

**CORPORATE ENTREPRENEUR'S PERCEPTION OF KNOWLEDGE AND
COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES REQUIRED OF BUSINESS
EDUCATION GRADUATES FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT IN
ANAMBRA STATE**

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Abstract

The study examined corporate entrepreneur's perception of knowledge and communication competencies required of business education graduates for entrepreneurial development in Anambra State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. An analytic descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 227 registered small scale and medium scale entrepreneurs with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Awka, Anambra State. A validated 4-point scale questionnaire containing 12 items was used for data collection. Internal consistency of the instrument was determined by administering it to 20 small scale and medium scale entrepreneurs in Imo State. Cronbach Alpha was used to obtain reliability coefficient of 0.79. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' means while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that corporate entrepreneurs perceived that out of twelve knowledge competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development only one was highly needed, that is the ability to know the best way to select competent employee. Whereas all the communication competencies for effective entrepreneurial development were needed, but ability to sort and prioritize e-mails based on deadlines was the only one highly needed. The study concluded that business education is a skill-based course which inculcates entrepreneurial skills in the recipients and it has the potentials of promoting entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. The study recommended among others that the existing business education curriculum should be reviewed to integrate knowledge, innovation, communication, information, accounting/financial and general business competencies to equip graduates of business education with the necessary skills to establish their own business and become successful entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Business education, competencies, entrepreneurship, development.

Introduction

Competency is essentially a precursor of business education graduate effectiveness. There is an upsurge of interest in developing competencies required in the work place. Society is changing, times are changing and new organizational structures are revolving. Competencies in one's job encourage high-performance economy as technology is fast shaping our future and empowering our daily lives. Many efficient and effective business education graduates seek satisfaction directly from their work, but the overwhelming evidence shows more and more that they are often disappointed due to their lack of practical skills to meet up with the challenges of the time and its competency demand.

Mitchelmore and Rowley (2010) described business competencies as generic and specific knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to create, sustain and grow business venture successfully. This explains that competency-based education is the type of education that encourages each student to develop his or her full capacity. It is also seen as the ability to perform effectively and efficiently in business courses like secretarial, Accounting, Co-operative and commerce.

Tertiary institutions in Anambra State are among the institutions or schools that face the challenges of improving the competencies of their business education graduates for future business or job performance. The expectations from tertiary institutions can only be realized when effective business education graduates are properly prepared and motivated to attract various benefits. The benefits and role education can play in the pursuit of self-reliance have over the years been the focal point of the nation. This is as a result of the dynamic nature of the society which has translated the educational system from one which aims at creating qualified and skilled manpower without actual jobs for such graduates. One of the nation's educational aims and objectives as contained in the National Policy of Education, is the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies, both mental and physical, as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2014).

The above objective, however, is in conformity with one of the objectives of business education - to give training and impart necessary skills leading to the production of goods and services and self-reliance. The focus of Business education as stated by NPE in 2014 is directed towards preparing individuals for the enterprise as employees, entrepreneurs, employers and the self-employed. This, therefore, makes business education a requisite for entrepreneurial development.

Entrepreneurship is the capacity and willingness to develop, organize and manage any business venture along side with its risks in order to make a profit. Olagwuju (2016) saw entrepreneurship as an undertaking in which one is involved in the task of creating and managing an enterprise for a purpose which may be personal, social or developmental. Every entrepreneur has positive and negative qualities or business success. Also Olagwuju observed that an entrepreneur has to effectively use his positive characteristics such as leadership, hardworking, risk-taking, decision making, business planning, flexibility, personal satisfaction, self-confidence, creativity, drive, energy and initiative to and restrain the negative characteristic. According to Igbo (2010), the four major entrepreneurial marketing skills and competencies for every entrepreneur are managerial skills, accounting/financial skills and general business skills. Olawoli and Kaegou (2012) stressed that the desire of every society to achieve a suitable level of economic development could

only be possible through embarking on entrepreneurial activities by the citizens of such society. According to Abraham (2014), the Federal Government of Nigeria made entrepreneurship education a compulsory subject in our tertiary institutions, this will discourage Nigeria graduates from craving for non-existent white-collar jobs. This would help to deal with the vexed issues of the low employability rate of Nigeria graduates and general unemployment problems confronting the nation. The federal government noted that if the global best practices must be adapted to Nigeria, entrepreneurship development must be institutionalized. The introduction of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria institutions is widely regarded as a suitable measure to entrepreneurship development. This prepares and encourages the recipients to create employment opportunities for themselves and others by investing their knowledge, skills and other resources to satisfy needs in the environment to make a profit (FRN, 2014)

Consequently, Ezenwafor and Olaniyi (2017) observed that entrepreneurship education is a key agent in the development of creativity and innovativeness of individuals for business success. To them, stimulates business interest and potentials as well as the acquisition of relevant skills and competencies for the establishment and operation of a new profit-oriented business venture like small and medium enterprise.

