

An Assessment of Business Competencies Needed by Business Education Students for Entrepreneurial Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper examined the business competencies required by business education students for entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. To achieve the objective, two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Survey design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 6002 business education students. Six hundred (600) students were selected through satisfied sampling techniques and were used for the study. A structured questionnaire was developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was face-validated by three experts in the Departments of Business and science Education of Ebonyi State University. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha correlation coefficient and it yielded an index of 0.95. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used to analyze the data. The study revealed that business education students required management and marketing competencies to function well in the business environment. It was concluded that there was need to put in place the learning facilities that will help the business education students to acquire the competencies stated in the study. It was recommended that each institution training Business Education students for entrepreneurial development should have well qualified training personnel who are well groomed in instilling management and marketing competencies in students.

Keywords: Assessment, Business competencies, Entrepreneurial development, Nigeria.

Introduction

The concept of entrepreneurship has been described by many authors. They have equally been viewed from the roles they played in our economic, political, or social lives. Osuala (1999) asserted that the process of bringing together creative or 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 essentially describes entrepreneurship.

The introduction of entrepreneurial development in tertiary institutions will no doubt inject a new spirit in the mindset of the graduate beneficiaries of the entrepreneurial study (Oduma 2012). This will no doubt help to make the students to become self-reliant or self employed on graduation. Business education in its foundation level has entrepreneurship component. Thus, it is often perceived as education “for and about” business or training in business skills, attitudes and competencies, (Okoro, 2007). For instance, graduates of business education are able to find jobs in offices, companies and public sectors.

The business education curriculum offers knowledge in subject areas such as Accounting, Management, Secretarial Studies, Offices Practice, Information and Communication Technology and Management. All these enable the recipient to seek career in business. Nwosu (2007) buttressed the views of others that business education is the aspect of education that equips individuals with accounting knowledge, secretarial skill and broaden their ideas towards how their chosen career works.

The level of poverty and unemployment with their attendant social ills in the country seems to continue to increase at alarming rate despite the introduction of entrepreneurship in Nigerian higher institutions. Osuala (1993), Anaele (1998), Ojukwu (2000), Oni (2005) and Ohaneme (2009) noted that business failure is rampant in the society. The underlying reason according to them is that small scale business is high risk area and full of uncertainties. An entrepreneur thinking of starting a business needs a broad array of entrepreneurial competencies which includes management and marketing competencies in the critical skills of entrepreneurial development to succeed in the competitive market. Olaleye (2005) observed that students of Business Education need to acquire the management competencies for success in entrepreneurship development. He stressed further that students of Business Education need management competencies for planning, organizing, supervising, directing, controlling and coordinating the business enterprise. These are in line with Ile (2001) who noted that students need these competencies in order to be successful in business. He opined that these competencies help to check and monitor performance against set goals and plan while harmonizing individuals and group efforts to achieve business goals.

Okpan (2006) identified marketing competencies as the requisite for entrepreneurship development to include ability to capture and retain the attention of customers: ability to promote and sell the organization product; ability to analyze demand and supply situations, ability to acquire effective sales habit, ability to be self reliant and tact, ability to acquire good sales techniques, ability to carry out effective marketing and information research, and ability to be polite, cheerful and glooming. Therefore, based on the foregoing, it seems that there is a problem in entrepreneurial development for Business Education graduates due to lack of required needed

business skills to own businesses. It is against this situation that it becomes necessary to conduct this study to identify the competencies by Business Education students in entrepreneurial development in Colleges of Education in South – West Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the Business competencies needed by Business Education students for entrepreneurial development in South-West Geo-political zone of Nigeria. The study sought to identify:

1. The management competencies required by business education students for entrepreneurial development in Nigeria.
2. The marketing competencies required by business education students for entrepreneurial development in Nigeria.

Research Questions

Two research questions were formulated by the researchers to guide the study.

1. What are the management competencies required by business education students for entrepreneurial development in Nigeria?
2. What are the marketing competencies required by business education students for entrepreneurial development in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study.

H₀₁: There will be no significant difference between the mean responses of Business Education students of State and Federal Colleges of Education regarding the management skills training needed for entrepreneurial development.

H₀₂:- There will be no significant difference between the mean responses of Business Education students with 1-2years of marketing experience and their counterpart with 3-5 years marketing experiences regarding marketing skills training needed for entrepreneurial development.

