

# IMPEDIMENTS TO MAXIMUM ACQUISITION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES BY BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## Abstract

The study discussed the various impediments faced by students of business education in acquiring the skills expected of them to be successful entrepreneurs. The different entrepreneurial skills and competencies were discussed which included; technical skills, personal skills, business management skills and ICT skills. The impediments facing the acquisition of these skills were identified which included poor reading habit, lack of interest/commitment, absence of infrastructural facilities, lack of adequate security and possible remedies proffered. Undoubtedly, proper and adequate impartation of entrepreneurial skills to business education students will enable them contribute meaningfully and positively to the development of the nation on graduation.

**Keywords:** Business Education, Entrepreneurial Skill, Challenges, Acquisition.

## Introduction

Business education as a discipline is expected to expose its recipients to diverse curricula, hence, it is that type of education that inculcates in its recipients attitudes, knowledge, skills, values that are required in the business world. This is a means of producing a healthy, literate, self-reliant citizens that would create wealth for human development when they become self-employed, thereby resulting to sustainable national development at large. Business education impacts the requisite skills and creative knowledge required for employment generation opportunities. Such entrepreneurial skills and accounting competencies make business graduates to adopt some strategic survival instincts.

Entrepreneurship today is therefore enjoying a great deal of

attention in various higher institutions in Nigeria. At the moment, in the business education programme of universities and colleges of education in Nigeria, entrepreneurship education is taught along with other courses. All these are aimed at the acquisition of practical skills and competencies for self-actualization. Okolocha and Ile (2011) observed that the attempt of various governments in the past to eradicate poverty and increase the standard of living of citizens through the establishment of poverty alleviation programmes have failed due to lack of entrepreneurship skills by graduates of the education system. Millions of jobs are awaiting to be done but people with the right type of education and training cannot be found. This corroborates the result of the study carried out by the National Universities Commission in Mebane (2006) that the findings of the

study revealed that tertiary institutions in Nigeria do not sufficiently and adequately prepare students to be self-reliant. It is therefore, in view of this that this paper focused on the impediments facing business education students in the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills.

According to Henley, (2007) the acquisition of the requisite skills is a means of increasing the productive power of any nation. Consequently he added the Nigerian society should recognize the fact that every citizen should be equipped to contribute effectively to the welfare of the country. The acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is important because when efficient and skillful hands are employed in any field of human endeavours, high productivity is usually achieved. Economically, maximum skills acquisition by business education students and others will help to enrich the Nigerian society and in this way, tend to make possible sustainable national development.

The efforts to improve the standard and quality of acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and competencies inherent in business education to maximum level seems to be hampered by a number of factors such as the low interest of students in skill acquisition, curriculum structure, inadequate personnel, inadequate equipment and facilities for the teaching and learning of the skills and inadequate material resources for training. These factors stated above constitute serious impediments to the acquisition of

maximum skills and competencies by business education students.

## Concept of Entrepreneurship

Stevenson and Jarillo (1990) explained that entrepreneurship is the process by which individuals, either on their own or inside organizations, pursue opportunities without regard to the resources they currently control. An entrepreneur, according to Anyanwu, Amadi and Oparaku (2010), takes calculated risks by investing in business opportunities and getting compensations from the risk by enjoying high profit as the result of risk-taking. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Aliu (2007), defined entrepreneurship education as learning directed towards developing in people, those skills, competences, understandings and attributes which equip them to be innovative, and to identify, create, initiate and successfully manage personal, community business, and work opportunities including working for themselves. According to Amoor (2008), entrepreneurship education provides the students with the opportunities to identify and develop a range of skills and attributes that will be of use in creating and shaping the future by experiencing both business and work environments.

The European Commission (2003) and Van Gelderen, Brand, Van Praag, Bodewes and Van Gils (2008) defined entrepreneurship as an attitude that reflects an individual's motivation and

capacity to identify opportunities and pursue it, in order to produce new values or economic success. Entrepreneurship is the capacity and willingness to undertake conception, organization, and management of a productive venture with all attendant risks while seeking profit as a reward. Entrepreneurship emerged as an important concept in global economic transformation. Studies have shown that entrepreneurship process is a vital source of developing human capital as well as improving learning opportunities for individuals to improve their skills, attitudes and abilities (Shane, 2003), Brans, 2008); Ekpo and Edet, 2011).

