

## **SOFT SKILLS NEEDED BY ACCOUNTING EDUCATION STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITIES FOR EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE AFTER GRADUATION IN ENUGU STATE.**

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**Abstract:** *This work was carried out to determine the soft skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities for effective Performance after graduation in Enugu state. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested. The population for the study comprised 68 Entrepreneurship lecturers from Enugu state University of Science and Technology. The instrument was a-20 item structured questionnaire developed by the researcher entitled: Soft skills needed by Accounting Education Students Questionnaire (SSNBAESQ). The instrument was duly validated by three experts. The reliability was done using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded coefficient of 0.71, indicating that the instrument was reliable. The two research questions were answered using mean with standard deviation; while the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test at appropriate degree of freedom. Results of data analysis relating to the study have shown that emotional intelligence and teamwork skills respectively are needed by Accounting Education students in universities for effective Performance in universities for effective Performance after graduation in Enugu state. The null hypotheses tested showed that, there was no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female Entrepreneurship lecturers in ESUT on emotional intelligence and teamwork skills respectively. Based on the findings, it was recommended that, Accounting Education students should be exposed to various emotional Intelligence skills. Again, Accounting Education lectures should impact useful teamwork skills to her students using required strategies.*

**Keywords:** *Soft skills, Accounting Education students, Universities and effective Performance.*

### **Introduction**

Accounting Education is one of the options of Business Education in Nigeria universities. Accounting Education is a vocation which prepares one for skills and gainful employment. According to

Ugwunwoti and Nomeh (2016) in Ngene (2024), Accounting Education prepares the recipient for career in Accounting and Education. In order word, such recipient can be either an accountant of Accounting educator or both.

In the opinion of Nwokike (2010), Accounting Education is the type of Education that provides individual with skills and knowledge in accounting, computing and data-processing occupation for gainful employment in public and private enterprises for self-employment. The Accounting Education students to be effective after graduation should possess certain skills while in universities.

University Accounting Education students according to Ngene (2024) are learners who are undergoing formal four years programme in the Accounting and Education. Such learner is expected to have at least Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Business Education with bias in accounting option. Accounting Education students while in universities are expected to possess soft skills.

Soft skills are personal attributes and qualities that enhance one's interactions, work performance and relationships. According to Alessandra (2000), soft skills are the personality traits, social skills and emotional intelligence that distinguish elite performers from average ones. In short, soft skills are the skills that one a valuable and effective team player, beyond one technical expertise.

Moreover, Nwosu (2020) opined that soft skills are essential life skills required for personal and professional growth, including communication, teamwork, adaptability and problem-solving. Soft skills are non-technical competencies that enhance an individual's ability to work effectively with others, manage time and achieve goals (Owolabi, 2018). Soft skills foster teamwork, cooperation, and a positive work environment. Therefore, acquisition of soft skills can significantly improve individual and organizational performance, leading to a more efficient, productive and successful office environment. There are various types of soft skills, but in this context, emotional intelligence skills and teamwork skills will be discussed.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognize an understand emotions in one and others and to use the awareness to guide one thoughts, feelings and actions. Moreover, EI skills refers to the ability to recognize and understand emotions in oneself and others, and to use this awareness to guide thoughts, feelings and actions.

Emotional Intelligence skills (EI) Comprises Various skills that help individuals recognize and manage emotions in them- selves and others. According to Nwosu (2022) Emotional intelligence skills are the abilities to recognize and manage, emotions in oneself and others. But Olokundun (2019), opined that EI skills refers to the abilities to understand and manage emotions to achieve effective relationship When emotional intelligence Skills are possessed by Accounting Education Student, it will help them to cope with pressure and Maintain Well-being. Moreover, EI Skills will help the students to adjust to changing accounting standards and regulations. By emphasizing EI skills in Accounting Education, students will be better equipped to excel in their professional carriers and

navigate the complexities of the accounting industry. Apart from El Skills teamwork Skills are also needed by these students.

Teamwork is the collaborative effort of Individuals working together towards a common goal, sharing responsibilities, resources and expertise to achieve efficient and effective results Teamwork is a Strategic partnership of individuals working together to achieve a shared objective, leveraging each other's Strengths and expertise (Okoro, 2020). Teamwork as made of up of interdependence, Shared goals Communication, cooperation, decision making, flexibility and accountability. Teamwork Skills are needed to achieve the teamwork values.