Methods

The design of the study was survey. The study was carried out in South-West Geo-political Zone. The study covered six Colleges of Education, Namely: Federal College of Education, Osiele, Abeokuta, Federal College of Education, Akoka, Lagos State; Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo; Osun State College of Education, Ilesha, College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti and Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo, Oyo State. The population of this study was made of 6002 Business Education Students from the six Colleges of Education named above. The sample size was 10% of the total population which was 600 respondents. The instrument used for data collection for this study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers and face validated by three experts in business education and science education using 4-point scale as follows: Very highly Required, Highly Required, Rarely Required, Not Required. These items were grouped into two clusters to facilitate analysis. The cronbach alpha was used to determine internal consistency of the instrument of which 0.95 obtained was considered highly enough to measure the reliability of the instrument. Data collected for this study were analysed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions while t-test were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Mean Ratings and t-test analysis of the Responses on Management Competencies required by Business Education Students for Entrepreneurial Development (N=589).

| S/N | Management competencies to: | X | Decision | State n=399 X ₁ | SD ₁ | Federal n=190 X ₂ | SD ₂ | t-cal |
|-----|--|------|----------|-------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| 1. | Undertake basic steps in starting a business | 3.07 | RQ | 3.02 | 1.13 | 3.17 | 0.98 | 1.54 |
| 2. | Plan business activities | 3.18 | RQ | 3.16 | 0.92 | 3.23 | 0.81 | 0.91 |
| 3. | Implement plans for goal attainment | 2.87 | RQ | 2.79 | 1.09 | 3.05 | 0.98 | 2.79 |
| 4. | Direct the business activities | 2.96 | RQ | 2.93 | 0.92 | 3.02 | 0.87 | 1.17 |
| 5. | Evaluate business activities | 2.98 | RQ | 2.97 | 1.10 | 3.01 | 1.06 | 0.48 |
| 6. | Meet job schedule | 2.87 | RQ | 2.80 | 1.09 | 3.02 | 0.94 | 2.38 |
| 7. | Organize human resources | 2.93 | RQ | 2.97 | 1.05 | 2.64 | 1.09 | 1.33 |
| 8. | Organize material resources | 3.89 | RQ | 2.87 | 1.03 | 2.94 | 0.92 | 0.74 |
| 9. | Monitor employee's performance | 2.82 | RQ | 2.82 | 1.05 | 2.82 | 1.02 | 0.01 |
| 10. | Determine personnel salary | 2.92 | RQ | 2.92 | 1.06 | 2.93 | 0.94 | 0.03 |
| 11. | Recognize the need of employee | 2.87 | RQ | 2.84 | 1.01 | 2.92 | 1.00 | 0.92 |
| 12. | Judge performance of employee | 2.72 | RQ | 2.66 | 1.06 | 2.84 | 0.95 | 2.10 |
| 13. | Query employee's misconduct | 2.78 | RQ | 2.73 | 1.05 | 2.88 | 1.03 | 1.63 |
| 14. | Take appropriate decision when necessary | 2.96 | RQ | 2.93 | 1.00 | 3.03 | 0.98 | 1.22 |

The Table 1 shows that all the 14 items had their mean between 2.72 and 3.18 which falls within the response category of agree. This indicates that all the items are required for entrepreneurial development. The result also revealed that only 3 items have their t-cal greater than t-table value while the remaining 11 items have their t-cal values less than the t-table value. Therefore, there exists enough evidence not to reject the null hypothesis. This implies that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of Business Education students of state and federal colleges of education regarding the management skills training needed for entrepreneurial development.

Table 2: Mean Ratings and t-test analysis on Marketing Management Competencies Required by Business Education Students for Entrepreneurial Development (N=589)

| S/N | Marketing management competencies required to: | X | Decision | Yr.Exp (1-2) no=354 X ₁ | SD1 | Yr.Exp (3-5) no=235 X ₂ | SD2 | t-cal |
|-----|--|------|----------|---------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------|------|-------|
| 15 | Determine customer's need | 3.17 | RQ | 3.25 | 1.02 | 3.04 | 1.17 | 2.30 |
| 16. | Deliver product to the customer's door step | 3.34 | RQ | 3.28 | 0.98 | 3.43 | 0.79 | 2.07 |
| 17. | Capture customer's interest to buy their product | 3.07 | RQ | 3.17 | 0.98 | 2.92 | 1.03 | 2.89 |
| 18. | Retain customer's patronage | 3.07 | RQ | 3.04 | 0.98 | 3.13 | 0.93 | 1.14 |
| 19. | Promote product of the organization | 2.94 | RQ | 2.97 | 1.01 | 2.91 | 0.98 | 0.73 |
| 20. | Communicate marketing ideas through oral presentation | 3.16 | RQ | 3.15 | 0.92 | 3.18 | 0.82 | 0.31 |
| 21. | Communicate marketing ideas through written presentation | 3.06 | RQ | 3.11 | 0.84 | 3.00 | 0.94 | 1.52 |
| 22. | Have access to good sale techniques | 2.86 | RQ | 2.83 | 1.05 | 2.90 | 1.02 | 0.72 |
| 23. | Adopt a good human relation with customers | 3.07 | RQ | 3.06 | 0.89 | 3.09 | 0.97 | 0.39 |
| 24. | Relate well with competitors | 3.00 | RQ | 2.95 | 1.02 | 3.07 | 1.07 | 1.31 |
| 25. | Determine the strength of the competitors | 2.97 | RQ | 3.00 | 0.88 | 2.93 | 0.92 | 0.92 |
| 26. | Establish a good marketing plan | 2.96 | RQ | 2.91 | 1.03 | 3.05 | 0.96 | 1.64 |
| 27. | Solve marketing problems | 2.95 | RQ | 2.94 | 0.97 | 2.96 | 1.01 | 0.18 |
| 28. | Determine yearly budget of the business | 2.99 | RQ | 3.00 | 0.93 | 2.97 | 0.97 | 0.39 |
| 29. | Understand the business environment | 2.98 | RQ | 3.03 | 0.94 | 2.91 | 0.97 | 1.53 |
| 30. | Handle customer's complaints satisfactorily | 3.05 | RQ | 3.06 | 0.94 | 3.03 | 0.93 | 0.43 |
| 31. | Display product properly | 3.01 | RQ | 3.09 | 0.94 | 2.89 | 1.03 | 2.48 |
| 32. | Negotiate sales | 2.83 | RQ | 2.76 | 1.14 | 2.92 | 1.05 | 1.73 |

