



ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS NEED OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS FOR SELF EMPLOYMENT IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This research investigated the entrepreneurial skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. Two specific objectives, Two research questions and Two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 234 business education lecturers and students made up of 48 business educators and 186 final year Business Education Students in Akwa Ibom State. The sample of the study was 187 respondents made up of 149 business education students and 38 business educators. Convenience sampling technique was used for the study. A structured questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurial Skills Need of Business Education Students for Self-Employment Questionnaire (ESNBESSEQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three lecturers from University of Uyo. Cronbach alpha test was used to estimate the reliability coefficient of the instruments. The completed questionnaires were collected, collated and analysed using Mean and Improvement Need Index (INI) to answer the research questions while Independent t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings emerged from the study revealed that there is skill need and significant difference between business educators and business education students on creativity and marketing skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. It was concluded that for business education to assume self-employment in Akwa Ibom State, they require entrepreneurial skills. Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it was recommended that business education curriculum developers should integrate project-based learning into the curriculum in order to encourage students to develop innovative business ideas and prototypes and allow students to think creatively and develop problem-solving skills.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of entrepreneurial skills for self-employment of business education students cannot be overstated. In today's fast-paced and competitive business environment, employers are looking for employees who possess not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills and competencies that can be applied in the workplace. Entrepreneurial skills such as creativity, innovation, risk-taking, and problem-solving are highly necessary for employment creation and are essential for success in the modern business world. Nigeria as a developing nation needs a comprehensive functional education that will impart the right knowledge, skills and attitudes as well as stir up the productive potentials of the citizenry to achieve self reliance.

As noted by Etifit *et al.* (2016), the higher educational programmes in Nigeria had fallen short of expectations, and as a result, many of the graduates of these institutions lack



basic skills required in the labour market. Considering the dynamic nature of the global market and business environment, the quest for self-reliance through education has always been the desire of many nations, especially in the present economic downturn. This has triggered many countries of the world to re-evaluate their position and question their roles as nations and consider investing heavily in entrepreneurial education.

Entrepreneurship has gained prominence over the years, both in developing and developed countries. Many countries are channeling their energy to ensure entrepreneurship is practiced, to ensure gainful employment, self-reliant of citizen and sustainable economic growth. Entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people, particularly youths, to be responsible, productive and enterprising individuals, who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers. Udukeke and Usoro (2023) defined entrepreneurship as the creative process of utilizing resources for the introduction of a new product or the addition of incremental value to an existing product, process, method, market, project or an organization so as to meet human needs profitably. Entrepreneurship education can help students opt in for new venture creation, develop positive and favourable attitudes towards entrepreneurial situations and also propose new career perspectives (Ukoima, Charles and Nworgu, 2022).

Entrepreneurs are agents who overcome obstacles to build their enterprises through recognition of opportunities, exploring them through innovation and creativity. Moreover, through entrepreneurship, new businesses and jobs are created, which is of critical importance in today's global business environment. New firms creation is a critical driving force of economic growth, job creation, as well as enhancing federal and local tax revenues, boosting exports, and generally increasing national productivity. Mwangi (2020) asserted that entrepreneurs have a way of surviving complex problems, unlike the non-entrepreneurs who lack critical entrepreneurial skills.

Entrepreneurial skills are those skills that help in enterprise development. These skills seek to provide students with knowledge, ability and motivation to ensure development and success of businesses. Students who acquire entrepreneurial skills need not be found looking for white-collar jobs after graduation, because the students are already equipped with the necessary skills to become self-reliant and employers of labour in different discipline. Entrepreneurial skills encourage the need for people to improve their living conditions using their initiatives and resources at their disposal, without depending on external support.

Over the years, the awareness of the need for entrepreneurial skill has increased among stakeholders in industries, businesses and government of many countries, in order to stimulate entrepreneurial activities and reduce business failure. Entrepreneurial skill acquisition is a process whereby a person possesses or learns a particular skill or type of behaviour needed for business through training or education (Okon and Ukoima 2015). Entrepreneurial skill acquisition programmes introduced into educational system are meant to provide the level of education or knowledge needed to exploit entrepreneurial opportunity which could help to achieve economic development of such countries. Entrepreneurial skills equip individuals with ability to analyze situations, opportunities and environment and assist a business man in managing and assuming a business risk with the aim of making profit. These skills are embedded in business education programme at all levels.

