

## Identifying Entrepreneurial Marketing Skill Needs of Business Education Students of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State for Self-Reliance

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### **Abstract**

*The study identified the entrepreneurial marketing skill needs required for self-reliance by business education students of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The design of the study was descriptive survey. Three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population for the study was 1006 final year business education students from RSU, IAUOE and FCT. Sample size of 402 final year students were studied. A structured questionnaire titled “Assessing Entrepreneurial Marketing Skill Needs Questionnaire” (AEMSNQ) in a four point rating scale duly validated by experts in the field was used as instrument for data collection. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha method which yielded a mean value of 0.75. Mean was used to answer the research questions while ANOVA was used in testing the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that entrepreneurship skills such as ability to determine the needs of customers, ability to capture, maintain and retain the attention of customers, ability to determine demand and supply situation, ability to develop good negotiation skills and others were identified as entrepreneurial marketing skill needs required for self-reliance by business education students. Inadequate facilities for teaching and learning, little or no practical instructional delivery, lack of students’ interest in practically oriented courses among others were revealed as constraints to effective entrepreneurial skill acquisition. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that the business education curriculum should incorporate the entrepreneurial marketing skill needs identified in this study; business education students should be encouraged to acquaint themselves with all the relevant entrepreneurial skills that will enable them to be self-reliant in the society before graduation. Measures such as provision of good learning environment, Provision of adequate skilled manpower, attending conferences, seminars and workshops, making teaching and learning practical oriented among others were proffered to promote entrepreneurship skills acquisition.*

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**Keywords:** Marketing, Entrepreneurial Marketing Skills, Self-Reliance, Business Education.

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### **Introduction**

Every individual is involved in marketing one way or the other. Marketing activities can be identified in any occupation, be it industrial, direct service or commercial (Sabo, 2006). The world is gradually becoming a global village where there is the interplay of the competing needs, demands and activities on a daily basis such that no single individual has all it takes to move the engine of growth across the globe for the good of man in order for man and nations of the world to avail themselves the resources needed for growth.

A major objective of education as defined by the National policy on Education is the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence that will enable individuals contribute to national development (NPE, 2013). Business education programme strives to achieve this aim by preparing students for the world of work either as employed or self-employed by instilling them with relevant skills, abilities knowledge and competencies. Okpan (2006) observed that business education programmes, possess laudable marketing skills and qualities for making an entrepreneur as they fulfill the entrepreneurial objective of grooming and breeding innovative individuals that will create jobs themselves instead of seeking employment opportunities. The main aim here is to impart the necessary skill needs to students during the course of their study, so they can be self-reliant economically after graduation, thereby striving to achieve the mission for self-employment and poverty alleviation. Thus, Business education students require a broad range of entrepreneurial marketing skill needs to enable them achieve self-reliance after graduation.

Marketing and distributive is one of the major areas of business education, which provides for the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and has as one of its mandate to graduate students who will become self-reliant. It is designed to meet the need of persons who have interest or are preparing to enter a marketing occupation as an entrepreneur. This type of education has become increasingly important due to the role of marketing and distribution in the economic growth of a nation and the countless entrepreneurial business opportunities this component of business education offers to graduates.

In the opinion of Ezeani (2008), entrepreneurial marketing involves identifying the needs of consumers; planning and developing a product or service that satisfies those wants; and determining the best possible price to promote and distribute that product or service thus identifying, anticipating, and satisfying customer requirements. It involves the process of planning and implementing the concepts of pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas in the creation of goods and services that will satisfy individual and organizational goals. Accordingly, Ameh and Ezeahurukwe (2016) opined that marketing involves research, product development, design, and testing, and concentrates primarily on consumers or buyers. When consumers needs/wants have been identified, marketing strategies are developed and designed to educate consumers about important product features with the aim of persuading them to buy it, thereby bringing about consumer satisfaction. It is a function of moving goods from the producer to the consumers. Consequently, entrepreneurial marketing could be described as a marketing spirit and culture that helps entrepreneurs actually define a unique identity for their selves and also provide one of the best ways for emerging entrepreneurs (graduates) to define their image in the minds of consumers. It makes available opportunities for individuals to explore their potentials and initiatives for greatness, which in turn builds their self-reliance in the race of life (Medeyase, 2013).

