

OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION COMPETENCY REQUIRED FOR JOB CREATION BY BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN BAYELSA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of opportunity recognition competency required for job creation by business education students in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. The study was anchored on the theory of skill acquisition. A descriptive survey research design was used to carry out the study. The population of the study consisted of 499 undergraduates in business education from the three tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. A simple random sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 222 undergraduates, which was derived using Taro Yemen's sampling formula. The Opportunity recognition Competency and Job Creation Questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated and tested for reliability, with a reliability index of 0.975 derived through Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistic. Out of the 222 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 219 copies were retrieved and used for further analysis. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions, while the null hypotheses were tested using the independent t-test at the 0.05 significance level. The findings of the study revealed, among others, that there is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female students on the extent to which opportunity recognition competency is required for job creation. The study concluded that business education students in tertiary institutions should be trained to understand opportunities and make plans so that they can create jobs. The study, therefore, recommended, among others, that Business education lecturers should be able to expose students to how to recognize business opportunities so that they can make plans so that they can create jobs when they graduate, and Business education curriculum planners should incorporate the programs into the business education curriculum to aid students in the formalization of business so that they will understand opportunities and make plans when they graduate.

Keywords: Opportunity Recognition Competency, Job Creation, Business Education, Lecturer

INTRODUCTION

Business opportunities abound almost around us, but the challenge has always been how to turn these opportunities into the productive and remunerative ones that people can look forward to in the future. As much as finance is one of the significant factors required for job creation, it is not enough on its own to create sustainable jobs, but competency are the sine qua non for any entrepreneur to create the required enterprises. These skills are presumably learned through entrepreneurship education, which is a core component of business education, introduced because, business education alone lacked many of the values and capabilities it was intended to teach. But unfortunately, most of the tertiary education systems and entrepreneurs do not take cognizance of this key role that entrepreneurship education has to play in the business education curriculum. This lack of awareness on the part of business educators can be attributed to the higher educational content and curriculum, which are very specific and close to set requirements; therefore, it seems that entrepreneurship education has become somewhat redundant.

The issue of unemployment among graduates, especially those of business education, can be considered another reason for the dearth of entrepreneurship education. Graduate unemployment has become a peculiar phenomenon in Nigeria, partly due to the vagueness and overemphasis on

certificates, grades, and qualifications rather than the acquisition of technical and vocational skills that are in line with the needs of the labour market. Today, the complaint from many employers of labour about graduates seeking employment is common. Many employers are of the view that graduates lack the required skills necessary to face the challenges of the modern business environment. This further shows that the aim of vocational training and enhancement is overlooked by the system, which continues to rely on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, failing to recognize that the only reasonable future for graduates lies in technical and vocational skills. Okereke and Okoroafor (2011) asserted that entrepreneurial competency skills have been acknowledged as potent and viable tools for self-empowerment, job creation, and economic survival. The foregoing assertion raises questions about the extent of entrepreneurship competency among business education students, and the extent to which the acquired entrepreneurship competency enhance job creation among business education students. Apparently, business education as a discipline is designed to turn out knowledgeable and skilful graduates who will succeed in teaching, office work, or entrepreneurship. However, it is surprising and at the same time disappointing that many graduates of business education are circling curriculum vitae in search of scanty employment opportunities because they appear not to adequately possess entrepreneurship competency for self-employment. This makes it imperative to assess the extent of the influence of entrepreneurship competency required for job creation by business education students in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of opportunity recognition competency required for job creation by business education students in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine whether opportunity recognition competency is required for job creation by business education students in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent is opportunity recognition competency required for job creation by business education students in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated and was tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the extent to which opportunity recognition competency is required for job creation by business education students based on the tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

Concept of Competency

Competency, according to Adameji (2014), means the ability to be a competent, adequate possessor of required skills and knowledge; qualification, or capacity; competency in a cogent term that reflects the ability to do something in contrast with the more traditional ability to demonstrate knowledge. Competency reflects the ability to do something, in contrast with the more traditional ability to demonstrate knowledge. Competency can be described as the sum total of all skills and knowledge needed by a teacher to be successful in teaching. According to Golman, Boyatzis, and Mckee (2002), competency is the underlying characteristics of an individual that relate to effective or superior performance in a job. It is a skill that leads to superior performance.

