



Evaluation of Entrepreneurial Skills and Competencies Expected of Business Education Graduate Workers in Rivers and Bayelsa States

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the entrepreneurial skills and competencies expected by employers of Business Education graduates in Rivers State. Two research questions guided the study with two null hypotheses which were tested. The study adopted evaluation research design. The Product Evaluation component of the CIPP Evaluation Model of Stufflebeam (1971) was used for this evaluation study. The population comprised 747 supervisors made up of 313 heads of departments and directors of government establishments and 434 managers and directors of private establishments who work directly with Business Education graduates workers in the area with the sample size of 224 (that is, 107 supervisors made up of heads of department and directors of government establishment, and 117 managers and directors of private establishment). Stratified random sampling technique was used in this study. A self-structured research instrument containing 40 statements was used to elicit information from respondents for this study. The instrument was face and content validated and the reliability co-efficient of 0.89 was obtained showing that the instrument was reliable. The mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data and to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In the study, it was discovered that business education graduate workers in Rivers and Bayelsa states possessed entrepreneurial skills and competencies to a great extent. It was recommended that government should endeavour to encourage entrepreneurship by introducing element of entrepreneurship all level of the educational system

Keywords: Evaluation, Entrepreneurial skill, Competencies, Business Education

INTRODUCTION

The importance of entrepreneurship development to the economy has been the subject of increased attention in Nigeria and the world-over in recent years. Gibson (2001) defined entrepreneurship as the process of using private initiative to transform a business concept into a new venture or to grow and diversify an existing venture or enterprise with high great potential. Henry (2003) view entrepreneurship as the engine driving the economy of nations, creating new industries, young entrepreneurs, employment and wealth. Also, Agbionu (2008) opined that entrepreneurship involves a process aimed at creating wealth for the purpose of growth, development of the environment and eradication of unemployment for national sustainability.

Entrepreneurship Education seeks to provide students especially those in tertiary institutions with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial studies in a variety of setting (Wu, 2008). Wu emphasized that different aspects of entrepreneurship education are offered at all levels of schooling from primary or secondary schools through graduate university programmes. The growth of

entrepreneurship as a recognised profession would help decrease the chances of failure by stressing a consistent and proven set of practice (Banabo & Ndiomu, 2011). This implies that entrepreneurship education prepares the individuals to be properly equipped to acquire saleable skills which could be used to manage his business or that of other persons (Oduwaiye, 2005). Entrepreneurship is therefore that education which assists students to develop positive attitudes, innovation and skills for self-reliance, rather than depending on the government for employment. This would in-turn produce graduates with self-confidence and capacities for independent thought to discover new information leading to economic development (Emeraton, 2008).

Entrepreneurship constitutes a vital engine for economic, social, practical and all round development of any nation. Entrepreneurship has been identified by many both globally and nationally as a tool for a sustainable, virile and stable economy. This is why successive governments in Nigeria attempted to strengthen relevant agencies in order to achieve this position. The government of today perhaps look more serious than ever in sustaining a few of the agencies such as NAPEP, NDE and NEEDS. Akpomi (2009) opined that no country can as a matter of truth, move forward technologically, industrially and economically without developing strong private partner initiate in the creation of wealth, poverty reduction and employment generation, with required skills. These skills include managerial, comparative, communication, technical, human and special skills to cope with the challenges of the future since entrepreneurship is vital to the sustainable advancement of any nation. Entrepreneurship serves learning and training centres for the translation of dreams and ideas into successful ventures, facilitates the identification, creation and utilization of non-existent saving, brings self-fulfilment, check rural urban drift, alleviates and eradicates poverty and creates employment (Ley, 2006).

The Nigeria's teeming population plagued with unemployment can drastically be reduced through entrepreneurial explosion. Entrepreneurship education therefore, seeks to provide students with skills, knowledge and motivation, as well as to effect attitudinal changes, necessary to encourage self-reliance through involvement in entrepreneurial activities (Hisrich, 2002). Through entrepreneurship education, young people learn organizational skills, time management, and leadership involvement in entrepreneurial activities. Entrepreneurial education seeks to immerse people in real life experiences which encourage and empower them to take risks, manage the results and learn from the outcome.