Table 2 shows that the 18 items had their mean between 2.83 and 3.34 which falls within the response categories of required. This indicates that all the items are required for entrepreneurial development of business education students. Only 4 items out of 18 items have their t-calculated values greater than the t-critical value. Since the t-calculated for the remaining 14 items are less than the t-critical value, there exists enough evidence not to reject the null hypothesis. This implies that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of Business Education Students with 1-2years of marketing experience and their counterpart with 3-5years of marketing experience regarding marketing skills training needed for entrepreneurial development.

Discussion

Result in Table 1 showed all the management competencies required by Business Education students for entrepreneurial development. It was observed that the Business Education students required all the management competencies indicated. This is because in entrepreneurial development t such competencies are required by Business Education students for the successful execution in their business activities. This in line with the opinion of Osuala (2000) who posited that management is the process of achieving an organization's goal through the coordinate performance of five specific functions; namely: planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling. Stoner, freeman and Gilbert (2000) stressed that management is a process, hence, it entails systematic way of doing things. It emphasis that all business managers regardless of their particular aptitude or skills engage in certain interested activities in order to achieve the desired goals of their business venture. It is therefore imperative to note that Business Education students needed all the management competencies in order to take

basic steps in starting a business, direct the business activities and evaluate business activities.

However, 3 items out of the 14 items had their t- calculated values higher than the critical values. This implies that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of the Business Education students regarding the managerial skills training needed based on the ownership of institutions. Therefore, the hypothesis was upheld. The finding is in line with Okoro(2011) who revealed that there was no significant differences in the opinions of the experienced managers of small and medium scale enterprises and that of their less experienced counterparts on the management skills needed by them towards improving productivity.

Result in Table 2 showed that all the marketing competencies were required by Business Education students to be able to produce products needed by the public at an affordable price, time and place. This is in line with the view of Kathleen (2003) who noted that marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customers' relationships in ways that benefits the organization and its stakeholders. Armstrongy (2006) stressed further that marketing is a societal process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating offering and freely exchanging products and services of value with others. He concluded that entrepreneurs should realize that marketing is a total system of business activities design to plan, price, promote and distribute goods and services to present and potential customers. Moreover, the results showed that 4 items out of 18 marketing skills training studied had their t- calculated value higher than the critical value. This implies that there was no significant difference in the mean responses among the Business Education students regarding the marketing skills training needed based on the years of experience in marketing. The result is in conformity with Oketoobo, Lawal, and Onipede(2011) who reported that the business experiences of the respondents did not significantly influence their perception on the marketing management skill training required by the graduates for commercial cucumber production.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it could be concluded that entrepreneurial competencies of management and marketing competencies are required of Business Education students for self-sustainability. Since entrepreneurship is synonymous with self-empowerment. It is then imperative that Business Education students who intend to be self-reliant be acquainted with these competencies for successful enterprise.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study

1. Colleges of educations lecturers should be sent for in-service training at least once in three years training to acquaint with current trend in the job market.
2. Government should made available adequate fund for business education department as to acquire necessary equipment that would aid the acquisition of necessary competencies required by business education students during the course of their programme.
3. There is also need for a collaborative relationship between professional marketers and entrepreneurship education lecturers and other lecturers in the institution to ensure a proper dissemination of entrepreneurial competencies to students for effective entrepreneurship experience upon graduation.

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