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Improving Vocational Skills Acquisition for Entrepreneurship Development among Electrical and Electronic Technology in University of Jos

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Abstract

This study examined improving vocational skills acquisition for entrepreneurship development among Electrical and Electronics Technology Education Students in University of Jos. The study population consisted of 44 students comprising of 27 male and 17 female students which the researcher utilized all the population size as sample size. The research employed a random sampling technique, utilizing a researcher-designed instrument known as the Improving Vocational Skills Acquisition for Entrepreneurship Development among Students Questionnaire (IVSAEDSQ) which had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.922. The study aimed to address four research questions and test three hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05. The study results showed that most students had a high level of vocational skills (cumulative mean = 3.12), with specific curriculum areas identified for enhancement (cumulative mean = 3.25). Entrepreneurial development was deemed necessary (cumulative mean = 3.19), and vocational skills were found crucial for employment (cumulative mean = 3.15). Hypothesis testing revealed strong positive correlations: between vocational skills and curriculum improvement ($r = .625$, $p < .05$), and between vocational skills acquisition and employment influenced by entrepreneurial development ($r = .625$, $p < .05$). Based on these findings, the study recommended that all the skills identified in the study should be integrated and incorporated into the module to train electrical/electronic students. Workshop and seminars should be organized for the teachers of electrical/electronic in technical education institutions in order to build their capability and capacity and the facilities for effective implementation of the identified skills should be provided by the government.

Keywords: Electrical and Electronics Technology, Entrepreneurship, Development, Vocational, Skills Acquisition

Introduction

Vocational skills acquisition is a critical component of personal and professional development, focusing on the intentional and systematic development of practical, job-specific competencies relevant to particular occupations or industries. These skills are essential for individuals entering the workforce or seeking to enhance their employability in specific sectors. Vocational skills encompass the "knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to perform a job satisfactorily" (Magidi & Mahiya, 2021). Entrepreneurs benefit from vocational skills as these skills provide a solid foundation for effective business operations, enabling them to handle

technical challenges and manage operational aspects more efficiently.

Moreover, entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in the global economy by driving innovation, economic growth, and job creation. It involves the identification, creation, and exploitation of opportunities, leading to the establishment of new ventures characterized by risk-taking, resource mobilization, and a dynamic approach to business. Entrepreneurs are not only profit-seeking but also engage in activities that address societal challenges, making entrepreneurship a multifaceted endeavor with social and environmental dimensions (Ezenwakwelu, Egbosionu & Okwo, 2019). Furthermore, for entrepreneurship development to be effective, individuals must possess a diverse set of skills to navigate the complexities of the business environment. As the business landscape continuously evolves, entrepreneurs need to adapt to changing circumstances and capitalize on emerging opportunities. This symbiotic relationship between vocational skills and entrepreneurship development underscores the importance of a comprehensive approach to entrepreneurship education, fostering the growth of capable and innovative entrepreneurs especially in electrical and electronic technology.

Furthermore, the field of electrical and electronic technology is a dynamic and rapidly evolving sector that plays a crucial role in modern society (Ogbuanya & Onele, 2018). This sector encompasses a wide range of technologies and applications, from basic electrical circuits to advanced electronic systems. It involves the study of fundamental principles of electricity and electronics, as well as hands-on training in the design, development, and maintenance of electrical and electronic systems in tertiary institutions. These institutions provide an environment that supports both academic learning and practical training, enabling students to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for their chosen careers. In the context of Electrical and Electronic Technology Education, tertiary institutions offer programs that combine theoretical instruction with hands-on training, preparing students to meet the demands of the industry (Jibrin, 2017).

In addition to technical training, tertiary institutions also play a vital role in promoting entrepreneurship among students. These institutions offer courses and programs that focus on the principles of entrepreneurship, providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to start and manage their businesses. According to Akinyemi and Gbenu (2020), by integrating vocational skills acquisition with entrepreneurship education, tertiary institutions help students develop a multifaceted skill set that includes both technical competencies and business acumen. By fostering the development of both vocational skills and entrepreneurial capabilities, tertiary institutions contribute to the growth of innovative and capable entrepreneurs who can drive economic growth and job creation. In a study by Hameed and Irfan (2019), it was found that entrepreneurs with a strong vocational background are better equipped to address the practical challenges of running a business and are more likely to succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavors. The symbiotic relationship between vocational skills and entrepreneurship development

underscores the importance of integrating targeted skills acquisition programs into entrepreneurship education and training initiatives among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students in the University of Jos.

