



## ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the impact of entrepreneurial education on socioeconomic development in Cross River State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to examine the impact of entrepreneurial education on job creation and poverty reduction in Cross River State. The study adopted a survey design, and the population of the study comprised of 1200 students of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Calabar, Calabar. This study utilized purposive sampling technique. A survey by the use of a structured questionnaire was undertaken to sample 50% of the target population of 1200 students. The primary data were analyzed using the simple percentages statistical technique. Findings from the analyses revealed that entrepreneurial education do impact significantly on job creation in Cross River State and entrepreneurial education do impact significantly on poverty reduction in Cross River State. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended among others that the government of Cross River State should intensify its efforts on entrepreneurial education by investing more in terms of establishing more entrepreneurial development centers in tertiary institutions in Cross River State so as to inculcate entrepreneurial skills among students and youths in the State to enhance socioeconomic development in Cross River State, Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurial education, Socio-economic development, Job creation, Poverty reduction, Cross River State.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as important drivers of socioeconomic development. Entrepreneurship is an innovative behaviour of people. It is a way of doing business through creativity and innovation in identifying business opportunities. To ensure that people possess the requisite skills, knowledge, and abilities for creativity and innovation, entrepreneurship education becomes necessary. It is on this premise that entrepreneurship education was introduced in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Entrepreneurship education therefore, is the act of transmitting and imparting knowledge and skills on the student or learner for innovative and

Ibiang Omini Ebri  
Department of Economics,  
University of Calabar, Calabar.  
[ibiangomini28@gmail.com](mailto:ibiangomini28@gmail.com)

Eja, Christy Ebinehita  
Department of Economics,  
University of Calabar, Calabar.  
[tianabanks@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tianabanks@yahoo.co.uk)

Elizabeth Odije Patrick  
Department of Continuing  
Education and Development  
Studies,  
University of Calabar  
[lizbliss1984@gmail.com](mailto:lizbliss1984@gmail.com)

Okeke Stephen Chika  
Department of Economics,  
University of Calabar, Calabar.  
[okekestephenchika@gmail.com](mailto:okekestephenchika@gmail.com)

**\*Corresponding author:**  
Ibiang Omini Ebri  
Department of Economics,  
University of Calabar, Calabar.  
[ibiangomini28@gmail.com](mailto:ibiangomini28@gmail.com)

creative behaviour. It entails the acquisition of accounting and finance skills, production skills, marketing skills, human resource skills, information and communication technology skills, communication skills, among others.

Empirical research shows that entrepreneurship has been the driving force behind every nation's economic development (Schumpeter, 1950; Baumol, 1968, 1990; Christensen et al., 2002). In explaining the USA's new economy, Kuttner (2000) refers to America's enterprising spirit and dynamism. It is not just in the USA where entrepreneurship is valued; the newly industrialized countries of Southeast Asia like South Korea, Malaysia and Taiwan have developed because entrepreneurship was given a free hand to flourish. Several scholars have demonstrated that entrepreneurship is not only beneficial but necessary for a healthy economy (Henry et al., 2003; Gorman et al., 1997; Hisrich and Peters, 1995; Jack and Anderson, 1998). In the case of Europe, Garavan et al. (1997) observed that since the 1970s, small businesses started by entrepreneurs had become a net creator of jobs and wealth creation.

In Africa, several African governments have developed entrepreneurial skills development programs in order to solve youth unemployment problem and ensure economic growth (Nafukho, 1998). In the case of Nigeria for instance, the Government has created several entrepreneurial development agencies such as the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agencies of Nigeria (SMEDAN) to enhance the growth of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education in the country so as to enhance the socioeconomic development of the country.

Despite the role of government entrepreneurial programs in Cross River State to improve the quality of lives of the youths in the State, there is still high rate of unemployment, poverty and low quality of lives among youths in Cross River State, Nigeria. According to Nwakanma and Igbe (2020), in Cross River State unemployment rate in 2019 stood at 30.6 per cent, as many persons within the productive age are not able to access gainful employment irrespective of their qualification and skillsets. Cross River State also struggles with significantly 3.44 million people living in multidimensional poverty, constituting a staggering 75.6 per cent of the State's population, (Business Day, 2023).

