Business Education Students' Perception of the Skills Needed for Self-Employment in South-West Colleges of Education, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated business education students' perception of the skills needed for self-employment in south-west Nigeria colleges of education. Two research questions were raised to guide the study while two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was 2,682 year III NCE business education students of the Federal and State owned colleges of education in South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria.

The sample for the study was 348 year III NCE Business Education students of the government owned colleges of education. The instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaire titled Self-Employment Skills Questionnaire (SESQ). Three experts validated the instrument. Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument in which 0.85 reliability coefficient was obtained. Mean, standard deviation and percentages were employed to analyze data for answering research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

The study found that Business Education students needed skills such as time management skills and self-motivation skills for self-employment and national development. The hypotheses tested indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of business education students on the interpersonal related skills and human resource management related skills needed for self-employment. It was recommended among others that instructional delivery should be more of practical so as to avail the Business Education students with the opportunity of practicing the skills taught them by their lecturers.

(Keywords: business education, self-employment, skills, students and perception).

INTRODUCTION

The College of Education is an educational institution established to prepare individuals to become professionally trained teachers and individuals who will be able to be productive in the society. At this stage of education, one of the programs offered is Business Education which prepares its recipients for the teaching profession, to undertake jobs in industry, and/or creation of a venture that is owned, managed and controlled by the recipients after graduation. The ability to create self-ventures is as a result of necessary skills which would have been imparted to the trainees during the program in the institutions. The growth and development of the economy depends largely on the kind of skills that the graduates of educational institutions are equipped with (Owenvbiugie and Ediagbonya, 2014). At the completion of Business Education program in colleges of education, it is expected that the objectives for which Business Education program is organized must have been achieved by the individuals and leading to the award of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE).

Business education is a program of study which offers students who wish to pursue a career in business an opportunity to develop skills, abilities and understanding that will enable them to enter, perform and progress in business occupation

after graduating from high school or the university (Ebinga, 2014).

Osuala (2004) asserted that business education is a program of instruction which consists of two parts: office education is education for office careers through initial, refresher and upgrading education and general business education program that provide students with information and competencies which are needed by all in managing personal business affairs and in using the services of business. Business Education could be viewed as that type of education that is designed to be inculcated in individual persons or trainees or students skills necessary for usefulness of such persons to successfully operate on his or her own and be self-sufficient in the world of work.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2014) viewed skill as the acquisition of practical competencies, know-how and attitudes necessary to perform a trade or occupation in the labor market. A skill is the learned ability to carry out a task with pre-determined results often within a given amount of time, energy, or both (Gordon, 2018). Skills can often be divided into domain-general and domain-specific skills. In the domain of work, some general skills would include time management, teamwork and leadership, self-motivation and others, whereas domain-specific skills would be used only for a certain job. A skill therefore is the dexterity with which a person discharges or performs a task or duty diligently and in conformity with the expectation.. Skills such as interpersonal related skills and human resource management related skills could aid development of individuals in the society.

Interpersonal skills are the skills used by a person to interact with others properly. In the business domain, the term generally refers to an employee's ability to get along with others while getting the job done. Interpersonal skills include everything from communication and listening skills to attitude and deportment (Investopedia, 2018). Human resource management skills on the other hand are the skills required of a business owner to be able to control and ensure that people perform the task within their best capacity as individuals and to work well with others. Such skills are therefore necessary for creation and sustenance of self-employment in any nation. To be able to successfully manage the people and resources of any venture, the requisite skills of human resource

management have to be supported with financial skills so that a lot of financial resources are not wasted in the course of managing resources in a business environment. Anyone who is vast in skill is expected to be on self-employment

Self-employment is synonymous to self-reliance. A self-employed person is self-reliant. Self-employment is a situation in which an individual works for himself instead of working for an employer that pays a salary or a wage (Investopedia, 2018). A self-employed individual earns his income through conducting profitable operations from a trade or business that he operates directly. According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2018), Self-employment is defined as the employment of employers, workers who work for themselves, members of producers' co-operatives, and unpaid family workers. The latter are unpaid in the sense that they lack a formal contract to receive a fixed amount of income at regular intervals, but they share in the income generated by the enterprise.