#### **Concept of Entrepreneurship Skill**

Entrepreneurial skills are simply business skill, which an individual acquires to enable him function effectively in the turbulent business environment as an entrepreneur of a self employed. Brans, (2008) also defined entrepreneurial skills as skills relating to identifying business opportunities and receiving a sustainable income from these opportunities. The acquisition of entrepreneurial skills means combining personal characteristics, financial resources within one's environment and taking advantage of them for rewarding outcome.

Shane, (2003) opined that the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills means possessing the ability to find and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources, initiate

appropriate action to ensure success; and implement actions to take advantage of the opportunities for rewarding outcome. The entrepreneur according Oduma, (2012) is as someone who engages in business enterprise, often with some personal financial risk. Entrepreneur can be defined as a person who always searches for change, response to it and exploits it as an opportunity.

Aliu, (2007) also opined that entrepreneurs are people who have the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities, to gather the necessary resources, to take advantage of them; and to initiate appropriate action for success. However, entrepreneur as a person who operates a new enterprise or venture and assumes some accountability for the inherent risks. The entrepreneur is also anybody who organizes, manages a business undertaking, and assumes a risk for the sake of profit Ekpo and Edet, (2011).

#### **Entrepreneurship Skills expected of Business Education Students**

According to Asugwo in Esene and Mgbonyebi (2015) entrepreneurship education has been gradually accepted as a unique course now offered and taught among higher education institutions in Nigerian aimed at equipping students with skills and competencies to make them self-reliant and employers of labour on graduation. In view of Alademenia in Ihimekpen, Crossdale and Amaehule (2015), the following entrepreneurial skills expected of students of business

education programme from Nigerian college of education:

Personal skills;  
Technical skills and  
Professional skills.

**1. Personal Skill:** Personal skills involves personal needs and traits of the entrepreneur as well as helping employees in new skills development which will be of immense benefit to the business. The personal skills of students of business education include:

**a. Self Confidence** - students of business education programmes that are prepared for the world of work should have self confidence. This skill is needed to energize the recipients to do what they think is right and continue doing it without minding distractions from outsiders, until success is achieved, Oduma, (2010) Self confidence is the ability to trust one's efforts to succeed in a chosen adventure. It is the skill of self-confidence that spurs the entrepreneur into taking risks in starting and operating a business. It energizes the entrepreneur to forge ahead in the midst of odds. The skill is built during the period of formal school system training or through apprenticeship.

**b. Motivational Skills** - motivation is what prompts people to do what they are doing with success zeal in them. It is the inner mind that energises. Motivation makes

businessmen to work day and night without feeling tired, hoping that "one day it will be better". The entrepreneur can build on motivated skills or acquire skills through the encouragement of other people such as parents, teachers, support, professional partners, age groups amongst others.

**c. Communication skill** - this involves meeting people and making them buy one's business ideas, products or services or meeting people and encouraging them to sell their business ideas, products or services. Communication skills involve visiting people, talking to people, writing business letters, telephone calls, arranging for meetings among others, Nwosu, (2002). The students of business education should have good command of English language, possess listening ability, possess intelligent perception and be competent to make intelligent interpretations, be competent in the use of body language, possession of friendly voice and ability to make intelligent selection of communication channels. These skills are learnt during period of apprenticeship, vocational or technical training, seminars, workshops and on-the-job-training. An entrepreneur who lacks communication skills would be using unrefined and uncomplimentary language on customers, workers,

friends among others.