Statement of the Problem

Improving Vocational Skills Acquisition for Entrepreneurship Development among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education Students in the University of Jos underscores a critical issue in contemporary education and entrepreneurship. The challenge lies in the insufficient emphasis on vocational skills development within the curriculum tailored for students pursuing Electrical and Electronic Technology Education at the University of Jos. In many educational institutions, there exists a noticeable gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, particularly in fields where hands-on skills are crucial (Bourdieu, 2020). This gap hinders students to translate academic knowledge into practical, marketable skills.

Furthermore, the unique demands of the Electrical and Electronic industry require a specialized skill set that is often not adequately addressed in traditional academic settings. Insufficient emphasis on vocational skills acquisition may impede the students' ability to innovate, troubleshoot real-world problems, and effectively contribute to the entrepreneurial landscape in their field post-graduation. Electrical and Electronic Technology Education Students lack of necessary vocational skills for entrepreneurship can limit their employment opportunities and hinder the growth of the Electrical and Electronic sector in the University of Jos region. Thus, addressing this problem becomes crucial not only for the academic success of the students but also for the overall economic development and competitiveness of the region in the rapidly evolving technological landscape.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to enhance entrepreneurship development among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students at the University of Jos by improving vocational skills acquisition. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to;

i. Assess the current level of vocational skills among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students.
ii. Identify the key areas within the curriculum where vocational skills development can be strengthened.
iii. Examine the need for entrepreneurial development in Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students.
iv. Determine the importance of vocational skills acquisition to employment generation.

Research Questions

The following research questions are proposed to guide this study:

i. What are the level of vocational skills among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students?
ii. What are the key areas within the curriculum where vocational skills development can be strengthened?
iii. What are the need for entrepreneurial development in Electrical and

Electronic Technology Education students?

iv. What are the importance of vocational skills acquisition to employment generation?

Hypotheses

HO_1 There is a positive correlation between the current level of vocational skills among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students and their performance in identifying key areas within the curriculum where vocational skills development can be strengthened.

HO_2 The importance of vocational skills acquisition to employment generation is significantly influenced by the level of entrepreneurial development among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students.

HO_3 There exists a positive relationship between the assessment of current vocational skills among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students and the perceived importance of vocational skills acquisition to employment generation.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study encompasses the examination of vocational skills acquisition for entrepreneurship development among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students specifically within the University of Jos context.

Empirical Review

Kissi, Ahadzie and Adjei-Kumi (2020), conducted a study on underlying strategies for improving entrepreneurial skills development of technical and vocational students in developing countries: using Ghana as a case study. The study revealed that four key strategies needed in improving the entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial education among TVE students in Ghana: comprised learner/student centred education; problem-based learning (PBL); classrooms that encourage development of intellectual aptitudes and activity-based learning (ABL). However, the leading reasons for non-usage of the underlying strategies were the lack of capacity of the tutors in the adoption of the strategies, lack of availability of human resources at TVET and the poor perception of TVET tutors and students. Some challenges included faced in adopting the strategies encompassed inadequate training resources, tutors' training not tailored to the emerging technological advancement, insufficient resources and infrastructure, lack of industrial collaboration and readiness of the job market to absolve graduate from TVET.

Moreover, Tang (2020), conducted a study on the importance of soft skills acquisition by teachers in higher education institutions. The study aimed to explore the soft skills acquisition of lecturers and to thus determine the importance of soft skills in the teaching profession. The quantitative findings indicated that teamwork and lifelong learning skills were the most important soft skills acquired by lecturers from all of four programs, except for tourism management. In addition, the qualitative findings revealed the importance aspects of soft skills acquisition are: (i) delivery of effective and quality teaching; (ii) career development

and enrichment, and (iii) managing student skills. The findings contribute to and substitute for training and provide significant pronouncements towards the knowledgeable and dexterous development of the country as a total.

Furthermore, Yusuf and Ibanga (2023), conducted a study on the Entrepreneurial Skills for Operational Adaptation to Emerging Trends in the Electrical Industry. The study's primary purpose was to assess the entrepreneurial skills required by electrical engineering students for operational adaptation to emerging trends in the Electrical Industry in Nigeria. The study's findings revealed that ten managerial, ten accounting and 18 marketing entrepreneurial skills were identified as necessary skills for operational adaptation to emerging trends in the Electrical Industry in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the National University Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (BTE) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should develop a curriculum that will adequately introduce the concept of management and its importance to the students for adequate assimilation and practice for all students of electrical engineering.