Unpaid family workers are particularly important in farming and retail trade. Self-Employment could therefore be operationally described as having to do with individuals carrying out businesses or managing enterprises either by employing others or not for the purpose of providing for one's self and one's immediate family and thereby promoting economic well-being of one's self and as well contribute to national development. Achieving the self-employment and or self-reliance among the graduates of business education has become a widespread problem in the society. This is underline by the alarming rate of graduates who are roaming the streets in search of white-collar jobs that are rarely available. One would be faced with the question of what gets what wrong and where? Hence the study sought to investigate business education students' perception of the skills needs for self-employment in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate business education students' perception of the skills needed for self-employment in Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined:

1. interpersonal related skills needed by business education students in colleges of education for self-employment.

2. human resource management related skills needed by business education students in colleges of education for self-employment.
Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the interpersonal related skills needed by business education students in colleges of education for self-employment?

2. What are the human resource management related skills needed by business education students in colleges of education for self-employment?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the interpersonal related skills needed by business education students of colleges of education for self-employment based on their gender (male and female).

2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the human resource management related skills needed by business education students of colleges of education for self-employment based on their institution type (federal and state).

METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive survey design. The study was conducted in South West, Nigeria. The population for this study consisted of 2,682 NCE III Business Education students of the Federal and State-owned colleges of education in South-West, Nigeria. The population was made up of 1,081 male students and 1,601 female students. There were 12 government owned colleges of education in South-West geopolitical zone. Out of this number, four are Federal owned colleges of education while the remaining eight are state owned colleges of education.

The sample for the study was 348 NCE III Business Education students of the government owned colleges of education in South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria. The sample was arrived at by using Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. Proportionate stratified sampling technique was used in drawing the sample from each of the colleges. The instrument used for the study was titled Self-Employment Skills Questionnaire (SESQ) developed by the researcher.

The SESQ consisted of two parts, 1 and 2. Part 1 focused on respondents' demographic data while part 2 was made up of two sections, A and B based on the two research questions. The instrument consisted of 20 items in part 2. A with 10 items focused on interpersonal related skills to address research question1, B also with 10 items focused human resource management related skills to answer research question 2.

The instrument was on 5-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA, 5), Agree (A, 4), Undecided (UD, 3), Disagree (DA, 2) and Strongly Disagree (SA, 1). The instrument was validated by two experts from Department of Science Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka and one expert from the Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Corrections were accordingly affected.

The reliability of the instrument was determined through application of Cronbach Alpha statistical method and a reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained. The instrument was administered on the respondents by the researcher and research assistants. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation was used to determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondent's views while t-test inferential statistics was employed to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Percentages for each item as responded to by the respondents were determined. 50% and above were taken to mean "agreement" while any item that resulted to less than 50% of respondent's opinions was regarded as "disagreement".

The response options were summarized into "agree and disagree". Null hypothesis was rejected where p-value was less than or equal to 0.05 level of significance, hypothesis was not rejected where p-value obtained was greater than 0.05.

RESULTS

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Interpersonal Related Skills Needed by Business Education Students in Colleges of Education for Self-Employment.