- d. **Saving and Investment Skills** - saving is a skill which can be acquired through practice or learnt under successful businessmen. It is the act of keeping aside an amount of one's income or profit at the end of a business cycle. The cycle may be on daily, weekly, monthly or yearly basis. Savings give rise to investment and without savings there will be no investment. The practice and prospective entrepreneur must learn, acquire and practice the skill of saving.
- e. **Adaptive Skill** - to adapt is to change according to changing conditions. "No condition", they say. "is permanent". The entrepreneur operates in all kinds of changing environment and must adapt to changes to survive. Nwosu, (2002) the business environment is sometimes favourable and sometimes unfavourable. But the entrepreneur would not need to jettison the business even in unfavourable conditions. There is the need to learn to adapt and continue the business using other skills of the entrepreneur. When the entrepreneur adapts to the changing economic, social and technological environments, he becomes part of it and would eventually suppress or manage the environment and extract the much needed profit.
- f. **Planning and Managerial Skills:** planning involves patience and belt

tightening. This skills is about eating half instead of exhausting all so that one can move in the future, Oduma, (2010). The skill of planning starts by setting aside a certain amount from small income. Anyone who cannot save from the little earned would not be able to save anything from thousands and millions of naira. The students of business education programme need to develop managerial skills in order to know how to take care of human and material resources under their care. These human and material resources are scarce or insufficient and need to be managed optimally. Some entrepreneurs regard human beings as machines but those who have managerial skills apply the principles of human relations in dealing with their workers.

- g. **Human Relations Skills** - human beings live and work together and they need some skills to encourage them to be highly productive. Human relations try to find out what behaviour and attitude that encourages people to work and to be productive. Nwosu, (2002) affirmed that human relations is the interaction and integration of people into a work situation of people that motivate them to work together productively, co-operatively and with economic, psychological and social satisfaction. Human relations could be said to be the ability to get along with others. This skill is expected from office

managers, directors, entrepreneurs, supervisors and foremen.

## 2. Technical Skills of business education students

The technical skills of business education students' are as follows:

- a. **Computer Skills or Professional Software Skills:** Most employers demand "computer literacy" as a pre-requisite for employment on certain jobs. Business education products must therefore, be versatile with the use of the computer and information and communication technology. With the invention of computer and internet technology, the world has been reduced to a global village where people buy from the same market, the same computer language and travel on the same information "super-highway" (Ehirheme, 2014). The scopes of computer and information processing have widened technology with the introduction of electronic-business, e-payment, e-commerce, cashless society and paperless office among others. Business education graduates work typically centres on the office. It therefore behoves on them to be well skilled in the use of computer and information and communication technology.
- b. **Record Management Skill:** Oduma, (2010) pointed that effective record management skill is another entrepreneurial skills needed by business education students. Since records management is an inevitable

activity in modern establishment that guarantees the safety of documents and their retrieval in times of need. Thus, business students must possess competences in the management of essential official documents. Oduma, (2010) concluded that it is equally important for business education student to be competent in preparing official reports, coverage of official meetings, be knowledgeable in law and practice of meetings, knowledgeable in office staff training and orientation methods, as well as proficiency in forms design.

- c. **Psychomotor skill** - this is the ability to operate machine tools, machinery and manipulate technical objects. This is one of the most important skills expected of business education students for effective office operations. It involves the use of various office machines, including keyboarding machines and making use of various copiers and processors for the reproduction of documents Ihimekpeu, Crossdale Ovwido and Amaefula (2015).
- d. **Analytical Skill** – There is need for a critical analysis of the business environment to separate successful businessmen from unsuccessful ones Oduma, (2010). Business education students must possess the skill to analyse the business environment which is friendly in some regions, volatile in other ones and full of uncertainty in other areas. The analytical skill is developed through

training and is applied to environment scanning, business appraisal and offer to bid.

e. **Creative Skill** - this is one of the skills which a business education student must possess. The skill enables the students to create ideas, services and products which are sold to people. The skills help the students to generate business ideas, create new products, packages, services among others Shane,(2003). Creative skills assist in imaginative thinking which can bring about innovation in any sector of entrepreneurial activities.

3. **Professional Skills of business education students:** According to Ihimekpeu, Crossdale Ovwido and Amaefula (2015) professional skills are competencies which assist the entrepreneur to enroll, be acceptable and also practice in a profession. To be recognized by a professional body, business education students are expected to be technically and educationally qualified after graduation and must possess the right ethics of the profession when admitted into the profession and be able to practice as a professional, having an obligation to protect the professional ethics and enjoy the privileges of the profession.

a. **Basic Professional Competencies:** Oduma (2010) believed that basic professional competencies must be acquired by the business education students. Such professional competencies include

possession of skill and competencies in preparing accounting information effectively as accounting information and their uses are inevitable exercises in every establishment and organization for monitoring financial transactions and analysis.