Teamwork skills are the abilities, competencies, and traits that enable individuals to effectively collaborate coordinate, and communicate with others to achieve shared goals and objectives. According to Olowookere (2022), teamwork Skills includes conflict resolution negotiation and Persuasion. Moreover Adeniji (2015) noted that, teamwork skills encompass shaved vision, mental models an team learning, Teamwork skills will make Accounting Education Students in universities to be better equipped to excel in their professional careers, work effectively in teams, and provide high-quality Services to clients. There is need for these students to possess these soft skills while in universities.

A University is an institution of higher education and research that grants academic degrees in various fields of study. According to Ugwunwoti, Eya and Aruah (2024) university is an institution that combines teaching, research and service to society; producing graduates equipped with skills, knowledge and value for the global market. An organized university is responsible for teaching, researching and community Service. In university particularly in Enugu State, Various courses are offered like Entrepreneurship Studies. Entrepreneurship Studies according to ESUT (2023) is aimed at equipping 200 Level a 300 Level Students respectively with relevant entrepreneurial Skills. Entrepreneurship Studies in CCMAS (2023) are Introduction to Entrepreneurship Development (ENS 222) and Entrepreneurship Practicum (ENS 311). These courses expose students to both employability skills and 21st century Skills which soft Skills are among.

Entrepreneurship Courses in Enugu State university of Science and technology are taught by their male and female lecturers. According to Ugwunwoti (2024) Male Entrepreneur Ship lecturers are male academic professionals who teach and research entrepreneurship, guiding student in developing entrepreneurial Skills, knowledge and mindset On the Contrary, female Entrepreneurship lecturers according to Aveogo (2020) are female academic professionals who teach and research entrepreneurship, guiding students in developing entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurship lecturers are expected to impart relevant soft skills in their students for effective performance after graduation. Effective performance is achieving desired results through efficient efforts. Effective performance also requires aligning personal and organizational values Okorie (2018) opined that, effective

performance is driven by leadership, teamwork and Innovation Gbajumo (2020) noted that effective performance requires emotional intelligence, resilience and Continuous learning. Effective performance therefore requires clarity of purpose, efficient resource utilization, and Continuous improvement.

Effective performance by Accounting Education students refers to achieving academic excellence, developing essential Skills, and demonstrating competencies required for success in the accounting profession. But in Enugu State, Reports have it that these Accounting Education students after graduation either perform or do not perform at all the needed duties either in offices or classrooms or both.

Based on this, the researchers are worried and the intended to Curb this ugly situation. Hence, carried this work on soft skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities for effective performance after graduation in Enugu state.

### **Statement of the problem**

The primary objective of Accounting Education in universities is to equip its recipients with accounting principles, theories and practices to be relevant in classrooms or offices. Despite possessing technical accounting knowledge, many Accounting Education graduates in Enugu State struggle to secure employment or perform effectively on the workplace due to inadequate soft skills. This deficiency is an indicative of their inability to communicate effectively, Manage time, work collaboratively and adapt to Changing work environment, ultimately affecting their overall career success. It is against this backdrop that soft skills needed by Accounting Education Students in universities for effective performance after graduation in Enugu state was carried out.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study was to determine the soft skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities for effective performance after graduation in Enugu state. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine teamwork skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities for effective performance after graduation in Enugu state.
2. ascertain the emotional intelligence skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities for effective performance after graduation in Enugu state.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the emotional intelligence skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities for effective performance after graduation in Enugu State?
2. What are the teamwork skills teamwork needed by Accounting Education Students in universities after graduation for effective performance in Enugu State?

### **Hypotheses**

The under listed hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of Significance using t-test.

**H01:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Male and female Entrepreneurship, lecturers on the emotional intelligence skills needed by Accounting Education students in Universities for effective performance after graduation in Enugu State.

**Ho2:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female Entrepreneurship lectures on the teamwork skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities for effective performance after graduation in Enugu State.

**Method**

A descriptive survey research design was employed in this study According to Nworgu (2015) descriptive survey, is the one in which a group of people is studied by collecting and analyzing data from few people considered to be representative of the entire group. The study was carried out in Enugu State university of Science and technology. The population for the Study comprised of 168 Entrepreneurship ENS 222 lecturers (35 males and 33 females) in ESUT. There was no Sampling because the population size was Manageable.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers entitled: Soft skills needed Questionnaire (SKNQ). The instrument has Three Sections. Section A was on bio-data. Section B on the emotional intelligence skills and Section C Contains items on Time Management Skills. The rating responses were strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) with numerical Value of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts, Two from the Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education and one from the Department of Mathematics and Computer Education (Measurement And Evaluation) both from Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu State to test the reliability of the instrument, 20 entrepreneurship lecturers from Ebonyi State University Abakiliki was used. Cronbach Alpha estimate was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument; which yielded index of 0.70. This index indicated that the instrument was reliable enough to be used for the study.

