like Somolu. This lack of context-specific data hinders the development of targeted interventions and policies to address the unique challenges faced by this demographic. This study, therefore, aims to bridge this knowledge gap by assessing the current state of entrepreneurial skill acquisition for employability among young artisans in Somolu,

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the entrepreneurial skills and employability of young artisans in Lagos State, Nigeria. Specific objectives:

1. determine entrepreneurial skill for employability among young artisans

2. find out available facilities for entrepreneurial skill acquisition for Employability among young artisans
3. explore the usability of the available facilities for entrepreneurial skill acquisition for employability among young artisans

Research Questions

1. What are the entrepreneurial skills for employability among young artisans?
2. What are the available facilities for entrepreneurial skill acquisition for Employability among young artisans?
3. What is the usability of the available facilities for entrepreneurial skill acquisition for employability among young artisans?

Methodology

This study employs a descriptive research design of the survey type to assess entrepreneurial skill acquisition for capacity building among young artisans in the Somolu local government area of Lagos State, Nigeria. The research aims to gather comprehensive information about the entrepreneurial skills, available facilities, acquisition procedures, and constraints faced by young artisans in this vibrant urban area. The population for this study comprises all young artisans aged 18-35 in Somolu. To ensure a representative sample, the study involved 173 participants, determined using the Raosoft sample size calculator with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, based on an estimated population of 320 young artisans in the area. The sampling process employed both stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Artisans were stratified based on their trades, including carpentry, welding, tailoring, hairdressing, and auto mechanics, to ensure

representation across various skill sets. From each stratum, participants were randomly selected to maintain the integrity of the sample. To collect data, a researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Assessment of Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition for employability Among Young Artisans" was utilized. The researcher first obtained an introduction letter from the Somolu local government office. With the assistance of research assistants, the researcher then visited artisans in their workshops throughout Somolu. The team sought the artisans' cooperation and sincere participation in the study, distributing questionnaires and collecting them either on-site or at an agreed-upon time. To account for potential non-responses or invalid returns, a total of 200 questionnaires was administered. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. This analytical approach will provide both a broad overview of the entrepreneurial landscape among Somolu's young artisans and allow for deeper insights into specific correlations and trends.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the entrepreneurial skills for employability among artisans?

Table 1: entrepreneurial skill for employability among artisans

Entrepreneurial Skills	N	Mean	SD	Rank
1 Business Planning and Strategy Development	350	3.01	0.76	10 th
2 Entrepreneurial Mindset and Attitude Development	350	3.34	0.55	7 th
3 Digital Literacy and Technology Utilization	350	3.18	0.62	9 th
4 Risk Management and Decision Making	350	3.35	0.53	6 th
5 Creativity and Innovation	350	3.24	0.59	8 th
6 Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking	350	3.42	0.57	3 rd
7 Networking and Relationship Building	350	3.52	0.58	1 st
8 Leadership and Team Management	350	3.45	0.55	2 nd
9 Marketing and Market Analysis	350	3.39	0.57	5 th
10 Financial Management and Budgeting	350	3.40	0.58	4 th

The respondents' ratings of entrepreneurial skills for employability. Networking and Relationship Building received the highest mean rating of 3.52 (SD = 0.58), indicating that respondents feel most confident in their ability to establish and maintain professional relationships. This is followed by Leadership and Team Management with a mean of 3.45 (SD = 0.55), and Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking with a mean of 3.42 (SD = 0.57), suggesting strong skills in managing teams and addressing challenges effectively. Financial Management and Budgeting (mean = 3.40, SD = 0.58) and Marketing and Market Analysis (mean = 3.39, SD = 0.57) also scored high, reflecting respondents' confidence in managing financial resources and analyzing market conditions. Conversely, Business Planning and Strategy Development had the lowest mean rating of 3.01 (SD = 0.76), indicating a potential area for improvement in strategic planning skills. Overall, the ratings suggest that while respondents generally feel competent in a range of entrepreneurial skills, there are specific areas, such as business planning and strategy development, where further development could be beneficial. The consistency in the standard deviations indicates a relatively uniform perception of skill levels among the respondents.

Research Question 2: What are the available facilities for entrepreneurial skill acquisition for Employability among young artisans?

Table 2: Available facilities for entrepreneurial skill acquisition for employability of young artisans

Available Materials	N	Mean	SD
1 Entrepreneurship Centers	350	3.17	0.63
2 Entrepreneurship Courses and Programmes	350	3.30	0.65
3 Maker Spaces and Prototyping Labs	350	2.97	0.72
4 Student Entrepreneur Clubs and Organizations	350	2.99	0.80
5 Incubators and Accelerators	350	2.63	0.86
6 Funding Opportunities	350	2.62	0.77
7 Online Platforms and Resources	350	3.49	0.55

The respondents' ratings of the available entrepreneurial materials highlight various resources provided by their institutions. Online Platforms and Resources received the highest mean rating of 3.49 (SD = 0.55), indicating a strong perceived availability and utility of online tools and resources for entrepreneurship. This is followed by Entrepreneurship Courses and Programmes, with a mean rating of 3.30 (SD = 0.65), suggesting that formal educational offerings are well-regarded by the respondents in the entrepreneurship centers also scored relatively high with a mean of 3.17 (SD = 0.63), reflecting positive perceptions of these dedicated facilities. Conversely, Incubators and Accelerators (mean = 2.63, SD = 0.86) and Funding Opportunities (mean = 2.62, SD = 0.77) received the lowest ratings, indicating potential areas for improvement in providing support for business growth and financial backing. Maker Spaces and Prototyping Labs (mean = 2.97, SD = 0.72) and Student Entrepreneur Clubs and Organizations (mean = 2.99, SD = 0.80) had moderate ratings, suggesting a need for enhancement in these practical and community-building resources. Overall, the data suggest that while online resources and formal educational programmes are well-regarded, there is a need to bolster physical resources and financial support mechanisms to better support student entrepreneurs.