N=348

S/N	Items Statement	Mean	SD	%A	%D	Remarks
1.	Ability to listen attentively	4.44	0.90	88.51	11.49	Agree
2.	Ability to render supportive services to the customers	4.30	1.06	86.21	13.79	Agree
3.	Ability to take decisions based on the available facts	4.27	0.90	83.05	16.95	Agree
4.	Ability to delegate authority to employees	4.20	0.93	79.60	20.40	Agree
5.	Ability to interact with people openly and fairly	4.03	1.06	78.45	21.55	Agree
6.	Ability to encourage innovation	3.84	1.12	67.24	32.76	Agree
7.	Ability to control emotions and situations as the need arises.	3.99	0.99	70.11	29.89	Agree
8.	Being sensitive to the needs of others empathetically	4.11	0.99	75.29	24.71	Agree
9.	Ability to handle team conflict	4.23	0.86	80.17	19.83	Agree
10.	Ability to handle customer's grievances	4.31	0.91	77.87	22.13	Agree
Grand Mean		**4.17**	**0.97**			**Agree**

Key: SD= Standard Deviation, VHN= Very Highly Needed, HN= Highly Needed,
MN= Moderately Needed, LN= Lowly Needed, NN= Not Needed

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Human Resource Management Related Skills Needed by Business Education Students in Colleges of Education for Self-Employment.

N=348

S/N	Items Statement	Mean	SD	%A	%D	Remarks
11.	Ability to handle confidential information with appropriately	4.30	0.96	81.61	18.39	Agree
12.	Ability to recruit right persons at the right positions	4.11	0.95	80.46	19.54	Agree
13.	Ability to think clearly	4.20	0.96	81.03	18.97	Agree
14.	Ability to coordinate human and nonhuman factors in business	4.27	0.87	86.78	13.22	Agree
15.	Ability to get employee updated in line with new knowledge of task handling through training	4.24	0.84	82.76	17.24	Agree
16.	Ability to be self-disciplined	4.12	1.11	77.30	22.70	Agree
17.	Ability to determine when to seek professional help	4.07	1.01	76.15	23.85	Agree
18.	Ability to enforce management policies on employees	4.04	1.05	69.83	30.17	Agree
19.	Ability to manage and resolve conflict	4.12	1.02	76.72	23.28	Agree
20.	Ability to maintain follow up among employees towards attainment of goals	4.05	1.01	76.72	23.28	Agree
Grand Mean		**4.15**	**0.98**			**Agree**

Key: SD= Standard Deviation, VHN= Very Highly Needed, HN= Highly Needed,
MN= Moderately Needed, LN= Lowly Needed, NN= Not Needed

Table 1 presents the mean ratings of respondents on the interpersonal related skills needed by Business Education students of Colleges of Education for self-employment. All the items recorded mean scores ranging from 3.84 to 4.44 indicating that the respondents needed interpersonal related skills. Standard deviation ranges from 0.86-1.11 indicating that the respondents were not far from one another in their opinions.

The percentages of the respondents who agreed on the interpersonal related skills needed were 88.51%, 86.21%, 83.05%, 79.60%, 78.45%, 67.24%, 70.11%, 75.29%, 80.17% and 77.87% respectively while the percentages of the respondents who disagreed on the interpersonal related skills needed were `17.53%, 11.49%, 13.79%, 16.95%, 20.40%, 21.55%, 32.76%, 29.89%, 24.71%, 19.83% and 22.13% respectively. The grand mean of 4.17 and standard deviation of 0.97 showed that Business Education students of colleges of education needed interpersonal related skills for self-employment and national development.

Table 2 reveals the mean ratings of respondents on the human resource management related skills needed by Business Education students of Colleges of Education for self-employment. All the items recorded mean scores ranging from 4.03 to 4.30 indicating needed.

Table 3: Summary of t-Test Analysis between the Mean Responses of Male and Female Business Education Students Regarding the Interpersonal Related Skills Needed for Self-Employment.