In the light of this, this study seeks answers to these questions: what is the impact of entrepreneurial education on unemployment in Cross River State? And what is the impact of entrepreneurial education on poverty reduction? This mainly objective of this study is to examine the impact of entrepreneurial education on socioeconomic development in Cross River State, Nigeria. The paper is structured into five sections. After this introductory section, section two reviews related literature. The methodology is discussed in the

third section. Section four comprises results and discussion of findings, and finally, section five draws conclusions based on the findings and recommends the way forward.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

#### **2.1.1 Entrepreneurial Education**

Entrepreneurship education is the process of providing individuals with the concepts and skills to recognize business opportunities that others have overlooked and to have the insight, self-esteem and knowledge to act where others have hesitated. The essence of entrepreneurship education is to help students acquire increased understanding of entrepreneurship and equip them with necessary entrepreneurial approaches to the world of work as well as prepare them to act as entrepreneurs and managers of new businesses (Buba, Rimamnde, Umman, & Mallo, 2015). Entrepreneurship education focuses on the start-up of new business ventures. It emphasizes imagination, creativity, and risk taking in business. The tenet of entrepreneurship education is to equip students with productive work life and self-reliance.

Suartha and Suprapti (2016) described entrepreneurship education as the training that emphasized the acquisition and development of appropriate knowledge and skills that will enable an individual to maximize the resources around him and within the limits of his capability. In the same vein, Osuala (2004) and Duru (2006) noted that entrepreneurship education is a specialized training given to persons to acquire skills, ideas and management abilities necessary for self-reliance. According to Okoye (2004), entrepreneurship education consist of ideas, information and facts that help learners develop competencies needed for firm career's commitments such as setting up businesses, marketing services or being productive employees of organization. According to Brown (2003), entrepreneurship education focuses on the start-up of new business ventures. It tends to draw the interest of students who want the opportunity to operate on their own business, make money, and be successful. Therefore, entrepreneurship education can also be defined as a formal training aimed at acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes which direct human and material resources towards business objectives for self-reliance and national growth and development.

#### **2.1.2 Socioeconomic Development**

Socioeconomic development, in essence is the process of improving both the social and economic conditions of a community or society aiming for a better quality of life for all in terms of wealth creation, increase in income, employment generation, poverty reduction, improving the quality of goods and services, etc. The process of social and economic development in a society is known as socio-economic development. Indicators used to evaluate socioeconomic development include GDP, life expectancy, efforts to alleviate

poverty, creation of jobs, literacy rates, and employment levels (Ekpe, Mat, & Razak, 2010). As a result, socio-economic development is a multifaceted process of improvement. It must have an impact on every facet of life for people in that nation.

### **2.1.3 Theoretical framework**

#### **2.1.3.1 Human Capital Theory of Entrepreneurship**

This theory was propounded by Bruederl, Preisendoerfes and Ziegler in 1992. The theory is concerned with knowledge and experiences of small scale business owners. The theory is an extension of the capital concept and posits that expenditures on education, job training, and health are capital investments that will yield economic and social returns at the individual and societal levels. Education and training are assumed to lead to greater productivity, which is ultimately translated into economic returns such as higher wages and increased GDP.

The general assumption is that the human capital of the founder of micro, small and medium firm enhances the survival of these firms. Human capital acts as a resource which makes the founder more efficient in organizing processes or in attracting customers and investors. This theory has an important implication since the theory is concerned with knowledge, capacities and processes as well. Additionally, since human capital acts as a resource it might be interesting to evaluate the impacts of human capital to entrepreneurship.

This theory is linked to this study such that when an individual obtain some specific experiences through education and knowledge it can improve those variables associated with the performance of enterprises which can lead to enterprise growth thus leading to the socioeconomic development in terms of employment generation, poverty reduction and improvement in the quality of lives of the entrepreneurs.

#### **2.1.4 Empirical Review**

Osadebe *et al* (2024) inspected the role of entrepreneurship education in enhancing socio-economic development in Nigeria. The study highlighted that entrepreneurship education aims primarily to produce competent, skillful, and dynamic entrepreneurs who will effectively compete in the world of work. Through literature review and participant observation, this study identified that entrepreneurship education will enhance self-employment and self-reliance among the youths, thereby eradicating poverty and hunger in Nigeria. It concluded with a clarion call for further research in entrepreneurship education for socio-economic growth and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Eromafuru and Adidi (2024) examined the relationships between women entrepreneurship and socio-economic development of Delta and Edo States with government policies. In the bid to achieve the objective, the

study adopted a cross sectional survey research design. The population of the study comprises of 456 female-owned restaurants in Edo and Delta State, Nigeria. Sample size of 213 female-owned restaurants was sampled for the study. The study designs a structured questionnaire to collect data from the respondents on women entrepreneurship and socio-economic development. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analyzing data. Descriptive statistics involves the computation of frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation. Multiple regression analysis was chosen because it is best suited to test the relative effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The study found that there is significant relationship between entrepreneurial financing and socio-economic development of people in Delta and Edo States. There is significant relationship between networking and socio-economic development of women entrepreneurs. There is significant relationship between business environment and socio-economic development of women entrepreneurs. There is significant relationship between training and socio-economic development of women entrepreneurs. The study concluded that social factors such as good network with outsiders, availability of fund, favorable business environment and training and development of women entrepreneurs influences women entrepreneurs' business startup, expansion and leads to economic development and social advancement.

