

Business Educators' Views on the Entrepreneurial Competencies Needed by Business Education Graduates in Edo and Delta States of Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated Business Educators' views on the entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates in Nigeria. A 23-item instrument was used for this study. The study sample comprised all the 66 Business Education lecturers in the universities and colleges of Education in Edo and Delta states of Nigeria. Edo and Delta states are neighbouring states located in the south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria. They are also one of the petroleum oil producing areas in Nigeria. The collected data were analysed using the descriptive statistics, while the t-test measure was used for testing the hypothesis. The findings of the study reveals that all the respondents agreed that the 23 competency items are needed by business education graduates. Furthermore, the findings show a no significant difference in the views of male and female business education lecturers on the entrepreneurial competencies needed by them. Finally, some recommendations that are likely to enable both the pre-service and in-service acquire relevant entrepreneurial competencies have been proffered.

Introduction

In the national policy on education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004), emphasis is laid on a united, strong and self-reliant nation. The policy goes further to stress on the acquisition of appropriate knowledge and skills necessary for one to secure paid employment in office or be self-employed. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme of 1999 is comprehensive in content and well equipped to inculcate in the young all the necessary attributes that will ensure their "acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life long learning" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). The above objectives aptly align with the general goal of business education which is to give training and impart necessary skills leading to the production of goods, services and self-reliance. According to the national policy on education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004), business education is considered as a veritable tool for preparing students for the enterprise as employees, employers, entrepreneurs and to be self-employed. Business education is an aspect of educational programme offered at the higher institution of learning which prepare students for careers in business.

Anao (1986) states the major goals of business education amongst others to include (i) adapting the various business concepts acquired in class to real life situation; (ii)

acquiring skills and competencies required for the performance of basic business jobs e.g. taking simple administrative decisions and dealing with correspondence; (iii) keeping simple records of financial and other transactions in the office; and (iv) playing productive roles in a free enterprise economy. Entrepreneurship is about learning the skills needed to assume the risk of establishing a business. It is about developing the winning strategies and executing them with all vigour, persistence and passion needed to win any game (Inegbenebor, 2006). Osuala (1999) posits that 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 is entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is seen as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully (Okenwa, 1999). Other entrepreneurship skills include pooling of various scarce resources for production and distribution of goods and services, organization and arrangement of the human and material resources for the attainment of the objectives of the enterprise, risk bearing and innovations.

Statement of the Problem

The national policy on education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) enunciates that education is an instrument per excellence for the development of the nation towards making the nation and citizens self-reliant. To this end, business education as a programme that prepares the recipient with necessary skills and competencies that can enable the graduates, in the absence of paid employment, establish a centre where they can render both secretarial, distributive and accounting services to their clients is urgently needed. In this vein, business education programme equips her graduates with the right skills that enable them to engage in a life of work in the office as well as for self-employment after graduation from the training institutions. In line with aspiration, one may not be able to say how effective the business education programme has been in developing the students for the needed entrepreneurship skills. In real terms, the concern of these researchers was to establish the views of business educators on what should be the entrepreneurial competencies of business education graduates. Consequently, this study has been designed to find the views of educators on the entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research question will be used to provide answer to the study: What are the business educators' views on the entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates in Nigeria. One hypothesis will be tested: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the views of male and female business educators on the entrepreneurial competencies needed by Nigerian business education graduates.

Methods of Study

This study adopted the survey design. All the business education lecturers (66) of whom 41 were males and 24 females in the universities and colleges of Education in Edo and

Delta states of Nigeria formed the population of this study. A 23-item questionnaire titled “Entrepreneurial Competencies Needed by Business Education Graduates Questionnaire” (ECNBEGQ) was designed for data collection. Respondents were asked to rate each of the items on a four-point scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) 4; Agree (A) 3; Disagree (D) 2; and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1. The instrument was validated by three experienced research scholars in the field of Business Education from the University of Benin, Benin City and Delta State University, Abraka. A split-half method was used with a pilot group of 10 lecturers to derive the reliability coefficient of 0.86 using the Spearman Brown formula. The researchers administered the questionnaire with a research assistant who was specifically coached and instructed on the manner in which the instrument was to be administered. The completed questionnaire was returned within 2 weeks of administration. On the whole, all the 66 pack of questionnaire (100%) was returned and used to carry out the analysis. The data gathered from the study were analysed using the mean (\bar{X}), standard deviation (SD) and t-test. For research question 1, the mean and standard deviation were used as statistical tools. The mean of 2.5 was regarded as “Disagree” while a mean response on or above 2.5 was regarded as “Agree”. For research question 2, the null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance such that any calculated t-test value less than 1.96 ($P < 0.05$) was regarded as “insignificant” and any calculated t-test value of 1.96 or above at 0.05 level of significance ($P > 0.05$) was regarded as “significant”.

Findings

Research Question 1: What are the business educators’ views on the entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates in Nigeria?