N= 348, (Male=140; Female=208)

S/N	Items Statement	$\overline{X_1}$	SD₁	$\overline{X_2}$	SD₂	df	t-cal	Sig.	Remarks
1.	Ability to listen attentively	4.73	.49	4.24	1.05	346	5.19	.00	S
2.	Ability to render supportive services to the customers	4.56	.63	4.10	1.23	346	4.28	.00	S
3.	Ability to take decisions based on the available facts	4.40	.77	4.19	0.97	346	2.18	.03	S
4.	Ability to delegate authority to employees	4.39	.72	4.07	1.03	346	3.13	.00	S
5.	Ability to interact with people openly and fairly	4.12	.85	3.98	1.17	346	1.22	.22	NS
6.	Ability to encourage innovation	4.00	.94	3.73	1.21	346	2.26	.03	S
7.	Ability to control emotions and situations as the need arises.	4.14	.83	3.88	1.06	346	2.41	.02	S
8.	Being sensitive to the needs of others empathetically	4.23	.82	4.02	1.08	346	2.01	.05	S
9.	Ability to handle team conflict	4.34	.76	4.16	0.92	346	1.88	.06	NS
10.	Ability to handle customer's grievances	4.57	.67	4.13	0.99	346	4.61	.00	S

Key: X₁= Mean of male business education students of Colleges of Education in South-West, X2 = Mean of female business education students of Colleges of Education in South-West, SD1= Standard Deviation of male business education students of Colleges of Education in South-West, SD2= Standard Deviation of female business education students of Colleges of Education in South-West, Df= degree of freedom, Sig.= probability value (2 tailed), t-cal= calculated values of t-test, S= significant, NS= Not Significant.

Table 4: Summary of t-Test Analysis between the Mean Responses of Business Education Students of Federal and State Colleges of Education Regarding the Human Resource Management Related Skills Needed for Self-Employment.

N= 348, (Federal=125; State=223)

S/N	Items Statement	$\overline{X_1}$	SD₁	$\overline{X_2}$	SD₂	df	t-cal	Sig.	Remarks
11.	Ability to handle confidential information with appropriately	4.42	.84	4.23	1.02	346	1.78	.08	NS
12.	Ability to recruit right persons at the right positions	4.12	.81	4.10	1.03	346	0.16	.88	NS
13.	Ability to think clearly	4.22	.88	4.20	0.99	346	0.18	.86	NS
14.	Ability to coordinate human and nonhuman factors in business	4.24	.85	4.29	0.89	346	0.60	.98	NS
15.	Ability to get employee updated in line with new knowledge of task handling through training	4.22	.96	4.25	0.77	346	0.33	.75	NS
16.	Ability to be self-disciplined	4.18	1.03	4.08	1.15	346	0.83	.41	NS
17.	Ability to determine when to seek professional help	4.21	.85	3.99	1.07	346	1.89	.06	NS
18.	Ability to enforce management policies on employees	4.14	.91	3.98	1.11	346	1.42	.15	NS
19.	Ability to manage and resolve conflict	4.09	.98	4.14	1.04	346	0.45	.65	NS
20.	Ability to maintain follow up among employees towards attainment of goals	4.17	.90	3.99	1.06	346	1.57	.12	NS

Key: X₁= Mean of business education students of Federal Colleges of Education in South-West, X2 = Mean of business education students of State Colleges of Education in South-West, SD1= Standard Deviation of business education students of Federal Colleges of Education in South-West, SD2= Standard Deviation of business education students of State Colleges of Education in South-West, Df= degree of freedom, Sig.= probability value (2 tailed), t-cal= calculated values of t-test, S= significant, NS= Not Significant.

Standard deviation ranges from 0.84-1.11 indicating that the respondents were not far from one another in their opinions. The percentages of the respondents who agreed on the human resource related skills needed were 81.61%, 80.46%, 81.03%, 86.78%,82.76%, 77.30%, 76.15%, 69.83%, 76.72%, and 76.72% respectively. conversely, the percentages of the respondents who disagreed on the human resource related skills needed were 18.39%, 19.54%, 18.97%, 13.22%, 17.24%, 22.70%, 23.85%30.17%, 23.28% and 23.28, respectively.

