

Entrepreneurial Skills Required of Business Education Graduates for Sustainable Livelihood through Investment in Small Scale Business as Perceived by Business Educators in Colleges of Education, Delta State

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Abstract:- The study examined entrepreneurial skills required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business as perceived by business educators in Colleges of Education, Delta State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The study population comprised 113 business educators in three (3) Colleges of Education in Delta State. Since the population was sizeable, there was no sampling. A researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurial Skills Required of Business Education Graduates Questionnaire (ESRBEGQ)" was used to collect data. The 15 questionnaire items used in this study were structured using a four-point response scale. The draft of the instrument was given to three experts who are lecturers in the Department of Educational Foundations to ascertain the face validity of the instrument. With the help of two research assistants, the researcher administered 113 copies of the instrument and retrieved 108 copies used for analysis. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, while the t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. For the research questions, the decision was based on the criterion mean of 2.50. The findings of the study revealed that, to a great extent, risk-taking/adaptation skills and creative thinking skills are required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in the small-scale business as perceived by business educators in Colleges of Education, Delta State. The study recommends, among other things, that business education students in Colleges of Education should be regularly exposed to entrepreneurial skills acquisition centers within the neighborhood for practical knowledge of entrepreneurial skills relevant to the economic needs of the immediate environment.

Keywords:- *Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Skills, Business Education, Small Scale business.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has a population of approximately two hundred and eight million, four hundred and nineteen thousand, eight hundred and sixty-six (208,419,866). The Nation is regarded as the most densely inhabited country in Africa. The residents of Nigeria represent 20% of the entire population of sub-Saharan Africa (Worldometer, 2020). With the abundance of natural resources in Nigeria, however, poverty among the employed and unemployed has been a major problem (Umukoro, 2015). The surging population growth of Nigeria and the sole dependence on crude oil for economic development and sustainability, coupled with the relative expansion of the education systems (programmes), have created gaps between job opportunities and job seekers. To close the gaps, the Federal government of Nigeria has, at different levels, made policies on entrepreneurship education and skills acquisition programmes (Morrison, Agusiobo&Obocha, 2016). Consequently, the National Educational Policy document (NPE, 2014) states that the Nation's educational activity should be centred on the students in order for them to acquire sufficient skills for self-development and fulfilment in the labour market. More so, the European Commission endorses such support, noting that the primary purpose of entrepreneurship education (at the higher education level) is to develop entrepreneurial skills and recommends integrating entrepreneurship education more fully into all tertiary institution's curricula.

Entrepreneurship is a venture that involves taking up a business enterprise quite distinct from obtaining a paid job. Entrepreneurship is organizing business opportunities and mobilizing human and material resources to exploit the identified opportunity (Ama, 2016; Akanwa&Akpanabia, 2018). Various professions have defined entrepreneurship to mean many things since middle age. According to Mwasalwiba (2018), entrepreneurship is the process of building new or alternative values by setting aside the necessary time, taking on the associated financial, psychological, and social risks, and reaping the benefits in

the form of the greatest level of personal happiness. In order to unite people, money, and resources to address an identified need and produce wealth, entrepreneurship combines creative and innovative ideas with management and organizational skills. Although each of these definitions or descriptions approaches an entrepreneur from a slightly different angle, they share concepts like taking risks, planning, generating wealth, initiative, and newness. Garba (2016) asserted that the term entrepreneurship means different things to people with varying conceptual perspectives. He stated that despite these differences, there are some common aspects, such as risk-taking, creativity, independence and rewards. The teaching of entrepreneurship is referred to as entrepreneurship education.

Morrison, Agusiobo and Oboche (2016) affirm that entrepreneurship education is a powerful way of preparing people to be economically and socially functional by being engaged in one form of job or the other based on a developed skill. Escobar (2018) states that entrepreneurship education is the tool used to bring about entrepreneurial skills, which entails the strategies needed to make entrepreneurs successful especially young entrepreneurs when they graduate from school. Entrepreneurs exhibit common traits such as single-mindedness, drive, ambition, creativity, problem-solving, practicality and goal-oriented. An entrepreneur is an individual who recognizes an opportunity or unmet need(s) and takes the risk to pursue it. It, therefore, implies that for one to be functional, such a person must be groomed in one skill or another, which must be relevant to the socio-economic environment of society. This can only be achieved through entrepreneurship education. It, therefore, becomes imperative to equip business education graduates with relevant entrepreneurial skills in other for them to perform effectively in the world of work.