Self-reliance is the ability of an individual to establish a business of his own without depending on someone else (Umoru & Nnagi, 2015). A person who is independent and self-employed is self-reliant. To achieve self-reliance, one must be able to develop the spirit of self-employment; take calculated risk; translate his/her dream into reality through creating, organizing, and producing ideas; spot opportunity and utilize every difficult situation; and develop a school to work strategy, that is, have a practical work experience before graduation from school (Medeyase, 2013). Similarly, Daluba and Odiba (2013) observed that Nigerian graduates could only be self-reliant if they acquire relevant skills through entrepreneurship programmes which will translate into self-employment, wealth creation, job creation, and satisfaction.

Oyerinde and Falana (2016) described entrepreneurial marketing skill needs as requisite skills that involve thinking about how to reach the targeted audience for product and service produce by an entrepreneur. The authors further opined that any entrepreneur who acquires these skills will be able to cross the bar of unemployment as this skill will enable him/her to define their image in the minds of consumers. Entrepreneurial marketing skill needs are essential for the success or failure of a business. Similarly, Ademiluyi (2007) opined that the development of marketing skills offer the entrepreneur the unique strategy of success in business. The author, further identified areas of entrepreneurial marketing skill needs to include: salesmanship and negotiation; sales record keeping; sales promotion; stock record keeping; pricing; advertising channels; advertising media; consumer behaviour appreciation and transportation. In the same vein, Oboreh (2011) and Okpan (2006) identified entrepreneurial marketing skills to include ability to capture and retain the attention of customers; ability to promote and sell organizational products; ability to analyse demand and sell the products; ability to acquire effective sales techniques; ability to acquire good sales habit; ability to carry out effective marketing and information research; ability to be self-reliant and tactful; ability to determine the extent to which a product can sell; ability to budget and forecast; knowledge of seasonal fluctuation of goods and ability to determine and interpret factors which indicate extent and strength of competition. Consequently, there is the need to integrate these entrepreneurial marketing skill needs into the business education curriculum with a view to emphasizing the acquisition of practical and applied skills which will eventually translate into job creation and self-reliance.

It is against this background that this paper intends to identify the entrepreneurial marketing skill needs required for self-reliance and the strategies for improving the acquisition of skills by business education graduates in Rivers State.

### **Statement of Problem**

Over the years, Nigeria has been confronted with the challenge of high unemployment among her youths. Today, the present state of the Nigerian economy requires every individual to think of the very best alternative means of meeting his/her immediate needs through self-employment which entrepreneurial marketing offers to graduates especially those of business education. According to Ezenwafor and Olaniyi (2016), the skill needs required by graduates of Nigerian tertiary institutions in this contemporary time, are more than mere preparation for white collar jobs but for self-reliance geared towards national development. The field of marketing in business education provides abundant self-reliant employment opportunities for graduates, which they are unable to identify and explore because of they are deficient in relevant entrepreneurial marketing skill needs required to market a business. It is very certain that unemployment will continue to increase at an alarming rate owing to ill-acquisition of entrepreneurial skills amongst Nigeria graduates (Adebisi, 2015), especially those of business education. Thus the business education student is also faced with the challenge of unemployment and striving to survive in the midst of the dwindling Nigerian economy.

### **Propose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to determine entrepreneurial marketing skill needs required for self-reliance by business education students of Rivers State tertiary institutions. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify the marketing entrepreneurial skills required by business education students for self-reliance.

2. Identify constraints that hinder the effective entrepreneurial skill acquisition by business education students.
3. Proffer possible strategies for enhancing acquisition of skills by business education students.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the purpose of the study, the following research questions were answered:

1. What are the entrepreneurial marketing skills needs required by business education students for self-reliance?
2. What are the constraints that hinder effective skill acquisition by business education students?
3. What strategies will enhance acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by business education students in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating amongst business education students of RSU, IAUOE and FCT on entrepreneurial marketing skills required for self-reliance.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating amongst business education students of RSU, IAUOE and FCT on constraints that hinder effective skill acquisition by business education students?
3. There is no significant difference in the mean rating amongst business education students of RSU, IAUOE and FCT on strategies that will enhance acquisition of skills by business education graduates in Rivers State.

