

ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES REQUIRED BY BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS FOR ESTABLISHING SMALL BUSINESS VENTURES IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

The study examined the entrepreneurial competencies required by Business Education students for establishing small business ventures in Lagos State. A total of 100 respondents comprising 60 business education lecturers and 40 entrepreneurs in Lagos metropolis made up the population for the study. Three research questions guided the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire with reliability coefficient of 0.84. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings of the study revealed that managerial skills, information and communication technology skills and marketing skills are required by business education students in establishing small business ventures. The study concluded that entrepreneurial competencies are highly required for establishing small business ventures. It was recommended among others that curriculum planners should ensure entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education students are included in business education curriculum; management of institutions should ensure managerial, marketing and communication competencies are taught and that government at all levels should make adequate financial provisions for business education programmes to facilitate the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and competencies.

Key words: Entrepreneurial, Business Education, Competencies, Business Ventures

Introduction

Most nations in the world are clamoring for industrialization, but no nation can successfully implement a policy on industrialization where the teaming youth of that country do not possess entrepreneurial skills and competencies. Nigeria, as a developing nation is also in need of her youths to have entrepreneurial practical skills. It is only through the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies that individuals can surmount the current socio-economic challenges of unemployment, poverty and hunger.

Unemployment is a macro economic problem that does no one any good. It is a society malady. Its debilitating effects on individuals in the society are unquantifiable. Chukwu (2019), saw unemployment as the involuntary idleness of a person willing to work at the prevailing rate of pay but unable to find it. It is a negative situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. It is one of the macro-economic problems which every responsible government is expected to monitor and regulate. Unemployment

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threatens the lives of Nigerians especially the youths, causing dejection, frustration, poverty and dependency on family members to survive. Muhlbock, Warmuth, Holienka & Kittel, (2018) postulated that entrepreneurship has been on the limelight of labour market policies in varied European nations since the inception of economic crisis. Numerous political platforms, propel and spur the establishment of small scale ventures in anticipation of the multi-layered gains stemming from: the termination of unemployment of the incoming entrepreneur and providing job creation via economic development and thriving business on a massive level (Muhlbock et al, 2018).

Entrepreneurial skills cannot be duly appreciated without comprehension of entrepreneurial competencies as both propositions are interlaced. Entrepreneurial competencies are viewed as those rudimentary attributes, universal and distinctive knowledge, inspirations/motivations, traits, self-efficacy, societal roles and skills whose resultant effect is venture inception, growth and sustenance (Birds, 2019). In concordant to the above, Al mamun et al. (2019) ascribed entrepreneurial competencies to set of distinctive characteristics that portray the proficiency of an entrepreneur to perform a task. Entrepreneurial competencies are said to be embodied by individuals i.e. entrepreneurs who take up entrepreneurial actions, organizational modification and who make viable impact through gathering and identification of resources (Bird, 2019). Ideally, the exhilarating outcomes of entrepreneurial skills when cultivated under an affirmative social atmosphere can be translated into venture creation, unemployment reduction, skill acquisition, mastery advancement, lifeline support etc. For these results to be reaped it is imperative that the rudiments that serves as a propelling force need to be amply digested. Considering the goal of entrepreneurial education is to provide individuals with adequate knowledge and skills to discharge their entrepreneurial capabilities there has been a resounding call for business/entrepreneurial skills to be beyond the technological domain (Badawi et al, 2019).

At the international level, young businesses experience a high rate of failure as 20 percent of them would be eliminated by their first year of activity, it reaches 66 percent by the end of the sixth year (Franco & Haase, 2020). In addition, Driessen and Zwart (2020) stated that 50 percent of business would vanish during their first five years of foundation. Without sufficient performance, a business would not be able to survive, especially in a competitive environment. There are several factors which may influence the business performance, while entrepreneurs pay attention to external factors especially those of financial and non-financial for performance improvement. Studies shows that there is an indispensable relationship between competencies and business performance (Garcia, 2019). Since entrepreneurial competencies are related to business performance, entrepreneurs must pay a special attention to their competency improvement in order to boost performance (Mitchel & Rowley, 2020).