The concept of business education has evolved. This is evident in the different definitions offered by various authors and researchers in trying to make clear the meaning of business education. Ohiwere (2017) defined business education as a course that prepares students for entry into the advancement of jobs within the business and prepares them to handle their business affairs to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. Similarly, Amaewhule (2018) opined that business education encompasses knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed by all citizens to effectively manage their businesses and economic system. Atakpa (2019) remarked that business education embodies vocational knowledge and skills needed for employment and advancement in a broad range of business careers. In other words, Business education is an aspect of vocational and technical Education which is used as a term to refer to those educational processes involving the study of techniques, acquisition of practical skills, attitudes and knowledge relating to occupation in vocational sectors of economic and social life. Business education is an academic programme essentially geared towards preparing recipients for teaching business courses, work life and sustainable livelihood. Etonyeaku (2018) affirmed that business education has a formidable force that will equip its graduates with appropriate entrepreneurial skills,

knowledge, abilities and competencies that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.

Entrepreneurial skills required of business education graduates form an integral part of inclusive entrepreneurship (Loretto & White, 2016). Listen (2015), and Stevenson and Jarillo (2017) show that entrepreneurial skills are a learning process, which in turn affects the entrepreneur's personal characteristics. Available entrepreneurial skills training programs are directed to invest in business education graduates the capabilities and skills to running small scale businesses in the sector of manufacturing, services, agriculture and trading, such as crafts, workshops, banking, insurance, warehousing, advertising, plantation, farming, fisheries, food industry among others (Gerry, 2018). Entrepreneurial skills have a significant influence on the competitiveness of small-scale businesses. As a result, scholars have recommended abandoning the procedural approach in the teaching and learning of business education (Albrecht & Sack, 2019; Herring & Williams, 2012). Yet others like Hunton (2018) would like to see the teaching of higher-order skills such as risk-taking/adaptation skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving and analytical skills in business education classes. Albrecht and Sack (2019) have also called for developing analytical, written and oral communication skills during the business education program. However, what is not clear is the list of skills generally agreed upon by key stakeholders in Education or whether this skill set will differ depending on local or regional settings.

The emphasis of general Education in Nigeria and the world over is to train and equip individuals with the necessary skills to improve their lives and meet the aspirations and goals of the society and the Nation at large. However, many business education students, unfortunately, are still learning 20th-century skills in the 21st century. Students must learn the skills for future employment and not for the past. The business environment has changed and is continually changing, and the way business is done is the same trend. Skill means the ability to do something well. It is also referred to as a type of ability or a particular ability to do something. Daniel (2021) defined skill as learned responses, often as a result of specific training which affords someone the ability to perform a particular task and achieve a particular objective. Moreso, Bleak in Uzor and Ike (2016) described skill as the ability to do something well gained through training and experience. Thus, the lack of entrepreneurial skills such as creativity, record keeping, administrative ability, and ability to take risks and adapt to changing environments are additional factors inhibiting the success of a small-scale business (Sternberg, 2014).

Small-scale businesses are a vital part of the Nigerian economy. The meaning of the term small scale business varies from one country to another and from one industry to another, even within the same country. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has located about fifty (50) different definitions of small-scale industries in seventy-five (75) different countries. According to such various definitions were based on parameters such as installed capacity utilization, output, employment, capital,