The grand mean of 4.15 and standard deviation of 0.98 indicated that Business Education students of colleges of education need human resource management related skills for self-employment and national development.

Table 3 shows each of the calculated t-values and p-values for items 21-30. Only items 25 and 29 have their p-values greater than the level of significance (0.05). However, since the p-values of the remaining 8 items (21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27,

28 and 30) are less than the level of significance, there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. This implies that there was significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the interpersonal related skills needed by business education students of colleges of education for self-employment based on their gender (male and female).

Table 4 shows each of the calculated t-values and p-values for items 31-40. All the items (31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40) have their p-values greater than the level of significance (0.05), there is enough evidence not to accept the null hypothesis. This implies that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the human resource management related skills needed by business education students of colleges of education for self-employment based on their institution type (federal and state).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results in Table 1 showed that Business Education students of colleges of education needed interpersonal related skills. The skills areas include ability to listen attentively, ability to render supportive services to the customers, ability to take decisions based on the available facts, ability to delegate authority to employees, ability to interact with people openly and fairly, ability to encourage innovation, ability to control emotions and situations as the need arises, being sensitive to the needs of others empathetically, ability to handle team conflict and ability to handle customers grievances. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Agomuo (2006) who found that medial communication skill and knowledge were required of senior secondary school business studies graduates. The result is also in agreement with the findings of Ezenwafor and Olaniyi (2017) who found that human relation skills were highly needed by Business Education graduates to succeed in self-employment and contribute to entrepreneurial development.

The results of the analysis in Table 3 showed that only items 25 and 29 out of 10 items on interpersonal related skills had their p-values greater than the level of significance (0.05). This indicated that there was significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education students regarding interpersonal related skills needed for self-employment based on their gender. Also, the

results of the analysis in Table 3 revealed that only items 1, 2, 4, and 10 out of 10 items had their p-values less than the level of significance value (0.05). This implies that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education students regarding interpersonal related skills needed for self-employment based on the institution type. This finding is in line with Ezenwafor and Olaniyi (2017) who found that gender does not have significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education graduates regarding human relation skills needed for self-employment.

The results of the analysis in Table 2 showed that all the items 31-40 were rated as being needed by the respondents. Business Education students rated as needed the human resource related skills which range from ability to handle confidential information with appropriately, ability to recruit right persons at the right positions, ability to think clearly, ability to coordinate human and nonhuman factors in business, ability to get employee updated in line with new knowledge of task handling through training, ability to get employee updated in line with new knowledge of task handling through training, ability to be self-disciplined, ability to determine when to seek professional help, ability to enforce management policies on employees, ability to manage and resolve conflict and ability to maintain follow up among employees towards attainment of goals. The result of this finding is in agreement with Ekankumo, Komebaradikumo and Braye (2011) who found that human resource management related skills are required by tertiary institution administrators in the Niger Delta States of Nigeria.

The results of the analysis in Table 4 showed that only items 31, 37, and 40 had their p-values less than 0.05 level of significance while other items 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, and 39 had their p-values greater than the level of significance. This means that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education students regarding the financial management related skills needed for self-employment and national development based on their gender. Also, the results of the analysis in Table 4 showed that all the items in respect of human resource related skills had their p-values greater than the level of significance. This equally revels that the respondents were not significantly different in their opinions regarding the human related skills needed for self-employment and national

development based on their institution type. The findings of this study lends credence to the study conducted by Ekankumo, Komebaradikumo and Braye (2011) who found that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of tertiary institutions administrators on skills for human resource management.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the business education students agreed to the skills identified in the study as needed. This means that the respondents concluded that interpersonal related skills and human resource management related skills were needed for self-employment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Instructional delivery should be more of practical so as to avail the Business Education students with the opportunity of practicing the skills taught them by their lecturers.

2. Business Education students should be exposed to practical handling of business activities through periodical excursions to companies, accounting and audit firms and other related businesses that would offer them the relevant dexterity

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