Business education is one of the courses offered in the universities with the central aim of building the capacity of its recipients for enterprise development. One remarkable and important characteristic of business education programme is that its products can function independently as self-employed and employers of labour. Business education programme



prepares students for entry into and advancement in jobs within the business environment. It is an educational programme which involves acquisition of skills, knowledge and competences which make the recipients/beneficiaries self-reliant. As defined by Usen *et al.* (2019), business education is a programme of study that prepares students for skill acquisition in different specialized areas such as office occupations (secretaries), book keeping (accountants) as well as teaching (accounting teachers and e-commerce professionals).

The programme is designed to inculcate in students the relevant entrepreneurial skills and competencies in different areas of specialization for gainful employment after graduation. One of the cardinal objectives of business education is to provide orientation and basic skills with which to start a life of work for those who may not further educational training. In consonance with this, Usen *et al.* (2020) agreed that business education is meant to prepare individuals for self-reliance, self-actualisation, job- creation, and wealth-creation. The successful implementation of this programme will promote self-independence, creativity, economic well-being, and a reduction in Nigerian unemployment.

Self-employment is creating one's own employment without working for others to earn a living. It makes one self-reliant, not depending on others and not seeking white-collar job. Those who pursue self-employment are those who take on the risk of starting and managing their own businesses. Business education students, in particular, need to acquire entrepreneurial skills to enhance their self-employment prospects. Business education students who possess entrepreneurial skills are more likely to secure employment and have better career prospects than those who do not. Entrepreneurial skills are essential for business education students who aspire to become entrepreneurs and start their own businesses. Therefore, for self-employment of business education students after graduation, possession of related entrepreneurial skills is a prerequisite.

Skill is simply defined as ability, capacity or proficiency to carry out tasks with pre-determined results often within a given amount of time and energy. Skills are acquired abilities or expertise developed through learning and experience. They can be categorized into various types including technical, soft and transferrable skills (Eminue and Udo, 2024). Technical skills are specific to a particular field or industry, while soft skills encompass interpersonal and communication abilities. Transferable skills are versatile and can be applied across different roles. Continuous skill development is essential in adapting to evolving business environment and personal growth. Need is what ought to be available but is missing, and is required to be there. It shows there is something which if present, will better the performance of an individual or group of individuals. Therefore, skills need is operationally defined as those capabilities business education students ought to acquire to help them scale through in their respective future endeavours. The selected entrepreneurial skills needed for self-employment in the context of this study include but not limited to creativity skills, marketing skills, interpersonal skills, risk management skills and accounting skills.

Creativity is a highly valued skill in the modern workplace, and is essential for business education students to acquire in order to enhance their self-employment prospects. According to Amabile (2023), creativity is the ability to generate new and useful ideas, and is a key component of innovation and entrepreneurship. Business education students need to develop creativity skills in order to think outside the box, generate new ideas, and solve complex problems. Creativity skills are essential for business graduates to succeed in the workplace, as they enable them to adapt to changing circumstances, think critically, and develop innovative solutions. In order to ensure self-employment of business education



students, it is imperative to provide them with skills to generate ideas, think critically and solve business problems.

Another important entrepreneurial skill for self-employment of business education students is marketing skill. Marketing is a critical function of business that involves identifying and satisfying customer needs, and business education students need to develop marketing skills in order to succeed in the workplace. Usip and Ukoima (2023) viewed marketing skills as skills which consist of all profitable human activities undertaken by a firm towards the creation of goods and services. This implies that marketing skills could promote business and enhance the performance of managers on distribution and sales of goods and services. This is because marketing skill involves the use of the four-Ps of marketing namely; product, price, place and promotion to increase sales. Business education students who possess these skills are more likely to secure employment and have better career prospects.

Business education students in the context of this study are students who are undergoing training in teachers' training college, colleges of education or faculty of education in the University or similar institutions that engage in business education programme. Students pursuing business education often delve into a diverse curriculum covering foundational concepts in business administration, accounting, management and marketing, among others. This educational path equips students with practical skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, decision-making and communication skills which are essential for success in the corporate world. Business education students are exposed to opportunities for internships, projects to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios, preparing them to navigate the complexities of the business landscape upon graduation. The benchmark for the assessment of skills need of business education students is set by business education lecturers. The lecturers are the ones who teach entrepreneurship education as such they know the skill needed by the students for gainful employment and self-reliance. It is on the basis of this background that this study is carried out to investigate the entrepreneurial skills needed for self-employment of business education students with the aim of identifying the need gap to be filled.