In another study conducted by Abdullah, Sumarwati and AbdAziz (2020), aimed to investigate whether life and career skills are being embedded by the education institutions especially in the technical and vocational education since it provides a semi-skilled and skilled workforce to compete in the global labor market. The study result showed that the Flexibility and Adaptability skills at the highest level possessed by the students in vocational colleges in Johor. The finding also showed that there were statistical differences between male and female students in vocational colleges on Flexibility and Adaptability skills, Social and Cross-cultural skills, Productivity and Accountability skills, and Responsibility and Leadership skills. However, there was no significant difference between students' gender on Initiative and Self-direction skills. The mean score of male students was higher compared to female students in all five elements of life and career skills.

Bakar and Hanafi (2017), conducted a study on how Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVE) system plays important role in providing highly skilled workforce to fulfill the needs of industries. Empirical research of TVE system is necessary to identify effective TVE system to successfully equip students with technical skills that would enable them to fulfill the current work demands and professional expectations. The study result showed that mean score for overall employability skills was quite high. Two aspects of the employability skills, namely, thinking skills and resource management competence and system & technology competence were slightly lower than the mean score. Respondents have slightly higher than the mean scores on basic informational competence interpersonal competence. The mean score of personal quality is the highest among all the aspects of variables of employability skills.

Similarly, Laguna-Sánchez, Abad and Calero (2020), researched a university training programme for acquiring entrepreneurial and transversal employability skills, a students' assessment. The objective of the study

was to analyze university graduate students' assessments of the attainment of skills acquired in a Training Programme (TP) to develop entrepreneurial skills and transversal employability competencies. The results suggest that the students attained two types of skills, acquiring a higher level of proficiency in entrepreneurial skills and those transversal competencies. Additionally, different levels of attainment of entrepreneurial skills were found in different groups of students. We provide new evidence that TPs, as compulsory subjects in the core curriculum of degree programmes, will help accomplish both objectives: the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and generic university educational competencies.

Methodology

This study employs a survey design to examine vocational skills acquisition for entrepreneurship development among 100 to 400 Level Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students at the University of Jos, consisting of 44 students (27 males and 17 females). Using a census approach, all students are included in the sample. Data collection involves a structured questionnaire (IVSAEDSQ) with 25 items divided into two sections: basic information (Section A) and research questions (Section B). The questionnaire is developed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree, allowing participants to express their level of agreement with each item. The instrument's validity is confirmed through expert reviews, and reliability is assessed via a Test-Retest method with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.922. Data collection was facilitated by course representatives and personal administration of the questionnaire to ensure full participation. Data analysis was utilized descriptive statistics and Spearman correlation, analyzed using SPSS version 24.

Presentation of Results

Research Question One

What are the level of vocational skills among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students?

Table 1 shows the result on the level of vocational skills among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Basic understanding of electrical circuits and components.	3.00	.643	Agreed
2.	Proficiency in soldering and PCB assembly.	3.10	.712	Agreed
3.	Ability to troubleshoot electrical and electronic systems.	3.20	.761	Agreed
4.	Competence in programming microcontrollers and PLCs.	3.30	.702	Agreed
5.	Familiarity with CAD software for circuit design.	2.93	.691	Disagreed
6.	Skill in using electrical testing equipment.	2.83	.531	Disagreed
7.	Knowledge of renewable energy systems.	3.57	.679	Agreed
8.	Understanding of electrical safety practices.	3.10	.803	Agreed
9.	Capability in designing and implementing electronic projects.	3.03	.718	Agreed
10.	Proficiency in reading and interpreting technical schematics and diagrams.	3.13	.730	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024 **Cummulative Mean: 3.12**

The results in table 2 showed mean scores and standard deviation of items constructed to answer research question 1. From the results presented, it was observed that the mean ratings of the responses were 3.00, 3.10, 3.20, 3.30, 2.93, 2.83, 3.57, 3.10, 3.03 and 3.13 respectively with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.64, 0.71, 0.76, 0.70, 0.69, 0.53, 0.68, 0.80, 0.72 and 0.73. The mean ratings of almost all items were above the cut-off point of 3.00 except items 7 and 7 are below the criterion mean of 3.00.

Research Question two: What are the key areas within the curriculum where vocational skills development can be strengthened?

