

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY-BASED ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

The development of University-based entrepreneurial ecosystem is a smart form of entrepreneurship which is directly proportional to technology competence. This paper explicates the role of technological competence in the development of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem. Qualitative interviews were conducted in stages and respondents' data were analyzed in consonant with the methodological tenet of Constructivist grounded theory. Three categories and two macro-themes (Technology compliance and Technophilia) emerged and were substantively explicated in relation to the research ambience. The research reveals the mesh mechanism surrounding technological competence in the development of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem. The study's implication in substantive research is discussed in relation to the research ambience.

Keywords: Technological Competence, Technophilia, University-Based entrepreneurial ecosystem, Afrocentric, Entrepreneurial ecosystem.

INTRODUCTION

Technology competence is a significant phenomenon that has hugely contributed to the development of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem. Extant studies confirm a correlation between technological competence and the development of entrepreneurship in both developed and developing countries (Bassellier & Benbasat, 2004; Harland, Stewart & Bruce, 2019). Despite the global significance that has been accorded to technology competence, entrepreneurial actors are yet to democratize this variable, especially in the substantive development of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem in Nigeria.

This study is replete with extant technological theories and the authors notice a correlational relationship between technology competence and entrepreneurial ecosystem although the subject of technological democratization is still oblivious in most research. The subject of technology competence must be seen in the light of technological theories, and several studies are yet to embrace the significance of technology theories in the development

of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem. Therefore, this study shows the significance of technology competence in the substantive development of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem.

There is urgent necessity for the substantive validation of the role of technology competence in the development of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem in the research ambience. This paper cautions researchers to substantively verify variables and their fitness in the elucidation of afrocentric research, especially variables that have had global acceptance in the field of entrepreneurial ecosystem. This article expands the entrepreneurial horizon of the research ambience by explicating the nuances inherent in technology competence in relation to the development of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem in private and public universities in Nigeria.

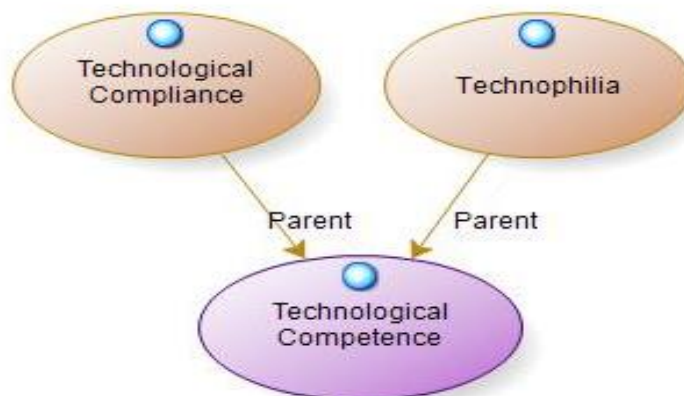


Figure 1. The Role of Technological Competence in the development of University-based Entrepreneurial Ecosystem.

Figure 1. Above indicates that technological competence rests on the threshold of Technological compliance and Technophilia. Recent entrepreneurial advancement and global demand for entrepreneurship accentuates the significance of technology competence and a substantive research helps to elucidate the dimensional verities of this variable upon bifurcation. Substantive research accounts for the dichotomy in the emerged dimensions and sub-dimensions and their nomological utilities and management can be elucidated in the ambience of this research, though the authors perceived that this validation is above the scope of this study.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The development of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem is functionally fraught with technical issues and a substantive explanation is needed to ascertain the dimensional impact of technology competence. Didactically, there is urgent necessity for an explorative explication of the dimensional significance of technology competence in relation to the development of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem development in the context of Nigerian universities. Inductive explication of entrepreneurial variable is significant for the development of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem and this paper proffered some substantive explication of the deductive issues inherent in the development of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem in the ambience of Nigerian universities.

THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

Didactically, this paper provides dimensional explication of the significance of technology competence using the inductive approach. Hence, this paper underscore the role of an inductive research in the substantive explication of technology competence in relation to the development of indigenous university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem in the ambience of Nigerian universities.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

Qualitative data was purposively gathered by interviewing 85 students in Nigerian universities. The researcher employed semi-structured questionnaire to substantively understand the technical situation and the possibilities inherent in the development of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem in Nigeria.