An individual becomes self-employed through proper engagement of the acquired entrepreneurial practical skills in business venture. Self-employment is the seizing available opportunities to generate or get involved in activities that could be realized for development and profit making. Onoh (2023) observed that self-employment can mean the promotion of free enterprise and self-sufficiency by creating and spreading wealth to the grass root level as a contribution to economic growth, employment generation and social progress. For self-employed person to be successful, such a person must possess the requisite skills and these skills can be gotten through entrepreneurship education. These employability skills are not specific to one particular career path but are useful across all employment sectors.

Badawi et al. (2019) avows that entrepreneurial skills spurs individuals to convert suppositions/theories into real time actions/practicable actions which surmounts the basic comprehension/interpretation of entrepreneurship. In affirmation, Al mamun et al. (2019) construed entrepreneurial skills as aptitude or knowledgeable insights that successfully steers an organization's operations. Hence, entrepreneurial skills can be ascribed to the capacity to learn and inculcate exceptional traits that are fundamental to undertaking entrepreneurial duties which entails interactions between economic and social climate (Al mamun 2019). Firmly asserting, entrepreneurial skills are deemed as a component of generic skills that boosts an individual propensity to exhibit tremendous degree of analytical reasoning in real business scenarios, make productive choices, decode tough issues, incorporate viable concepts that depicts originality and willingness to learn from failures and accomplishments (Bejinaru, 2018).

Olaitan et al (2019) in a study carried out on the entrepreneurial competencies required by secondary school graduates for entering into oil palm processing enterprise in the South Eastern States of Nigeria, states that managerial competencies are required by graduates of colleges to establish an enterprise in oil palm processing and in other vocational fields. In the same vein, further researches revealed that business education students lack marketing skills which is essential for any entrepreneur to present his product to customers for favourable patronage. According to Leghara and Mbah (2020), no business enterprise can succeed without its owners having adequate marketing skill and competencies.

Ojukwu (2020) opined that information and communication technology skills are part of the requirements for starting and running a successful small business ventures. The author argued that in this 21st century, business education students as future entrepreneurs must possess ICT skills.

Entrepreneurial competencies such as managerial, marketing, and communication skills are necessary in order to boost performance in the establishment and management of small business ventures. Udo-Aka (2017) suggested that entrepreneurial skills training helps the youths to develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship, such as the ability to take creative initiative, creatively seek out and identify business opportunities, develop budgets and forecast resource needs, understand various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option, and communicate effectively and market oneself and one's idea.

Entrepreneurial skill training is a deliberate attempt to provide trainees with relevant knowledge, appropriate skills, competencies and right attitude to effectively run or manage a business outfit. It is only through entrepreneurial skills training that individuals will acquire practical skills that can be used to surmount the current socio-economic challenges of unemployment, poverty and hunger. This study was therefore designed to empirically ascertain the entrepreneurial competencies required by business education students in establishing small business ventures in Lagos State.

Statement of the Problem

Business education is an aspect of vocational and technical education which involves the study of techniques, related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes and knowledge related to occupation in vocational sectors of economic and social life. In line with the goal of business education, graduates of this programme are expected to possess entrepreneurial skills and competencies needed to function effectively as employees in the world of work and to

establish and run business enterprises successfully. But what is obtainable is contrary, most students are graduating from colleges and universities without acquiring the necessary entrepreneurial skills and competencies that will enable them establish and manage small business ventures so as to become self-employed and self-reliant upon graduation. The high rate of unemployment among business education students has been attributed to lack of competencies required in the world of work. According to Moses (2019) a survey carried out by the National Universities Commission (NUC) showed that Nigerian university graduates lack basic job competencies as well as oral communication and managerial skills. The Association of Graduates Recruiters (2017) in the UK identified that there was a skill gap in the graduates leaving universities. This calls for the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills, which is a prerequisite for any meaningful self-employment. Therefore, this study sought to identify the entrepreneurial competencies required by business education students for establishing small business ventures in Lagos State.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate Entrepreneurial Competencies Required by Business Education Students for Establishing Small Business Ventures in Lagos State. The specific objectives were to:

