Manpower Development and Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition of Business Education Undergraduates Students on Industrial Training Scheme of the State owned Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria

Hillary Wordu (Ph.D) & Ethel Obiedima Pepple

Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Emails: drworduhillary@gmail.com; ethelpepple@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
The study on manpower development and entrepreneurship skills of Business Education undergraduate students on industrial training scheme in state owned universities was necessitated by the need to ensure that Business Education undergraduates in the area acquire relevant skills for entrepreneurial success. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested. The design of the study was descriptive survey. The population was 1330 business education students of Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE). The sample was 30% of the population, comprising (Rivers State University students, 235 and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, 165 students) was used for the study. A self-structured 4-point rating scale questionnaire which was validated by experts in the field was used to collect data. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and the application yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.75. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions T-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that the respondents rated human relation skills as highly and innovative skills as moderately acquired by Business Education undergraduates for entrepreneurial development in the area. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that regulatory agencies for business education programme should review the curriculum to integrate and adequately emphasize the skills rated as highly needed while the implementers should adopt suitable approaches to help all the graduates acquire the skills in order to become successful entrepreneurs who will contribute to the entrepreneurial development of the area.

Keywords: Industrial training scheme, manpower development, entrepreneurial skills, business education undergraduates.

INTRODUCTION
Entrepreneurship refers to a process which seeks answers to what the entrepreneur does, how does he (an entrepreneur) do what he does? Entrepreneur can be defined as one who brings resources, labour, materials among other into combinations that make their value greater than in the past, as well as being able to introduce changes, innovation and new ideas for the growth of a business. Kitzer (2007) viewed an entrepreneur as a special type of labour that requires the assembling of all factors of production namely capital, land and labour, and tries to ensure optimum utilization of them for maximum profit. From the management angle, entrepreneurs are pictured as managers of small business. They organise, manage, and assume the risk of a business or an enterprise. In entrepreneur management, an entrepreneur does not only organise resources to create wealth but manages such resources efficiently in order to sustain his/her innovation and minimize possible risks that might lie ahead. The success of an entrepreneur depends on the willingness to accept responsibility for one’s own work as a process.
Allawadi (2007) defined entrepreneurship as that which involves evaluating business opportunities, development of a business plan, and determination of the required resources as well as management of resulting enterprise. It is the practice of consistently converting goods and ideas into profitable commercial ventures. It is a continually pursuit of opportunities through innovations leverage of resourcee that are for the most part not controlled internally. Entrepreneurship refers to an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action. According to the European Commission (2009), entrepreneurial programmes and modules offer the beneficiaries the ability to think creatively and become an effective problem solver. Modern school of thought claims that the role of the entrepreneur is that of an innovator, even though the definition of innovation is still widely debatable.

Based on the above definitions, it can be concluded that entrepreneurship is the process of carefully determining and analyzing unmet needs through creatively and satisfying those needs by bearing the related risks. By combining the above thoughts, it can be generalized that entrepreneurs are risk bearers, coordinators, organizers, gap-fillers, leaders, and innovators or creative imitators who are focused and determined to make life meaningful. More so that education for entrepreneurship can be particularly effective in initial Undergraduate Industrial Training Scheme where the students are exposed to a world of business and aid them to develop their skills in entrepreneurship.

It is no news that the world has become private sector driven, and economic prosperity in the 21st century requires the possession of entrepreneurial skills to function. The student needs exposure in practical entrepreneurial work experience in order to be proficient in their chosen career and be useful to themselves and the society. Entrepreneurship which is a planned effort undertaken by an individual or individuals, institutions or agencies to develop the required competencies in people can easily be addressed through industrial training options. Competencies of individual’s entrepreneurial skills on industrial training are designed to lead the beneficiaries to self-employment, economic self-sufficiency, and employment generation through short or long-term training. This has lead African countries including Nigeria to realize that training through industrial training is necessary to alleviate poverty through skill acquisition.

Industrial training can be described as any form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare beneficiaries for gainful employment in an occupation or group of occupations. Olaitan (2010) defined industrial training as a form of education that primarily concern the development of occupational skills needed in an individual as a preparation for work. It is a form of education which promotes the dignity of labour by entrenching work as the goal of education. Industrial training is training or retraining programme given in students outside the classroom under supervision and control. The learning experiences according to Abubakar (2010) may occur in a variety of learning context, including educational institutions and workplace.