Competency denotes one's 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 works.

According to Munro (2007), competence is defined as the ability to combine and apply relevant attributes to particular tasks in particular contexts. These attributes include high levels of knowledge, values, skills, personal disposition, sensitivities, and capabilities, and the ability to put those combinations into practice in an appropriate way. Competence indicates the sufficiency of knowledge and skills that enables someone to act in a wide variety of situations. Because each level of responsibility has its own requirements, competence can occur at any period of a person's life or at any stage of his or her career. Competence is the capacity of a person to understand a situation and to act reasonably. Competence is the ability to do something successfully or efficiently (Schulz, 2008).

Opportunity recognition: Identification of Opportunities – While opportunity recognition is often considered to be a critical step in the entrepreneurial process, limited empirical research has been conducted about this process (Ucbasaran et al., 2011). This involves the ability to see and envision various opportunities within the market and technological environment. "The Sensing dimension is about seeing or envisioning market and technological opportunities, within as well as beyond the confines of an industry, as in the case of cross-boundary disruptors"

Sensing existing opportunities can emanate from people within an organization such as lower managers or employees and also from various units within an organization. It can also emanate from people in the external environment of the organization such as customers and suppliers. Users have been found a frequent source of new opportunities identification (Shah & Tripsas, 2007).

An opportunity is a chance to initiate a productive change that will be wanted by others. According to Bodell, et al. (2011), Entrepreneurial opportunities have a variety of characteristics and lead to a variety of outcomes. Opportunity features, the authors said; exist within a specific time frame; they are easy or difficult to detect; have a limited market potential; are unrecognisable by others and are linked to other opportunities. Opportunity trials the authors maintain are also: spotting a trend; changes in taste and preferences; changes in perception, which are sometimes mistakes, accidents, failures, and surprises; changes in technology; the changes in business cycles and/or political leadership; are demographic changes and opportunity evolve from chaos.

Concept of Job Creation

The term "job," as used in this study, refers to devoting one's labor time to achieving economic tasks. Two types of jobs are identified in this study: employment jobs and entrepreneurial jobs. An employment job is a contractual arrangement between an employer and an employee that specifies work for pay. In contrast, an entrepreneurial job is a self-created position for exerting one's own efforts directly into business creation. Creating a job as an entrepreneur is a function of the ability an individual has to learn how to think of what is lacking in an environment. The ability to provide or supply to the environment is what makes an individual an entrepreneur and job creator.

Entrepreneurship is so much more than just learning to run your own business. It is an approach to life that involves thinking of yourself as a can-do person. After all, if you can start your own business, you can do just about anything (Steve, 2006). Even when working for others, one can still think like an entrepreneur. How? Always look for opportunities to learn new skills and take on new responsibilities, demonstrate to your employers that you understand business and are working to improve the country's profitability (Mariotti, 2006).

Job creation is important to the wellbeing of an economy and has become an urgent national priority following the recent financial crisis. Not all jobs are counted. The official number of jobs includes payroll jobs and multiple jobholders but excludes self-employed entrepreneurs and unpaid workers in business startups (Bowler & Morisi, 2006). Job creation has emerged as the single most

critical economic challenge facing the world today. Anxiety over employment problems and pessimism over the prospects for solving them prevail in many parts of the world. According to Anyadike, Emeh, and Ukah (2012), job creation has emerged as the single most critical economic challenge facing the world today.

Creating a job as an entrepreneur is a function of an individual's ability to learn how to strategically scan the environment in order to identify immediate societal needs and possibly provide the necessary solutions. In the attempt to provide the needed solutions to societal problems, processes are set in motion, and it is the processes put in motion that open up the opportunities for engagement of human effort called job creation. Jobs are said to be created when firms are established by entrepreneurs and require people with the requisite skills to apply for existing vacant positions. As Tijani-Alawiye (2004) observes, entrepreneurs successfully run innovative enterprises, nurture them to grow and sustain them, with a view to achieving broad socio-economic development goals. In essence, entrepreneurs, through entrepreneurial development, create job opportunities.

A different approach towards achieving inclusive growth, which is generating interest within the development community, is the idea of job creation as a *means* to economic growth rather than an *end*. This innovative approach recognizes the fact that successive increases in value addition by economic agents and other factor inputs (conditional on taxes and subsidies) is the underpinning of economic growth; thus, growth in employment of productive factors would lead to economic growth. Therefore, attention is being shifted towards examining innovative ways of creating jobs and sectors that offer outstanding job potential in order to achieve more inclusive economic growth.