Equally, Okoli (2013) defined skills as the economic tools with which entrepreneurs acquire and solve societal problems. Skills are employable, self-reliant and relevant to the society. Okoli further stated that entrepreneurs must possess these business skills that are necessary to enable them to start, finance their own business enterprises and market the products or services.

Adenusi (2015) noted that small and medium enterprises occupy a place of pride in virtually every country or state. They play significant roles in the development and growth of various economics, as a result of which they are aptly referred to as the engine of growth and catalyst for socio-economic transformation of any country. Small and medium enterprises are usually owned and managed by individuals called business owners, entrepreneurs or business operators. The nature of the business is such that managers are employed to handle the affairs of the enterprise by helping to scout for and discover business opportunities as well as plan promotional activities to increase patronage. Normally, small and medium enterprises are the most widely spread form of business organization in Nigeria, involving men and women of different levels of education and skills associated with such training.

Olaniyi (2016) asserted that possession of good human relation skills is another success factor in entrepreneurship. The entrepreneur is the human factor that organizes other factors of production such as land, capital and machinery to achieve set business goals. Labour is a human factor of production but it is the ability to manage it effectively in an organization that leads to excellent business performance. It is a generally accepted fact that no matter how hard an individual may work or how brilliant ideas he may display if he cannot connect with other people around, his professional life will suffer. Olaniyi observed that this situation emphasizes the need to acquire human relation skill for entrepreneurial development. Human relation entails the ability to relate well with co-workers; accept criticisms, advice and suggestions from others, exercise confidence, good judgment and bring about increased customers satisfaction through innovation.

A business is built on the problems (needs and wants) of customers and without these; there will be no business at all. This is why problem-solving competencies are very

important for success in operating an enterprise (Ezenwafor & Olaniyi, 2017). Also, Ezenwafor and Olaniyi observed that problem-solving competencies for entrepreneurial development involve critical thinking, understanding of the business, team spirit, decisiveness, and courage. Acquisition of these competencies enable graduates of business education to identify business problems and become critical thinkers so as to turn the identified business problems into opportunities. Ubulom and Ogwunte (2017) observed communicative, innovative and evaluation competencies are very useful for entrepreneurial development.

Communication competencies help one to be able to communicate well and 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 skills among others to run any business enterprise. Evaluation competencies assess specific casual contributions of activities to results. Knowledge competencies are necessary for various fields when starting or running a business. Igbo in Ulasi (2016) opined that managerial and knowledge competencies are needed for success in entrepreneurship development in various fields when starting a business.

Communication competencies help one to be able to speak well and make message clearer. Ezeabii, Nwokike and Jim (2018) observed that communication competencies required by business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship development involve the ability to use English language to pass information effectively. That is to say, the ability to produce general mailable letters and send an e-mail with ease. Igbo in Ulasi (2016) maintained knowledge competencies involve knowledge of important job demand, on home and family life. Also, he contended that knowledge competencies involve knowledge of the need for employee growth and development. The researchers observed that knowledge competencies are necessary for various fields when starting or running a business.

Knowledge competences involve ability to conduct an effective meeting, understand inventory control and turnover and to have good entrepreneurship acumen. Communication competencies involve ability to construct mailable letters, generate and send e-mail, answer telephone calls in a pleasant and efficient manner and to handle confidential matters.

Business education graduates should be enthusiastic about knowledge competencies acquisition so as to perform well at their work places thereby help in effective entrepreneurship development. As has been rightly observed by Baba, Ameh and Ezeachurukwe (2018), the acquisition of technological knowledge and skills must be connected with development of a broader array of competencies. It is only by combined efforts of business education graduates and business educators that former would acquire the needed knowledge competencies to ensure effective entrepreneurship development.

Statement of the Problem

Development is very crucial for improving the quality, number and variety of employment opportunities for the poor. It spurs innovation and fosters investment by people. 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 (Adegite, 2010).