- 1. examine the managerial skills required by business education students for establishing small business ventures in Lagos State.
- 2. identify the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills required by business education students in establishing small business ventures in Lagos State.
- 3. examine the marketing skills required by business education students in establishing small business ventures in Lagos State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- 1. What are the managerial skills required by business education students for establishing small business ventures in Lagos State?
- 2. What are the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills required by business education students in establishing small business ventures in Lagos State?
- 3. What are the marketing skills required by business education students in establishing small business ventures in Lagos State?

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The survey was carried out in some institutions offering Business Education in Lagos State, which include Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka, St. Augustine College of Education and University of Lagos and some small scale business enterprises. The population of the study was made up of 60 business education lecturers and 40 small scale entrepreneurs in Lagos metropolis. This consist of 42 lecturers from Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka, 10 lecturers from University of Lagos and 8 lecturers form St. Augustine College of Education while the small scale entrepreneurs were selected from major commercial towns in Lagos State. The entire population was involved in the study because the researcher considered the size manageable. A structured questionnaire containing 27 items developed by the researchers was used for data collection from the respondents. A four point scale of Highly Required (HR), Required (R), Not Required (NR), and Highly Not Required (HNR) were used with a corresponding assigned value of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts from School of Business Education,

Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka, Lagos. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Crombach Alpha reliability, which yielded a co-efficient of 0.84. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The decision rule was that any item with mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as 'Required' while any item with a mean score below 2.5 was regarded as 'Not Required'.

Results

Research Question One: What are the managerial skills required by business education students for establishing small business ventures?

Table One: Mean Responses on Managerial Skills Required by Business Education Students for Establishing Small Business Ventures.

S/N	Item Statements	X	SD	Remark
1	Ability to have a cordial communication with customers and staff	2.50	0.43	Required
2	Ability to make effective use of feedback from customers	2.56	0.67	Required
3	Ability to set achievable goals and target for the enterprise	2.90	0.96	Required
4	Ability to plan effectively on how to achieve the goals of the business	2.66	0.85	Required
5	Ability to have self-evaluation skills and knowledge	2.78	0.88	Required
6	Skill to maintain cost effectiveness policy	3.08	0.89	Required
7	Ability to have long and short vision for managing an enterprise	2.85	0.91	Required
8	Ability to have human resource management skill	2.90	0.98	Required
9	Ability to have good human relations	2.69	0.89	Required
Average Mean		2.8	Required	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 revealed that the respondents indicated that all the items were required with mean ranging from 2.50 to 3.08. The results therefore, showed that the respondents indicated that all the constructs are the managerial skills required by business education students for establishing small business ventures in Lagos State. The average mean of 2.8 which is above the standard mean of 2.5 is also an indication that all the skills listed are required by business education students.

Research Question Two: What are the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills required by business education students for establishing small business ventures?

Table 2: Mean Responses on Information Communication Technology Required by Business Education Students for Establishing Small Business Ventures.