### **Impediments to Maximum Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Skills and Competencies by Under Graduate of Business Education**

Nigeria as a growing economy is not exempted from the challenges peculiar with growing economies as a nation. Consequently, the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and competencies by undergraduate of business education students is faced with daunting but surmountable challenges.

Henley, (2007) affirmed that many business education undergraduates have low interest in the study of the skills and competencies required in entrepreneurship courses. This is manifested in the students' attitude toward training in entrepreneurship. The students do not devote enough time and concentration during practicals lectures in subjects such as accounting, typewriting, word processing and so on which will lead to the acquisition of maximum skills for self-development and fulfillment on graduation, Kaegon, (2012).

Furthermore, business education student is faced with poor reading habits/culture prevalent in the society today. Intensive and extensive reading is

very important because it exposes students to understand the various skills and competencies required of them to become successful entrepreneurs, Kaegon, (2012). Many students prefer to spend most of their time playing with their phones, making calls and browsing instead of reading. They seem to forget that a well read student do far better than poorly read ones in all facets of life.

Because of the nature of the Nigeria society today where unemployment is on the high side, business education students do not have the habit of working assiduously with commitment and dedication to their studies in order to achieve maximum skill acquisition which will enable them be self-reliant on graduation.

Mebane, (2006) opined that another factor which constitutes impediment to students' acquisition of maximum skill and competencies is their spending habit. Business education students do not find delight in spending money on items like textbooks, working materials, equipment and so on that will assist them to develop the acquisition of beneficial skills for self-reliance after graduation. Rather, they resort to buying costly phones, recharge cards and so on. Little did they realize that worthy items bought can assist them after graduation to be successful entrepreneurs.

Another impediment to acquiring maximum skills and competencies by business education students is the failure of government agencies, private organizations and local communities

towards assisting in the provision of relevant equipment and facilities needed for the training of these business education students. For example, there are no computers for the teaching and learning of information and communication technology (ICT) which is not the case with developed countries where students are trained under a conducive environment and with the right equipment, Mebane, (2006).

Poor maintenance culture prevalent in the society today is another predicament to the development of adequate skill acquisition by students of business education. There is also lack of electricity in our schools and colleges for practical works and dishonest students and leaders who are all out to destroy whatever the government has made available in schools and colleges.

Lack of adequate training for students that would enable them meet the challenges of the future as leaders of business and change agents is another hindrance. In addition to this, the low standard of education in the recent years, resulting from lack of incentive for teachers, inadequate funding of schools, inadequate equipment and laboratories for teaching and learning, dearth of adequate, qualified teachers, absence of conducive learning environment and so on are still impediments to the impartation of maximum skill and competencies to business education students. Education is the key to knowledge and it plays a strong role in forming burgeoning entrepreneurs,

(Oduma, 2012). The absence of solid educational foundation for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and office competences would result in half-baked workforce whose activities would be retrogressive and unproductive in a society.

### Recommendations and Conclusion

Based on the above impediments to maximum skill acquisition by students of business education, the following recommendations are made:

1. Business education students should develop keen interest in the study of skills and competencies required in entrepreneurial courses.
2. The students should imbibe the spirit of intensive and extensive reading to overcome their poor reading culture.
3. Students of business education should devote some part of their spending on materials that will help them in acquiring entrepreneurial skills.
4. Government and other stakeholders should assist in providing necessary equipment and facilities to improve the learning of business students in skill acquisition.
5. The institutions and their students should cultivate good maintenance culture.
6. Students should think twice and change their negative attitude and turn to develop themselves

sufficiently in the skill and competencies inherent in business education programme of their institutions.

Business related programme in institution of higher learning is a major place for the acquisition of skills, attitudes and abilities required and needed for entrepreneurial success. It therefore behoves on the institution to lay greater emphasis on business education in order to achieve this noble objective.

Business education equips students with general skills and competencies and in view of this, this paper therefore urges all business education students to ensure that they acquire maximum skills and competencies needed for the development of themselves and the nation.

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