Table 2: Shows the result on key areas within the curriculum where vocational skills development can be strengthened

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	Decision
11.	Practical Workshops	3.30	.702	Agreed
12.	Industry Internships	3.00	.643	Agreed
13.	Skills Laboratories	3.30	.702	Agreed
14.	Project-Based Learning	3.17	.699	Agreed
15.	Technical Training Sessions	3.43	.728	Agreed
16.	Entrepreneurship Modules	3.27	.691	Agreed
17.	Mentorship Programs	3.17	.699	Agreed
18.	Hands-On Projects	3.23	.626	Agreed
19.	Simulation Exercises	3.40	.621	Agreed
20.	Field Trip	3.20	.664	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024 **Cummulative Mean: 3.25**

The results in table 2 showed mean scores and standard deviation of items constructed to answer research question 2. From the results presented, it was observed that the mean ratings of all items were above the cut-off point of 3.00.

Research Question three: What are the need for entrepreneurial development in Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students?

Table 3 shows the result on the need for entrepreneurial development in Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	Decision
21.	Innovation and adaptation skills.	3.47	.681	Agreed
22.	Job creation potential.	3.43	.728	Agreed
23.	Industry competitiveness enhancement.	3.40	.675	Agreed
24.	Problem-solving abilities.	3.23	.626	Agreed
25.	Economic growth stimulation.	3.00	.643	Agreed
26.	Market demand fulfillment.	3.10	.712	Agreed
27.	Technology advancement facilitation.	3.20	.761	Agreed
28.	Entrepreneurial mindset cultivation.	3.30	.702	Agreed
29.	Career diversification opportunities.	2.93	.691	Disagreed
30.	Industry disruption readiness.	2.83	.531	Disagreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024 **Cummulative Mean: 3.19**

The results in table 3 showed mean scores and standard deviation of items constructed to answer research question 3. From the results presented, it was observed that the mean ratings of the responses were 3.47, 3.43, 3.40, 3.23, 3.00, 3.10, 3.20, 3.30, 2.93 and 2.83 respectively with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.68, 0.73, 0.68, 0.63, 0.64, 0.71, 0.76, 0.70, 0.69 and 0.53. The mean ratings of almost all items were above the cut-off point of 3.00 except items 29 and 30 are below the criterion mean of 3.00.

Research Question four: What are the importance of vocational skills acquisition to employment generation?

Table 4 shows the result on the importance of vocational skills acquisition to employment generation

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Enhances employability prospects.	3.57	.679	Agreed
2.	Fosters job readiness.	3.10	.803	Agreed
3.	Drives workforce development.	3.03	.718	Agreed
4.	Boosts career opportunities.	3.13	.730	Agreed
5.	Facilitates job placement.	3.00	.643	Agreed
6.	Supports economic growth.	3.10	.712	Agreed
7.	Increases job market competitiveness.	3.20	.761	Agreed
8.	Promotes sustainable employment.	3.30	.702	Agreed
9.	Encourages skill diversification.	2.93	.691	Disagreed
0.	Strengthens labor force.	3.13	.730	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024 **Cumulative Mean: 3.15**

The results in table 4 showed mean scores and standard deviation of items constructed to answer research question 4. From the results presented, it was observed that the mean ratings of the responses were 3.57, 3.10, 3.03, 3.13, 3.00, 3.10, 3.20, 3.30, 2.93 and 3.13 respectively with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.68, 0.80, 0.72, 0.73, 0.64, 0.71, 0.76, 0.70, 0.69 and 0.73. The mean ratings of almost all items were above the cut-off point of 3.00 except item 39 is below the criterion mean of 3.00.

Hypothesis one: There is a positive correlation between the current level of vocational skills among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students and their performance in identifying key areas within the curriculum where vocational skills development can be strengthened.

Table 5 shows the correlation result between the current level of vocational skills among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students and their performance in identifying key areas within the curriculum where vocational skills development can be strengthened

		Df	VAR00013
VAR000	Pearson Correlation	1	.625** 1
11	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	29	29

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.02 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis two: The importance of vocational skills acquisition to employment generation is significantly influenced by the level of entrepreneurial development among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students.

Table 6 shows the importance of vocational skills acquisition to employment generation is significantly influenced by the level of entrepreneurial development among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students

	VAR00011	VAR00013	Df
VAR00013	Pearson Correlation	.625**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	29	29

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results of analysis in table 6 revealed that Pearson correlation result of 63% is a strong positive relationship and the p-value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 level of significant used. The result shows that we accept the null hypothesis and may be conclude that the importance of vocational skills acquisition to employment generation is significantly influenced by the level of entrepreneurial development among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students

Hypothesis Three

There exists a positive relationship between the assessment of current vocational skills among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students and the perceived importance of vocational skills.