Statement of the Problem

The 21st century has provided business education students with a lot of opportunities to develop skills related to employment. It is expected that in line with the objective of business education, students should be exposed to entrepreneurial skills for gainful employment and self-reliance before graduation. Despite the importance of entrepreneurial skills for self-employment, many business education students seem to lack these skills. According to Yusuf (2022), many business education students finished school without acquiring the necessary entrepreneurial skills to succeed in the workplace. Unfortunately, the graduates of this programme like other graduates are seen roaming about looking for employment without consideration for utilizing entrepreneurial skills for self-employment.

This situation has continued to increase the number of unemployed business education graduates found around us, especially as they face stiff competition for employment space with graduates of other programmes who can also utilize entrepreneurial skills. It is presumed that most business education students are not fully equipped with the relevant entrepreneurial skills for either gainful employment or self-reliance in Akwa Ibom State after graduation. Consequently, the students after graduation find it difficult to secure



employment opportunities without relevant skills. They may also find it difficult to take up self-employment opportunity to provide services where they cannot secure employment.

Due to inadequate entrepreneurship skills, some business education students after graduation end up roaming the streets seeking for job, where there is none. The effects become imminent, such as increase in the rate of poverty. This also culminates in restiveness, kidnapping, over dependency as well as low Gross Domestic Product (GDP), low per capita income and economic underdevelopment. The above problems engendered in the researcher the interest to carry out this study to determine the entrepreneurial skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the entrepreneurial skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. The creativity skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State.
2. The marketing skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State.

1.5 Research Questions

The study sought to provide answers to the following questions.

1. What are the creativity skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State?
2. What are the marketing skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study at 0.05 level of significance;

- H₀₁ There is no significant difference between business educators and business education students on creativity skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State.
- H₀₂ There is no significant difference between business educators and business education students on marketing skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to collect data on the opinions of respondents in order to examine the entrepreneurial skills needs of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. The design allowed for the selection of participants from the population and facilitated data collection through questionnaires for opinion survey, making it suitable for gathering data from lecturers and students. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, using tertiary institutions offering business education. The state, which comprises three senatorial districts—Akwa Ibom North East, South, and North West—has a population of about 5,451,000 people and 31 Local



Government Areas, with Uyo as the capital. It hosts several tertiary institutions, including the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State University, a Polytechnic, Maritime Academy, and College of Education, among others. The choice of the state was informed by the high rate of unemployment and the need to enhance self-employment through entrepreneurial skills development.

The population comprised 234 respondents, including 48 business educators and 186 final-year business education students from the University of Uyo and Akwa Ibom State College of Education, Afaha Nsit. A sample of 187 respondents (38 educators and 149 students), representing 80% of the population, was selected using convenience sampling, considered appropriate due to accessibility constraints. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled *Entrepreneurial Skills Need of Business Education Students for Self-employment Questionnaire (ESNBESSEQ)*, divided into two sections: demographic information and items on entrepreneurial skills needs. Responses were rated on a 4-point scale for both lecturers and students. The responses were made on a 4-point rating scale as follows:

Lecturers	Students	Value
Very Highly Needed (VHN)	Very High Possessed (VHP)	4
Highly Needed (HN)	High Possessed (HP)	3
Lowly Needed (LN)	Low Possessed (LP)	2
Very Lowly Needed (VLN)	Very Low Possessed (VLP)	1

The instrument was face-validated by three experts and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.82, indicating high reliability. The questionnaire was administered with the assistance of three trained research assistants, resulting in 184 valid responses out of 187 distributed (98.39% return rate). Data collected were analyzed using Improvement Need Index (INI) to answer research questions and independent t-test to test hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance, with analysis conducted using SPSS version 25.0.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

What are the creativity skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 4.1: Performance gap analysis of creativity skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State

S/N	Creativity Skills Need	\bar{X}_N	\bar{X}_P	$\bar{X}_N - \bar{X}_P$ (PG)	Remarks
1	Ability to generate new ideas	3.11	2.40	0.71	SN
2	Ability to think critically.	3.50	2.05	1.45	SN
3	Ability to solve problems.	3.52	2.43	1.09	SN
4	Ability to identify alternative course of action	3.44	2.44	1.00	SN
5	Ability to analyze information	3.00	2.38	0.62	SN



6	Ability to develop well-supported conclusions	2.92	2.84	0.08	SN
7	Ability to set achievable goals of a business.	3.02	1.33	1.69	SN
CLUSTER MEAN		3.21	2.26	0.94	SN

SN= Skill Needed

The result in Table 1 shows creativity skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. The result reveals that performance gap of all the 7 items on creativity skills need are positive (ranging from 0.08-1.69), with a cluster mean of 0.94. This implies that business education students need improvement in creativity skills for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. The item on ability to set achievable goals of a business has the highest mean gap of 1.69, while the item on ability to develop well-supported conclusions has the lowest mean of 0.53.

