EXTENT OF TECHNICAL AND ICT SKILLS NEEDED FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS BY BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES IN ONDO AND EKITI STATES

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Abstract
The need for business education graduates in Ondo and Ekiti States to thrive in entrepreneurship necessitated this study to determine the rating of managers of small and medium enterprises in the area on the technical and ICT skills they need. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested. The design of the study was descriptive survey. The population for the study was 540 out of which 230 was sampled. A structured 5-point rating scale questionnaire which was duly validated by experts in the field was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was administered to 20 managers of SMEs in Osun State and data collected were analyzed with Cronbach alpha to obtain reliability coefficients of 0.73 and 0.77 for the two clusters with an overall coefficient of 0.75. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze data in respect of research questions and to determine the cohesiveness or otherwise of respondents’ ratings. Z-Test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that small and medium enterprises managers rated technical skills and ICT skills as highly needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in the area. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that business education curriculum developers should emphasize technical and ICT skills in the curriculum content and that the lecturers should effectively inculcate them in their students irrespective of their preferred option. Also, institutional authorities should make entrepreneurial skills training development compulsory for all business education lecturers to enable them update and meet with challenges of entrepreneurial success in the area in particular and the Nigerian society at large.

Introduction
The society is changing rapidly based on knowledge and modern technologies. The fact remains that rote memorization and accumulation of scientific facts have, no doubt, failed people in terms of sustainable development as educational practices acquired from the colonial masters were tailored towards preparation for white collar jobs after graduation. However, in this contemporary time, the skills needed by teeming
graduates are more than mere preparation for white collar jobs but for self-reliance and sustenance to provide required impetus for the nation’s development. Hence, the requirements of graduates to fit in as managers or entrepreneurs are more prominent so as to face the challenges of modern day.

Given the current economic challenges facing many countries across the globe, the notion of engendering greater entrepreneurial activities has become a prominent goal for many governments. It becomes imperative for the nation to have a rethink on educational delivery in order to produce graduates who can be self-reliant and self-sustaining. As part of government commitment to equip the youths with skills for self-reliance, entrepreneurship education was introduced as a compulsory course in tertiary institutions.

Entrepreneurship education is a carefully planned programme of instruction in schools geared towards enabling students to acquire entrepreneurial skills and competencies that they can use in establishing, managing and sustaining their business enterprises. Osuala (2004) defined entrepreneurship education as a set of training that provides valuable skills needed by an entrepreneur in order to avoid trial and error that often results in business failures. According to Inegbenebor (2006), entrepreneurship education is about learning the skills needed to assume the risks to establish a business. It is about developing the winning strategies and executing them with all the vigorous persistence and passion needed to win any game. Thus, one can say that entrepreneurship education is an education that equips an individual with the ability to seek investment opportunities and respond to them by establishing an enterprise. It is focused on developing understanding and capacity to pursue and develop entrepreneurial behaviour, skills and attributes in a widely different context. Entrepreneurship education is an avenue for discovering knowledge, acquiring human and social skills through a well packaged and relevant course content, guided by achievable objectives and enriched with a suitable methodology that enhances the teaching and learning process.

According to Filani in Olaniyi (2016), the aim of entrepreneurship education is to encourage and train graduates of secondary schools and higher institutions to take up self employment. People benefit immensely when basic skills are acquired to enable them become self-reliant and have confidence in their ability to become economically independent. Thus, Deen (2003) observed that there was growing scientific evidence that entrepreneurship education is capable of stimulating employment, productivity and economic growth through establishment of small and medium enterprises.

Small and medium enterprises are usually owned and managed by individuals called business owners, entrepreneurs or business operators. The nature of the business is such that managers are employed to handle the affairs of the business by helping to source for business opportunities and plan promotional activities to increase patronage.
(Akaharu, 2015). Comparatively, these managers could be male or female and small businesses owned by female entrepreneurs operate differently from those owned by male entrepreneurs.

Olaniyi (2016) noted that an individual thinking of starting a business needs a broad array of skills for the business to succeed in the competitive market. Skill is the habit of doing something well especially through training or experience. Okoli (2013) defined skills as the economic tools with which entrepreneurs confront and solve societal problems. Skills are practical activities which make one employable, self-reliant and relevant to the society. Okoli further stated that entrepreneurs must possess relevant business skills that will enable them start, finance and market their own business enterprises. Several skills such as supervisory, managerial, inter-personal, business, technical and ICT among others are needed by graduates of business education to be able to run any kind of business enterprise. This study focuses on technical and ICT skills.

