

Influence of Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition on Employability Proficiency among Business Education Graduates in Colleges of Education

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Abstract

This study examined the Influence of Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition on Employability Proficiency among Business Education Graduates in Colleges of Education in Kwara State. Two specific purposes, two research questions and two research hypotheses were formulated and tested. Survey research design was used, population for this study comprised 2,414 graduating business education students in colleges of education and 240 were used as sampled through Stratified sampling technique. The instrument used was a self-developed questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition on Employability Proficiency among Business Education Graduates Questionnaire (ESAEPBEGQ)". Part A of the instrument contained the personal data of the respondents, while part B was designed to gather information of the research questions and a four points rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 Points, High Extent (HE) = 3 Points, Low Extent (LE) = 2 Points, and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1 Point was used to elicit information from the respondents. Test-re-test was used to test the reliability of the instrument and 0.78 coefficient was obtained. 240 Copies of the questionnaire were administered on graduating business education students in the selected public colleges of education through the help of research assistants. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business education graduates on employability proficiency regarding the entrepreneurial skills acquired in colleges of education. Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it was recommended among others that there is need for adequate provision of fund by government and other relevant agencies for the acquisition of necessary equipment and facilities for the training of business education students at colleges of education.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Skills Acquisition, Employability, Proficiency, Business Education

Introduction

It is common knowledge that about 80% of graduates in most Nigerian tertiary institutions find it difficult to get employment each year. The kind of entrepreneurship education given to students in Nigerian colleges of education gives room for concern. There is general complain of inadequate funding, poor state of infrastructure in colleges and dearth of experienced entrepreneurship teachers that will cope with the challenges of the new curriculum. All these affect the realization of the objectives of entrepreneurial education. Entrepreneurship education was incorporated into the curriculum of tertiary institutions in Nigeria with the hoped that, through effective entrepreneurship education, graduates would

acquire necessary skills and knowledge needed to start and grow up new businesses. Sánchez, (2010) observed that entrepreneurship education provides graduates with a sense of independence and self-confidence, makes them to be aware of alternative career choices and provide them with knowledge that can be used to actualize new entrepreneurial opportunities.

Entrepreneurs are essential bedrock for achieving rapid economic growth of nations. Many economies of the world including Nigeria's economy owed its industrialization and technological advancement to the enthronement of entrepreneurship (Koko, 2014). Entrepreneurship according to Solomon, (2017) is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities, to establish and to run an enterprise successfully. Omolayo and Baba, (2013) viewed entrepreneurship as the act of starting a business or company, arranging business ideas and taking risks in order to make profit through the education skills acquired. The entrepreneurship spirit is a pre-requisite to an entrepreneurial society and culture. The authors noted that this spirit is required for the overall economic growth of any nation especially developing ones like Nigeria. The above assertion is in line with the views of Ojeifo, (2013) who depicted that entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual, a firm or an organization to identify an environmental change and exploit such an opportunity to produce goods and services for public consumption. According to Paul, (2015) entrepreneurship is about taking a risk; it is the process of creating new venture that did not previously exist; it is the practice of starting a new organization, especially new business; it involves creation of new wealth through implementation of new concepts. In the same vein, Alugbuo, (2013) posited that entrepreneurs are people with visions and ideas. Entrepreneurs are creative and innovative.

On the other hand Akpotowoh and Amahi, (2016) opined that the skills acquired in any of the functional areas of business related programme promotes training in entrepreneurship as well as equip graduates with requisite potentials to establish and run small businesses on their own. According to Ademiluyi, (2017) entrepreneurship skills are simply business skills which individuals acquire to enable them effectively function in the turbulent business environment as an entrepreneur or self-employed. Akinola, (2011) pointed out that it takes special skills to succeed as an entrepreneur most especially the female folks.

Skills acquisition is an ability to translate knowledge into action that results in the desired performance. Okoli, (2013) defined skills as the economic tools with which entrepreneurs acquire and solve societal problems. Essential skills have been classified into three categories namely, technical, human and conceptual skills. Technical skills are the ability to use a special proficiency or expertise relating to a method, process or procedure. Example; accountants, computer operators, typists, possess technical skills acquired through formal education. Human skill is the ability to work well in cooperation with other persons. It emerges as a spirit of trust, and enthusiasm and genuine involvement in interpersonal relationship. A person with good human skills will have a high degree of self-awareness and capacity to understand and empathize with the feelings of others. Seeing the noble work of a teacher, human skills are critical for all business education teachers. Conceptual skills are drawn heavily on one's analytical and diagnostics capacities to identify problems and opportunities, gather and interpret relevant information, and make good problem solving. For a skill to be acquired, the learner should be exposed to the relevant activities embodying the skill. Entrepreneurial skills and attributes provide benefits to society, even beyond their application to business activity. Obviously, personal qualities that are relevant to entrepreneurship such as creativity and a spirit of initiative can be useful to everyone in their working responsibilities and in their day-to-day existence. Also the relevant vocational and

business skills need to be provided to those who choose to be self-employed and or to start their own venture or might do so in the future.