### **Methodology**

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The study was guided by 3 research questions and 3 hypotheses. The study was carried out in Rivers State. The state has three tertiary institutions offering business education programme, namely Rivers State University (RSU), Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUOE) and Federal College of Education Omoku. The choice of the state for this study was necessitated by the adequate number of business education graduates who constituted the respondents for the study and also the growing number of unemployed business education graduates who will benefit immensely from the findings of the study. Population of the study comprised all 1,006 final year students in the department of business education from the three tertiary institutions for 2016/17 academic session. The choice of this category of respondents was because they have vast potential for entrepreneurial development. A sample size of 402 students representing 40 percent of the population was studied. The instrument used for data collection was a 30 item structured questionnaire titled "Assessing Entrepreneurial Marketing Skills Needs Questionnaire" (AEMSQ), drafted using four (4) point rating scale ranging of strongly agree (SD) 4 points, agree (A) 3 points, disagree (D) 3 points and strongly disagree (SD) 1 point. The questionnaire items were subjected to face and content validation by two experts from business education and measurement and evaluation. A reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained using test Cronbach Alpha method thus making the instrument suitable for use. Data collected relative to research questions were analyzed using the mean while null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using analysis of variance (ANOVA). Mean scores of 2.50 and above were considered as accepted while mean scores below 2.5 were considered as rejected. Also, if the f-calculated value is greater than the f-table value for the given degree of

freedom (df) the null hypothesis was rejected otherwise accepted if the f-calculated value is less than f-table value.

## Results

### Research Question 1

What are the entrepreneurial marketing skills needs required by business education graduates for self- reliance?

**Table 1: Respondents Mean Rating on Entrepreneurial Marketing Skill Needs Required by Business Education Graduates for Self- Reliance**

S/N	Entrepreneurial Skill Needs	Marketing	RSU N=110	IAUOE N=132	FCE(T) N = 135	Mean	Decision
1.	Ability to carry out effective marketing/ information research.		2.85	2.85	2.86	2.85	Accepted
2.	Ability to determine the needs of customers.		3.26	3.32	3.31	3.30	Accepted
3.	Ability to capture, maintain and retain the attention of customers.		3.30	3.27	3.28	3.28	Accepted
4.	Ability to develop good negotiation skills.		3.24	3.28	3.28	3.27	Accepted
5.	Ability to acquire effective sales techniques.		2.76	2.77	2.79	2.77	Accepted
6.	Ability to determine demand and supply situation.		3.38	3.39	3.41	3.39	Accepted
7.	Ability to make goods and services available to customers at the right place, price and with appropriate advertising technique.		3.32	3.16	3.27	3.25	Accepted
8.	Ability to identify new trends in the marketing environment.		2.98	3.08	3.28	3.11	Accepted
9.	Ability to determine factors that indicate the strength and weakness of competitors.		3.21	2.23	3.20	2.88	Accepted
10.	Ability to identify seasonal fluctuation of goods and services.		3.43	3.09	3.09	3.20	Accepted
	<b>Grand mean</b>		<b>3.17</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>3.18</b>	<b>3.13</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Source: Field Survey Data 2017

Table 1 above revealed that respondents agreed on all questionnaire items on entrepreneurial marketing skill needs required by business education graduates (mean scores > 2.5). The grand

mean of 3.17, 3.04 and 3.18 from Rivers State University, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku respectively and an overall grand mean of 3.13 are indications that these institutions agreed that entrepreneurial marketing skills are needed by business education graduates of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

**Research Question 2:**

What are the constraints that hinder effective skill acquisition by business education graduates?

**Table 2: Respondents Mean Ratings on the Constraints that Hinder Effective Skill Acquisition by Business Education Graduates**

S/N	Constraints to Skill Acquisition	RSU N=110	IAUOE N=132	FCE(T) N = 135	Mean	Decision
1.	Lack of sustained funds for skill acquisition.	3.30	3.32	3.31	3.31	Accepted
2.	Inability to utilize resources more effectively and efficiently.	3.11	3.13	3.12	3.12	Accepted
3.	Inability to recognize opportunities for competitive profile.	2.10	2.14	2.42	2.22	Rejected
4.	Inadequate knowledge of entrepreneurship education.	2.90	2.95	2.95	2.93	Accepted
5.	Inadequate instructional materials.	3.18	3.17	3.19	3.18	Accepted
6.	Incompetency of teachers	3.40	3.42	3.41	3.41	Accepted
7.	Poor societal attitude to self-employment.	3.08	3.12	3.11	3.10	Accepted
8.	Inadequate facilities for teaching and learning	3.18	3.17	3.19	3.18	Accepted
9.	Little or no practical instructional delivery.	2.92	2.94	2.94	2.93	Accepted
10.	Lack of students' interest in practically oriented courses.	3.03	3.04	3.05	3.04	Accepted
	<b>Grand mean</b>	3.12	3.14	3.17	3.14	<b>Accepted</b>