The objective of entrepreneurship education has variously been stated. Ayediso (2004) stated that entrepreneurship education provides meaningful education for the youth which could make them self-reliant and subsequently encourage them to derive profit and be self-reliant. For Aghazamani (2010), entrepreneurship education equip graduates with the training and support necessary to help them establish careers in small and medium sized-business, provide graduate with training skills that will make them meet societal man power needs and stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas. In the view of Abosede, Anthony & Jimoh (2012), entrepreneurship education produce graduates with sufficient training to make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities and provide graduate with training in risk management to alleviate and minimise uncertainty.

Many educationists have discussed entrepreneurial and employable skills expected of business education graduates to acquire. Koch (2011) identified the entrepreneurial skills as teachable, learnable and transferable which also include proactively, achievement orientation and commitment to others, internal and external Loci of control, creativity and innovation, time management, leadership self-confidence, and positive attitudes. For Osisioma (2010) and Olarinoye (2014) entrepreneurial skills are building vision, faith and commitment, being aware of One's strength, clearly defining one's target group, planning and thorough implementation of plans as sellable transferable entrepreneurial skills.

Business education is that aspect of educational programme designed to provide an individual with the needed practical business and vocational attitudes, understanding, knowledge, skills and values that will enable him or her function effectively in the society (Ubulom, 2006). It is the intellectual and vocational preparation of people for earning a living in the contemporary industrial and business environment. From the foregoing, it is a clear indication that business education students should be able to acquire the needed knowledge and skills that will help them to find a job after schooling or create their own employment (Ogben & Amahi, 2008). It is on this premise that Atakpa (2004) recognised that the objectives of undergraduate business education programme is geared towards the

preparation of individuals who are skilled in the pedagogy in business education, principles and practice in Accounting, Management, Marketing and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). For Dike (2009) business education prepares individuals who are skilled in curriculum design and evaluation in business education, provide orientation and basic skill with which to start a life work for those who may not further educational training and to relate the knowledge and skills acquired to national development.

Aquah (2014) stated that business education was brought to lime light and made prominence in Nigeria by the current national policy on education launched in 1977, which has been severally reviewed as years go by. Business education programme is offered in the secondary and tertiary levels of the Nigerian educational system. Aquah (1998) observed that the laudable programme of this system of education as introduced by the Federal Republic of Nigeria aimed at providing the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitude needed in the business world has failed to curb youth unemployment. Those who are employed at all are found to be incompetent in discharging their assigned duties. They lack practical knowledge and manual skills.

Competency denotes one faculty of doing things appropriately based on one's inherent abilities, capabilities and capacities. Therefore, competencies present certain clusters of skills abilities, and knowledge that are essential to perform certain functions. For example, social workers must have competencies in a number of areas to be effective professionals and to be licensed. Competency has two dimensions: knowledge and skill. Knowledge may be seen as our understanding of how our everyday world is constituted and how it work. Skills involve the ability to pragmatically apply, consciously or unconsciously our knowledge in practical settings (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). If such practical setting includes business organizations, then as pointed out by Ezeana (1984) in Ojukwu & Ojukwu (2002), competencies are the knowledge, skills and behaviours that will enable an employee to meet established performance criteria. In the light of the above statement, an employee possesses competency if he has the combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skill, abilities and personal attributes that contribute to enhanced employee performance and ultimately result in organizational success.

Business educators need to produce graduates who are well equipped with the necessary skills and competencies that will enable them interact effectively with their publics. However, it has continued to bother the minds of business educators that in this 21st century, the society still witness a mismatch between the training Business Education graduate receive and the activities employers expect them to perform. It is no surprise too, that at the roof of a large number of organizational problems is poor entrepreneurial and competencies. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to determine the extent to which entrepreneurial skills and competencies are necessary for business education graduate to secure employment in modern organizations.

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to devaluate the entrepreneurial skills and competencies expected of business education graduates to secure employment in modern organizations. Specifically, the study attempted to:

- 1) Determine the extent entrepreneurial skills are necessary for business education graduates to be employable in modern organizations.
- 2) Determine the extent competencies are necessary for business education graduates to be employable in modern offices.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) To what extent are entrepreneurial skills expected by employers in public and private sectors for employability of business education graduates?
- 2) To what extent are competencies expected by employers in public and private sectors for employability of business education graduates?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- 1) There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of employers in public and private sectors on the extent to which entrepreneurial skills are expected for business education graduates to be employable in modern organizations.