type of industry or other criteria which have more relevance to the industrial policies of the specified country (Oresota, 2017). Accordingly, some people would undoubtedly consider all businesses with no more than a specified number of employees (5 or 10) small. Others would believe that a small business operates only in the local market area. Still, others would classify a business as small by firms such as the local drug store, dress shop, neighborhood store or shoe-makers at the corners of the street (Akinrinade, 2019). In 2009, the industrial policy of Nigeria defined small-scale industries as those with a total investment of between 10,000.00 and 2 million, exclusive of the land but including working capital. (Regede, 2015). Entrepreneurial skills have a significant influence on the competitiveness of small-scale businesses. Therefore, if entrepreneurship skills are essential in running small-scale businesses and ensuring a sustainable livelihood for business education graduates, this study becomes necessary in order to determine the entrepreneurial skills required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small scale business as perceived by business educators in Colleges of Education, Delta State.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The trend and problem of unemployment in Nigeria remains obstinate, with a tendency to grow geometrically to the alarming rate of over 3 million unemployed youths annually (Adelodun, 2021). Some of these youths are Business education graduates roaming the streets searching for jobs. Unfortunately, most of these Business Education graduates are unemployable because they lack the skills that employers are looking for and the entrepreneurial skills to start their own small-scale businesses (Echebiri, 2020). After graduation, business education graduates hope to get a beneficial job to continue contributing their quota to society's development. However, when these jobs are nowhere to be found, and without proper acquisition of entrepreneurial skills to start up their businesses, there is the possibility that these unemployed graduates could tend to experience such feelings as downheartedness, melancholy, anger, acrimony and mortification. The implication is that different forms of misconduct like deceit, fraud, robbery, kidnapping and ferocity usually occur in a society with many young unemployed graduates. This study, therefore, sought to examine entrepreneurial skills required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in the small-scale business as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education in Delta State.

III. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study's main purpose is to evaluate entrepreneurial skills required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education, Delta State. Specifically, the study sought to;

- Ascertain the extent to which risk-taking/adaptation skills are required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in the small-scale business as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education, Delta State.

- Determine the extent to which business education graduates require creative thinking skills for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education, Delta State.

A. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

- To what extent are risk-taking/adaptation skills required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in the small-scale business as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education, Delta State?
- To what extent are creative thinking skills required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in the small-scale business as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education, Delta State?

B. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are stated for the study:

- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent to which risk-taking/adaptation skills are required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business based on gender.
- There is no significant relationship in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent to which creative thinking skill is required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business based on location.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Survey research design possesses great relevance of adoption when a researcher intends to describe existing conditions and induce reasons for their prevalence. The study population comprised 113 business educators in three (3) Colleges of Education in Delta State. Since the population was sizeable, there was no sampling. A researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurial Skills Required of Business Education Graduates Questionnaire (ESRBEGQ)" was used to collect data. The 15 questionnaire items used in this study were structured using a four-point response scale with the following options: Very High Extent (VHE) - 4; High Extent (HE) - 3; Low Extent (LE) - 2; Very Low Extent (VLE) – 1. The draft of the instrument was given to three experts who are lecturers in the Department of Educational Foundations to ascertain the face validity of the instrument. With the help of two research assistants, the researcher administered 113 copies of the instrument and retrieved 108 copies used for analysis. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, while the t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. For the research questions, the decision was based on the criterion mean of 2.50. Thus, any item with a mean value of 2.50 or above was accepted, while any item with a mean value lower than

2.50 was rejected. For the hypotheses, if the calculated value of t (t-cal) is greater than the table value of t (t-crit), the hypothesis will be rejected. In contrast, if the calculated

value of t (t-cal) is less than the table or critical value of t (t-crit), the hypothesis will be accepted.

V. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

- **Research Question 1:** To what extent is risk-taking/adaptation skills required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in the small-scale business as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education, Delta State?

S/N	STATEMENTS	\bar{x}	SD	REMARK
1.	Ability of business education graduates to acquire skills that will help them adapt to private work life.	2.94	0.94	High Extent
2.	Ability of business education graduates to acquire the capacity to absorb likely failures emanating from investments.	3.00	1.04	High Extent
3.	Ability of business education graduates to adapt to all kinds of changing (favorable or unfavorable) environments in order to survive.	3.45	1.0	High Extent
4.	Ability of business education graduates to make business plan and acquire adaptation skills for effective implementation of business plan.	3.44	1.0	High Extent
5.	Ability of business education graduates to view failure as feedbacks and not setbacks.	3.32	0.9	High Extent
Grand Mean		3.23	0.98	High Extent

Table 1: Mean Scores and standard deviation of Responses on the extent to which risk-taking/adaptation skills are required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in the small-scale business as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education, Delta State.