**Concept of Manpower Development**

The concept manpower development could be defined as “the existence of unskilled and/or skilled humans that need training or re-training to perform specific task in society (Ekpo, 1989). Thus, manpower development could be seen as organizational specific. This is because it is largely a function of organizational manpower needed or job specification. That is, it could be viewed as the adaptation of the human resources available in the country to the needs, objectives and orientation of a given organization. Conversely, the concept development of manpower could be viewed as a concept which is generic because of its focus on turning out human resource that is needed for the development of the State (Drucker, 1999). As a result, development of manpower views man as the most important asset in the society (Chalofsky & Reinhart, 1988; Ekpo, 1989, Drucker 1999 & Muchinsky, 2000). A typical example of the manifestation of this concept could be viewed from the perspective of the Nigerian educational system which is anchored on the 6-3-3-4 system which sought to address the manpower need of the country through mechanisms geared towards developing manpower that would boost the nation’s socio-economic and technological advancement (FGN, 1998).

**Concept of Business Education**

Business Education is often described as education for, and about business (Nwosu, 2003). Its primary purpose is to prepare individuals for gainful employment in business occupations. Business Education is
an aspect of total education programme that provides functional and saleable skills, knowledge, understanding, attitudes or values needed to perform in the business world as producer and/or consumer of goods and services that all business offers. This suggests that all citizens need Business Education as an entry level of employment or as an entrepreneur, particularly, in this period when unemployment has become a big problem in Nigeria and other developing nations. For Business Education to meet the needs of our present day society, it should be able to equip the students with entrepreneurial skills, which according to Akinola (2001) are the understanding of the nature of small business, determining one’s potentials as an entrepreneur and acquisition of the competencies in marketing, sales, finance, record keeping, management, security and protection of the small business. She also maintained that Business Education must teach entrepreneurial skills in problem solving, decision-making and long term planning. In the words of Ubulom (2003), entrepreneurial skills are business skills which an individual acquires to enable him function effectively in the turbulent business environment as an entrepreneur. These skills include, ability to:
- Plan, organize and manage small-scale or medium-scale business
- Source for funds for small-scale business
- Develop skills of keeping the accounting records
- Develop human and public relation skills
- Maintain the laws relating to the registration of business
- Coordinate and supervise both human and material resources and utilize the profit for the growth and development of the business
- Apply integrating business skills
- Acquire proprietorship and high productivity skills
- Developing broad base investment, planning and implementation skills.
A business is built on the problems (needs and wants) of customers and without these; there will be no business at all. This is why problem-solving skills are very important tools for success in operating an enterprise. Ajaero (2006) stated that problem-solving skills for entrepreneurial development involve critical thinking, understanding of the business, team spirit, decisiveness and courage. Acquisition of these skills will enable graduates of Business Education to identify business problems and become critical thinkers so as to turn the identified business problems into opportunities.

**Statement of the Problem**
In the light of series of reforms and introduction of entrepreneurship education as compulsory course in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria, it is expected that Business Education undergraduates would acquire relevant entrepreneurial skills that will enable them become successful entrepreneurs after graduation. Unfortunately, most of these undergraduates seem to lack interest and confidence in entrepreneurial activities for self-reliance, while in school. Instead they prefer to join wagon of persons in search for scarce paid employment after graduation thereby increasing the already high unemployment rate in the country despite the abundant entrepreneurship opportunities. This trend creates doubts as to whether these graduates possess skills required to successfully engage in entrepreneurship. Thus this study is to examine, the extent Business Education undergraduates in state owned universities in Rivers state have acquire the entrepreneurship skills that will make them self-sufficient and self-reliance after graduation from school.

**Purpose of the Study**
The purpose of the study is generally to determine the entrepreneurial skills acquired by the undergraduates on the Industrial training Scheme for manpower development in Rivers State owned Universities. Specifically the objectives are as follows:
1. To determine the human relation skills acquired for the entrepreneurial manpower development of the Business Education undergraduates on Industrial Training Scheme in Rives State owned Universities.
2. To determine the innovative skills acquired for the entrepreneurial manpower development of the Business education undergraduates on Industrial Training Scheme in Rivers State owned Universities.
Research Questions
1. What are the human relation skills acquired for the entrepreneurial manpower development of the Business Education undergraduates on Industrial Training Scheme in Rivers State owned Universities.
2. What are the innovative skills acquired for the entrepreneurial manpower development of the Business Education undergraduates on Industrial Training Scheme in Rivers State owned Universities.