2) There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of employers in public and private sectors on the extent to which basic entrepreneurial competencies are expected for employability of business education graduates in modern offices.

METHODS

The study adopted evaluation research design. The Product Evaluation component of the CIPP Evaluation Model of Stufflebeam (1971) was used for this evaluation study. The population comprised 747 supervisors made up of 313 heads of departments and directors of government establishments and 434 managers and directors of private establishments who work directly with Business Education graduates workers in the area with the sample size of 224 (that is, 107 supervisors made up of heads of department and directors of government establishment, and 117 managers and directors of private establishment). Stratified random sampling technique was used in this study. A self-structured research instrument containing 40 statements was used to elicit information from respondents for this study. The instrument was face and content validated and the reliability coefficient of 0.89 was obtained showing that the instrument was reliable. The mean and standard deviation were used to analyse and answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A mean rating that is equal to or greater than 3.50 was regarded as possessed at a high extent, while any item with a mean rating that is less than 3.50 was regarded as possessed at a low extent.

RESULTS

Research question 1

To what extent are entrepreneurial skills expected by employers in public and private sectors for employability of business education graduates?

Table 1: Employers rating of the extent to which entrepreneurial skills are expected for employability of business education graduates.

(N = 224)

S/No.	Entrepreneurial skills	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1.	Computer skills	3.52	1.13	Great Extent
2.	Basic professional skill	3.87	1.02	Great Extent
3.	Record management skill	3.73	1.04	Great Extent
4.	Psychomotive skill	3.53	0.98	Great Extent
5.	Aggressiveness	3.67	1.11	Great Extent
6.	Identifying opportunities & challenges	3.88	1.07	Great Extent
7.	Risk expression	3.78	1.03	Great Extent
8.	Self-actualization	3.76	1.21	Great Extent
9.	Exploiting opportunity skill	4.18	0.97	Great Extent
10.	Financial management skill	4.18	0.97	Great Extent
11.	Marketing	4.32	0.91	Great Extent
12.	Persuasion skill	4.33	0.93	Great Extent
13.	Innovative skill	4.76	0.86	Very Great Extent
14.	Wealth creation	4.63	0.93	Very Great Extent
15.	Analytical skill	4.57	0.99	Very Great Extent
16.	Resourcefulness	4.48	1.02	Great Extent
17.	Knowledge of relevant machine	4.48	1.07	Great Extent
18.	Knowledge of relevant market	3.76	1.03	Great Extent
19.	Knowledge of relevant product	3.64	1.07	Great Extent
20.	Avoiding insecurity of paid job	3.53	1.11	Great Extent
Grand mean \bar{X} and SD		4.03	1.02	Great Extent

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that mean of 4.50 and above were obtained for items 13 – 15. This indicates that the supervisors rated the acquisition of three items to a very great extent. On the remaining items 1 – 12 and 16 – 20 in which the mean scores of 4.50 and below were obtained, the

supervisors expected the acquisition of these items to a great extent from business education graduates.

Research question 2

To what extent are competencies expected by employers in public and private sector for employability of business education graduates?

Table 2: Employers rating of the extent to which entrepreneurial competencies are expected for employability of business education graduates

(N = 224)

S/No.	Entrepreneurial competencies	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1.	Self confidence	4.87	0.67	Very Great Extent
2.	Motivation skills	4.82	0.73	Very Great Extent
3.	Communicative skills	4.73	0.86	Very Great Extent
4.	Planning skills	4.63	1.88	Very Great Extent
5.	Adaptive skills	3.96	1.17	Great Extent
6.	Human ration skills	4.41	0.96	Great Extent
7.	Positive attitude	3.99	1.07	Great Extent
8.	Listening skill	4.88	0.93	Very Great Extent
9.	Writing skill	4.91	079	Very Great Extent
10.	Sense of achievement	4.96	0.62	Very Great Extent
11.	Negotiation skill	3.87	1.23	Great Extent
12.	Leadership skill	3.68	1.18	Great Extent
13.	Time management skill	3.93	1.21	Great Extent
14.	Management skill	4.73	0.86	Very Great Extent
15.	Perseverance skill	3.86	1.31	Great Extent
16.	Organizational skill	4.86	0.91	Very Great Extent
17.	Coaching competency	4.82	0.86	Very Great Extent
18.	Team work	4.03	1.03	Great Extent
19.	Environmental monitoring competency	3.89	1.18	Great Extent
20.	Network building	2.76	1.33	Great Extent
Grand mean \bar{X} and SD		4.33	1.04	Great Extent