S/N	Item Statements	X	SD	Remark
1	Computer operating skill	2.68	0.96	Required
2	Ability to use scanning machines	2.55	0.87	Required
3	Ability to browse and download information from the internet	2.96	1.07	Required
4	Ability to access the internet through the use of mobile phones.	2.50	0.78	Required
5	Ability to create, format, save, print documents	2.65	0.94	Required
6	Ability to use database, Microsoft access for storage and administration of staff data.	3.04	0.90	Required
7	Skill to use spreadsheets to manage the business budget	3.10	0.99	Required
8	Conference calls/video conferencing skills	2.81	0.94	Required
9	Website creating skill	2.46	0.71	Not Required
Average Mean		2.75	Required	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The result in table 2 revealed that the respondents agreed that items 1 to 8 are ICT skills required by business education students for establishing small business ventures, only item 9 was rated as not required with mean ratings between 2.50 to 3.10. The table further shows that the respondents indicated that item 9 (ability to create website) is a skill, not required by business education students for establishing small-scale business ventures.

Research Question Three: What are the marketing skills required by business education students for establishing small-scale business ventures in Lagos State?

Table 3: Mean Responses on Marketing Skills Required by Business Education Students for Establishing Small Business Ventures

S/N	Item Statements	X	SD	Remark
1	Ability to recognize various marketing techniques	2.35	0.86	Not Required
2	Ability to identify existing and future competitors	3.25	0.56	Required
3	Ability to recognize opportunities for business	2.62	0.86	Required
4	Ability to recognize the concept of customer kingship (customer is always right)	2.56	0.94	Required
5	Ability to provide alternative products which can compete favourable with branded products	3.22	0.62	Required
6	Ability to determine what customers need	2.74	0.76	Required
7	Ability to satisfy customers’ needs	2.72	0.85	Required
8	Knowledge of several fluctuations of goods and familiarity with various aspects of salesmanship	2.48	0.84	Not Required
9	Skill of understanding the importance of advertisement in business	2.96	0.96	Required
Average Mean		2.8	Required	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The result in table 3 reveals that the respondents indicated required for seven items as skills required by business education students for establishing small scale business ventures with mean ratings ranging from 2.56 to 3.25. The table further shows that the respondents indicated that items 1 and 8 are skills not required by business education students for establishing small business ventures.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that business education students need entrepreneurial managerial competencies to establish small business ventures. This is in line with the study carried out by Olaitan, Ezo and Ogbonnaya (2019) on the entrepreneurial competencies required by secondary school graduates for entering into oil palm processing enterprise in the South Eastern States of Nigeria. The study revealed that managerial competencies are required by graduates of business education to establish an enterprise in oil palm processing and in other vocational fields.

Business education students before graduation require entrepreneurial marketing competencies to establish a small scale venture as revealed by the findings of the study. This is in line with the findings of Leghara and Mbah (2020) who found out that graduates of business studies lacked competencies in marketing and communication skills. Findings of the study in Table 2 revealed that, for business education students to establish a small business ventures require ICT skills. These findings corroborate the findings in the work of Ojukwu (2020) that ICT skills should include: word processing skills such as formatting, editing, keyboarding, ability to

use scanning machines, to select reproduction activities. Data presented in Table 3, also revealed that marketing skills are required to identify alternative products that can compete favourably with branded products and determine what customers need. This is in line with Kotler and Keller (2020) who stated that marketing is meeting consumers' needs profitably and satisfying them by communicating marketing ideas to the consumers.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is evident that entrepreneurial competencies are required for establishing small business ventures as well as effective business operation. The absence of these skills affects business education students in embarking on any business ventures. Managerial skills, Information and Communication Technology skills and marketing skills would enable business education students to handle all types of document for their customers and thereby meet their customers' satisfaction successfully. The skills could serve both as operational guidelines for those who are already in business ventures. The outcome of the study provides information on the entrepreneurial competencies that are required by business education students for establishing small business ventures.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The curriculum planners should ensure entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education students to thrive and progress in the world of work are included in business education curriculum.
2. The management of institutions and other stakeholders should to ensure that managerial, entrepreneurial marketing and communication competencies that will enable graduates of business education establish and manage business enterprise successfully are taught.
3. Government at all levels should make adequate financial provisions for business education programmes to facilitate the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and competencies that will make business education graduates self employed and effective business managers..

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