The researchers with the help of three two research assistants used direct delivery techniques in the administration of the instrument to the respondents. At the end of the administration of the instrument all the 68 Copies were returned and used for the study; representing 100% rate of return. Mean a Standard deviation was used in answering the research questions; while t- test was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance at the appropriate degree of freedom.

Decision rule for answering the research question was based on the real limits of the mean thus:

Very High Needed	-	3.58 -4.08
Highly Needed	-	2.50 -3.49
Slightly Needed	-	1.50 -2.49
Not Needed	-	1.00 - 1.49

For the hypotheses, when the calculated t-Value was equal to or greater than the table value, the will hypotheses was rejected, otherwise it was rejected.

**Results**

**Research Question 1**

What are the emotional intelligence skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities for effective Performance after graduation in Enugu state?

**Table 1: Mean scores and Standard deviation of Entrepreneurship lecturers on the emotional intelligence skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities after graduation for effective Performance in Enugu state.**

S/N	Items on emotional intelligence skills: Abilities to:	Male N=35		Female N=33		Overall N=68		Decision
		X1	SD1	X2	SD2	X	SD	
1	Recognize one's emotions, strength and weaknesses.	3.14	0.90	3.35	0.82	3.25	0.86	HN
2	Clear concise and respectful interaction	3.58	0.84	3.45	0.87	3.52	0.71	VHN
3	Understand colleagues emotions	3.60	0.49	3.32	0.71	3.43	0.66	HN
4	Manage disagreement constructively	3.41	0.68	3.32	0.72	3.40	0.70	HN
5	Change situations and priorities	3.28	0.72	3.52	0.57	3.40	0.60	HN
6	Manage one's emotions to maintain productivity	3.40	0.66	3.25	0.75	3.33	0.71	HN
7	Engage with others ideas	3.28	0.72	3.52	0.57	3.40	0.63	HN
8	Collaboration to achieve shared goals	3.25	0.75	3.40	0.66	3.32	0.71	HN
9	Analyze situation objectively	3.35	0.82	3.14	0.90	3.25	0.86	HN
10	Actually on constructive criticism	3.60	0.49	3.32	0.71	3.43	0.66	HN
Cluster mean/SD		<b>3.41</b>	<b>0.68</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>HN</b>

**Note: VHN = Very High Needed, HN = Highly Needed**

**X = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation**

Data presented in Table 1 above shows that, the mean scores of respondents (Entrepreneurship lecturers) on item number 2 was very high needed with the mean scores of 3.52. The table also shows that the item numbers 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 respectively were highly needed as emotional intelligence skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities after graduation for effective Performance in Enugu state; with aggregate mean score ranges from 3.25 to 3.43. The grand mean of 3.34 also attested to that the cluster standard deviation of 0.71 shows that the disparities of opinions of the respondents are slim.

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female Entrepreneurship lecturers on the emotional intelligence skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities after graduation for effective Performance in Enugu state.

**Table 2: Summary of t-test of difference between scores of male and female Entrepreneurship lecturers on the emotional intelligence skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities after graduation for effective Performance in Enugu state**

Respondents	No	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab	Decision
Male	35	3.41	0.68	66	0.194	1.96	Not significant
Female	33	3.27	0.76				
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>						

Table 2, shows that the calculated t-value (table) at 0.05 level of significance and 66 degree of freedom is 0.194, while the critical t-value under the same condition is 1.96. Since the calculated t-value is less than the table value, the null hypotheses is therefore not significant. This invariably means that, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female Entrepreneurship lecturers on emotional intelligence skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities after graduation for effective Performance in Enugu state

**Research Question 2**

What are the teamwork skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities after graduation for effective Performance in Enugu state?

**Table 3: Mean scores and Standard Deviation of Entrepreneurship lecturers on the teamwork skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities after graduation for effective Performance in Enugu state.**

