

Extent of Skills Developed by Business Education Students for Self Employment after Graduation across Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

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Abstract

This study investigated the extent of skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The studied population was made up of 337 final year undergraduate Business Education students during 2023/2024 academic session across three tertiary institutions in Rivers State namely Rivers State University (RSU), Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE), Port-Harcourt, and Federal College of Education (Tech.), Omoku - Rivers State. The sample size was made up of the entire 337 final year undergraduate Business Education across the three tertiary institutions, hence no sampling technique was used. Researcher's designed structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Two Business education lecturers with the knowledge of research from Rivers State University validated the instrument. For the reliability index, Pearson Product Moment Correlation r value of 0.74 was obtained for the instrument using a test retest method. Out of the 337 copies of the instrument administered, only 312 copies were properly filled and returned, and the rate of return was approximately 93%. The distribution of the returned copies are RSU – 41, IAUE – 153 and FCE(T), Omoku – 118. Data were analysed using mean and cluster mean to answer the research questions. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that to a high extent business functions skills for self employment were developed; and to a low extent psychological skills for self employment were developed by Business Education students across tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The results also revealed that there is no significant difference on the extent of business functions skills and the extent of psychological skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across tertiary institution in Rivers State. It was recommended among others that Business education lecturers should provide their students with learning activities that require the continuous performance of business functions tasks in order to enhance the participants business functions skills.

Keywords: *Business Education, Business Education Skills, Psychological Capital, Startup, Business Survive*

Introduction

Everything being equal, the outcomes of Business Education as one of the educational programmes offered in Nigerian tertiary institutions are expected to empower the graduates with relevant skills for operating in the business world and in education (Ukata, Adejola & Okoye, 2018). This essentially makes skills development an important aspect of the programme (Amesi, 2018). It is believed that inadequacy in the development of the essential skills before graduation would only render the Business Education programme jobless and useless (Edomwonyi, & Oduma, 2018). Consequently as noted by Ubulom, et al (2021), it is significant for every graduate of Business Education programme to develop adequately the skills related to the curriculum content implemented.

There are many indispensable skills students can develop through exposure to Business Education curriculum content at the tertiary institution level. These skills can be categorized into two sets, namely business functions skills and psychological skills. The business functions skills according to Abdulkarim and Osiah (2014), cuts across functional areas of business operations such as accounting skills, marketing skills, office operations skills, entrepreneurship skills, business economics skills and management practices skills. Similarly, Usoro (2016) opined that instructions in Business Education programme provides students the opportunity to develop business skills relating to accounting and financial records keeping, marketing, sales and distribution skills, office practice and management skills, technology integration skills, and entrepreneurship skills. Schell (2018) noted that through Business Education programme students are assisted to develop skills in accounting functions, office practice functions, marketing functions, management functions and entrepreneurship functions.

The psychological skills required to be developed by Business Education students are mostly those involving mental processing of information for effective decision and proactive actions. According to Osiah, et al (2018), psychological related skills developed through business education include but not limited to emotional intelligence skills, problem-solving skills, creativity skills, risk management skills, and time management skills. Akwaya and Okute (2022) opined that if Business Education students are to be prepared to function optimally in today's business world, they must be made to develop mental related skills such as creative and critical thinkers, innovative and skills for taking essential risk to drive entrepreneurial ventures as means of self-employment. Inferring from discourse so far, it can be deduced that Business Education programme offered in any tertiary institution should be able to assist the students developed necessary business functions skills and psychological skills to enable them start their own businesses and manage them effectively as means of self-employment.

Self-employment as a concept is derivable from the concept of employment. Employment on a general note is concerned with paid work relationship between the employer and the employee, while self-employment according to Abdulkarim (2012), is concerned with the socio-economic activities one is engaged with as a source of livelihood. Similarly, Nwachukwu (2012) described