Research Question 2

What are the marketing skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 4.2: Performance gap analysis of marketing skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State

S/N	Marketing Skills Need	\bar{X}_N	\bar{X}_P	$\bar{X}_N - \bar{X}_P$ (PG)	Remarks
1	Ability to determine sales target to sales representatives	3.13	2.98	0.15	SN
2	Ability to identify good business location	2.95	2.93	0.02	SN
3	Ability to fix favourable price	3.19	2.93	0.26	SN
4	Ability to persuade customers to buy a product	3.57	2.95	0.62	SN
5	Ability to delivery order on time	3.17	2.95	0.22	SN
6	Ability to advertise the product through right social media	2.89	2.97	-0.08	SNN
7	Ability to render after sales services	3.13	2.96	0.17	SN
CLUSTER MEAN		3.14	2.95	0.19	SN

SN = Skill Needed, SNN= Skill Not Needed

The result in Table 2 shows marketing skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. Ability to advertise the product through right social media has negative gap (-0.08) which means skills not needed, while other items have positive gaps (ranging from 0.02-0.62). The result reveals that the average performance gap of all the 7 items on marketing skills need is positive (0.19). This implies that business education students need improvement in marketing skills for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. Ability to persuade customers to buy a product has the highest gap of 0.62, while ability to identify good business location has the lowest gap of 0.02.

Research Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between business educators and business education students on creativity skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State



Table 3: Independent t-test analysis on the difference between business educators and business education students on creativity skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State

S/N	Items	Lecturers		Students		t-cal	P≤ .05	Decision
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD			
1	Ability to generate new ideas	3.11	0.56	2.40	0.73	7.06	.000	S
2	Ability to think critically.	3.50	0.56	2.05	1.09	8.18	.000	S
3	Ability to solve problems.	3.52	0.50	2.43	0.81	10.18	.000	S
4	Ability to identify alternative course of action	3.44	0.50	2.44	1.06	7.34	.000	S
5	Ability to analyze information	3.00	0.57	2.38	0.84	5.43	.000	S
6	Ability to develop well-supported conclusions	2.92	0.46	2.84	0.84	0.70	.048	S
7	Ability to set achievable goals of a business.	3.02	0.51	1.33	0.86	12.36	.000	S

S = Significant, df = 182, Sig@p≤.05 Source: Field Work (2025)

Table 3 shows the summary of the Independent t-test analysis of the difference between business educators and business education students on creativity skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. The result shows that at 182 degree of freedom, the P-values of all the seven items on creativity skills need are less than 0.05 alpha level (P-values ranging from .000-0.04). This implies that there is a significant difference between business educators and business education students on creativity skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, the research hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between business educators and business education students on creativity skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State is rejected.

Research Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between business educators and business education students on marketing skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4: Independent t-test analysis on the difference between business educators and business education students on marketing skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State

S/N	Items	Lecturers		Students		t-cal	P≤ .05	Decision
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD			
1	Ability to determine sales target to sales representatives	3.13	0.34	2.98	0.50	3.90	.000	S
2	Ability to identify good business location	2.95	0.53	2.93	0.33	0.59	.770	NS
3	Ability to fix favourable price	3.19	0.37	2.93	0.33	3.35	.000	S
4	Ability to persuade customers to buy a product	3.57	0.53	2.95	0.54	6.06	.000	S
5	Ability to delivery order on	3.17	0.54	2.95	0.57	4.02	.000	S



	time								
6	Ability to advertise the product through right social media	2.89	0.42	2.97	0.51	1.06	.064	NS	
7	Ability to render after sales services	3.13	0.59	2.96	0.59	2.73	.007	S	

S = Significant, SN = Not Significant; df = 182, Sig@p≤.05 Source: Field Work (2025)

Table 4 shows the summary of the Independent t-test analysis of the difference between business educators and business education students on marketing skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. The result shows that respondents were statistically significant in five items on interpersonal skills need with (P-values ranging from .000 to .007), while two item are not significant with P-values of .064 and .770. Since five out of seven P-values are less than the .05 alpha level at 182 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference between business educators and business education students on marketing skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State.