Source: Researcher’s field survey data, 2022.

Analyses in Table 1 reveal that the mean scores range from 2.94 – 3.45. This indicates that the respondents rated a great extent to statements in items 1-5. Data in Table 1 further shows the grand mean for the entire item, which is 3.23 and falls within the response option to a great extent. To a great extent, this indicates that risk-taking/adaptation skills are required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale

business as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education, Delta State.

- **Research Question 2:** To what extent is creative thinking skills required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in the small-scale business as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education, Delta State?

S/N	STATEMENTS	\bar{x}	SD	REMARK
6.	Ability of business education graduates to think out of the box or reaching at a level of thinking where no other can reach which can bring innovations in any sector of entrepreneurial activity.	3.23	0.6	High Extent
7.	Ability of business education graduates to receive and process thoughts, ideas, hunches, concerns and even flashes of inspiration from unknown sources within one’s consciousness.	3.53	0.7	High Extent
8.	Ability of business education graduates to manage conflicts which require a high level of understanding of creative thinking and integrating it in solving conflicts within the business.	3.90	0.5	High Extent
9.	Ability of business education graduates to remain open to accept ideas and keeping intact the curiosity to consider the generated ideas and still remain flexible in any alteration.	3.99	0.1	High Extent
10.	Ability of business education graduates to generate business ideas, services and products which he/she sells to people for monetary gains.	3.76	0.6	High Extent
Grand Mean		3.68	0.50	High Extent

Table 2: Mean Scores and standard deviation of Responses on the extent to which business education graduates require creative thinking skills for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education, Delta State.

Source: Researcher’s field survey data, 2022.

Analyses on Table 2 reveals that the mean scores range from 3.23 – 3.99. This indicates that the respondents rated high extent to statements in items 6-10. Data in Table 2 further shows the grand mean for the entire item which is 3.68, and falls within the response option of high extent.

This indicates that creative thinking skills to a high extent is required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small scale business as perceived by business educators in colleges of education, Delta State.

A. Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this study were tested with t-test (independent sample variable) at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis was retained when the $t_{cal} < t_{crit}$ and rejected otherwise. Where;

- N = number of sample
- \bar{x} = mean of sample
- S² = standard deviation

- t_{cal} = calculated value of the test
- t_{crit} = critical value of the test

- **Ho₁**: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent to which risk-taking/adaptation skills are required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business based on gender.

Respondents	N	\bar{x}	S ²	Df	t.cal	t.crit	α	Remark
Male	79	1.35	0.71	106	0.07	1.98	.05	Retain Ho
Female	31	1.34	0.60					

Table 3: Analysis of t-tests on the mean and standard deviation responses of male and female business educators on the extent to which risk-taking/adaptation skills are required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business.

From the t-test table, since $t_{cal} (0.07) < t_{crit} (1.98)$, we retain Ho. The null hypothesis retained a no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent to which risk-taking/adaptation skills are required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business based on gender.

- **Ho₂**: There is no significant relationship in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent to which creative thinking skill is required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business based on location.

Respondents	N	\bar{x}	S ²	Df	t.cal	t.crit	α	Remark
Urban	103	1.35	0.71	106	0.03	1.98	.05	Retain Ho
Rural	7	1.34	0.60					

Table 4: Analysis of t-tests on business educators' mean and standard deviation responses on the extent to which creative thinking skills are required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business based on location

From the t-test table, since $t_{cal} (0.03) < t_{crit} (1.98)$, we retain Ho. The null hypothesis is hereby retained that there is no significant relationship in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent to which creative thinking skill is required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small scale business based on location.