the concept of self-employment is the act of generating one's income directly from clients or other organizations through the provision of service of socio-economic value. Heathfield (2019) opined that self-employment exists when a person performs work directly to the consumer in exchange for fees or profits used as source of income. It is important to note that independently performance of task to final consumer for fees or profit can only be guaranteed when one has the skills and other competences required for the successful performance of the task, hence the extent of skills developed by students through Business Education programme should put them at advantage or disadvantage of being self-employed. Supporting this, Amesi (2018) posited that business education students equipped with relevant skills can engaged in different socio-economic activities for survival, but anyone who lacks the essential skill will find it difficult to be self-employed, Several studies have been conducted to assess the skills developed by business education students or graduates for employment or self-employment. It is important to note that the results are not consistent across the findings of different researchers. Abhakorn (2013) conducted students on the skills the students are helped to developed and reported that they were able to develop thinking skills, questioning skills, turn-taking skills, and socialization skills. Abdulkarim and Osiah (2014) investigated business education skills for reducing unemployment and reported that recipients are assisted to develop skills related to accounting, marketing, office operations and entrepreneurship required for employment in innovative business ventures. Kutbiddinova et al (2016) investigated how and type of skills developed by students after instructions and reported they developed psychological skills such as analytical thinking skills, and creativity skills. Val-Ossai and Akpomi (2017) reported that Business Education programme assists students to develop business skills for entry into and advancement of jobs within the business world. Osiah, et al (2018) reported the need for Business Education graduating students to equip with business and psychological skills such as marketing skills, problem-solving skills, creativity skills, emotional intelligence skills, and time management. Adizu, et al (2022) investigation revealed that business education graduates preferred white-collar employment than self-employment because they lack the requisite psychological skills for positive mindset to take risk. Wagbara and Berepugi (2023) investigation revealed among other things that graduating business education students to a moderate extent developed the requisite business skills for employability potential.

A cursory look at the reviewed empirical studies showed the need for continuous investigation of the extent of skills developed by Business Education graduating students in order to ascertain whether the programme's curriculum content and pedagogical practices are yielding the desirable outcomes capable of leading to graduates' self-employment. It is need that inspires the current study.

Statement of Problem

It is not a gainsaying that the aims of Business Education as a skill oriented programme is to equip recipients with necessary business functional skills and psychological skills for future endeavours. Nevertheless, the researcher observed that despite the programme's noble aims, many of the graduating students from tertiary institutions in Rivers State are still roaming the street in search of white collar jobs, some have taken to underemployment opportunities not capable of providing with adequate income for their livelihood, and others have not returned for graduates studies to see whether with a high certificate they can get better opportunities for employments. These

situations raise concern and doubt on whether the current Business Education programmes offered at tertiary institutions in Rivers State are really equipping students with essential business functions skills and psychological skills to take up self-employment were they cannot find paid employment. Consequently, to clear this doubt and provide a clearer picture on the extent of skills developed by students of the programme before graduation, the present study was conceived and undertaken.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the extent of skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to business functions skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
2. Determine the extent to psychological skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent of business functions skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across tertiary institutions in Rivers State?
2. What is the extent of psychological skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Test of Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference on the extent of business functions skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across the tertiary institution in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference on the extent of psychological skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across the tertiary institution in Rivers State.

Methods

Descriptive research design was adopted for the study to gather data based on the observed opinion of the respondents. The population of the study was made up of 337 final year undergraduate Business Education students during 2023/2024 academic session across three tertiary institutions in Rivers State namely Rivers State University (RSU), Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE), Port-Harcourt, and Federal College of Education (Tech.), Omoku - Rivers State academic session. The population breakdown is RSU – 47; IAUE – 162 and FCE(T), Omoku - 128. The sample size of the study was made up of the entire 337 final year undergraduate Business Education across the three tertiary institutions, hence no sampling technique was used.

Researcher's designed structured questionnaire titled "Extent of Business Functions Skills and Psychological Skills Developed by Students of Business Education Questionnaire (EBFSPSDSBEQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument contains 15 items, 10 to measure extent of business functions skills developed and 5 to measure extent of psychological capital

developed. The instrument response pattern was based on four point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE-4points), High Extent (HE-3points), Low Extent (LE - 2points), and Very Low Extent (VLE -1point).The instrument was completed by the participating graduating students. The questionnaire was validated by two Business education lecturerswith the knowledge of research from Rivers State University.The reliability index of $r = 0.74$ was obtained for the instrument using a test retest method with data generated from 20 final year undergraduate students from Niger Delta University and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24.0 used for computation of Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

The researcher through the various class representatives of final year students in Business Education programme administered the copies of the instrument. The researcher pleaded with them to personally administer the copies of the instrument to their colleagues to avoid loss. At the end, only 312 copies were properly filled and returned. The rate of return was approximately 93%. The distribution of the returned copies are RSU – 41, IAUE – 153 and FCE(T), Omoku – 118.