Obona, Alorye and Udang (2023) examined the impact of entrepreneurship education management on unemployment reduction among tertiary institution graduates in Cross River State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. Census technique was adopted in selecting the entire population of 113 entrepreneurship education management staff of five tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The null hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance using Simple and Multiple Linear Regression. The results of the study reveal that planning entrepreneurship programme, staff supervision and student mentoring have significant impact on unemployment reduction among tertiary institution graduates in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Ifere, Ekpe and Otu (2024) investigated entrepreneurial education and women economic development in Cross River State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample of one thousand, one hundred (1100) respondents was randomly selected for the study. The selection was done through the stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The procedure for data analysis was the Pearson product moment correlation analysis and the result of the analysis revealed that hairdressing skills acquisition, computer skills acquisition and catering skills acquisition significantly relate to women economic development.

Oguedoihu (2023) investigated entrepreneurship education for socio-economic empowerment of library and information science students of Federal Polytechnic Oko, Anambra state. Four research questions

guided the study. This study adopted web-based survey research design using google form questionnaire. Respondents were 240 Library and information science (LIS) students of the Polytechnic. Findings of the study revealed the study concluded that entrepreneurship education for socio-economic empowerment is available for Library and information science (LIS) students in Federal Polytechnic Oko, Anambra State. The students identified developing grit for overcoming the hardship of unemployment as the highest potential impact of entrepreneurship education for the socio-economic empowerment of Library and information science students. The highest benefit identified by the students is that entrepreneurship promotes research and industrial development. Majority of the students also noted that entrepreneurship education promotes social change, initiate chain of support and wealth sharing. The challenges faced by LIS students in acquiring entrepreneurial skills were identified as raising the investment capital, changing nature of ICT among others.

Aigbepue and Akenbor (2022) investigated the link between entrepreneurship education using business skills and ICT skills as proxies and innovation. To achieve this purpose, the authors reviewed related literature and certain propositions were made. The population of the study consisted of students that have taken entrepreneurial studies course in public polytechnics and universities in South-South Nigeria. Purposive sampling was used to select a total of 1118 respondents who participated in this study. In collecting data from the respondents, a questionnaire designed in five-point Likert scale was used. However, prior to its administration, the questionnaire was subjected to validity and reliability tests and the results were suitable for this study. For the purpose of this study, entrepreneurship education was operationalized as business skills and ICT skills. The data generated for this study were analysed with simple mean and the hypotheses were tested with the Pearson product moment co-efficient of correlation. The findings show that entrepreneurship education has a relationship with innovation among students in tertiary institutions in South-South, Nigeria though the link with the acquisition of business skills is not significant.

The study of Ezoem et al (2021) focused on entrepreneurship education for empowering Delta State youths beyond oil and national economic development. The study used a descriptive procedure and was carried out in Delta State. The result indicated that the instrument was reliable and therefore considered appropriate for use. Data collected were finally analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency distribution; mean and standard deviation while the t-test statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that effective skill acquisition, proper funding of entrepreneurship education and proper monitoring of entrepreneurship education empowers Delta State youths beyond oil and national economic development to a low extent.



Osakwe (2015) examined entrepreneurship education in Delta State tertiary institutions as a means of national growth and development. Two research questions were asked to guide the study. The population comprised all the 1,898 academic staff in eight tertiary institutions in the state. A sample of 800 lecturers was drawn through the multi stage and stratified random sampling techniques. The instrument used was the questionnaire. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics of means and standard deviation. Results revealed that most of the respondents agreed that entrepreneurship education is beneficial to national development despite its challenges in tertiary institutions.

Nafukho, Machuma and Muya, (2010), examined the development of entrepreneurship education and training in Kenya as a strategic approach to addressing the unemployment problem among the school and university graduates in Kenya and Africa in general. The study adopted a critical review of the literature method to achieve its purpose and to answer the key research question. The literature search included a computerized search of accessible and available material on entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial spirit, entrepreneurship education and training programs, history of entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship models, Africa and entrepreneurship development. Findings from the study showed that the development of entrepreneurial spirit and competencies should be a lifelong process. Addressing Africa's socioeconomic development in an entrepreneurial way requires learning successful lessons from within and without Africa.

