

**ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES REQUIRED OF BUSINESS  
EDUCATION GRADUATES FOR EFFECTIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT IN ANAMBRA STATE**

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**Abstract**

*The study was conducted to determine entrepreneurial competencies required of business education graduates for entrepreneurship development in Anambra State Analytic descriptive research design was adopted for the study. – research questions and two hypotheses tested at .05 level of significance were used. Population consisted of 227 registered small scale and medium scale entrepreneurs with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Awka, Anambra State. A validated questionnaire with reliability coefficients of 0.79 was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyzed research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The study concluded that business education has the potentials of promoting entrepreneurship development in Nigeria since it could lead to acquisition of competencies for identifying viable investment opportunities, proper marketing, financial management, proper management, avoidance of business failure among others. There were no significant differences in the mean ratings of respondents on entrepreneurial and innovative competencies required of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship development. The study strongly recommended, among others, that government should make fund available for retraining of business educators to acquaint themselves with the necessary competencies required in teaching business education students so as to equip them with the skills needed in the world of business.*

**Keywords:** Business education, Competencies, Entrepreneurship, Development.

**Introduction**

The success of every society in entrepreneurship development depends on skills and competencies acquired by the entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship development leads to creation of value by individuals through the recognition of significant business opportunity; the drive to manage risk-taking appropriate to that project and the exercise of

communicative and management skills necessary to mobilize rapidly the human, materials and financial resources that will bring the project to fruition (Iheonunekwu in Ezeibe, Ezenwaji, Omeke, Nwaoga & Diogu, 2011). According to Okanume-Onah (2014), entrepreneurship development leads to creating new ventures and innovation with usefulness by committing the necessary effort. Entrepreneurship development is a special kind of innovation aimed at creating economic values which may involve new technology or new ways of using existing technology. The essential consideration is that it is commercially viable (Lilly, 2014). Entrepreneurship development opens opportunities for self-reliance for youths as they learn to grow and run their own business ventures. It involves encouraging creative thinking and promoting a strong sense of self-worth and accountability (Okata, 2014). Entrepreneurship development helps to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to encourage success in a variety of settings and it leads to the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies (Okata, 2014).

The entrepreneurial competencies required of business education graduates consist of knowledge competencies, communication competencies, innovative competencies, managerial competencies, evaluation competencies among others (Igbo in Ulasi, 2016; Ubulom & Ogwunte, 2017). Knowledge competencies are necessary for various fields when starting or running a business. Communication competencies assist one to be able to communicate well to help make things clear to apprentices, team members, investors, customers among others. Innovative competencies involve the ability to combine ideas and knowledge into new value. Managerial competencies involve the acquisition of management and supervisory skill. Evaluation competencies assess specific casual contributions of activities to results among others to run any business enterprise.

Innovative competencies for entrepreneurial development include the introduction of new products, new methods of production, opening new markets, exploring new sources of supply of raw materials and carrying out new types of organization (Oduma, 2011). In their view, Hennessy and Amabile (2010) defined innovation as the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization. Based on this view, entrepreneurs' creativity is the starting point of innovation.

Innovative competencies involve ability to generate new business ideas, introduce a new method of productivity or new products, open new markets and create new wealth. Also innovative competencies entail ability to gain access to technology and innovation in the small scale business, add value to customers satisfaction, meet diversify production in line with customers' needs, improve old ideas when the need arises and all head to utilization of technological skills in business.

Innovative competencies according to Ezenwafor and Olaniyi (2017) are required by business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship development which involves the ability to generate new business ideas and the ability to introduce new methods of productivity and introduction of new products. Also, they further stated that innovative competencies involve the ability to combine ideas and knowledge into new value.

Entrepreneur is a French word which means “one who undertake innovations, finance and business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic goods”. According to Ubulom and Ogwunte (2017), communicative, innovative and evaluation competencies are very useful for entrepreneurship development. Also Emejulu (2014) observed that entrepreneurship enables one to be innovative, creative and takes business risks to become a successful entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurship can be seen as a process driven by the desire to innovate; that is producing new things (goods and services; processes or approaches) or improving on existing ones, and profiting from it. Enyekit, Ogwunte and Enyekit (2018) observed that entrepreneurship is the engine fuelling innovation, employment generation and economic growth.

Entrepreneurship entails the possession of key skills and talents; innovativeness and the combination and usage of all these together with an entrepreneurship skills. In the same parallel, Nwokike (2017) sees entrepreneurship as the ability of an individual to be innovative and enterprising. Equally entrepreneurship is the relative and innovative way of thinking that comes inherently to some people and not to others. The researchers observe that the acquisition of these competencies will enable graduates of business education function effectively in the current highly competitive environment and strong market forces to turn business problems into business opportunities.