From the t-test table, since $t_{cal} (0.03) < t_{crit} (1.98)$, we retain Ho. The null hypothesis is at this moment retained that there is no significant relationship in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent to which creative thinking skill is required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business based on location.

B. Summary of Findings

The summary of the findings of this study includes the following:

- To a high extent, risk-taking/adaptation skill is required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business.
- To a great extent, business education graduates require creative thinking skills for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale businesses.

VI. DISCUSSION

A. Research Question 1

sought to ascertain the extent to which risk-taking/adaptation skills are required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in the small-scale business as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education in Delta State. The findings of the study revealed that, to a high extent, risk-taking/adaptation skill is required by pensioners for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business. The risk-taking/adaptation skills have to do with the ability of business education graduates to do the following:

- Acquire skills that will help them adapt to private work life.
- Possess the capacity to absorb likely failures emanating from investments.
- Adapt to all kinds of changing (favorable or unfavorable) environments in order to survive.
- See opportunities for possible investment decisions.
- Enter new markets and exploit varied opportunities in an uncertain environment with two possibilities: success or failure.
- Make a business plan and acquire adaptation skills to effectively implement a business plan.
- View failure as feedback and not setbacks.
- Learn to endure and be patient to continue the business using other skills of the entrepreneur, and suppress or

manage the environment and extract the much-needed profit.

This finding agrees with Kitigin (2017) study, which established a strong positive correlation between risk-taking and business performance of small-scale enterprises in Eldora town.

B. Research Question 2

sought to determine the extent to which creative thinking skill is required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education in Delta State. The study's findings revealed that, to a high extent, creative thinking skill is required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale business. Creative thinking skills required of business education graduates include the ability to do the following: to think out of the box or reaching at a level of thinking where no other can reach which can bring innovations in any sector of entrepreneurial activity; receive and process thoughts, ideas, hunches, concerns and even flashes of inspiration from unknown sources within ones consciousness; manage conflicts which require a high level of understanding of creative thinking and integrating it in solving conflicts within the business; remain open to accept ideas and keeping intact the curiosity to consider the generated ideas and still remain flexible in any alteration; generate business ideas, services and products which he/she sells to people for monetary gains; use creativity skills in order to generate change and transform workplaces; generate business ideas using creative thinking skill; bring out new products, packages and services among others; engage in imaginative thinking which can bring innovations in any sector of entrepreneurial activities; and maintain ones inspiration and courage despite several setbacks or failures. This finding is in line with Puccio (2016), who submitted that creative thinking skill enables the entrepreneur to create ideas, services and products which he/she sells to people, and as such, he is said to be creative. The skill helps him to generate business ideas and produce new products, packages, and services, among others.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study sought to determine the entrepreneurial skills required of business education graduates for sustainable livelihood through investment in the small-scale business as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education, Delta State. Preparing business education students for entrepreneurship after graduation has been considered a means to provide the graduates with the skills and abilities to start their small-scale businesses after school. These entrepreneurial skills, if put together, would make business education graduates better prepared to work in organizations and contribute meaningfully to their success or, better still, become self-employed by establishing small-scale businesses. Thus, based on the analysis of data, it could be concluded that to a high extent, entrepreneurial skills such as risk-taking/adaptation and creative thinking are required of business education graduates for sustainable

livelihood through investment in small-scale businesses as perceived by business educators in colleges of Education, Delta State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are therefore made:

- It should be made mandatory that every College of Education should put up entrepreneurial skills acquisition centers for the development of appropriate competencies necessary for sustainable livelihood in a contemporary and economically dynamic society. This could make students combine academics with entrepreneurial skills acquisition for sustainable livelihood through investment in small-scale businesses.
- Business education students in Colleges of Education should be regularly exposed to entrepreneurial skills development centers within the neighborhood for practical knowledge of the entrepreneurial skills relevant to the economic needs of the immediate environment. This will make the student develop entrepreneurial skills that will make them employable upon graduation.
- Government should make colleges of Education to become more practical-oriented. If this is done, it will enable students to be theoretically and practically well-equipped for today's labor market.

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