### **2.1.5 Summary of literature review and research gap**

This study explored the link between entrepreneurial education and socioeconomic development in Cross River State, Nigeria. Ifere, Ekpe and Otu (2024) investigated entrepreneurial education and women economic development in Cross River State using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique, Also, Obona, Alorye and Udang (2023) examined the impact of entrepreneurship education management on unemployment reduction among tertiary institution graduates in Cross River State, Nigeria using Simple and Multiple Linear Regression. To the best of our knowledge, no scholars have investigated the link between entrepreneurial education and socioeconomic development in Cross River State, Nigeria. It is based on this perceived gap that this present study attempt to fill.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a survey design to establish the impact of entrepreneurial education on socioeconomic development in Cross River State. The area of study is the University of Calabar, Calabar. The population of the study comprises 1200 students of the Faculty of Social Sciences. University of Calabar. This study utilized purposive sampling technique since this sampling technique affords a researcher the chance to use his/her discretion to choose respondents adjudged to be typical of the population. A survey

by the use of a structured questionnaire was undertaken to sample 50% of the target population of 1200 students of the University of Calabar. This is because a 50 % sample will ensure that the sample closely reflects the characteristics of the entire population, reducing sampling error and increasing the reliability of the results. The study used a questionnaire as the main instrument of data collection. The structured questionnaire comprised of section A: which is the demographic information, and section B which consists of questions on Entrepreneurial education and socioeconomic development. To attain validity of the instrument used, the entire measuring instrument including items on the questionnaire were assessed by experts in measurement and evaluation for proper checks and corrections. The essence was to ensure that both face and internal validity is achieved at the end of the research. Finally, the data for this research was analyzed using the Chi-square statistical technique.

#### 4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

##### 4.1 Presentation of Data

**TABLE 4.1:**  
**Summary of respondents**

Questionnaire	Responses according to categories	Total	Percentage (%)
No. returned	588	588	98
Not returned	12	12	2
Total	600	600	100

Source: Field survey by the Author, 2025

From table 4.1 six hundred (600) questionnaires were administered to respondents and out of this number, 588 questionnaires representing 98 per cent were returned while 12 questionnaires representing 2 per cent were not returned.

**TABLE 4.2: Responses from the questionnaire on entrepreneurial education and job creation**

S/N	Items	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Many youths have created jobs for themselves as a result of entrepreneurial education	375 (63.8)	213 (36.2)
2	Entrepreneurial education provides skills that leads to job creation	498 (84.7)	90 (15.3)
3	I do not depend on government employment as a result of my entrepreneurial skills	312 (53.1)	276 (43.9)
4	Many students are self-sponsored due to the entrepreneurial	402	186



	skills they acquired	(68.4)	(31.6)
5	Entrepreneurial education has helped in curbing the rate of unemployment among youths in Cross River State	528 (89.8)	60 (11.2)

Source: *Researcher's computation, 2025.*

From the analysis above, 63.8 per cent of the respondents said agreed that many youths have created jobs for themselves as a result of entrepreneurial education, 84.7 per cent of respondents said that entrepreneurial education provides skills that leads to job creation, 53.1 per cent said they do not depend on government employment as a result of my entrepreneurial skills, 68.4 per agreed that many students are self-sponsored due to the entrepreneurial skills they acquired and 89.8 per cent of respondents admitted that entrepreneurial education has helped in curbing the rate of unemployment among youths in Cross River State. The results show that majority of students of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Calabar agreed that entrepreneurial education has helped in promoting job creation in Cross River State.

TABLE 4.3: Responses from the questionnaire on entrepreneurial education and poverty reduction

S/N	Items	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Entrepreneurial education has enabled many youths to start small businesses that has improved their livelihoods	465 (79.1)	123 (21.9)
2	Entrepreneurial skills learnt from entrepreneurial education has helped many students to meet their basic needs	528 (89.8)	60 (10.2)
3	The standard of living many families have improved because of entrepreneurial education	522 (88.7)	66 (11.3)
4	Entrepreneurial education has reduced the rate of poverty in Cross River State	552 (93.9)	36 (6.1)
5	The rate of poverty among youth has dropped since many youths possess entrepreneurial skills	420 (71.4)	168 (28.6)

Source: *Researcher's computation, 2025.*

From the analysis above, 79.1 per cent stressed that entrepreneurial education has enabled many youths to start small businesses that has improved their livelihoods, 89.8 per cent of the respondents agreed that entrepreneurial skills learnt from entrepreneurial education has helped many students to meet their basic needs, 88.7 per cent of the students said the standard of living many families have improved because of entrepreneurial education, 93.9 per cent of the students agreed that entrepreneurial education has reduced the rate of poverty in Cross River State and 71.4 per cent of the respondents agreed that the rate of poverty among youth has dropped since many youths possess entrepreneurial skills. Generally the result shows that entrepreneurial education has contributed significantly in reducing poverty in Cross River State.