Business Education is an educational programme that prepares students for entry and advancement in jobs within business and to handle their business affairs as well as to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. Osuala, (2014) defined Business Education as that aspect of vocational education, which emphasizes job competency, career preparation and work adjustments. It involves acquisition of special skills in business subject areas. Njoku, (2016) defined Business Education as an educational programme that equips individuals with functional and sustainable skills, knowledge, attitude and value that would enable the individuals operate in the environment such individuals find themselves. The technical skills basically involve the use of knowledge methods and techniques in performing the job effectively, (Okorie, 2010).

Statement of the Problems

Entrepreneurship education which is a sort of intervention programme which was introduced into Nigeria's tertiary education sub-sector in 2006 to remedy the unemployment challenge; and redirect the attention of youths/graduates towards job creation by instilling in them relevant entrepreneurial skills that will positively grow and develop the economy. The goals and objectives of the programme seem laudable and for these goals and objectives to be achieved, machinery has to be put in place. The relevance of this programme in the curriculum of all tertiary institutions in Nigeria is geared at creating an entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurial spirits in the students. Despite the introduction of entrepreneurship programme, there seems to be increase in graduates' unemployment. For instance, the unemployment rate as at 2011 was 23.9 percent but as at 2022, it has risen up to 30.4 percent. So many graduates moving around the street of major cities in search for white collar jobs which are readily not available and instead of making graduates job creators and not job seekers, since unemployment rate is high. Entrepreneurial skills and vocational/technical knowledge are targeted at unemployed graduates to become self-employed and have business creation capacity. Few once that are employed seems not proficient enough to discharge their responsibilities. It was against this background that this study examined the Influence of Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition on Employability Proficiency among Business Education Graduates in colleges of education in Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the Influence of Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition on Employability Proficiency among Business Education Graduates in Colleges of Education in Kwara State. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent entrepreneurial skills acquired by business education graduates in colleges of education influence their employability proficiency.
2. Determine the extent vocational skills acquired by business education graduates in colleges of education influence their employability proficiency.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent do entrepreneurial skills acquired by business education graduates in colleges of education influence their employability proficiency?
2. To what extent do vocational skills acquired by business education graduates in colleges of education influence their employability proficiency?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education graduates on employability proficiency regarding the entrepreneurial skills acquired in colleges of education.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education graduates on employability proficiency regarding the vocational skills acquired in colleges of education.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study, the population for the study comprised 2,414 graduating business education students in public colleges of education in Kwara State, Nigeria. The sample size used in this study consisted of 240 graduating business education students. Stratified sampling technique was used to select the sample size of 10% of the total population this is in line with Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The instrument used for this study was a self-developed questionnaire by the researchers titled “Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition on Employability Proficiency among Business Education Graduates Questionnaire (ESAEPBEGQ)”. The instrument consisted of two sections, part A and B, part A contained the personal data of the respondents, while part B was designed to gather information of the research questions and a four points rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 Points, High Extent (HE) = 3 Points, Low Extent (LE) = 2 Points, and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1 Point was used to elicit information from the respondents. To establish validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by three experts. Two from Business Education Department and one from Educational Management, all in the Faculty of Education, Kwara State University, Malete. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, copies of the questionnaire were administered to 30 Business Education students in Kwara State University, Malete who were not part of the respondents. Test-re-test was used to test the reliability of the instrument, while Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient was used to get the reliability index of 0.78. 240 Copies of the questionnaire were administered on graduating business education students in the selected public colleges of education in Kwara State through the help of research assistants. The data collected to answer the research questions for the study were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. In taking decision, a mean score of 3.50 – 4.00 was accepted as Very High Extent (VHE), Mean score of 2.50 – 3.49 was accepted as High Extent (HE), Mean Score of 1.50 – 2.49 was accepted as Low Extent (LE) while mean score of 0.50 – 1.49 was accepted as Very Low Extent (VLE). Also, the decision for the hypotheses testing was based on the fact that if the t-cal is higher than the table or critical t-value the hypotheses was rejected and if the calculated t-cal is lower than the t-crit value, the hypotheses was retained.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent do entrepreneurial skills acquired by business education graduates in colleges of education influence their employability proficiency?

Table 1:

Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Extent to which Entrepreneurial Skills Acquired by Business Education Graduates in Colleges of Education Influence Their Employability Proficiency.

S/N	Entrepreneurial Skills	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Possession of sound human relations' skills has influence in setting up entrepreneurial venture.	3.33	0.76	High Extent
2	Managerial skills acquired have influence in ensuring entrepreneurial success.	3.43	0.76	High Extent
3	Accounting and financial competency skills acquired have influence in starting and managing an entrepreneurial venture.	3.40	0.71	High Extent
4	Marketing and sales skills possessed as a result of Entrepreneurship Education has relevance in starting and managing a business venture.	3.38	0.68	High Extent
5	General business skills possessed as a result of Entrepreneurship Education has relevance in starting and managing a business venture.	3.38	0.69	High Extent
Weighted Mean		3.39	0.72	High Extent

Source: Field survey, 2024

The results in the table1 above shows that all the items on the table were rated high extent by colleges of education Business Education graduates. It is generally concluded that entrepreneurial Skills help the Business Education graduates to possessed sound human relations' skills, managerial skills, accounting and financial competency skills. Entrepreneurial Skills prepare the students for marketing and sales skills as well as general business skills to a high extent, with a grand mean of 3.39 respectively.

