



Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Skills as Determinant of Employability as Perceived by Business Education Students

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Abstract

This research was carried out to examine the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by university students as perceived by Business Education students for employability in Ekiti State. A descriptive research design was adopted by the researcher. From the study, population comprised of 570 Business Education students from the two public universities in Ekiti State. The sample consisted of 335 Business Education students in 200 and 300 levels in the two public universities in the State who were selected through simple random sampling technique. The instrument used to gather data was a questionnaire titled 'Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Skills as Perceived by Business Education Students for Employability (AESPBUSE)' which was validated by experts from the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City. The reliability of the instrument was determined by using test re-test method and reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained. Data collected were analysed using mean, standard deviation and percentages. The results of the study revealed that acquisition of entrepreneurial skills namely: human relation skill, communication skill and marketing skill will enhance business education students' employability after graduation. It is therefore recommended that, business education students should be encouraged to devote more time and energy to acquisition of entrepreneurial skills to boost their employability after graduation. There should be regular workshop, seminar and training to create avenue for lecturers to improve their understanding and teaching of entrepreneurial skills in the universities.

Keywords: Human relation skill, Communication skill, Marketing skill, University students, Employability, Business Education students.

Introduction

It is no more news that Nigeria has a lot of problems constantly demanding for solutions and many of such are very injurious to the country, amongst these is the problem of unemployment which could also be deduced to be the root cause of all other problems that are threatening the corporate existence of the country and her citizenry. As part of the solutions to the problem of youth unemployment which stood at 33.3% (Ndubisi, 2021 & NBC, 2020), coupled with the problem of University graduates that are unemployable by the reason of the course they studied and lack of skills, Entrepreneurship has been identified and introduced by the Government to enhance skills acquisition amongst the university undergraduates to make them employable and become employers of labour rather than looking

for white collar jobs that are not almost available (FGN, 2013). However, the perception of Business Education students has a long way to go in determining the acquisition of such skills (Olanipekun & Adeyera, 2014). Alase, (2014) posited that the role of perception in modifying behaviour cannot be overemphasized. The way in which people perceive, label, interpret and imagine events, issues determines how they react and behave towards it. When people perceive wrongly, they may react in a particular manner, which may be considered acceptable or unacceptable by the concerned individuals. Among the skills to be considered in this study are; human relation skill, communication skills and marketing skills.

Human relation skill enables would be entrepreneurs to interact overtly or face to face



with the people or customers and other competitors. Lamberton and Minor (2002) described human relation skills to include a desire to understand others, their needs, weaknesses and their talents and abilities. It also involves an understanding of how people work together in a group, satisfying both individual needs and group objectives. This skill assists and helps business education students to learn how to relate with other people in a way to bring about success in business enterprises. Not only this, Akinkuolie, (2014) posited that human relation skills are needed to enhance the maintenance of a good rapport and cordial relationship between individuals. The influence of the good rapport will continue between the entrepreneur and their customers and it will bring about the enactment of team spirit that leads to high productivity which invariably serves as impetus for achieving business goals and objectives (profit maximization) (Ezeani, 2012). Students seem to believe that only the extroverts are good in business/ entrepreneurship activities as against the introverts. The introverts seem to believe that they are not too good in maintaining good human relation.

According to Barret (2006), communication is the act of transferring ideas, information to ensure a clear meaning. It further refers to the transfer of a message (thoughts, ideas, facts, information, intent, or feeling) that is both received and understood (Steenkemp, 2011). Communication skills is one of the skills which university undergraduates especially the Business Education students are expected to acquire in order for them to be employable. It refers to the ability to relate and interact with subordinates, superiors and customers/clients to build effective relationship. Communication skills further allows one to understand and be understood by others as it encompasses effective transferring of ideas, active listening in conversations, giving and receiving critical feedback and engaging in public speaking. Nieuwehuizen (2008) posited that university undergraduates' ability to exchange meaningful information, facts that leads to effective entrepreneurship is attributed to good communication skills. Hergie (2007) was of the

view that communication is a social skill that is important and necessary for business growth and development. While assessing the importance of good communication skills especially for business students, Afolabi and Macheke (2012) affirmed that absence of good communication skills may hinder the employability of university undergraduates and also lead to poor performance in any business venture.

However, it has been observed that many university graduates find it very difficult to express themselves overtly even during job interviews. Therefore, acquisition of good communication skill is necessary for entrepreneurship effectiveness and competitiveness. Emerging entrepreneurs or would be entrepreneurs like Business Education students should acquire and improve upon their communication skills as it would help the students in the sharing of ideas, information and in presenting such ideas or information clearly and understandably. It would further assist in maintaining a good working relationship with their staff, team members and clients.

Having good communication skills would help an entrepreneur to make good presentation, sustain discussion and market products, services and programs very well. It is expected that business education students should understand the great role of communication skill in entrepreneurship and furnish themselves with them to make their regular interaction effective, so as to aid their employability after graduation. Baum and Locke (2004) buttress the above assertion by saying that nascent entrepreneur has a vision, idea of the business which must be communicated effectively to a team. Effective communicable business education student can build their career easily and be self-reliant after graduation.