Business education graduates may not have been taken very seriously acquisition of skills and competencies during their trainings. Ezenwafor and Olaniyi (2017) observed that 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 lack the necessary entrepreneurial competencies needed for effective entrepreneurship development, the need to bridge the gap.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine corporate entrepreneur's perception on the competencies required of business education graduates for entrepreneurial development in Anambra State. The specific purposes of the study are to:

1. determine corporate entrepreneur's perception on knowledge competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development.
2. ascertain perception of corporate entrepreneur's perception on communication competencies needed of business graduates for effective entrepreneurial development.

Research Questions

The following two research questions guided this study:

1. What are corporate entrepreneur's perception on knowledge competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development?
2. What are corporate entrepreneur's perception on communication competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

- HO₁: There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female corporate entrepreneurs regarding knowledge competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development.
- HO₂: There is no significant difference in the perception of corporate entrepreneurs with 5 years and above experience and those with less than 5 years experience regarding communication competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development.

Method

Analytic descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 227 registered small scale and medium scale entrepreneurs with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Awka, Anambra State. No sample was used since the population was not large. A four-point scale questionnaire that has two sections and (sections A and B) was used. Section A elicit information on demographic information of the respondents while section B answers questions based on research questions.

The instrument was validated by three experts from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. The Cronbach Alpha reliability test was used to determine

the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.79 in line with Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The researcher with the help of research assistants administered 227 copies of the questionnaire to corporate entrepreneurs in Anambra State. The 227 copies of the questionnaire administered were all retrieved. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected to answer research questions. t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The mean rating research questions. Items with mean values 2.50 and above were considered as needed while items with mean values below 2.50 were considered as not needed. For the hypotheses, when P-value is greater than .05, the hypothesis will be accepted and when p-value is less than 0.05, the hypothesis will be rejected.

Results

Research Question One:

What are corporate entrepreneur's perception on the knowledge competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development?

Table 1: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of Corporate Entrepreneur's perception on Knowledge Competencies Needed of Business Education Graduates for Effective Entrepreneurial Development.

N = 227				
S/N	Knowledge Competencies	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to conduct an effective meeting	3.33	0.62	Needed
2	Ability to understand inventory control and turnover	3.08	0.64	Needed
3	Ability to know important job demand, on home and family life	3.07	0.86	Needed
4	Ability to know the right inventory option for the enterprise	3.41	0.49	Needed
5	Ability to understand the need of employee	2.84	0.79	Needed
6	Ability to know federal, state and local government approved levies	2.91	0.86	Needed
7	Ability to make good use of insurance scheme	2.99	0.81	Needed
8	Ability to have good entrepreneurial acumen	2.93	0.76	Needed
9	Ability to have good business forecast	3.24	0.72	Needed
10	Ability to know the right advertising procedure to adopt	3.25	0.72	Needed
11	Ability to show good ownership of the business	3.13	0.68	Needed
12	Ability to know the best way to select competent employee	3.55	0.72	Highly Needed
Cluster Mean		3.14		Needed

As indicated by the cluster mean of 3.14 in Tables1, corporate entrepreneurs responded that the knowledge competencies required of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development were all needed except item 12 which was highly needed. The item by item analysis shows that items 1 to 11 with mean ratings ranging from 2.84 to 3.41 were needed while item 12 with mean rating 3.55 was highly needed. There was homogeneity in all the items amongst corporate entrepreneurs' responses.

Research Question Two:

What are corporate entrepreneur’s perception on communication competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development?

Table 2: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of Corporate Entrepreneur’s perception on Communication Competencies Needed of Business Education Graduates for Effective Entrepreneurial Development.

N = 227

S/N	Communication Competencies	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to construct mailable letters	3.24	0.72	Needed
2	Ability to edit documents	2.83	0.55	Needed
3	Ability to generate and send e-mail	3.33	0.74	Needed
4	Ability to produce office correspondence	3.12	1.08	Needed
5	Ability to answer telephone calls in a pleasant and efficient manner	2.99	0.70	Needed
6	Ability to handle confidential matters	3.08	0.76	Needed
7	Ability to use the English language to pass information effectively	3.33	0.62	Needed
8	Ability to sort and prioritize emails based on deadlines	3.17	0.69	Needed
9	Ability to arrange callbacks and appointments	3.49	0.64	Needed
10	Ability to answer questions about the specifics of the office	3.50	0.64	Highly Needed
11	Ability to communicate effectively and to connect markets	.91	0.75	Needed
12	Ability to discuss well with others	3.00	0.71	Needed
Cluster Mean		3.16		Needed

As shown by the cluster mean of 3.16 in Table 2, corporate entrepreneurs responded that the communication competencies required of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development were all needed with exception of item 10 which was highly needed. The item by item analysis shows that items 1 to 9 and items 11 to 12 fell within a mean rating range of 2.83 to 3.49 while item 10 had mean rating of 3.50. The standard deviations for all the items were within the same range indicating that respondents were homogenous in their mean ratings.

