

**BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES AND JOB CREATION POTENTIALS OF
BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN RIVERS STATE.**

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ABSTRACT

This study is all about business management competencies and job creation potentials of business education students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Correlational survey design was adopted in this study and the population consisted of six hundred and ten (610) final year business education students in four (4) tertiary institutions running business education programme in Rivers State. The sample size of this study consisted of 241 respondents drawn from the population using Taro Yamen formula, hence simple random sampling technique was adopted in this study. Two (2) set of instruments titled "Entrepreneurial Competencies of Business Education Students Questionnaire (ECBESQ)" and "Job Creation Potentials of Business Education Students Questionnaire (JCPBESQ)" were used to obtain necessary data for this study. The instruments were validated by experts in the Department of Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation, and a reliability index coefficient of 0.81 and 0.74 were obtained respectively using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC). The aforementioned statistical tool was also used to answer and analyze the research questions and to test the stated null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Finding of this study showed that there is a very strong, positive and significant relationship between business management competency and job creation potentials of business education students respectively in the aforementioned institutions in Rivers State. It was therefore recommended among others that business education students should endeavor to acquire business management competency while in school so that they can create jobs for themselves upon graduation.

Keywords: Business Management Competency, Job Creation, Business Education,

INTRODUCTION

Business opportunities abound almost around graduates, 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 as one of the significant factors required for job creation, it is not enough on its own to create sustainable jobs, but competencies 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.

In addition, the researcher observed that 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. Many employers are of the view that some 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.

The researcher observed 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 skillful 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 study is expected to bridge the observed gap in the literature on the subject matter investigated because there are numerous studies on the subject matter. However, most are based on the work of researchers who have not investigated it as deeply as they might have or do not cover the same content, geographical, and unit of analysis scope that the present study hopes to attain. For instance, Okoye and Onyeagha (2021) determined entrepreneurship competencies required of business education graduates for entrepreneurship development in Anambra State. Scholars investigated perceived entrepreneurship competencies required by business education students for establishing small-scale ventures in Kwara State. Okeke and Okanlanwo (2018) ascertained entrepreneurs' ratings of the technical competencies required of business education graduates for establishing small and medium-scale enterprises in Anambra State. Hence, in contrast to the foregoing, there is little or no evidence that studies exist with the same content, geographical, and unit of analysis scope as this present study. Therefore, it is based on the observed gap that this study is set to fill.

Null Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between business management competency and job creation potentials of business education students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Business Management Competency and Job Creation Potentials of Business Education Students

Business skills are attitudes to develop knowledge and aptitude and excel in business. Such skills include marketing skills, ability to advertise products effectively, familiar with business environment, business laws, licensing, insurance and leasing, ability to determine the extent of the market and seasonal fluctuations, ability to possess product distribution, identification, pricing, labeling and packaging skills, ability to interpret factors of which indicate extent of strength of competitions, ability to determine current and future trends in the market, ability to understand and exhibit customers needs and demands at a particular time, ability to have good public relation skills.

Management is the art of getting things done through people; it is a process of achieving an organization's goal through coordinated performance of five specific functions namely; planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling (Osuala, 2001). An organizations' success depends on how well its management is able to plan. According to Olagunju (2021) one of the roles of management in a business enterprise is to ensure the constructive coordination management efforts at all levels into an effective instrument for achieving cooperate objectives.

Management as a body of knowledge is the science of getting things done in the most appropriate, efficient, and effective manner (Okoro & Matt, 2019). Management employs a lot of investigative

work and analysis to substitute given work with certainties. Broadly, the authors stated that management involves planning, coordinating, motivating, and so on. Hence, management refers to the "act of planning, organizing, and controlling activities of other factors or systems to achieve as efficiently as possible the stated goals of an organization. According to Nwaukwa (2015), management is the process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling both human and material resources efficiently towards achieving individual, group, and organizational goals.

Eshenake (2017) sees business management skills as a process demanding the importance of specific functions. Nwachukwu (2005) defined business management as the art of getting things done through the efforts of other people. It is also defined as the process of planning, organizing, and directing organizational resources to achieve organizational goals. Osuala (2001) also defined business management as the process of achieving an organization's goals through the coordinated performance of five (5) specific functions: planning, organization, staffing, directing, and controlling. Management as a process of doing things in an organization is basically the combination and utilization of available human, financial, and material resources towards the achievement of organizational objectives (Eshenake, 2017). Business education graduates are expected to possess adequate skills in business management. In the same vein, Ekpenyong and Ojo (2018) identified the following business management skills as needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success: The essence of entrepreneurship education is to ensure self-sustainability, employment generation, income generation, wealth creation, and a reduction in the crime rate.

Olagungu (2021) explains that a modern business environment is a combination of traditional institutions and roles and more new changes in production, distribution, and consumption patterns created by developments in science and technology. Therefore, business management is a balance between two (2) major forces - *continuity and change*. Good business management skills play a major role in the process of achieving the set goal of the organization. Hence, every entrepreneur needs to be a good manager endowed with business management skills to achieve the set goals. An entrepreneur with good business management skills is the key person when it comes to the positive development of the enterprise. Business management is about handling the business activities so as to meet the objectives of the organization within the prescribed time frame. To perform this task efficiently, the entrepreneur needs good business management skills, and the best part is that these skills can be learned, developed, and incorporated by any person who wants to succeed in their small scale business creation.