Entrepreneurship Competency of Business Education Students

Aquah (2018) 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 (2018) 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. One of the aims of Business Education is to produce graduates that are equipped with vocational skills and competency required in modern offices and schools, but the relevance of Business Education classrooms and laboratories in this regard are questionable. But this aim could be achieved when Business Education classroom and laboratories are modified to suit modern offices and schools' technological needs. To buttress the above, Amoor (2008) opined that graduates of Business Education have problems in using technology in a work environment due to their inadequate exposure to information system and incompetency in modern office technology and other rudiments of managing modern offices. This incompetency is caused due to students' inability to use them (ICT) when they were in tertiary institutions as undergraduates in learning. In line with the above, Achilike (2012) posited that Business Education studios and laboratories should be enhanced to equip students of the programme with relevant ICT skills expected of its learners. These skills include: telecommuting, e-cottage, storing and forwarding of voice system, teleconferencing, computer output microfilm, facsimile etc. These skills will help them in handling assignment, writing ICT-based examination, presenting seminars, effective in research and also packaging messages, disseminating message and receiving messages in modern offices.

Business education inculcates in its recipients entrepreneurial skills. Skills do not depend solely upon a person's fundamental, innate capacities but must be developed through training, practice and experience an individual acquires. According to Bolt-Lee and Foster (2003), skill is the art of possessing the ability, power, authority, or competence to do the task requires of an individual on

the job. An entrepreneur who will succeed in business required a synergy of skills. Successful entrepreneurs become successful because they invest time and resources to develop their entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurship is simply the willingness and ability of individuals or group of persons to search for investment opportunities, establish and run business units successfully. The need to stay connected to the rest of the world and ability to transact business online and make payments make it imperative for an entrepreneur to acquire ICT skills. Oyelola, et al. (2013) stated that development of entrepreneurial skills married with excellent knowledge of information and communication technology (ICT) is an additional key to entrepreneurial successes.

Theory of Skill Acquisition by Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus (1986)

The study of skill acquisition all over the world draws from the early works of Professor Stuart Dreyfus, a Mathematician and Professor Hubert Dreyfus, a philosopher-from their study of chess players and pilots. Dreyfus Hubert and Dreyfus Stuart in 1986 propounded the theory of skill acquisition which states that formal system of deduction is a gradual process that involves being embodied in different ways and developing skills that would make it possible for people to deal with the world. The main idea behind Dreyfus and Dreyfus's skill development theories is the distinction they made between "knowing that" and "knowing how." The knowing-how and knowing-that is considered one concept, which is acquired through a formal system of deduction. Dreyfus and Dreyfus in the article "Five stages from Novice to expert," stated that human beings acquire skills through instruction and experiences, they do not appear to leap suddenly from rule-guided "knowing that" to experience-based knowing-how. Hubert and Stuart believe that there is a gradual process involved for a student to go through in order to reach the stage of expertise or knowing-how. Their skill acquisition process shows that a student goes through at least five stages of different knowledge of a specific task and ways of decision-making as he improves his skill. These five stages are novice, advanced beginner, competence, proficiency, and expertise. This assertion holds true in a business education programme where several courses, both theoretical and practical, are taught to the students, who before now had little or no knowledge about such courses. This assumption relates to the study as follows:

- i. Novice stage
- ii. Advanced beginner stage
- iii. Competent stage
- iv. Proficient stage
- v. Expert stage
- vi.

a. Novice Stage:

In the novice level, beginners have no experience with the situations in which they are expected to perform tasks. In order to give them entry to these situations, they are taught about them in terms of objective attributes. These attributes are features of the task that can be recognized without situational experience. Novice practitioners are also taught rules to guide action in respect to different attributes. Dreyfus and Dreyfus stated that a novice has some general ideas and is in the process of learning the rules, with no responsibility beyond following the rules exactly. The heart of the difficulty that the novice faces is the inability to use discretionary judgment. Since novices have no experience with the situation they face, they must use context-free rules to guide their task performance. The business education student at the tertiary level is exposed to basic principles of potentials and other related introductory knowledge, which will prepare him/her higher level skills.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of this study consisted of four hundred and ninety-nine (499) final-year students of business education from three tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. They include Niger Delta University Yenagoa, Federal

University Otuoke, and Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education. The sample of the study consisted of 222 business education final year students, which is derived from Taro Yemen's sampling formula. The sample size of 222 respondents was drawn from students of the five tertiary institutions selected for the study. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured 30-item questionnaire. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using an Independent t-test at the 0.05 significance level. The data analyses were carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.