**Source:** *Field Survey Data 2017*

Table 2 above revealed that respondents agreed on nine out of ten questionnaire items on constraints that hinder effective skill acquisition by business education graduates (mean scores > 2.5). The grand mean of 3.12, 3.14 and 3.17 from RSU, IAUOE and FCT respectively

and an overall grand mean of 3.14 are indications that these institutions agreed that outlined are constraints hindering acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by business education students of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

### Research Question 3:

What measures will promote acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by business education graduates in Rivers State?

**Table 3: Respondents Mean Ratings on Measures that will Promote Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Skills by Business Education Graduates in Rivers State**

S/N	Measures	RSU N=110	IAUOE N=132	FCE(T) N = 135	Mean	Decision
1.	Objectives of the programme should be well defined to the students.	2.23	2.86	3.43	2.84	Accepted
2.	Government should ensure effective distribution of funds to institutions.	3.09	3.31	3.21	3.20	Accepted
3.	Provision of adequate teaching/ learning facilities and conducive environment.	3.16	3.28	2.98	3.25	Accepted
4.	Adequate motivation and reinforcements to the students through exposure to practical work	2.77	3.28	3.32	3.12	Accepted
5.	Provision of conducive teaching and learning environment.	3.08	2.79	3.38	3.08	Accepted
6.	Provision of adequate skilled manpower	3.28	3.41	2.76	3.15	Accepted
7.	Developing positive attitude towards self-employment	3.32	3.27	3.24	3.27	Accepted
8.	Attending trainings, conferences, seminars and workshops that skill oriented.	2.85	3.28	3.30	3.14	Accepted
9.	Ensure practical instructional delivery.	3.27	3.20	3.26	3.24	Accepted
10.	Students should be well motivated	3.39	3.09	2.85	3.11	Accepted
	<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>3.18</b>	<b>3.17</b>	<b>3.14</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Source: Field Survey Data 2017

Table 3 above revealed that respondents agreed on all the outlined measures that will promote skill acquisition by business education students (mean scores > 2.5). The grand mean of 3.04, 3.18 and 3.17 from RSU, IAUOE and FCT respectively and an overall grand mean of 3.14 are indications that these institutions agreed that the outlined measures will enhance acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by business education students of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

## Testing of Hypotheses

### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of business education students of RSU, IAUOE and FCT on marketing entrepreneurial skills required for self-reliance.

**Table 4: Summary of ANOVA on Entrepreneurial Marketing Skills Required by Business Education Students for Self-reliance in Rivers State**

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	Level of significance	F-cal.	F-crit.	Decision
Between groups	0.084	2	0.042				
Within groups	71.279	374	0.191	0.05	0.22	2.61	Accepted
Total	71.364	376					

*Source: Field Survey Data 2017*

Table 4 revealed that  $f\text{-cal} = 0.22$  as against  $f\text{-table}$  value of 2.61 at degree of freedom 2 and 374 on the respondents responses on marketing entrepreneurial skills required for self-reliance by business education students in the tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Since the  $f\text{-cal}$  is less than the critical value of 2.61, the researchers therefore accept the null hypothesis. Hence the above conclusion is sustained and it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean response of respondents on entrepreneurial marketing skill needs required by business education students in the tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

### Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean rating amongst business education graduates of RSU, IAUOE and FCT on constraints that hinder effective skill acquisition by business education students?

**Table 5: Summary of ANOVA on Constraints that Hinder Effective Skill Acquisition by Business Education Students**

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	Level of significance	F-cal.	F-crit.	Decision
Between groups	0.147	2	0.73				
Within groups	111.585	374	0.298	0.05	0.25	2.61	Accepted
Total	111.731	376					

*Source: Field Survey Data 2017*

From table 5, it was revealed that  $f\text{-calculated}$  was  $0.25 < f\text{-critical}$  value of 2.61 at degree of freedom 2 and 374 respectively and 0.05 level of significance.  $F\text{-calculated}$  is less than  $f\text{-critical}$  indicating that no significant difference exists between the respondents of the three institutions.



### Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the mean rating amongst business education graduates of RSU, IAUOE and FCT on measures that will promote acquisition of skills by business education graduates in Rivers State.

**Table 6: Summary of ANOVA on Measures that will Promote Acquisition of Skills by Business Education Graduates in Rivers State**

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	Level of significance	F-cal.	F-crit.	Decision
Between groups	0.084	2	0.042				
Within groups	71.279	374	0.191	0.05	0.22	2.61	Accepted
Total	71.364	376					

*Source: Field Survey Data 2017,*

Table 6 shows the calculated f-cal value as  $0.22 < f_{crit. (0.05, 2, 374)} = 2.61$ , the researchers therefore accept the null hypothesis. Hence the above conclusion is sustained and concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean response of respondents on measures that will promote acquisition of skills by business education graduates in Rivers State.

### Discussion of Findings

The Findings of the study presented in table 1 revealed that all the identified entrepreneurship marketing skill needs were required by business education students. This is because it will help students achieve self-reliance and self-employment after graduation. This finding aligns with the opinions of Ezeh (2012) and Igbo (2009) that acquisition of entrepreneurial skills help students develop potentials for the attainment of self-reliance thereby contributing to sustainable development. This finding also collaborates with the view of Oyerinde and Falana (2016) that students who acquire marketing skills will be able to cross the bars of unemployment and become self-reliant.

The findings as presented in table 2 revealed that constraints such as lack of funds, incompetent manpower, lack of students' interest in practically oriented courses, poor societal attitude to self-employment, little or no practical instructional delivery, inadequate teaching/learning facilities, among others hinder the effective acquisition of the entrepreneurial skills by business education students. This agrees with Kayode (2010) that most teachers are yet to acquire some practical entrepreneurial skills they are to instill in students as well as develop and adopt new teaching methods that will enhance skill delivery. It also confirms the observation by Gbenidio (2012) teaching and learning facilities are still inadequate in Nigerian tertiary institutions because education in Nigerian still remains poorly funded.

Findings from table 3 above, revealed that measures such as provision of adequate teaching/learning facilities and conducive environment, developing positive attitude towards self-employment, attending trainings, conferences, seminars and workshops that are skill oriented, competent manpower, and ensuring practical instructional delivery among others will promote the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance by business education students after graduation. This is in line with the Report of the European Commission (2008) as cited in Ugwu and Ezeani (2012) which indicated that tertiary institutions should have a strategy of action plan for teaching and research in entrepreneurship. This also aligns with the view of Nwakeaku (2013) that students are bound to develop skills which need to be improved through well planned strategies.

The findings of the study as revealed in tables 4, 5, and 6 also shows that disparity does not exist in the opinions of final year business education students from the three tertiary institutions as it relate to the entrepreneurship marketing skill needs required by students, constraints hindering entrepreneurial skill acquisition and the measures that will promote effective skill acquisition by business education students in Rivers State.

### **Conclusion**

This study identified the entrepreneurial marketing skill needs required for self-reliance by business education students, the constraints that hinder effective skill acquisition as well as the measures that will promote the acquisition of these entrepreneurial skill needs. Entrepreneurial skill needs are veritable tools that will prepare students for the contemporary world of work, helping them to become self-reliant and creators of jobs thereby reducing unemployment in the nation and sustenance of the economy. The ability of individuals to survive in the present state of the Nigerian economy is dependent on the type and quality of entrepreneurial skills acquired.

Every business education student needs to acquire entrepreneurial marketing skills to achieve self-reliance as its importance cannot be over-emphasized. The possession of these skill needs will facilitate students' self-employment after graduation thereby reducing graduate unemployment in Nigeria. Marketing as a facet of business education provide a lot of business opportunities for students after graduation. Thus business education students must get themselves acquainted with these skill needs while in school so they can achieve self-reliance after graduation and also contribute their quota to national development.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) Business education students should endeavour to acquire themselves with all the relevant skill needs necessary for them to create, and maintain their customers' needs
- 2) Government and other stakeholders in education should expose the students to other skill acquisition programmes and opportunities that will ensure skill development and promote economic self-reliance
- 3) The teaching of business education courses should be practical oriented as this will help to improve students creativity
- 4) Conferences, seminars and workshops should be periodically arranged for teachers and students as this will assist them to update their knowledge and skills in business education programmes.
- 5) Business educators should strive to employ the proffered measures in delivery of business education courses to enhance skill development.

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