Closely related to the communication skill is the marketing skill, a good and productive marketing skill is a function of good communication skill. Marketing skill is one of the entrepreneurship skills which business education students are expected to acquire and this involves the act of thinking about how goods or services produced should reach the target audience. The skill enables them to listen to peoples' needs, wants and interact well with



them so as to discover where demand is high for the goods produced and this is done through market survey (Thom-Otuya, 2018). This will further enable the entrepreneurs the ability to budget and forecast, determine current and future trends in sales of products, knowledge of advertising, determine and interpret factors which indicate extent and strength of competition, determine availability of goods or raw materials for production and storage of the finished goods and knowledge of seasonal fluctuating of goods and prices of goods.

Statement of the Problem

The persistence increase in the rate of unemployment among universities graduates despite the inclusion of entrepreneurship education into the university curriculum in Nigeria is a major concern to all well-meaning individuals. It seems that the reason behind this scenario may not be unconnected with Business Education students' perception of entrepreneurial skills acquisition in school. The problems of poverty, insecurity, kidnapping, joblessness among others have also posed great challenges to economic growth of the nation. All these may be traced to the quality of entrepreneurial skills acquired by students while in the school. More so, it appears students are being blamed by the general populace for failing to equip or acquire necessary entrepreneurial skills while in the universities which has led to their non-employable or not being self-reliant after graduation. Furthermore, the emphasis on academic oriented programmes in universities without the acquisition of necessary entrepreneurial skills appears not to be preparing the students for employability in the present economic situation of the country. The researcher further observed that business education students seem to perceive that acquisition of entrepreneurial skills may not probably determine their employability in the

labour market and for this reason many seem not to consider acquisition of entrepreneurial skills as part of their academic pursuit. This seem to be a factor that may likely influence the acquisition of such entrepreneurial skills. Therefore, the researcher seeks to examine acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in Universities as perceived by business education students for employability.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in line with the specific objectives to guide the study:

1. To what extent does acquisition of human relation skill enhance employability as perceived by Business Education students?
2. To what extent does acquisition of communication skill enhance employability as perceived by Business Education students?
3. What is the perception of Business Education students on acquisition of marketing skill to employability in Ekiti State?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. Atamhenwan (2014), defined a survey research as one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be a representative of the entire population. This is considered appropriate because the researcher intends to collect data from this representative and from which the results would be generalized. It is aimed at collecting data and describing characteristics, features and facts about a given population using questionnaire. The population of the study consist of all the Business Education students in the two public universities in Ekiti State. Thus, the population of the study is as follows:

Table 1: Population of Students as at February, 2019

Name of University	100Level Students	200Level Students	300Level Students	400Level Students	Total
Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti	57	89	144	53	343
Federal University, Oye-Ekiti	125	84	18	-	227



Sources: Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. Department of Educational Management and Business Studies, Federal University, Oye-Ekiti.

The sample of this study stood at 335 Business Education students in 200 level and 300 level from the public universities in Ekiti State. That is, 173 (200level) and 162 (300 level) Business Education students. A structured questionnaire was designed by the researcher titled: “Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Skills as Perceived by Business Education Students for Employability (AESPBESE)” was used for collection of data from the respondents. It is a 30- item questionnaire with sections A and B: Section A was used to collect bio-data of respondents. Section B with 30 items was grouped according to the research questions. A four point Likert type rating scale was used and categorized into Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree and were weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. To ascertain face validity of the instrument, the instrument was given to two experts in the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City. Their corrections and inputs were used to produce the final draft. The reliability of the instrument was determined by using test re-test method. This was carried out on 20 students in

the Department of Vocational and Technical Education of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State. The administration of the instrument for reliability was carried out on the respondents at two different occasions at the interval of two weeks. The responses from the two tests were scored and correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. A reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained. This figure was considered to be appropriate for the purpose of this study. The instrument was administered by the researcher with two research assistants who were briefed about the instrument and who are also familiar with the sampled institutions and the students.

The researcher sought for the permission and cooperation of each Head of Department and the students with a letter of introduction from HOD before the administration of the instrument. Copies of the questionnaire were collected immediately on completion except for those that were not ready which the researcher went back to collect after one week. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while for the decision to be taken, the mean for the scaling point was computed. Any calculated mean (\bar{X}) equal or greater than 2.5 represents agree while any mean (\bar{X}) less than 2.5 represents disagree

Results:

Research Question 1: To what extent does acquisition of human relation skill enhance employability as perceived by Business Education students?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on acquisition of human relation skills for employability in Ekiti State.

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Students consider the appropriateness of employees training and development as skills required for employability.	3.35	0.66	Agree
2.	Students consider creation and maintenance of a cordial relationship between management and other workers as skills for employability.	3.39	0.71	Agree
3.	Students consider inspiring other co-workers through the sharing of business visions and goals are skills required for employability.	3.37	0.71	Agree



4.	Students consider identification and building of a management team to develop a business empire are skills required for employability.	3.36	0.78	Agree
5.	Students consider developing a business relationship with key people to boost business opportunities are skills required for employability	3.40	0.69	Agree
	Grand mean	3.37	0.71	Agree

Table 2 reveals that the mean responses of students range from 3.35 to 3.40 while the standard deviation range from 0.66 to 0.78. The mean values show that students agreed to all the five items. The grand indicates that the extent of

acquisitions of human relation skills as perceived by Business Education students' to enhance their employability in Ekiti State is high.