Results

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation scores of views on entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates

Results

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S/No	Competency Statement	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation	Decision
	Enterprising Key Skills			
1	Ability to be resourceful and creative	3.01	0.78	Needed
2	Ability to redefine 'risk' as opportunities to make use of the expertise	2.85	0.92	Needed
3	Ability to motivate self and others under one's circle of influence	3.00	1.15	Needed
4	Ability to acquire proprietorship and high productivity skills	3.75	1.08	Needed
5	Developing skills for effective utilization of the profit for the growth and development of the firm	3.14	0.89	Needed
6	Ability to look for opportunities	3.12	1.03	Needed
7	Ability to develop a reputation for being the kind of person who is always looking for ways to do things better and faster Management Skills	3.08	1.19	Needed
8	Ability to plan, organize and manage small-scale or medium scale business	2.89	1.14	Needed
9	Ability to source for fund for the running of a small-scale business	3.16	0.78	Needed
10	Ability to develop skills of keeping the accounting records of small-scale businesses	2.95	0.98	Needed
11	Acquiring skills for effective supervision and coordination of both human and material resources	3.16	0.91	Needed
12	Ability to develop broad-based investment planning and implementation skills	3.00	1.25	Needed
13	Ability to apply integrating business skills	3.11	0.88	Needed
14	Ability to have constant alertness to market changes and technical trends	3.18	1.02	Needed

15	Ability to maintain business ethics	2.98	1.00	Needed
16	Ability to interpret market information	3.02	0.90	Needed
<i>Human Public Relation Skills</i>				
17	Ability to develop good customer orientation for effective operation of relation network	3.45	1.01	Needed
18	Ability to identify new services and new approaches for exploring the target market	3.13	0.82	Needed
19	Ability to identify and apply new technologies to solve customer problems in different ways	2.95	1.26	Needed
20	Ability to find a business location which is more convenient for customers	3.44	0.68	Needed
21	Ability to communicate and persuade customers, clients, suppliers, competitors, service providers and stakeholders in the business environment	3.45	1.00	Needed
22	Ability to handle apprehension and requirements of clients	3.22	1.06	Needed
23	Ability to establish linkages with other business persons and stakeholders for mutual learning and collaborative undertakings	3.18	0.90	Needed

In response to research question one Table 1 shows that all the respondents agreed that the 23 identified competencies are needed by business education graduates for developing entrepreneurial competencies. The mean scores ranged from 2.85 to 3.75.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the views of male and female business educators on the entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates in Nigeria

Table 2: t-test score of significant difference between male and female business educators

Group	N	X	SD	DF	Calculated t-test value	Criterion value	Decision
Male Business Educators	41	3.10	0.76				
Female Business Educators	25	2.86	0.82	64	1.374	1.960	N.S.

Table 2 shows that the calculated t-test value of 1.374 is less than the criterion figure of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance to accept the null hypothesis of no significant difference. This in other words, means that the views of both the male and female business educators on the entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates in Nigeria are the same.

Discussion

The analysis of data on table 1 indicates that the respondents agreed that all the 23 identified competency skills are viewed as areas where training is required for effective business teacher programme. This finding is supported by Anao (1986) and Ubulom (2003) who stated that enterprising key skills, management skills and human public relations skills are necessary competencies needed by all business education graduates. According to the Joint Committee of the National Business Office Education Division of the American Vocational Association (1990), business education is a broad, comprehensive discipline whose instructional programme among others, encompasses the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed by all citizens in order to effectively manage their personal business and economic system. In the view point of Inegbenebor (2006), the functions the entrepreneur is expected to perform in a business enterprise include (i) perception and identification of business opportunities; (ii) selection of the legal form of the enterprise, and obtaining the necessary licenses, permits and approvals; (iii) identification, selection and acquisition of key resources; (iv) innovation; (v) risk bearing; and (vi) management of the on-going enterprise. Ojo and Uwameiye (2005) opined that the survival of any society is determined by its ability to inculcate its values and attitudes to its younger population through the school curriculum. Good school curricula often strives to devise means of transmitting the younger children in order to acquire knowledge, skills, and ethical values to be able to face their daily challenges. An educational system which will help the young people in Nigeria to develop a mind set on creation of jobs for themselves in small, medium or large enterprises, may just be the solution in the right direction. Consequently, if unemployment among today's youths and graduates must be taken care of, then the various entrepreneurship education have to be oriented towards self-employment without having to rely on government for salaried jobs. The development of entrepreneurial competencies will include: inculcating in the business education students those personal qualities that form the basis for entrepreneurship such as creativity, spirit of initiatives, responsibility, capacity for confronting risks and inadequacies. This view is corroborated by Uwameiye (2003) who posited that the entrepreneurs are not born but nurtured. With such early exposure to entrepreneurial competencies, the youths and business education graduates develop a mind set for creating jobs instead of seeking for the non-existent jobs.

Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference between the views held by male and female business educators on the entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates. This is as a result of the fact that business education is both present and future-oriented, comprising knowledge, competencies and values which will enable the student understand himself/herself in relation to his/her society.

Conclusion

This study reveals the business educators' view on the fact that the development of entrepreneurial competencies among Nigerian business education undergraduates is the panacea to solving the problem of unemployment and poverty among youths in the nation. The identified competencies include the enterprising key skills, management

skills and public relation skills. Arising from the findings, the need for all the pre-service and in-service business education graduates to acquire relevant entrepreneurial competencies has been established in this paper.

Recommendations

- 1 All stakeholders in the education industry, curriculum planners and evaluators should continue to create positive awareness on the necessity of developing entrepreneurial competency culture among Nigerian undergraduates.
- 2 Government should grant soft loans to the graduates to enable them establish their various businesses as a way of tackling the unemployment problem as well as creating enabling environment that is favourable for entrepreneurship development.
- 3 As a matter of urgency, adequate and relevant instructional facilities should be provided by the government and effectively utilised during instructional process in business education. This will facilitate mastery in the various competency areas.

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