The acquisition of business management skills will facilitate effective job performance in the operation in the areas of receiving, recording, processing, analyzing, and processing of information. Okwelle (2016) identified the following office business management skills needed by business education graduates for effective functioning in the world of management of small scale business operations to include: ability to demonstrate skills in good record management: ability to know and identify the filing system; ability to determine and utilize appropriate communication channels; ability to manage information well; ability to store and retrieve information well; ability to follow trends in office technology; ability to write mailable letters; ability to demonstrate the knowledge of office automation systems; ability to use inter-office and distance communication gadgets like intercom, telephone, telex, fax, and e-mail; ability to use different types of office machines, equipment, and facilities; and last but not the least, ability to manage and use time effectively.

Ekpenyong and Ojo (2018) identified the these management skills as needed by graduates of business education for entrepreneurial success: ability to plan, organise and manage small scale or medium scale businesses; ability to source funds for the running of small scale businesses;

ability to develop skills for keeping accounting records of small scale businesses; ability to supervise and coordinate effectively both human and material resources; ability to develop broad-based investment in planning and implementation; ability to apply integrating business skills; ability to have constant alertness to market changes and technical trends; ability to maintain business ethics; ability to be resourceful and creative; ability to re-define risk as opportunities to make use of the expertise; ability to develop effective utilization of the project for the growth and development of the firm; ability to motivate self and others under him; ability to handle crisis when it occurs.

In the same manner, Nwaukwa (2015) also identified the following business management skills expected of business education graduates as follows:

1. Ability to identify and use market opportunities.
2. Ability to set appropriate goals.
3. Ability to plan effectively for goal attainment.
4. Ability to organize resources (human and materials) for goal attainment.
5. Ability to implement plans for goal attainment.
6. Ability to evaluate all activities and operations in the process of goal attainment.
7. Ability to give appropriate feedback.
8. Ability to relate properly with other people (business partners and customers)
9. Ability to understand business law.
10. Ability to understand and use banking facilities.

Investing wisely both in consumable and non-immediate consumable items for reconciliation of one's assets and liabilities, studies remarked that the basic knowledge of accounting education will help the students develop manipulative skills that will help them solve problems in business, Okwelle (2016) identified some of these skills required by business education graduates to include: ability to keep accurate financial records; ability to understand ways of recording business transactions; ability to determine profit for a particular period; ability to avoid unplanned expenditures; ability to be acquainted with new trends as regards accounting in the business world; ability to understand and undertake simple audit; ability to detect fraud; knowledge of federal government laws and policies. The above business management skills will enable business education graduates to function effectively in the world of work as successful entrepreneurs.

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

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

Research Design in non-experimental research. The population of this study consisted of six hundred and ten (610) final year students of 2020/2021 academic session from the four(4) tertiary institutions running business education programme in Rivers State. The sample size of this study consisted of 241 final year which was derived from the use of Taro Yamen’s sampling formula. However, simple random sampling technique was considered fit for this study because it gives all the students the equal opportunity of being selected for this study. In addition the Bowley Proportional Allocation Formula was used to determine the sample size of students in each of the institutions. The researcher used Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) to analyze and answer the research questions that were stated regarding the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and job creation potentials of business education students and to test the hypotheses that were formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of Null Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between business management competency and job creation potentials of business education students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Test of Correlation of Relationship between business management competency and job creation potentials of business education students at 0.05 Level of Significance

Variables	N	Df	r-cal	r-critical	Decision
Business Management Competency	204				Significant/Rejected
		202	0.58	0.196	
Job Creation Potentials	204				

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork (2024)

Table 1 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.58 is greater than the r-critical value of 0.196. Therefore, since the computed r-value is greater than r-critical value, the hypothesis which states

that there is no significant relationship between business management competency and job creation potentials of business education students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State is hereby rejected. However, this implies that there is a significant relationship between business management competency and job creation potentials of students in the aforementioned institutions in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Business Management Competency and Job Creation Potentials of Business Education Students

The result analysis in Table 1 shows that there is a moderate and positive relationship between business management competency and job creation potentials of business education students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. In addition, the result of the associated hypothesis shown in Table 4.7 indicates that, there is a significant relationship between business management competency and job creation potentials of business education students. This finding corroborated with Olagunju (2021) who opined that one of the roles of management in a business enterprise is to ensure the constructive coordination management efforts at all levels into an effective instrument for achieving cooperate objectives.

Management as a body of knowledge is the science of getting things done in the most appropriate, efficient, and effective manner (Okoro & Matt, 2019). Management employs a lot of investigative work and analysis to substitute given work with certainties. Broadly, the authors stated that management involves planning, coordinating, motivating, and so on. Hence, management refers to the "act of planning, organizing, and controlling activities of other factors or systems to achieve as efficiently as possible the stated goals of an organization. According to Nwaukwa (2015), management is the process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling both human and material resources efficiently towards achieving individual, group, and organizational goals.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated entrepreneurial competencies and job creation potentials of business education students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that for a business education students to be successful in creating jobs for themselves, it then becomes imperative that their competencies in terms of business management competency need to be acquired and developed on a regular basis in order to be able to explore in this entrepreneurial world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. Business education students should endeavor to acquire business management competency while in school so that they can create jobs for themselves after graduation.
2. Management of tertiary institutions in Rivers State should implement entrepreneurship education courses in order to inculcate in the students the various marketing competencies and skill required in job creation.
3. Management of tertiary institutions should ensure that lecturers that teaches entrepreneurship courses are grounded in it so that students would be able to acquire the needed financial management competencies for job creation.

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