According to Buxton (2013), competency is the state of having the necessary skills or knowledge. European Commission Cedefop Glossary (2014) saw competency as the state or quality of being adequately or well qualified, having the ability to perform a specific role. It is the ability to do something well. Judy and Chris in James (2014) contended that competency is the combination of knowledge, attitude, values and skills required to perform tasks in determined situations.

Skills for operating a business enterprise are needed for the business to succeed in the competitive market. Skill is the ability to do something well and is usually gained through training or experience. Skills and competencies are used interchangeably. Competencies are equated to knowledge and skills and as such skills and competencies are relatively the same. According to Baba, Ameh and Ezeahurukwe (2018) the acquisition of technological knowledge and skills must be connected with the development of a broader array of competencies. Nwokike (2016) affirmed that competency can be developed through training which is adequately for accomplishing some specific tasks. The researcher shares the same view that skills are acquired through training to enhance task accomplishment. In nutshell competencies and skills lead to fitness and expertness in the performance of tasks.

Education also equips a person with relevant skills which would lead him to better performance in his chosen career. In line with these, Business education which is described as an “education for business and about business” could make a person to perform well as an entrepreneur (Sulayman, 2014). The researchers observe that this is due to the fact that it equips the recipients with competencies which are needed for business success.

Furthermore, Sulayman observes that entrepreneurship focuses on the desire and ability of a person to search for investment opportunities within his environment and also be able to set up and run an enterprise based on the identified opportunities.

Based on the presentation above, it is obvious that Business education could lead to the development of entrepreneurship in Nigeria and indeed all the countries of the world. In a nutshell, business education provides a wide spectrum of economic activities in any society.

Business education has a significant role to play in entrepreneurial development. Ojukwu (2010) shared the view that businesses should create and emphasize entrepreneurship awareness because it is through the programme that youths (including business education graduates) who have acquired appropriate entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, abilities, and competencies would be self-reliance (self-employed).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Development of entrepreneurial competencies has been a powerful engine of economic growth and wealth creation for many developing countries. It is very crucial for improving the quality, number and variety of employment opportunities for the poor. It spurs innovation and fosters investment by people. Business education graduates acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies enable them to create new enterprises, new commercial activities, and new economic sectors. It seems, therefore, that many graduates of business education appear not to have acquired the necessary competencies expected of them in performing the essential task of establishing small and medium enterprises of their own.

Large numbers of business education and vocational education graduates are without entrepreneurial competencies. Thus, the curricula of most tertiary education institutions do not seem to satisfy the current entrepreneurial demands. This worrisome situation has exposed the fact that most business education graduates make little or no attempt to establish small scale businesses of their own despite the abundant business opportunities. Again, business education graduates may not have been taken very seriously acquisition of skills and competencies during their trainings. Most of business education graduates seem to lack interest and confidence in entrepreneurial activities for self-reliance, instead they join in the search for scarce paid employment thereby increasing the already high unemployment rate in the country despite the abundant entrepreneurship opportunities.

The problem of this study, therefore, is that business education graduates seen to the lacking the necessary entrepreneurial competencies needed for entrepreneurship development, thus the need to bridge the gaps.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain entrepreneurial competencies required of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship development in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the entrepreneurial competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship development.
2. Determine the innovative competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship development.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the entrepreneurship competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship development?
2. What are innovative competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship development?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses tested at .05 were formulated to guide the study:

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the opinion of small scale and medium scale corporate entrepreneurs regarding entrepreneurial competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship development.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the opinion of urban and rural corporate entrepreneurs regarding innovative competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship development.

### **Method**

The analytic descriptive research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised 227 corporate entrepreneurs (owners) of small and medium scale enterprises registered with Anambra State Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Awka. No sample was used since the population was not large. A four-point scale questionnaire with two sections and 12 items was used. The instrument was validated by three experts from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus and Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe. A pilot test was used to test for the reliability of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient measure of internal consistency in line with statistical package for social sciences. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Mean value of item 2.50 and above was regarded as needed while below 2.50 was regarded as not needed. For the hypotheses, when p-value is greater than 0.05, the hypothesis was accepted and when p-value is less than .05, the hypothesis was rejected.

### **Results and Discussion**

**Research Question 1:** What are the entrepreneurial competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship development?

**Table 1:** Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) Responses of Respondents on Entrepreneurial Competencies Needed of Business Education Graduates for Effective Entrepreneurship Development.