Data collected for the study were analysed using mean and cluster mean to answer the research questions. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the formulated hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for mean and cluster mean are as follows: VHE: 3.50 – 4.00; HE: 2.50 – 3.49; LE: 1.50 – 2.49; and VLE: 0.50 – 1.49

Results

Research Question 1: What is the extent of business functions skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 1: Summary of Mean Responses of Extent of Business Functions Skills Developed by Business Education Students for Self=employment

S/N	I t e m s	R S U		I A U E		FCE(T.), Omoku	
		Mean	Decision	Mean	Decision	Mean	Decision
1	I can plan effectively for myself business	3 . 7 0	V H E	3.56	V H E	3.51	V H E
2	I can persuade customers to patronize my business	2 . 5 6	H E	3.23	H E	3.44	H E
3	I can drive enough sales to sustain my business	3 . 5 1	V H E	3.65	V H E	3.66	V H E
4	I can record every financial dealings of my business successfully	2 . 5 3	H E	2.65	H E	2.57	H E
5	I can report effectively the financial status of my business	2 . 4 4	L E	2.51	H E	2.61	H E
6	I can utilize computer, digital printer, and other office technologies to provide services	3 . 3 6	H E	3.11	H E	3.26	H E
7	I can manage office space efficiently for own business	3 . 6 8	V H E	3.51	V H E	3.55	V H E
8	I can mobilize resources to finance own business	1 . 6 5	L E	2.63	H E	2.11	L E
9	I can care effectively for clients of my own business	3 . 4 7	H E	3.45	H E	3.48	H E
1 0	I can creatively promote services to earn a living	2 . 5 1	H E	2.63	H E	2.61	H E
	C l u s t e r m e a n	2 . 9 4	H E	3.09	H E	3.08	H E

Source: 2024 field survey

Table 1 reveals that respondent from RSU, IAUE and FCE(T) opined that to a very high extent they can plan effectively for their own businesses, drive enough sales to sustain their businesses, manage office space efficiently for their own businesses with mean scores of 3.70, 3.56, 3.51, 3.51, 3.65, 3.66, 3.68, 3.51, and 3.55 respectively. The respondents from RSU, IAUE and FCE(T.),

Omoku also opined that to a high extent they can persuade customers to patronize their businesses, record every financial dealings of their businesses successfully, utilize computer, digital printer and other office technologies to provide service, care effectively for clients of their own businesses and can creatively promote services to earn a living with mean scores of 2.56, 3.23, 3.44, 2.53, 2.65, 2.57, 3.36, 3.11, 3.26, 3.47, 3.45, 3.48, 2.51, 2.63 and 2.61. The respondents from IAUE and FCE (T.), Omoku opined that to a high extent they can report effectively the financial status of their businesses with mean scores of 2.51 and 2.61, while their counterparts from RSU opined that to a low extent they can perform same function with mean score of 2.44. The respondents from IAUE also opined that to a high extent they can mobilize resources to finance own business with mean score of 2.63; while their counters from University of Port-Harcourt and FCE (T.), Omoku opined that to a low extent they can perform same task with mean scores of 1.65 and 2.11 respectively. Nevertheless, when the cluster means scores of 2.94, 3.09 and 3.08 are considered, it can be concluded that to a high extent business functions skills for self employment are developed by Business Education students across tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of psychological skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 2: Summary of Mean Responses of Extent of Psychological Skills Developed by Business Educations for Self Employment

S/N	I t e m s	R Mean	S Decision	U Mean	I Decision	A Mean	U Decision	E Mean	FCE(T.), Omoku Decision
1	I can easily identify challenges and systematically think out possible solutions	2.53	H	E	2.72	H	E	2.61	H E
2	I can combine resources in different ways to get positive results in my business	2.32	L	E	2.11	L	E	2.38	L E
3	I can commit resources to any profitable venture that will earn me a living	2.54	H	E	2.61	H	E	2.72	H E
4	I can read the emotions of customers in order to find out what needs to be address	1.42	V L	E	1.12	V L	E	1.39	V L E
5	I can analytically think out strategies to successful create my business venture	3.44	H	E	3.41	H	E	3.13	M E
	C l u s t e r m e a n	2.45	L	E	2.39	L	E	2.45	L E

Source: 2024 field survey

Table 2 reveals that the respondents from RSU, IAUE and F.C.E. (T.), Omoku opined to high extent they can identify challenges and systematically think out possible solutions, commit resources to any profitable venture that will earn them a living, and can analytically think out strategies to successful create their businesses venture with mean scores 2.53, 2.72, 2.61, 2.54, 2.61, 2.72, 3.44, 3.41, and 3.13 respectively. The respondents from RSU, IAUE and FCE (T.), Omoku also opined that they can combine resources in different ways to get positive results in business with mean scores of 2.32, 2.11 and 2.38. Therespondents from RSU, IAUE and F.C.E. (T.), Omoku also opined to a very low extent they can combine emotions of customers in order to find out what needs to be addressed with mean score 1.42, 1.12, and 1.39. However, when the cluster means scores of 2.45, 2.39 and 2.45are considered, it can be concluded that to a low extent psychological skills for self employment are developed by Business Education students across tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference on the extent of business functions skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across tertiary institution in Rivers State.