S/N	Items on teamwork skills: Abilities to:	Male N=35		Female N=33		Overall N=68		Decision
		X1	SD1	X2	SD2	X	SD	
11	Stay updated with industry trends	3.60	0.58	3.59	0.60	3.60	0.59	VHN
12	Resolve disagreement within teams	3.15	1.03	3.49	0.71	3.32	0.81	HN
13	Build strong relationship with colleagues	2.86	0.97	2.92	0.96	2.89	0.97	HN
14	Motivate team members to achieve success	3.20	0.79	3.12	0.82	3.16	0.81	HN
15	Prioritize lacks and meeting deadlines	3.26	0.83	3.26	0.85	3.26	0.84	HN
16	Analyze issues and develop practical solution	3.23	0.83	3.35	0.59	3.29	0.63	HN
17	Embrace changes in the accounting field	3.48	0.50	3.47	0.60	3.48	0.55	HN
18	Collaborate with others to achieve common goals	3.49	0.71	3.15	1.03	3.32	0.89	HN
19	Take the lead to address challenges	3.35	0.59	3.23	0.66	3.29	0.63	HN
20	Convey financial information to clients	3.25	0.77	3.31	0.73	3.29	0.78	HN
<b>Cluster mean/SD</b>		<b>3.29</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>VHN</b>

Data presented in Table 3 shows that mean scores of male and female Entrepreneurship lecturers on item number 11 was very high needed, while item number 12 to 20 with mean scores of 3.32, 2.89, 3.16, 3.26, 3.29, 3.48, 3.32, 3.29 and 3.29 respectively were highly needed as teamwork skills needed by Accounting Education students in universities after graduation for effective Performance in Enugu state. The grand mean value of 3.56 also attested to that, while the cluster standard deviation of 0.72 shows the homogeneity of the opinion of the respondents.

**Hypothesis 2:**

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female Entrepreneurship lecturers on the teamwork skills needed by Accounting Education Students in universities after graduation for effective performances in Enugu State

**Table 4: Summary of t-test of difference between male and female Entrepreneurship lecturers on teamwork skills needed by Accounting Education Students in universities for effective performance after graduation in Enugu State**

Respondents	No	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab	Decision
Male	35	3.29	0.76	66	0.366	1.96	Not significant
Female	33	3.80	0.67				
Total	68						

Table 4 shows that the calculated at 0.05 level of significance and 66 degree of freedom is 0.366; while the critical t- value under the same condition is 1.96. Since the calculated t- value is less than the table value, the null hypothesis is therefore not significant. This means that, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female Entrepreneurship lecturers on teamwork skills needed by Accounting Education Students universities for effective performance after graduation in Enugu State

**Principal Findings of the study.**

Result of data analysis relating to the study have shown the following:

1. Emotional Intelligence skills are needed by the Accounting Education Students for effective performance after graduation in Enugu State.
2. There was no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female Entrepreneurship lecturers in ESUT on the emotional intelligence skills needed by Accounting Education Students for effective performance in Enugu State
3. The itemized skills are teamwork skills needed by Accounting Education Students after graduation for effective performance in Enugu State.
4. There was no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female

Entrepreneurship lecturers in Enugu State regarding teamwork skills needed by Accounting Education Students for effective performance after graduation in Enugu State.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The data presented in Table 1 showed that the respondents (male and female Entrepreneurship lecturers) were in agreement that emotional intelligence (EI) skills are needed by Accounting Education Students universities for effective performance after graduation in Enugu State.

The finding is in harmony with Olokundun (2019), emotional intelligence skills help one to understand and manage emotions to achieve effective relationship. The finding is also in agreement with Nwosu (2022) that Emotional Intelligence skills (EIs) give abilities to recognize and manage emotions in oneself and others

The null hypothesis one tested on the emotional intelligence skills revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of entrepreneurship lecturers (male and female) on Emotional Intelligence skills needed by Accounting Education Students universities for effective performance after graduation in Enugu State. The implementation of the funding of no significant difference was that the gender of the respondents had no significant influence in their opinions.

Data obtained regarding research question two showed that male and female Entrepreneurship lecturers were in agreement that the itemized teamwork skills are keys for Accounting Education Students in universities to perform effectively after graduation in Enugu State. This is harmony with Olowookere (2022) that teamwork skills promote conflict resolution, negotiation and persuasion.

The null hypothesis two tested on the teamwork skills revealed that there was no significant difference between the male and female Entrepreneurship lecturers regarding teamwork skills needed by Accounting Education Students universities for effective performance after graduation in Enugu State. The implication of the Findings of no significant difference was that, the gender of the respondents had no significant influence in their opinions.

### **Conclusion**

Entrepreneurship lecturers in Enugu State was of the view that Emotional Intelligence skills and teamwork skills are capable of making Accounting Education Students in universities perform effectively after graduation

Respondents (male and female Entrepreneurship lecturers) were equally of the view that there was no significant difference in the means scores regarding Emotional Intelligence and teamwork skills respectively are needed by Accounting Education Students in universities after graduation for effective performance in Enugu State.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the Findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Accounting Education Students in universities should be exposed to various emotional

intelligence skills

2. Accounting Education lecturers should implant the needed teamwork skills to her students using useful strategies

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