Research Question Two: To what extent do vocational skills acquired by business education graduates in colleges of education influence their employability proficiency?

Table 2:

Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Extent to which Vocational Skills Acquired by Business Education Graduates in Colleges of Education Influence Their Employability Proficiency

S/N	Technical Skills	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Vocational Skills prepare the students for further training in industries and for advanced business courses in institutions of higher learning.	3.32	0.97	High Extent
2	Vocational Skills help the Business Education students to acquire relevant skills in specific business subject area to make them employable after graduation.	3.14	1.06	High Extent
3	Vocational Skills help the Business Education students to diversify the business area.	3.45	0.85	High Extent

4	Vocational Skills help the Business Education students to create and develop national and international networks.	3.42	0.98	High Extent
5	Vocational Skills help the Business Education students to have an awareness and understanding of the various business occupations	3.51	0.79	High Extent
Weighted Mean		3.37	0.94	High Extent

Source: Field survey, 2024

The results in the table above shows that all the items on the table were rated high extent by colleges of education business education graduates. It is generally concluded that vocational skills help the business education graduates to diversify the business area. Vocational Skills prepare the students for further training in industries and for advanced business courses in institutions of higher learning to a high extent, with a grand mean of 3.37 respectively.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education graduates on employability proficiency regarding the entrepreneurial skills acquired in colleges of education.

Table 3:

Summary of t-test of the difference between the mean responses of male and female business education graduates on employability proficiency regarding the entrepreneurial skills acquired in colleges of education

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	p-value	Decision
Male	137	2.84	0.99	0.044	238	1.972	Accepted
Female	103	3.32	0.86				

The data in Table 3 revealed that there are 137 male and 103 female graduating students', the t-test in table 3, the calculated value is 0.044 while the t-critical value is 1.972 at 0.05 level of significance. The t-cal value is less than t-critical value, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This implies that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education graduates on employability proficiency regarding the entrepreneurial skills acquired in colleges of education in Kwara State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education graduates on employability proficiency regarding the vocational skills acquired in colleges of education.

Table 4:

Summary of t-test of the difference between the mean responses of male and female business education graduates on employability proficiency regarding the vocational skills acquired in colleges of education

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	p-value	Decision
Male	137	3.03	0.84	0.236	238	1.972	Accepted
Female	103	2.77	0.94				

From the t-test in table 4, the t-cal. value is 0.236 while the t-crit. value is 1.972 at 0.05 level of significance. The t-calculated value is less than t-crit. value, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This implies that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education graduates on employability proficiency regarding the vocational skills acquired in colleges of education in Kwara State.

Discussion of Findings

The Discussion of findings was done according to the research questions. The findings revealed that Entrepreneurial Skills acquired, help Business Education graduates to possessed sound human relations' skills, managerial skills, accounting and financial competency skills. Entrepreneurial Skills prepared students for marketing and sales skills as well as general business skills to a high extent to diversify the business area. The findings is in line with the view of Ademiluyi (2017) who opined that entrepreneurship skills are simply business skills which individuals acquired to enable them effectively function in the turbulent business environment as an entrepreneur or self-employed. Akinola (2011) asserted that, it takes special skills to succeed as an entrepreneur, most especially the female folks. In line with the above view, Okorie (2010) opined that vocational skills are specialized knowledge and expertise which is utilized in dealing with day-to-day problems and activities. For example engineers, accountants, computer programmes and system analysts all have vocational skills in their areas and these skills are acquired through education and training". These skills are highly necessary at the lower level of management and as one moves to higher levels of management the relative importance of vocational skills usually diminishes.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion made, the researchers concluded that Entrepreneurial Skills acquired, help Business Education graduates to possessed sound human relations' skills, managerial skills, accounting and financial competency skills as well as general business skills possessed as a result of Entrepreneurship Education has relevance in starting and managing a business venture. Vocational skills prepare the students for further training in industries and for advanced business courses in institutions of higher learning as well as helping the Business Education students to have an awareness and understanding of the various business occupations and generally concluded that vocational skills help the business education graduates to diversify the business area.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made

1. For the fact that entrepreneurial / skill acquisition is a capital consuming programme, there is need for adequate provision of fund by government and other relevant agencies for the acquisition of necessary equipment and facilities for the training of business education students at colleges of education.
2. Government should encourage tertiary institutions in Nigeria to establish entrepreneurial training partnership with business organizations, private investors, state and local governments and other relevant stakeholders; these will help to foster the attitude of graduates to engage in entrepreneurial activities in the country.

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