Findings

1. Business Education students need improvement in creativity skills for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State.
2. Business Education students need improvement in marketing skills for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State.
3. There is a significant difference between business educators and business education students on creativity skills need of Business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State.
4. There is a significant difference between business educators and business education students on marketing skills need of Business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Findings

Creativity Skills Need for Self-employment

The result from research question one revealed that business education students need improvement in creativity skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. The result of hypothesis one also revealed that there is a significant difference between business educators and business education students on creativity skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. The result was because the level of creativity skills of business education students was lower than the benchmark provided by business education lecturers, resulting to a positive performance gap. Therefore, in order to bridge the gap business education students need improvement in ability to generate new ideas, ability to think critically, ability to solve problems, ability to identify alternative course of action, ability to analyze information, ability to develop well-supported conclusions and ability to set achievable goals of a business. These skills would aid them to think outside the box, challenge assumptions and explore new possibilities.



The finding of this study is in line with the finding by Afolabi *et al.* (2021) who found that creativity skills are highly required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development. Business students as would be entrepreneurs require creativity need if they are to be self-employed after graduation from school. The finding is also in agreement with another research finding by Yusuf (2022) who found that there is a significant influence of creativity skills on employability in manufacturing industries. Therefore, possession of these skills would help business education students in establishment and effective operation and development of business enterprises in Akwa Ibom State. The finding is also in consonant with the finding by Usman (2018) revealed that there is a significant relationship between creativity skills and students' self-employability. Therefore, to boost the prospect of self-employment, creativity skills should be adequately inculcated in business education students before graduation. Business educators can incorporate real-world projects into the curriculum, allowing students to think creatively and develop problem-solving skills, which can help them create employment for themselves, without depending on others in Akwa Ibom State.

Marketing skills Need for Self-employment

The finding from research question two revealed that business education students need improvement in marketing skills for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. The result of hypothesis two also revealed that there is a significant difference between business educators and business education students on marketing skills need of business education students for self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. The result was because the level of marketing skills of business education students was lower than the benchmark provided by business education lecturers, resulting to a positive performance gap. Therefore, in order to bridge the gap business education students need improvement in ability to determine sales target to sales representatives, ability to identify good business location, ability to fix favourable price, ability to persuade customers to buy a product, ability to delivery order on time, ability to advertise the product through right social media, ability to render after sales services.

The finding of this study is in agreement with earlier finding by Binuomote and Okoli (2017) who found that business education students require management and marketing competencies to function well in the business environment. The finding is also in line with the finding by Money and Odibo (2017) who found that there is direct significant in the application of marketing skill to the success and positive development of small and medium scale enterprises. Marketing skills help entrepreneurs to have niche in the market share. The finding also corroborate the finding by Salaam (2018) who found that Business Education students need more training in marketing skills among other entrepreneurial skills for effective management of retail shops in South-South Nigeria. The performance gap noticed from the study calls for a more holistic training of business education students to increase their chances of self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. Acquisition of sufficient level of marketing skills would enhance self-employment in Akwa Ibom State. Business education students need practical training in digital marketing tools and platforms. This can be done through workshops, internships, or industry partnerships, enabling students to gain hands-on experience and stay up-to-date with industry trends.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of this study. It can be concluded that for business education to assume self-employment in Akwa Ibom State, they



require entrepreneurial skills. From the finding, it is revealed that business education students need improvement in creativity and marketing for self-employment. Therefore, if business education students are given more training or are sufficiently exposed to the prescribed level of skills in creativity, marketing, interpersonal, risk management and accounting it would enhance self-employment in Akwa Ibom State.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study the following recommendations are made.

1. Business education curriculum developers should integrate project-based learning into the curriculum in order to encourage students to develop innovative business ideas and prototypes and allow students to think creatively and develop problem-solving skills.
2. Akwa Ibom State Government through Ministry of Education should provide practical training on marketing tools and platforms through workshops and seminars to enable students to gain hands-on experience and stay up-to-date with industry trends.
3. Business Educators should incorporate collaborative and team-based project in teaching, in order to allow students to develop effective communication, collaboration and strong interpersonal relationships with others.

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