Graduates of business education need to acquire technical skills in order to accomplish specific tasks in an organization. According to Osamwoyin and Igbinoso (2005) technical skills are related to knowledge and proficiency in activities involving processes, methods and procedures as well as the ability to use tools and specific techniques efficiently. Technical skills will enable graduates run the day-to-day activities of the enterprise (Anyakoha, 2009). Besides, Chinwe (2011) pointed out that skills like programming, database administration and networking are potential careers for in the ICT industry. The author further noted that ICT has become a critical factor in daily operations. Ntukidem (2005) emphasized that the relevance of ICT skills in business education is based on changes in the nature of workplace and business environment of the current era. Remarkably, Ile (2005) affirmed that everybody now realizes that computer has revolutionized the clerical functions in offices through word processing and accounting packages. Similarly, with the aid of database, information can be imputed, accessed, extracted and sorted in a variety of ways by the office workers. According to Nwosu (2007), the acquisition of ICT skills will make information processing, management and dissemination more effective and efficient. Therefore, the acquisition of ICT skills is of great importance for graduates of business education so as to equip them with modern technology to remain relevant in the global competitive workplace and business arena.

Statement of the Problem

The Federal Government of Nigeria has embarked on educational reforms aimed at making the system more functional and relevant to both the citizens and society at large, especially at the present time of economic crises and unemployment. As part of the government’s commitment in equipping the youths with skills that will help them to
become self-reliant, entrepreneurship education was introduced as a compulsory course for all programmes in tertiary institutions. The expectation was that all graduates including those of business education from Nigerian tertiary institutions would be adequately equipped with entrepreneurial skills that will enable them become successful entrepreneurs.

In view of the above, the problem of this study is that many graduates of business education from tertiary institutions in the nation seem to lack interest and confidence in entrepreneurial activities for self-sustenance. Despite the abundant business opportunities in the country, they seem to make little or no attempt to establish small scale businesses of their own. This raises the question as to whether their lecturers actually know and emphasize the relevant skills for entrepreneurial success in the course of their training. It, therefore, becomes imperative to ascertain the extent technical and ICT skills are needed by graduates of business education to run their own businesses and become employers of labour in order to provide empirical date to guide both the curriculum developers, lecturers and institutions management in taking objective remedial actions.

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to determine the extent business education graduates in Ondo and Ekiti States need technical and ICT skills for entrepreneurial success. Specifically, the study determined the extent:

1. Technical skills are needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in Ondo and Ekiti States.
2. Information and communication technology skills are needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in Ondo and Ekiti States.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent are technical skills needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in Ondo and Ekiti States?
2. To what extent are information and communication technology skills needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in Ondo and Ekiti States?

**Hypotheses**

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of managers in Ondo and Ekiti States on the extent technical skills are needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female managers on the extent information and communication technology skills are needed.
needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in Ondo and Ekiti States.

**Method**

The design adopted in this study was descriptive survey. The study was carried out in Ondo and Ekiti States. The choice of the two states was informed by the fact that they have vast potential for entrepreneurial development as well as several tertiary institutions offering business education programmes. Population comprised 540 managers of small and medium enterprises (made up of 284 managers from Ondo State and 260 from Ekiti State) registered with the chamber of commerce in the two States. These managers were chosen because by experience, they understand the entrepreneurial atmosphere in the area and, therefore, were in a better position to know the skills that will help fresh graduates to succeed. Sample size of 230 was drawn from the population using: Taro Yamane’s formula and Bowley’s formula for the distribution of the 230 respondents between the two States. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated by five experts both in business education and test and measurement. The instrument was administered to 20 managers of SMEs in Osun State and data collected were analyzed with Cronbach alpha to obtain reliability coefficients of 0.73 and 0.77 for the two clusters with an overall coefficient of 0.75. Data collected relative to the research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents’ views while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

**Research Question 1**

To what extent are technical skills needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in Ondo and Ekiti States?

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Technical Skills needed by Business Education graduates</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ability to understand the nature of business.</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>Very High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ability to apply academic background on business growth.</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ability to describe the types of equipment to be acquired for the business.</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>Very High Extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Ability to determine appropriate location for the business.  4.60  0.77  Very High Extent
5. Ability to ascertain the sources of raw materials.  4.35  0.90  High Extent
6. Ability to determine required number of personnel needed for the business.  4.36  0.78  High Extent
7. Ability to identify business operational problems.  4.41  0.88  High Extent
8. Ability to provide solution to problems identified.  4.62  0.59  Very High Extent
9. Ability to evaluate business operational plan and performance.  4.36  0.87  High Extent
10. Ability to identify business opportunities.  4.43  0.87  High Extent

Mean of Means  4.50  Very High Extent

Data in Table 1 reveal that out of ten items, four items with means ranging from 4.60 to 4.80 were rated as needed by business education graduates at a very high extent while the remaining six items with means ranging from 4.35 to 4.47 were rated as needed at high extent. The mean of means of 4.50 indicates that respondent rated technical skills as needed at a very high extent by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in Ondo and Ekiti States. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range indicating that the respondents were homogeneous in their ratings.