Table 3: Summary of Analysis of Variance on Significant Difference on the Extent of Business Functions Skills Developed by Business Education Students for Self Employment after Graduation across tertiary institutions in Rivers State

M	o	d	e	l	Sum of Squares	d	f	Mean Square	F	S	i	g	.
					46.837	2	3	3.419	5.645				
1					119.689	309	9	0.606					
					166.526	311	1						

Table 3 shows sum of squares is 46.837, with 2 as degree of freedom and mean square of 3.419. The table also shows residual sum of squares is 119.689 and 309 degree of freedom as well as mean square of 0.606. The total has 166.526 sum of squares and 311 degree of freedom. The computed F ratio is 5.645 which is statistically not significant alpha at 0.14. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference on the extent of business functions skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across tertiary institution in Rivers State is accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference on the extent of psychological skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across the tertiary institution in Rivers State.

Table 4: Summary of Analysis of Variance on Significant Difference on the Extent of Psychological Skills Developed by Business Education Students for Self Employment after Graduation across tertiary institutions in Rivers State

M	o	d	e	l	Sum of Squares	d	f	Mean Square	F	S	i	g	.
					41.631	2	2	20.816	2.430				
1					154.178	309	9	8.565					
					195.810	311	1						

Table 4 shows sum of squares is 41.631, with 2 as degree of freedom and mean square of 20.816. The table also shows residual sum of squares is 154.178 and 309 degree of freedom as well as mean square of 8.565. The total has 195.810 sum of squares and 311 degree of freedom. The computed F ratio is 2.430 which is not statistically significant alpha at 0.12. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference on the extent of psychological skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across the tertiary institution in Rivers State is accepted.

Discussion of Major Findings

The major findings of this study are discussion under each of the specific objectives they addressed as follows:

Extent to business functions skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across tertiary institutions in Rivers State

The results related to this specific purpose revealed that to a high extent business functions skills for self employment are developed by Business Education students across tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The results of test of hypothesis related to this specific purpose revealed that that there is no significant difference on the extent of business functions skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across tertiary institution in Rivers State. This finding emanated from the fact that respondents from RSU, IAUE and FCE(T.), Omoku opined that to a high extent they can persuade customers to patronize their businesses, record every financial dealings of their businesses successfully, utilize computer, digital printer and other office technologies to provide service, care effectively for clients of their own businesses and can creatively promote services to earn a living. This finding is corroborated by the position held by Abdulkarim and Osiah (2014) when they noted that through the studying of Business Education programme, students are exposed to relevant business skills. The finding is also contrary to thereport of Wagbara and Berepugi (2023) when they reported that graduating business education students to a moderate extent developed the requisite business skills for employability potential. Consequently, the finding of this study connotes that business education students should be able to utilize their business functions skills developed for self-employment.

Extent to psychological skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across tertiary institutions in Rivers State

The results related to this specific purpose revealed that to low extent psychological skills for self employment were developed by Business Education students across tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The results of test of hypothesis related to this specific purpose revealed that there is no significant difference on the extent of psychological skills developed by Business Education students for self-employment after graduation across the tertiary institution in Rivers State. This finding emanated based on the fact that the respondents from RSU, IAUE and FCE (T.), Omoku also opined that they can combine resources in different ways to get positive results in business and to a very low extent they can combine emotions of customers in order to find out what needs to be addressed. The finding of this study is supported by the report of Adizu, et al (2022) when they reported business education graduates preferred white-collar employment than self-employment because they lack the requisite psychological skills for positive mindset to take risk..This finding is contrary to the position held by Osiah, Allen and Abdulkarim (2018) when they noted that psychological related skills developed through business education include but not limited to emotional intelligence skills, problem-solving skills, creativity skills, risk management skills, and time management skills. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the differences of the present study finding with that of the earlier findings is based on the fact that the earlier studies were not concerned with the extent of psychological skills developed by the students but rather of the need for their development.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that to high the extent of business functions skills are developed by Business education students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State, while to a low extent psychological skills are developed. Consequently, it can be concluded that with the extent of business functions skills developed by Business education students, they should be able to drive venture creation and be self-employed, but the sustainability of such venture can be threaten by the low extent of psychological skills they developed. This is due to the fact that psychological skills are response oriented meant for the purpose overcoming challenges in a creative manner. This means that certain proactive steps need to be taken to enhance Business education students psychological skills every other things being equal.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusions made, the following recommendations were put forward for implementation:

1. Business education lecturers should provide their students with learning activities that require the continuous performance of business functions tasks in order to enhance the participants business functions skills.
2. Business education lecturers should design and implement learning activities capable of helping their students use their mental abilities to think out procedures, best practices and solutions to goal accomplishment in order to enhance psychological skills needed for self-employment.

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