The information contained in Table 2 shows that mean of 4.50 and below were obtained for items 5,6,7,11,12,13,15,18,19 and 20. This shows that supervisors rated the ten items to a great extent. On the remaining items 1 – 7, 11 – 13 and 18 – 20 in which the mean score of 4.50 and above were obtained, the supervisors rated the acquisition of these items to a very great extent from business education graduates.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of employers in public and private sectors on the extent to which entrepreneurial skills are expected for business education graduates to be employable in modern organizations.

Table 3: t-test Computation of the difference in the mean ratings of supervisors in government and private organizations in Rivers and Bayelsa States on entrepreneurial skills expected of business education graduate workers.

Supervisors	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-Crit	Decision
Male	109	2.26	0.54	222	2.16	1.96	Rejected
Female	115	1.77	0.48				

The presentation in Table 3 revealed that the t-calculated of 2.16 is greater than the critical t – value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This suggests that

employers in public and private sectors differ significantly on the extent of which entrepreneurial skills are expected for business education graduates to be employable in modern organizations.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of employers in public and private sectors on the extent to which basic entrepreneurial competencies are expected for employability of business education graduates in modern offices.

Table 4: t-test Computation of the difference in the mean ratings of supervisors in government and private organizations in Rivers and Bayelsa States on entrepreneurial competencies expected of business education graduate workers.

Supervisors	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Government	107	2.19	0.66	222	2.30	1.96	Rejected
Private	117	2.14	0.38				

As presented in table, the calculated t-value of 2.30 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This suggests that there is a significant difference in the opinion of employers in public and private sectors on the extent to which entrepreneurial competencies are expected for employability of business education graduates in modern offices.

DISCUSSION

The result of research question 1 shows the extent to which entrepreneurial skills are expected from business education graduates by employers in public and private sectors organisation. Of the twenty items of entrepreneurial skills listed, the responses shows that supervisors rated to a very great extent on the acquisition of 3 (15%) and great extent on 17 (85%). The result of this study confirms that of the finding of Hisrich (2002) who discovered that university entrepreneurship programmes are meeting the entrepreneurship education objectives.

The result of research question 2 shows the respondents’ ratings on entrepreneurial competencies expected of business education graduates. The result shows that supervisors rated to a very great extent on the acquisition of 10(50%) out of 20 items, and great extent of the remaining 10 (50%). The results confirms that the university entrepreneurship programme, even in these early days has imparted the expected competencies (teachable and learnable) which Osisioma (2010) identified as germane to entrepreneurship prospects.

The result of the test of hypotheses shows that employers in public and private sectors differ, significantly on the extent to which entrepreneurial skill and competencies are expected for business education graduates to be employable in modern organizations. The study shows that entrepreneurship education is changing the mind set of Nigerian youths. This agrees with the study of Ferdinand (2012) titled “change the mind-set of youths, and a society will move mountain”.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussions and findings of the study, it was concluded that business education graduate workers in Rivers and Bayelsa states possessed entrepreneurial skills and competencies to a great extent. The extent to which entrepreneurial skills and competencies are expected from business education graduate workers did not depend on gender and sector where these graduates work. In essences, today business education graduate workers are expected to be versatile to maintain professionally relevant and competitive activities in the face of the technological innovation era. Graduate business education workers to be exposed to the identified skills and competencies to acquaint themselves with the trend of modern office technology.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made:

- 1) Government should continue to encourage entrepreneurship education by introducing elements of entrepreneurship at all levels of the educational system.
- 2) Government and philanthropic organizations should provide adequate facilities for effective teaching of entrepreneurship education
- 3) Education authorities and curriculum planners should constantly update entrepreneurship curriculum
- 4) Entrepreneurship education teachers should be constantly trained and retrained for optimal performance
- 5) Government should provide more functional entrepreneurship support structure to encourage youth entrepreneurship
- 6) Adequate financial and technical supports should be provided by government so that initial enthusiasms will not growth cold.

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