Result

Mean score and standard deviation of the mean rating on the extent of opportunity recognition competency required for job creation by business education students in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State

S/N	Items	Sum	Respondents (n=219)		
			Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
.1	Know-how, experience, attitudes, resources, and networking in opportunity recognition are required for job creation opportunities	746	3.410	0.988	HE
.2	The ability to manage risks and opportunities in a "thinking outside the box" way is important in becoming an innovator are required for job creation opportunities.	758	3.460	0.852	HE
.3	The ability to discover the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in a business is required for job creation opportunities.	768	3.510	0.510	VHE
.4	The ability to translate dreams and ideas into successful ventures through identifying new business opportunities is required for job creation opportunities.	786	3.590	0.681	VHE
.5	The ability to assume the reasonable risk when opportunities are recognized is required for job creation opportunities.	789	3.600	0.622	VHE
Grand Mean			3.514		

Criterion Mean = 2.5; Mean: 1.0-1.99 = VLE, 2.0-2.49=LE, 2.50-3.49 = HE, 3.50-4.00=VHE.

The findings of Table 1 revealed the extent of opportunity recognition competency required for job creation by business education students in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. The result from the findings showed that majority of the respondents indicated very high extent to items 3-5 with their mean scores greater than or equal to the criterion mean (2.5) and within the mean score of 3.5-4.00. Furthermore, majority of the respondents indicated high extent to items 1 & 2 with their mean scores greater than or equal to the criterion mean (2.5) and within the mean score of 2.5-3.49. The implication of the finding with grand mean of 3.514 is that opportunity recognition competency required for job creation by business education students in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State to a very high extent.

Presentation of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female students on the extent to which opportunity recognition competency is required for job creation.

Table 2: Summary of independent t-test analysis on the difference in the mean response of male and female students on the extent to which opportunity recognition competency is required for job creation

Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t_{cal}	t_{tab}	Sig.	Decision
Male	108	17.460	1.682	217	-0.892	1.960	0.373	Retain: H_{01}
Female	111	17.670	1.697					

Table 4.7 indicates that $t_{cal} = -0.892$, $df = 217$, and $t_{tab} = 1.960$. Therefore, since $t_{cal} < t_{tab}$ and $P > 0.05$, then there is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female students on the extent to which opportunity recognition competency is required for job creation. Hence, the null hypothesis one is retained at the 0.05 level of significance.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the influence of entrepreneurship competency required for job creation by business education students in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. However, the result in Table 2 showed that opportunity recognition competency required for job creation by business education students in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State to a very high extent. Furthermore, the result of Table 2 indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female students on the extent to which opportunity recognition competency is required for job creation. This finding is in agreement with the study conducted by Syamsuriana and Mohd (2014), which revealed that all the managerial competency dimensions—technical, generic, and conceptual skills—had positive and significant impacts on small business growth and job creation. Furthermore, the result was corroborated by Omar, Bakar and Rashid (2012) which revealed that there was no significant gender difference in employability skills required of business education students.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the influence of entrepreneurship competency required for job creation by business education students in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. The analysis of the data gave results from which the objectives of the study were accomplished. However, some of the results of the study revealed that opportunity recognition competency required for job creation by business education students in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State to a very high extent,. However, the corresponding hypotheses showed that there is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female students on the extent to which opportunity recognition competency is required for job creation, and there is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female students on the extent to which formalizing a business plan competency is required for job creation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings, discussion and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Business education lecturers should be able to expose students to how to recognize business opportunities so that they can make plans so that they can create jobs when they graduate.
2. Business education curriculum planner should incorporate the programs into the business education curriculum to aid students in the formalization of business so that they will understand opportunities and make plans when they graduate.

3. Business education lecturers should initiate programmes that will help students develop capacity assessment skills that will enable them to judge their capacity and also help them judge their potential in the business world.

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