Research Question 2: To what extent does acquisition of communication skill enhance employability as perceived by Business Education students?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation on acquisition of communication skills for employability in Ekiti State.

S/N	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Remark
1.	Students consider proficient in words and internet applications as skills for employability.	3.27	0.74	Agree
2.	Students consider ability to communicate effectively with team mates as skills for employability.	3.44	0.64	Agree
3.	Students consider the use of social media networks to share ideas as skills for employability.	3.47	0.67	Agree
4.	Students consider ability to express oneself clearly and to listen to others as skills for employability.	3.44	0.62	Agree
5.	Students consider articulating own ideas and visions as skills for employability.	3.47	0.70	Agree
	Grand mean	3.42	0.67	Agree

Table 3 shows that the mean responses of students range from 3.27 to 3.47 while the standard deviation range from 0.62 to 0.74. The mean values show that students agreed to all the five items. The grand shows that the extent of acquisitions of communication skills as perceived by Business Education students' as relevant to employability in Ekiti State is high.



Research Question 3: To what extent does acquisition of marketing skill enhance employability as perceived by Business Education students?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation on acquisition of marketing skills for employability in Ekiti State

S/N	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Remark
1.	Students consider formulating a set of actions in pursuit of business opportunities as skills for employability.	3.44	0.64	Agree
2.	Students consider conducting market analysis related to starting a business as skills for employability.	3.42	0.63	Agree
3.	Students consider capturing and retain the attention of customers as a marketing skill for employability.	3.47	0.70	Agree
4.	Students consider delivering and distributing of products and services of an organization as skills for employability.	3.38	0.70	Agree
5.	Students consider analyzing demand and supply as skills required for employability.	3.39	0.67	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.42	0.67	Agree

Table 4 reveals that the mean responses of students range from 3.38 to 3.47 while the standard deviation range from 0.63 to 0.70. The mean values show that students agreed to all the five items. The grand indicates that the extent of acquisitions of marketing skills as perceived by Business Education students' for employability in Ekiti State is high.

Discussion

The findings revealed that all the human relation skills items are highly perceived by business education students in Ekiti State to enhance employability on graduation. This is because, it was revealed that human relations are built and maintained when a cordial relationship exists between the management and the workers. This finding is in consonance with the work of Lamberton & Minor (2002) who posited that acquisition of human relation skills includes a desire to understand others; their needs; weaknesses; talents and abilities. Furthermore, it involves an understanding of how people work

together in a group, satisfying both individual needs and group objectives. Human relation skills are needed to be acquired by business education students since it enhances employability, maintenance of harmonious relationship among individuals, inspiring other co-workers through the sharing of business visions and goals, identification and building of management team to develop a business empire and enhance productivity towards achieving organizational goals and objectives.

The findings of this study also revealed that acquisition of communication skills as perceived by business education students are relevant to employability in Ekiti State. Communication skills are vital skills which business education students must not neglect. Communication skills arouse the interest and curiosity of the customers in aspiring to know the ideas the entrepreneurial wants to share. This is in consonance with the study of Nieuwehuizen (2008) who posited that student's ability to exchange meaningful



information and facts that lead to effective entrepreneurship is attributed to good communication skills.

The study revealed that acquisition of marketing skills are highly required for effective delivering and distribution of products and services of the organization and students employability after graduation. The findings further revealed that marketing skills are essential in formulating a set of actions in pursuit of business opportunities and in conducting market analysis related to starting a business venture. The findings is in line with the view of Stanton (2000) who posited that acquisition of marketing skills tend to assist in capturing and retaining the attention of customers and assist in the distribution of goods and services.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that entrepreneurial skills acquisition as perceived by business education students are key for employability in Ekiti State. Lack of these important skills affect graduates in getting employed or embarking on any business venture. Furthermore, entrepreneurial skills will equip the undergraduates with skills, knowledge and abilities that will enable self-reliance and employability after graduation. For business education students to meet the challenges of the future and unemployment, efforts should be geared towards acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. The study has provided information on entrepreneurial skills that are required for business education students' employability. Therefore, business education students need to combine all the skills identified therein for effective management of business venture and for their employability.

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

1. A well planned and coordinated staff training development programmes should be put in place for business education lecturers to constantly update their knowledge and skills in order to be more competent on the job. There should be regular workshops, seminars and symposia to create avenue for lecturers to improve their understanding and teaching of entrepreneurial skills in the universities.

2. Business education students should develop a genuine interest to acquire entrepreneurial skills for employability.
3. Learning facilities/equipment that will help business education students to acquire the skills should be put in place. Tertiary institutions should be given adequate support by the government in the area of improving entrepreneurial skills among undergraduates in Nigeria universities.

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