## 4.2 Test of Hypotheses

## Hypothesis one

**H<sub>01</sub>:** *Entrepreneurial education do not impact significantly on job creation in Cross River State*

The Chi-square analysis was employed to test for the hypothesis while statistical package for social science (SPSS) software was utilized for the calculation of Chi-square analysis. The researcher adopted 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule is as follows:

Decision rule 1: reject null hypothesis, if chi-square calculated value is greater than the table value at the chosen degree of freedom and the p-value is less than 0.05 chosen significance level.

Decision rule 2: Otherwise accept null hypothesis

Figure 4.1

Summary of Chi-square computation to show if there is a significant impact of entrepreneurial education on job creation in Cross River State

Test Statistics

	Entrepreneurial education and job creation in Cross River State
Chi-Square	170.493 <sup>a</sup>
Df	14
Asymp. Sig.	.000

Source: Field work, 2025

From figure 4.1 above, it can be observed that since the chi-square calculated value of 170.493 is greater than the table value of 23.68 at 14 degree of freedom and the p-value of 0.000 is greater than 0.05 chosen significance level. We therefore reject the null hypothesis which states that entrepreneurial education do not impact significantly on job creation in Cross River State and concluded that entrepreneurial education do impact significantly on job creation in Cross River State. This result implies that entrepreneurial education enhances job creation in Cross River State.

## Hypothesis two

**H<sub>01</sub>:** *Entrepreneurial education do not impact significantly on poverty reduction in Cross River State*

The Chi-square analysis was employed to test for the hypothesis while statistical package for social science (SPSS) software was utilized for the calculation of Chi-square analysis. The researcher adopted 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule is as follows:

Decision rule 1: reject null hypothesis, if chi-square calculated value is greater than the table value at the chosen degree of freedom and the p-value is less than 0.05 chosen significance level.

Decision rule 2: Otherwise accept null hypothesis.

Figure 4.2

Summary of Chi-square computation to show if there is a significant impact of entrepreneurial education on poverty reduction in Cross River State

Test Statistics	
	Entrepreneurial education and poverty reduction in Cross River State
Chi-Square	205.611 <sup>a</sup>
Df	12
Asymp. Sig.	.000

Source: Field work, 2025.

From figure 4.2 above, it can be observed that since the chi-square calculated value of 205.611 is greater than the table value of 21.03 at 12 degree of freedom and the p-value of 0.000 is greater than 0.05 chosen significance level. We therefore reject the null hypothesis which states that entrepreneurial education do not impact significantly on poverty reduction in Cross River State and concluded that entrepreneurial education do impact significantly on poverty reduction in Cross River State. This result implies that entrepreneurial education enhances poverty reduction in Cross River State.

### 4.3 DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

From the findings from first objective of the study, entrepreneurial educations do impact significantly on job creation in Cross River State. This result reinforces the results of Osadebe *et al* (2024), Oguedoihu (2023) as well as Ezoem *et al* (2021). This outcome might be due to the entrepreneurial skills acquired by the students which made them to set up small businesses thus becoming self-employed. Furthermore, from the finding of the second objective which states that entrepreneurial education do impact significantly on poverty reduction in Cross River State, this finding is consistent with the findings of Osakwe (2015) and Ezoem *et al* (2021) who all concluded in their studies that entrepreneurial education is contribute to poverty reduction. This finding is as a result of the knowledge of entrepreneurial education possess by students and youths in Cross River State which has helped them to go into small scale businesses that contribute to improvement of their livelihoods, hence poverty reduction in Cross River State.

### 5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Entrepreneurship is globally recognized as important drivers of economic growth and socioeconomic development. Hence, this study examines the impact of entrepreneurial education on socioeconomic

development in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, it examines the impact of entrepreneurial education on job creation and poverty reduction in Cross River State. From the findings of the study, it was revealed that entrepreneurial education do impact significantly on job creation in Cross River State and entrepreneurial education do impact significantly on poverty reduction in Cross River State. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the government of Cross River State should intensify its efforts on entrepreneurial education by investing more in terms of establishing more entrepreneurial development centers in tertiary institutions in Cross River State so as to inculcate entrepreneurial skills among students and youths in the State to enhance socioeconomic development in Cross River State, Nigeria.

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