

ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES NEEDED BY BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN ENUGU STATE.

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Abstract

In this study, an attempt was made to identify the entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates in Enugu State for poverty alleviation. The study made use of survey research design. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The population consisted of 570 registered entrepreneurs in Enugu State and a sample size of 291 entrepreneurs was used. The data collected were analyzed using mean statistic and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that the theoretical entrepreneurship competencies such as the knowledge of advantages and disadvantages of starting a small scale business is very highly needed by business education graduates and also practical entrepreneurial competencies such as ability to keep proper book-keeping records of the organization is very highly needed by business education graduates for poverty alleviation in Enugu State. Based on the findings. It was recommended that business education graduates while in school should be equipped with theoretical and practical entrepreneurial knowledge and competencies that can help them in establishing and running a small-scale business for poverty alleviation.

Introduction

Business education is one of the courses that are offered in tertiary institutions. Business education is the type of education given to an individual in order to enable him/her to function effectively in the field of work or to function properly as a consumer or producer of goods and services. Anao (1986) in Animassuan (2011) defined business education as an area of study which has its goal as the production of manpower with requisite knowledge, skills and attitude for harnessing resources and bringing them into co-operative relationship which yields the goods and services that provide satisfaction.

The three major areas of business education as offered in the universities and colleges of education are office education,

accounting education, and distributive education. In the Nigerian universities, distributive education is variously regarded as marketing education or commerce and cooperative education. Office education as identified by Osuala (1988) in Oyesode (1998) is that aspect of business education, which offers knowledge and training in secretarial and clerical services. Accounting education is the type of business education that provides individuals with skills and knowledge in accounting, computer, and data processing, occupations for gainful employment in private or public sector. On the other hand, distributive education provides individuals with skills and competences that will enable business education graduates to earn a living as a

The data presented in table 1 revealed that all the 17 items listed are the theoretical entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates in Enugu State for poverty alleviation. Item No. 4 had a mean rating of 3.55, this indicates that this item is very highly needed while item Nos. 1, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 had their mean ratings between 3.00 – 3.49. This means that these 10 items Nos. are highly needed while 10 items 2, 3, 6, 7, 9 and 10 had their mean ratings between 2.50 – 2.99. This indicates that they are slightly needed.

Research Question 2

What are the practical entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates in Enugu State for poverty alleviation?

The data answering research question 2 is presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation of the respondents on the practical entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates in Enugu State for poverty alleviation.

| S/n | Item Statement | \bar{X} | SD | Remark/ Decision |
|-----|--|-----------|------|------------------|
| | Ability to: | | | |
| 18 | Keep proper book keeping records of the organization | 3.52 | 1.04 | VHN |
| 19 | Maintain a steady cash flow | 3.08 | 0.77 | HN |
| 20 | Identify the right sources of fund | 3.33 | 1.70 | HN |
| 21 | Maintain regular supply of stock | 3.27 | 0.64 | HN |
| 22 | Keep proper record of stock | 3.48 | 0.57 | HN |
| 23 | Operate a computer for any information processing | 3.14 | 1.58 | HN |
| 24 | Operate photocopying machine | 2.68 | 0.77 | SN |
| 25 | Use scanning machine | 2.52 | 0.87 | SN |
| 26 | Use franking machine | 2.92 | 0.86 | SN |
| 27 | Use perforating machine in filling documents | 2.93 | 0.55 | SN |
| 28 | Use a duplicating machine | 2.93 | 0.81 | SN |
| 29 | Laminate documents | 2.68 | 0.50 | SN |

The data presented in table 2 revealed that all the 12 practical entrepreneurial competencies have a mean score more than 2.50. The data further revealed that 1 item i.e. item No. 18 has its mean above 3.50 which indicates that this item is very highly needed while 7 items has its mean between 3.08 to 3.48. which shows that they are highly needed. Also 6 items has its mean between 2.42 – 2.93. This shows that these items are slightly needed.

The standard deviation ranges from 0.50 to 1.77 indicating that the respondents were not very far from the mean and from one another in their responses.