The range of respondents provided useful insights into the social-technical issues in the development of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem and the role of Constructivist variant of Grounded theory in the development of a substantive modelling of respondents' rich experience. Constructivist variant of grounded theory helps generate grounded data that enables substantive dimensional emergence (Clarke & Charmaz, 2014; Harland, Stewart & Bruce, 2019; Karpouza & Emvalotis, 2019).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

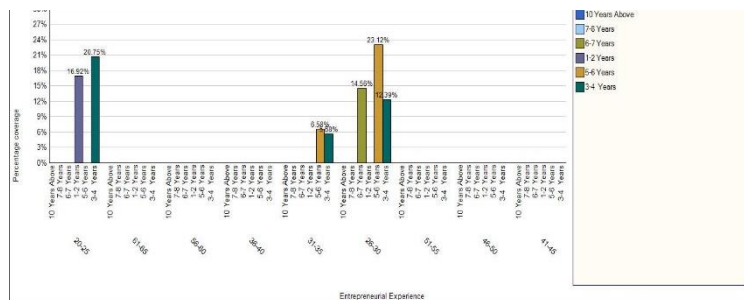


Figure 2: Technology Competence by Gender and Informants' Years of Experience

Figure 2 indicate that certain factors occasion competence in technology usage. However, 23% of technology users are young and are experienced and the range of their age falls within 25-30. The authors discover that of this number, male are more convenient with technology than female and the gender difference in technology usage has been the subject of several concerned researchers (O'Neal & Schoen, 2011; Crittenden, Crittenden & Ajjan, 2019). According to Samuel, Salleh & Hanif (2018) gender distinctions about technology competence has mixed results. However, most respondents (F = 31%, M = 69 %,) used technology for mere entertainment and (F = 59%, M = 41 %,) other respondents employ it for business application.

Table 1 Technology Competence – Matrices by Age

Technology Competence	Age:20-25	Age:26-30	Age:31-35
142 : Cost of Technology	0.9%	0.38%	0%
143 : Poor statistical and technological base affects the development of entrepreneurial programs	0.45%	0%	0%
144 : Purchasing technology is sometimes expensive	0.45%	0%	0%
145 : Technologies still has to be learnt and taught	0%	0.25%	0%
146 : Technology is not affordable	0%	0.13%	0%
147 : Maintenance of ICT	1.15%	0.27%	1.51%
148 : Facilitates entrepreneurial understanding	0.49%	0%	0%
149 : Good guidance is needed before technology can be used profitably	0%	0%	1.51%
150 : Protocols could be overtly unattainable	0.66%	0%	0%
151 : There's increasing call for technological management by universities	0%	0.27%	0%
152 : Universities that achieve good technological management have the best result	0%	0.27%	0%

The result, as Table 1 indicates, Technological competence is seen more among youths. Some of the informants' experiences demonstrate this:

Still can't use technologies for business purposes (Informant 7)
 (Informant 23)

Well, some of us just post pictures and other stuffs and not really doing business (Informant 10)

I just go online to check updates on social media and do my assignments
(Informant 14)

I have blogs but it's has less of ads but it is mainly for educative purpose
(Informant 6)

Two Propositions: Three propositions emerged throughout the respondents transcribed and coded interview transcript:

(i) "We need platforms that would enable us entrepreneurially". It indicates that technological platform is related to positive entrepreneurial behavior.

(ii) "Many of us are motivated about the impact and potentials of technology". It reveals that technological interest directly affects entrepreneurial development.

TWO CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

(i) Necessity for technological compliance in relation to entrepreneurial interest

(ii) Necessity for genuine passion for technology usage

This research reveals that technological competence is necessary for the development of university-based entrepreneurially ecosystem. As depicted in Table 1, this research interestingly shows that technological competence is cardinally low, in all the age range of the research. Many of the informants are still struggling to learn to use technologies and are yet to master the art of accessing wealth with technologies; thus this has greatly led to negative entrepreneurial behavior.

- How does technological competence affect entrepreneurship development in the research ambience?
- How does technological competence influences an entrepreneurial ecosystem and to what extent?

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the body of knowledge and it reveals the state of technology competence in Nigerian ambience in relation to entrepreneurial activity in the contemporary era. Samuel, Salleh & Hanif (2018) argued that technological competence is significant for meaningful entrepreneurial behaviour and the result of this study shows that the development of university entrepreneurial ecosystem is yet to be achieved in the ambience due to poor technology competence. This study have demonstrated that technological competence must be enforced for the substantive development of University-based entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Lastly, this study helps validate that the development of university-based entrepreneurial ecosystem is directly proportional to technological competence of the entrepreneurial actors in a given ambience.

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