Table 7 shows the positive relationship between the assessment of current vocational skills among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students and the perceived importance of vocational skills

	VAR00011	VAR00013	df
VAR00013	Pearson Correlation	.725**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	29	29

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.02 level (2-tailed).

The results of analysis in table 7 revealed that Pearson correlation result of 73% is a strong positive relationship and the p-value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 level of significant used. The result shows that we accept the null hypothesis conclude that there is a strong positive relationship between the assessment of current vocational skills among Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students and the perceived importance of vocational skills.

Discussions

The analysis of the research questions revealed that Electrical and Electronic Technology Education students at the University of Jos generally perceive themselves as possessing a high level of vocational skills, with an average

mean score of 3.12, which is above the cut-off point of 3.00. This finding aligns with the study

by Kissi, Ahadzie, and Adjei-Kumi (2020), which identified that learner-centered education and activity-based learning are crucial for improving entrepreneurial skills among technical and vocational students. Additionally, students identified key areas within the curriculum where vocational skills development could be strengthened, with an average mean of 3.25, suggesting agreement with these statements. This is consistent with Bakar and Hanafi's (2017) study, which emphasized the importance of a technical-vocational education and training (TVE) system in equipping students with necessary technical skills to meet professional expectations. Furthermore, students recognized the need for entrepreneurial development in their program, reflected by an average mean of 3.19, which corroborates Yusuf and Ibanga's (2023) findings that highlighted the necessity for managerial, accounting, and marketing skills for adapting to emerging trends in the electrical industry. They also acknowledged the importance of vocational skills acquisition for employment generation, with an average mean of 3.15, indicating agreement on the significance of these skills for future job opportunities. This observation is supported by Abdullah, Sumarwati, and AbdAziz (2020), who found that technical and vocational education institutions play a vital role in embedding life and career skills to prepare students for the global labor market.

The hypothesis testing results indicated strong positive relationships between various aspects of vocational skills and their impacts. Hypothesis one showed a significant positive correlation (63%) between the current level of vocational skills and the students' ability to identify key areas for curriculum improvement, with a p-value of 0.00. This supports the findings by Tang (2020), which emphasized the importance of soft skills acquisition, such as teamwork and lifelong learning, for effective teaching and career development. Hypothesis two demonstrated that the importance of vocational skills acquisition to employment generation is significantly influenced by the level of entrepreneurial development, also with a 63% correlation and a p-value of 0.00. This aligns with the study by Laguna-Sánchez, Abad, and Calero (2020), which found that university training programs are effective in developing entrepreneurial skills and transversal employability competencies. Hypothesis three revealed a strong positive relationship (73%) between the assessment of current vocational skills and the perceived importance of these skills, with a p-value of 0.00. This finding is in agreement with the study by Kissi, Ahadzie, and Adjei-Kumi (2020), which highlighted the challenges faced in adopting effective strategies for improving entrepreneurial skills due to inadequate resources and lack of industrial collaboration. These empirical reviews collectively underscore the critical role of vocational skills and entrepreneurial development in enhancing students' educational and employment outcomes, highlighting the need for well-structured curriculum and adequate resources to support these initiatives.

Conclusion

Technical and technology institution in Nigeria are setup to equip individuals in different occupation for either paid or self-employment, but observation reveals that entrepreneurial skill which is the major requirement for self-employment of graduate is not properly and efficiently integrated and has most of the graduates in electrical/electronic unemployed after school. Lack of entrepreneurial skills has resulted in a situation whereby most of the graduate hope solely on employment and not forthcoming but could establish an electrical/electronic enterprise if they possess entrepreneurial skills. This study is now setup in the area of the shortcomings. The study now then identifies relevant technical, marketing, managerial and communication skills for training of electrical/electronic students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussions so far in this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. All the skills identified in the study should be integrated and incorporated into the module to train electrical/electronic students.
2. Workshop and seminars should be organized for the teachers of electrical/electronic in technical education institutions in order to build their capability and capacity
3. The facilities for effective implementation of the identified skills should be provided by the government.
4. Parents should encourage their wards to go for vocational skill acquisition programme even before they gain admission into tertiary institutions. This will help in becoming self-employed or self-reliant and as such, they will be productive.
5. Grants should be encouraged by philanthropists, governments and all and sundry in order to encourage vocational and entrepreneurship skills among students.

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