

Assessment Of Entrepreneurial Skills Acquired By Graduating Business Education Students In South East Nigeria

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Abstract: The main purpose of the study was to find out the extent to which graduating students of Business Education acquired entrepreneurial skills. Three research questions guided the study. The research was carried out in the tertiary institutions in the South East of Nigeria. The population was 1,685 students. Purposive sampling method was used to select ten universities and seven colleges of education for the study. The sample of the study was 680 graduating business education students. Forty students were selected from each school. The students were selected using simple random sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire with 24 items developed by the researchers after extensive review of literature. Statistical mean was used in answering research questions. Findings from the study revealed that the graduating business education students acquired to a high extent the public relation skill and the financial management skill, but acquired ICT usage skill to a moderate extent. Based on the findings, recommendations were made which among others include; that the administrators of tertiary institutions should provide the enabling environment and ICT teaching facilities for business education lecturers to impart the ICT entrepreneurial competencies to business education students.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is an instrument for effecting change in a society. Activities of education are aimed at imparting desirable knowledge, skills, ideas, concepts and values to the learners so that they might become useful to themselves and the society at large. Considering the rate of graduates' unemployment in the society, entrepreneurship education was introduced in the higher levels of education in order to minimize unemployment of the graduates. Nzelum (2010) defined entrepreneurship education as a functional education and learning by doing.

According to Nwabuonu (2005) entrepreneurship is defined as the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and combining them with management and organizational skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and thereby create wealth.

It encompasses creation of new products or modifying the existing ones to suit the needs of the consumers. Entrepreneurship can also be defined as the ability to search for change, adapt to change and exploiting it as opportunity to make profit. It is expected that the knowledge acquired from entrepreneurship education should enable the recipient to overcome the problem of unemployment and business challenges. For an entrepreneur to thrive, there are certain characteristics which the entrepreneur must possess.

According to Akande (2011) an entrepreneur should possess human relation skills, financial management skills and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) usage skills among others. According to Clover (2002) human relation skill is important because it is about learning to live in harmony and cooperation with each other and the rest of nature. Financial management according to Roland (2004) is the act of controlling a business by keeping accurate

bookkeeping records, measuring and interpreting the financial results of the business and communicating these results to management and other interested parties. Financial management skill is important because it helps an entrepreneur to know whether profit is made or not. The ICT usage skill is also very important considering the rate with which ICT is being introduced in all the sectors of the economy including business/trade.

According to Ezenwafor (2012) the need for individuals of different age to possess skills and competencies for ICT utilization for success in whatever endeavor can never be over-emphasized. Eze and Okoroafor (2013) defined ICT as any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment that is used in the management, display, transmission or reception of data. Olise (2014) opined that ICT can be used, applied and integrated in activities of business organization. The ICT usage skill helps an entrepreneur to adapt to technological challenges brought about by new technologies which often enhance old practices of business and sometimes change it completely. It is therefore necessary that an entrepreneur should possess the relevant characteristics for achieving success in business ventures

However, Ezenwafor (2010) observed that frequent collapse of small, medium and large scale enterprises in Nigeria is sufficient proof that practicing entrepreneurs lack relevant competencies for effective entrepreneurship in the country. The question that comes to mind is “are those entrepreneurs, graduates of tertiary institutions?” It is expected that graduates especially graduates of business education from tertiary institutions, having undergone courses like entrepreneurship education, should be able to open up businesses of different sorts and be successful. This is because business education programme exposes their graduates to numerous self employment opportunities.

Salome (2012) defined business education as that type of education that inculcates in its recipients attitudes, knowledge, skills, values that are required in the world of work. Okwuanaso and Nwazor (2003) defined business education as education for business and education about business. By education for business, the authors mean that business education is the type of education that prepares its recipients for effective roles as participants in the business system of the economy as effective workers. By education about business, the authors mean that business education is the type of education that helps one to carry out some of the business practices irrespective of the person’s profession.

Olaniyan and Titiloye (2012), defined business education as a job-oriented programme with the primary aim of preparing students for self reliance through the acquisition of marketable skills and right attitude that will enable them to handle their own business affairs and function intelligently as consumers and employers of labour. It is therefore expected that graduates of business education should be job providers and not job seekers.

II. PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

Entrepreneurship education is the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitude and values needed to create job.

Since entrepreneurship education has been incorporated into the business education curriculum in tertiary institutions, it is expected that business education students who have received the training, should have acquired the necessary entrepreneurial skills and be able to establish business venture(s) and attain success. Although many studies have been conducted on entrepreneurial skills acquired by business education students, but the extent to which these skills have been acquired is not yet ascertained hence the need for the study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study;

- ✓ To what extent do graduating business education students acquired public relation skill?
- ✓ To what extent do graduating business education students acquired financial management skill?
- ✓ To what extent do graduating business education students acquired ICT usage skill?