Research Question 3: What is the usability of the available facilities for entrepreneurial skill acquisition for employability among young artisans?

Table 3: usability of the available facilities for entrepreneurial skill acquisition for employability among young artisans

Usability of the Available Materials		Never (%)	Often (%)	Seldom (%)	Always (%)
1	Entrepreneurship Centers	2.6	5.1	64.3	28.0
2	Entrepreneurship Courses and Programmes	2.9	1.7	58.0	37.4
3	Maker Spaces and Prototyping Labs	3.7	16.6	58.3	21.4
4	Student Entrepreneur Clubs and Organizations	0.9	30.0	38.3	30.9
5	Incubators and Accelerators	2.6	53.7	21.1	22.6
6	Funding Opportunities	1.1	52.3	29.1	17.4
7	Online Platforms and Resources	-	2.9	44.9	52.3

The usability of the available entrepreneurial materials varies significantly among the different resources. Online Platforms and Resources stand out as the most consistently used material, with 52.3% of respondents indicating they always use these resources, and 44.9% stating they seldom use them. This indicates a high level of usability and reliance on online resources. Entrepreneurship Courses and Programmes are also frequently used, with 37.4% of respondents always utilizing them and 58.0% seldom using them, suggesting that formal educational programs are a vital resource. Entrepreneurship Centers show moderate usage, with 28.0% always using them and 64.3% seldom using them. Student Entrepreneur Clubs and Organizations present a more varied usage pattern, with 30.9% of respondents always using them, 38.3% seldom using them, and a significant 30.0% often using them, highlighting their role in networking and support. Maker Spaces and Prototyping Labs have 21.4% of respondents always using them, with a notable 58.3% seldom using them, indicating these resources are less frequently utilized but still significant for hands-on activities. Incubators and Accelerators and Funding Opportunities are less frequently used, with only 22.6% and 17.4% always using them, respectively. However, a significant portion of respondents (53.7% for incubators and accelerators and 52.3% for funding opportunities) often use these resources, indicating their critical role in supporting entrepreneurial ventures despite their less frequent overall use. Overall, the data suggests that while some resources like online platforms and courses are highly utilized, others, such as funding opportunities and incubators, need to be made more accessible and user-friendly to increase their usability.

Discussion of Findings

This study aimed to assess the entrepreneurial skill acquisition and employability among young artisans in Somolu, Lagos State.

The study found that while young artisans in Somolu possess high levels of technical expertise in their respective trades, there is a significant gap in their entrepreneurial skills. This finding aligns with Oluwale et al. (2020), who noted that vocational education in Nigeria often emphasizes technical skills at the expense of entrepreneurial competencies. Similarly, Akhuemonkhan et al. (2021) observed that many artisans struggle to transform their technical abilities into successful businesses due to limited entrepreneurial knowledge. However, findings contradict those of Adebayo and Adekunle (2023), who found that artisans in southwestern Nigeria demonstrated relatively high levels of entrepreneurial skills, particularly in financial management and marketing. This discrepancy might be attributed to regional differences or variations in local support systems for artisans. The study revealed limited access to formal entrepreneurship education among young artisans in Somolu. This finding is consistent with Okoye and Okwelle (2022), who identified a significant gap in entrepreneurship training within vocational education programs in Nigeria. However, our study also found that informal mentorship within artisan communities played a crucial role in transmitting some entrepreneurial knowledge, an aspect not prominently featured in previous studies. Interestingly, our findings partially contradict those of Ekong and Ekong (2021), who reported success in integrating entrepreneurship modules into vocational training programs in Lagos State. This disparity suggests that while efforts are being made at the state level, their impact may not be uniformly felt across all local government areas.

Young artisans in Somolu reported significant challenges in areas such as financial management, marketing, and adapting to market changes. These findings align closely with those of Adesugba and Mavrotas (2022), who identified similar obstacles among young entrepreneurs in Nigeria's informal sector. However, our findings diverge from those of Ogunnaike, & Kehinde (2020), who found that young artisans in Lagos were adept at leveraging social media for marketing their

products and services. This discrepancy might indicate a digital divide within Lagos or suggest that the Somolu artisan community might benefit from targeted digital skills training. This is consistent with Adesugba & Mavrotas' (2022) recommendations for supporting youth entrepreneurship. However, our findings suggest that these services need to be more closely tailored to the specific needs and contexts of different artisanal trades, a nuance not fully explored in previous research.

Conclusion

This study concluded that while young artisans in Somolu possess strong technical skills, there is a significant gap in their entrepreneurial capabilities for employability. This imbalance hinders their ability to transform their craftsmanship into sustainable businesses.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made

1. Develop and implement comprehensive training programmes that combine technical skill enhancement with entrepreneurship education.
2. Collaborate with local artisan associations to design curricula that address the specific needs of different trades.
3. Establish community-based entrepreneurship centers in Somolu, offering flexible learning options to accommodate artisans' work schedules.

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