Hypothesis Ho¹

Table 3 The t-test comprises of the opinion of male and female entrepreneurs on the theoretical entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates for poverty alleviation.

| Respondents' Gender | N | X | SD | DF | t-cal | t-tab | Remark |
|---------------------|-----|------|------|-----|-------|-------|--------|
| Male | 217 | 3.12 | 1.53 | 289 | 0.31 | 1.96 | Ns |
| Female | 74 | 3.09 | 0.87 | | | | |

T-cal (0.31) < t-table (1.96) not significant. Table 3 shows that t-test comparison of the opinion of male and female entrepreneurs in Enugu State on the theoretical competencies needed by business education graduates for poverty alleviation. From the mean scores on table 5, it could be seen that small scale business with the mean score of 3.12 compared with the mean score of result shows that there is no significance difference on the male and female

entrepreneurs ratings on the theoretical competencies needed by business education graduates for poverty alleviation; therefore the null hypotheses is accepted.

Hypothesis Ho²

Table 4 The t-test comparison of the opinion of male and female entrepreneurs on the practical competencies needed by business education graduates for poverty alleviation.

| Respondents Gender | N | X | SD | DF | t-cal | t-tab | Remark |
|--------------------|-----|------|------|-----|-------|-------|--------|
| Male | 217 | 2.96 | 1.12 | 289 | -0.87 | 1.96 | Ns |
| female | 74 | 2.99 | 0.04 | | | | |

The result in table 4 revealed that the t-test calculated of -0.87 is less than the table t of 1.96 at 0.05 levels of significance, and 289 degree of freedom. This shows that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female entrepreneurs on the practical entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates for poverty alleviation. Therefore, (H_{0ii}) were accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The results for research question one showed that business education graduates need theoretical entrepreneurial competencies. The competencies that are very highly needed is the knowledge of advantages and disadvantages of starting a small scale business for poverty alleviation. Other competencies that were highly needed were knowledge of small-scale business opportunities, knowledge of consumer behaviour, and knowledge of distribution strategies. Since the 17 research items had their mean ratings above 2.50, it implies that business education graduates need the theoretical competencies of entrepreneurship for managing a small-scale business for poverty alleviation. Therefore, business education graduates should be adequately exposed to the theoretical knowledge of entrepreneurship education. This finding on the aspect of theoretical knowledge of entrepreneurship education agreed with the view of Elobuike (2010) who was of the opinion that subjects taught without adequate theoretical foundation were downgraded by students and perceived as irrelevant to their life aspirations and the world of work.

The result for research question two proved that business education graduates need practical entrepreneurial competencies for managing a small-scale business in order to live above poverty level. The ability to keep proper book keeping

records of the organization is very highly needed in managing small-scale business. Practical competencies, which are highly needed by business education graduates, include ability to maintain a steady cash flow, identify the right sources of fund, and maintain regular supply of stock. Other competencies that are highly needed include abilities to keep proper record of stock and operate a computer for information processing. Abilities to use scanning machine, franking machine, perforating machine in filing documents, duplicating machine and laminating machine is slightly needed. The result of this study agreed with the observation made by Osuala (2004) that one of the qualities of a good entrepreneur is that an entrepreneur should be technically competent.

Saralain in Audu (2010) lamented that the existing practice in technical education programmes are not adequately equipping students with technical competencies, knowledge and work habits needed for entry-level employment in their respective occupation. The researcher is of the opinion that theory should be linked with practice so that business education graduates should be equipped theoretically and practically in the entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates in starting and managing a small-scale business for poverty alleviation.

Conclusions

This study investigated the theoretical and practical entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education graduates for poverty alleviation in Enugu State. It was found that 17 theoretical and 12 practical entrepreneurial competencies are needed by business education graduates for poverty alleviation in Enugu State.

Recommendation: The researcher therefore, recommended that business education graduates while in school should

be equipped with theoretical and practical entrepreneurial knowledge and competencies that can help them in establishing and running a small-scale business for poverty alleviation in Enugu State.

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