Hypothesis One

The null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significant.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female corporate entrepreneurs regarding the knowledge competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development.

Table 3: t-test analysis of mean responses of male and female corporate entrepreneurs on knowledge competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development.

Source of Variation	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
Male	200	37.47	2.56	225	.119	.905	Accepted
Female	27	28.40	2.50				

The calculated t-value (.119) at 225 degrees of freedom and .05 level of significance was significance at a p-value of .905 which was greater than .05 alpha level, hence the null hypothesis was accepted. Based on the result of the null hypothesis there is no significant difference in the perception of male and female corporate entrepreneurs on knowledge competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development was accepted or retained.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the perception of corporate entrepreneurs with 5 years and above experience and those with less than 5 years experience regarding communication competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development.

Table 4: t-test analysis of mean responses of corporate entrepreneurs with 5 years and above experience and those with less than 5 years experience on communication competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development.

Source of Variation	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
Less than 5 years experience	163	37.89	2.96	225	.201	.841	Accepted
5 years and above experience	64	37.98	3.04				

The calculated t-value (0.201) at 225 degrees of freedom and .05 level of significance was significance at a p-value of .841 which was greater than .05 alpha level, hence the null hypothesis was accepted. Based on the result of the null hypothesis there is no significant difference in the perception of corporate entrepreneurs with 5 years and above experience and those with less than 5 years experience on competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development was accepted or retained.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that knowledge competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development were ability to understand inventory control and turnover, ability to know the right inventory option for the enterprise, ability to make good use of insurance scheme, ability to show good ownership of business and ability to know the best way to select competent employee. They should be enthusiastic about knowledge competencies acquisition so as to perform well at their work places thereby help in effective entrepreneurial development. It is important to know that acquisition of needed knowledge competencies would enable business education graduates to maintain expertise in a climate of rapid technological change which would enhance

effective entrepreneurial development. This findings is in consonance with the observation of Baba, Ameh and Ezeahurukwe (2018), that the acquisition of technological knowledge and skills must be connected with development of a broader array of competencies. It is only by combined efforts of business education graduates and business educators that the former would acquire the needed knowledge competencies to ensure effective entrepreneurial development. The finding also shows that ability to know Federal, State and local government approved levies was the knowledge competencies business education graduates rarely needed.

The study also indicates that there was no significant difference in the perception of male and female corporate entrepreneurs regarding knowledge competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development. Competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development were acquired during training of business education students normally done by business educators in our institutions of higher learning. The finding of the study is in line with the assertion of Judy and Chris in James (2014) that competency involves the combination of knowledge, attitude values and skills to perform tasks in determined situations.

Furthermore, the study indicated that communication competencies required of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development were all needed. The ability to generate and send e-mail, ability to handle confidential matters, ability to sort and prioritize mails based on deadlines and ability to arrange call backs and appointments were mostly needed whereas ability to construct mailable letters and ability to answer telephone calls in a pleasant and efficient manner were the least needed. The finding was in line with Ezeabii, Nwokike and Jim (2018) that communication competencies required of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development involve ability to use English Language to pass information effectively.

The findings also showed that there was no significant difference in ratings of 5 years experience and above less than and 5 years experience corporate entrepreneurs regarding communication competencies needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development. This was to say that 5 years and above experience and less than 5 years experience corporate entrepreneurs were of perception that communication competencies are highly needed of business education graduates for effective entrepreneurial development. This finding was not out of place since acquisition of communication competencies can be achieved through training in higher institutions of learning which lead to effective entrepreneurial 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. 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. The business education graduates and practising entrepreneurs need the following entrepreneurial competencies as knowledge, innovation, communication, information, accounting/financial and general business for success in self employment and effective entrepreneurial development.

Recommendations

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

1. Government should make adequate provision of funds to business education departments in institutions of higher learning for the purchase of facilities and teaching equipment for the training of business education students.
2. The existing business education curriculum should be reviewed to integrate knowledge, innovation, communication, information, accounting/financial and general business competencies to equip graduates of business education with the necessary skills to establish their own business and become successful entrepreneurs.
3. Government should make fund available for re-training of business educators to acquire knowledge, invocation, communication, information, accounting/financial and general business competencies since one cannot give what he does not have.

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