N = 227				
S/N	Entrepreneurial Competencies Needed of Business Education	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	Innovation competencies	3.13	0.68	Needed
2	Knowledge competencies	2.82	0.68	Needed
3	Communication competencies	3.40	0.82	Needed
4	Managerial competencies	3.00	0.91	Needed
5	Information competencies	2.79	0.70	Needed
6	Marketing and sales competencies	2.99	0.91	Needed
7	Accounting/financial competencies	3.08	0.76	Needed
8	Attitudinal competencies	2.91	0.75	Needed
9	Reprographic and micrographic competencies	3.28	0.76	Needed
10	Technical competencies	3.46	0.80	Needed
11	General business competencies	2.87	0.74	Needed
12	Evaluation competencies	3.24	0.83	Needed
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>3.08</b>		<b>Needed</b>

As shown by the cluster mean of 3.08 in Table 1, corporate entrepreneurs responded that all the items on entrepreneurial competencies are all needed by required of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship development. The item by item analysis shows that items 1 to 12 fell within a mean rating range of 2.79 to 3.46. The standard deviations for all the items were within the same range indicating that respondents were homogeneous in their mean ratings.

**Research Question 2:** What are innovative competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development?

**Table 2:** Mean and Standard Deviation Responses of Respondents on Innovative Competencies Needed of Business Education Graduates for Effective Entrepreneurial Development.

N = 227				
S/N	Innovative Competencies	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks

<b>Needed of Business Education</b>				
1	Ability to generate new business ideas	3.38	0.64	Needed
2	Ability to introduce a new method of productivity	2.85	0.79	Needed
3	Ability to introduce new products	2.66	0.94	Needed
4	Inability to combine ideas and knowledge into new value	3.46	1.07	Needed
5	Ability to explore new sources of supply of raw materials	3.00	0.71	Needed
6	Ability to open new markets	3.27	0.76	Needed
7	Ability to create new wealth	3.41	0.49	Needed
8	Ability to gain access to technology and innovation in the small scale business	3.13	0.80	Needed
9	Ability to add value to customers satisfaction	2.91	0.76	Needed
10	Ability to meet diversify production in line with customers' needs	3.07	0.86	Needed
11	Ability to improve old ideas	3.08	0.64	Needed
12	Ability to utilize technological skills in business.	3.33	0.74	Needed
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>3.13</b>		<b>Needed</b>

As revealed by the cluster mean of 3.13 in Table 2, corporate entrepreneurs responded that innovative competencies required of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development were all needed. The item by item analysis shows that item 1 to item 12 fell within mean rating range of 2.66 to 3.46. The standard deviations for all the items were within the same range indicating that respondents were homogenous in their mean ratings.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the opinion of small scale and medium scale corporate entrepreneurs regarding entrepreneurial competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development.

**Table 3:** t-test analysis of mean responses of small scale and medium scale corporate entrepreneurs on entrepreneurial competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship development.

Source of Variation	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
Small scale	110	36.15	3.55	225	.216	.829	Accepted
Medium scale	117	36.25	3.56				

The calculated t-value (.216) at 225 degree of freedom and .05 level of significance was significance at a p-value of .829 which was greater than .05 alpha level, hence the null hypotheses was accepted. Based on the result of the null hypothesis there is no significant difference in the opinion of small scale and medium scale corporate entrepreneurs on entrepreneurial competencies needed of business education graduates.

**Table 4:** t-test analysis of mean responses of urban and rural corporate entrepreneurs on innovative competencies needed of business education graduates.

Source of Variation	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
Urban	194	36.82	4.50	225	.207	.736	Accepted
Rural	33	26.72	2.47				

The calculated t-value (.207) at 225 degree of freedom and .05 level of significance was significance at a p-value of .736 which was greater than .05 alpha level, it implied that the null hypotheses was accepted. Based on the result of the null hypothesis

there is no significant difference in the opinion of urban and rural corporate entrepreneurs on innovative competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship development.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn. Business education is a skill-based course which inculcates entrepreneurial skills in the recipient. Entrepreneurship, on the other hand, deals with creative identification and utilization of business opportunities. This work establishes that business education has the potentials of promoting entrepreneurship development in Nigeria since it could lead to the acquisition of competencies for identifying viable investment opportunities, proper marketing, financial management, proper management and avoidance of business failure.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Business educators should use suitable methods and resources to ensure that their students adequately acquire knowledge, innovation, communication, information, accounting /financial and general business competencies to enable them become successful entrepreneurs on graduation.
2. Government should make fund available for re-training of business educators to acquire the necessary competencies required in training future business education graduates that will enhance entrepreneurship development in the business world.
3. Small scale and medium scale enterprise owners should ensure that they register with Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Awka in order to collaborate with government and schools to ensure effective entrepreneurial development in the State.

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