Hypotheses
The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:
\(Ho_1:\) There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Rivers State University Students and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education students on Industrial Training Scheme on the human relation skills acquired by Business Education undergraduates for entrepreneurial manpower development in Rivers State owned universities.

\(Ho_2:\) There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Rivers State University students and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education students on Industrial Training Scheme on the innovative skills acquired by Business Education undergraduates for entrepreneurial manpower development in Rivers State owned universities.

METHODOLOGY
The study adopted survey research design. The purpose was to determine the entrepreneurial skills required by the undergraduates on the Industrial Training Scheme as a means of manpower development in the two Rivers State owned Universities in Nigeria. To achieve this, a population of 1330 students of the Business Education undergraduates was used. Out of this, a sample size of 400 (comprised 235 Rivers State and 165 Ignatius Ajuru University) students. That is 30% of the population A 19 items researchers prepared structured questionnaire was used to gather information. The items are graded in four – point Likert Scale of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent. The questionnaire, before used was sent to three experts in entrepreneurship studies to make necessary corrections which were considered. The questionnaire was also subjected to a reliability test, using test and retest method and 0.75 reliability coefficient was obtained using Cronbach Alpha. The questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were computed using t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS
Research question 1: What are the human relation skills acquired for the entrepreneurial manpower development of the Business Education undergraduates on the Industrial Training Scheme in Rivers State owned Universities.
Table 1: Mean rating of respondents on human relation skills acquired by Business Education undergraduates on Industrial Training Scheme in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

(Decision ≥ 2.5 High Extent) N=400

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Human Relation skills acquired by Business Education undergraduates</th>
<th>RSU =235 Total resp</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>RMKS</th>
<th>IAUE =165 Total resp</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>RMKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Showing positive reinforcement when communicating with others.</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ability to develop good customer orientation for effective operation</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ability to persuade customers and stakeholders as expected</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>LE</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>LE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ability to organize customers meeting to improve their buying behaviour</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>LE</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Establishment of linkages with other business and stakeholders for mutual learning and collaborative undertaking</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>LE</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>LE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Having genuine regards for customers</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Recognizing the behavioural style of customers</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>LE</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Understanding the basic things which motivate customers</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>LE</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ability to manage time effectively</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Grand mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.15</strong></td>
<td>LE</td>
<td><strong>2.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.18</strong></td>
<td>LE</td>
<td><strong>HE</strong></td>
<td><strong>HE</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that students of RSU of Business Education undergraduates do not possess enough human relation skills for entrepreneurial success as compared to those of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education with a grand mean of 2.8.

**Research Question 2:** What are the innovative skills acquired for the entrepreneurial manpower development of the Business Education undergraduates on the Industrial Training Scheme in Rivers State owned Universities.
Table 2: Mean rating of respondents on innovative skills acquired by Business Education undergraduates on Industrial Training scheme in Rivers State University and Ignotius Ajuru University of Education

(Decision ≥ 2.5 High Extent) N=400

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean rating of innovation skills acquired by Business Education undergraduates</th>
<th>RSU =235</th>
<th>IAUE =165</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ability to generate new business ideas</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ability to introduce new products</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ability to introduce new method of productivity</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ability to combine ideas and knowledge into raw materials</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Ability to explore new sources of supply of raw materials</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Ability to open new market</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ability to gain access to technology on innovation in small scale business</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ability to create new wealth</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Ability to add value to customer satisfaction</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Ability to meet customer needs</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand mean</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>LE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 revealed that the students of industrial training of Business Education undergraduates have acquired moderate level of innovative skills as shown in the grand means of 2.1 for Rivers State University students and 2.4 for Ignatius Ajuru University of Education students. This calls for a serious concern among the stakeholders in the educational sector as undergraduates of Business Education do not possess enough creative ability to function as an entrepreneur in a work environment.