III. METHOD

The study used a survey research design. A total of 680 graduating business education students were selected from a population of 1,685. Purposive sampling was used to select tertiary institutions that offer Business Education. Seven universities and ten colleges of education in the South East Nigeria were selected. Then, simple random sampling was used to select 40 students from each of the selected schools. Structured questionnaire with 24 items designed by the researchers was the instrument for data collection. It was a five-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE)=(5), High Extent (HE)=(4), Moderate Extent (ME)=(3), Low Extent (LE)=(2) and Very Low Extent (VLE)=(1). Questionnaire items were validated by three experts from the Department of Vocational Education (Business Education Unit), Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

The recommendations of these experts were considered in the final draft of the instrument. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was established by collecting data from 50 graduating business education students who were not part of the population. Cronbach alpha’s method was used to determine the internal consistency of the items. The reliability coefficient of 0.82 was established. Five research assistants were used to collect the data. Data collected were analyzed using statistical mean. Items with mean scores above 3.00 were considered to be acquired at a high extent (HE) while items with mean scores below 3.00 were regarded to have acquired at a low extent (LE).

FINDINGS

S/N	Items	Mean	Remark
1	Ability to create good business relationship	3.41	HE
2	Ability to make good use of information received	3.62	HE
3	Ability to disseminate information in a proper way	3.66	HE
4	Ability to demonstrate good telephone manners	3.53	HE

5	Ability to promote peace in an environment	3.34	HE
6	Ability to listen patiently	3.24	HE
7	Ability to attract goodwill	3.54	HE
8	Ability to respect valuable ideas	3.21	HE
9	Ability to communicate effectively	3.62	HE

Grand Mean	3.46
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Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings on the extent of acquisition of public relation skill

Data in Table 1 show that respondents have acquired to a high extent the public relation skill with mean scores ranging from 3.21 to 3.66 and an aggregate mean of 3.46

S/N	Items	Mean	Remark
10	Ability to record business transactions	3.60	HE
11	Ability to keep accurate financial records	3.56	HE
12	Ability to interpret financial records	3.51	HE
13	Ability to effectively manage business cash	3.68	HE
14	Ability to negotiate financial deal	3.42	HE
15	Ability to determine profit/loss	3.56	HE
16	Ability to obtaining capital	3.42	HE

Grand Mean	3.54
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Table 2: Respondents' mean ratings on the extent of acquisition of financial management skill

Data in Table 2 show that respondents have acquired to a high extent the financial management skill with varied scores ranging from 3.42 to 3.68 and a grand mean score of 3.54

S/N	Items	Mean	Remark
17	Ability to use internet facilities to interact Effectively	3.62	HE
18	Ability to use computer to record data	3.24	HE
19	Ability to use computer to store information	3.26	HE
20	Ability to buy products through the internet	2.52	LE
21	Ability to sell products through the internet	2.64	LE
22	Ability to advertise products on the internet	3.00	ME
23	Ability to use internet facilities for banking	3.00	ME
24	Ability to make payments through the internet	3.00	ME

Grand Mean	3.00
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Table 3: Respondents' mean ratings on the extent of acquisition of ICT usage skill

Data in Table 3 show that respondents have acquired to a moderate extent the ICT usage skill with mean scores ranging from 2.52 to 3.62 and a grand mean score of 3.00.

IV. DISCUSSION

Findings on the acquisition of public relation skill show that graduating Business Education students have acquired public relation skill to a high extent. This is in line with Stillman (2012) who identified effective interpersonal skill as one of the basic skills needed by an entrepreneur for a successful business. This is important as the skill would help the graduating business education students to be able to relate well with the customers, work with other people, exist and co-exist peacefully in a business working situations.

Findings on the acquisition of financial management skill show that graduating Business Education students have acquired financial management skill to a high extent. The result is in consonance with the findings of Oladejo (2008) who discovered that entrepreneurs need financial management skills as it provides economic information to them. Possession of this skill entails that graduating business education students have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills with which to prepare some relevant accounting records.

Findings on the acquisition of ICT usage skill show that graduating Business Education students have acquired ICT usage skill to a moderate extent. This might be attributed to inadequate provision and utilization of ICT facilities in the teaching of entrepreneurship education in business education. This calls for concerted effort of stakeholders in education sector since maximal possession of ICT usage skill is important as it is needed in modern business practices. As stated by Tiripati (2008) that the knowledge of ICT is important and businesses that are not ICT compliant stand to lose of in the scheme of things and might soon be competed out of the market.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that graduating business education students acquired to a high extent the public relation skills and the financial management skills but acquired to a moderate extent, ICT usage skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Entrepreneurship education in business education should be more practical-oriented in ICT related matters to enhance the level of mastery by students.
- ✓ The administrators of tertiary institutions should provide the enabling environment and ICT teaching facilities for business education lecturers to impart the ICT entrepreneurial competencies to business education students.

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