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of RSU and IAUE students on Industrial Training Scheme on the human relation skills acquired by Business Education undergraduates for entrepreneurial manpower development in Rivers State owned universities.

**Table 3: T-test analyses of the difference in the ratings of human resource skills for entrepreneurial manpower development acquired by Business Education undergraduate students on Industrial Training Scheme of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-crit</th>
<th>RMKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSU</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAUE</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 3 it could be observed that t-calc value is greater than t-crit value and hence the null hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected. This implies that there was a significant difference in the mean rating of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education students’ industrial training scheme on human relation skills acquired by Business Education undergraduate students for entrepreneurial manpower development in Rivers State owned Universities.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education students on Industrial Training Scheme on innovative skills acquired by Business Education undergraduates for entrepreneurial manpower development in Rivers State owned Universities.

**Table 4: T-test analyses of the difference in the ratings of innovative skills for entrepreneurial manpower development acquired by Business Education undergraduates students on Industrial Training Scheme of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-crit</th>
<th>RMKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSU</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAUE</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 reveals that the t-calc value of 17.6 at 398 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significant was greater than the t-crit value of 1.96. This implies that there was significant difference between the mean ratings of the students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on innovative skills acquired by business education undergraduates for entrepreneurial manpower development. Consequently, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was not accepted.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Findings of the study relative to human relation skills showed that the respondents rated such skills as highly acquired by business education undergraduates for entrepreneurial development in Rivers State owned universities. This is in line with the assertion of Azubuike (2006) that entrepreneurs who develop and maintain good customer relationship will excel in business. Azubuike stressed further that the success of business depends on how well the entrepreneur relates with its public. In agreement, Okorie (2001)
noted that for a business to succeed, the owner (entrepreneur) must possess the required qualities of being a good public relation officer and be consumer-oriented in business. This finding also agrees with the view of Okoro & Leka (1999) that human relation is an important skills area required in work places as they contribute immensely towards the achievement of organizational objectives. In essence, Business Education undergraduates must improve their skills for human relation skills as a key ingredient in transforming organizational plans into results which is of essence in entrepreneurial development.

Furthermore, respondents differ significantly in their mean ratings on human relation skills acquired by Business Education undergraduates for entrepreneurial success in the area. This is in line with the finding of Akarahu & Baba (2011) that there was significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on human relations competences required by office education undergraduates for self-sustenance. It also agrees with Hean (2002) who argued that skills needed in small and medium enterprises were not gender sensitive and could not be influenced differently. This implies that all Business Education undergraduates need acceptable human relations skills for entrepreneurial development irrespective of location and gender.

The findings relative to research question two showed that students rated innovative skills to be highly acquired by Business Education undergraduates for entrepreneurial development in the area. This is in line with the findings of Chukwone & Obichili (2011) that the respondents rated creative and innovative skills highly needed by home economics graduates. Ayonmike (2011) corroborated that innovative ability was one of the important entrepreneurial skills needed by technical and vocational education graduates to succeed in their businesses. The test of the second hypothesis revealed that Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education students’ responses differ significantly in their mean ratings on innovative skills acquired by Business Education undergraduates for entrepreneurial development in Rivers State owned Universities.

**Summary of Major Findings**

The following were the major findings of this study:

That there was high extent of human resource skills acquired by the Business Education undergraduate students on Industrial Training Scheme of the Rivers State owned Universities. There was also a moderate extent of innovative skills acquired by the Business Education undergraduate students on Industrial Training Scheme of the Rivers State owned Universities.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that Business Education undergraduate students, after their Industrial Training Scheme, have acquired a high level of the human relation and moderate extent of innovative skills to succeed in entrepreneurial ventures and ready to contribute to the manpower development after their graduations.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. Business Education lecturers should use suitable methods and resources to ensure that their students adequately acquire human relations and innovative skills to become successful entrepreneurs on graduation.

2. Regulatory agencies for Business Education programme should review the existing curriculum to integrate human relations and innovative skills to equip the graduates to establish their own businesses and become successful entrepreneurs.

3. Government should encourage retraining of Business Education lecturers to acquire human relations and innovative skills since they cannot give what they do not have.

**REFERENCES**


Ubulom, W.J. (2003). Developing Entrepreneurial and Employability Skills Through Business Education in