Research Question 2
To what extent are information and communication technology skills needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in Ondo and Ekiti States?

Table 2
Respondents mean ratings on the extent ICT skills are needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in Ondo and Ekiti States (N=228)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>ICT Skills Needed by Business Education graduates</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ability to create, format, save and print documents from the computer.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ability to retrieve saved documents in the computer.</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ability to protect documents with passwords.</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ability to use software that adapts to customers’ needs.</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ability to browse and download information from the net.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ability to access the internet through mobile phones.</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ability to use internet for e-mail and communication.</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data presented in Table 2 reveal that the mean ratings for all the items ranged from 3.70 to 4.33 with a mean of means of 4.16. This indicates that the respondents rated all the ten ICT skills as needed at a high extent by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in Ondo and Ekiti States. The standard deviation for all the items are within the same range which indicates that the respondents were homogeneous in their ratings.

Hypothesis 1
There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of managers in Ondo and Ekiti States on the extent technical skills are needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success.

Table 3: Summary of z-test Analysis of the Mean Ratings of Respondents in Ondo and Ekiti States on Technical Skills Needed by Business Education Graduates for Entrepreneurial Success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>z-cal</th>
<th>z-crit</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ondo State</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekiti State</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that the calculated z-value of 1.14 is less than the critical z-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 226 degree of freedom. This shows that location did not significantly influence the respondents’ ratings of extent technical skills are needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in the area of study. Therefore, the hypothesis was upheld.

Hypothesis 2
There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female managers on the extent information and communication technology skills are needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in Ondo and Ekiti States.
Table 4
Summary of z-test Analysis of the Mean Ratings of male and female Respondents on information and communication technology Skills Needed by Business Education Graduates for Entrepreneurial Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>z-cal</th>
<th>z-crit</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 reveals that the calculated z-value of 0.68 is less than the critical z-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 226 degree of freedom. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the extent information and communication technology skills are needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in Ondo and Ekiti States. Therefore, the hypothesis was upheld.

Discussion
Findings of the study indicated that small and medium enterprises managers in Ondo and Ekiti States rated technical skills as need at a very high extent by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success. This is in line with the finding of Binuomote and Okoli (2015) who revealed that business education students needed technical skills training for entrepreneurial development. It was not surprising that business education graduates needed all the technical skills listed because the technical know-how relevant to an entrepreneur’s area of business interest is very crucial for business success. According to Uzoka (2007), having job specific knowledge and technique that are required to perform organizational role is very necessary. Therefore, business education graduates should strive to attain mastery of the technical aspect of the business so as to understand the secret of success in business. Also, having specific knowledge and techniques in a specific area of business could serve as a guarantee for effective performance.

The findings further show that small and medium enterprises managers in Ondo and Ekiti States did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on technical skills needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in the two states. This is in agreement with the report of Akarahu (2011) that there is no significance difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the technical competency required for successful business entrepreneurial.

Furthermore, findings of the study showed that the respondents rated ICT skills as needed at a high extent by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in Ondo and Ekiti States. This is in line with Okoli (2013) who posited that business
education students and graduates need information and communication technology skills to function well in the present ICT driven business environment. Also, this finding is in congruent with Agomuo (2006) who stated that computer operation skills, networking and media communication skills are required of business studies graduates.

The findings also show that male and female respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent ICT skills are needed by business education graduates for entrepreneurial success in Ondo and Ekiti States. This means that acquisition of these skills are essential to all business education graduates to enrich them with the technological awareness and competencies needed in today’s business and workplace arena.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that business education graduates highly need technical and ICT skills in order to succeed in their entrepreneurial drive in Ondo and Ekiti States to become self-reliant and self-sustaining.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Business education curriculum developers should emphasize technical and ICT skills in the programme at all levels of the education system.
2. Business education lecturers should adequately and effectively inculcate technical and ICT skills to all their students irrespective of preferred options.
3. Management of tertiary institutions should make entrepreneurial skills training and development compulsory for all business education lecturers to enable them update and effectively inculcate the relevant skills to their students to guarantee their entrepreneurial success.
4. Government should increase funds for acquisition of relevant training equipment and infrastructural facilities for quality training in all tertiary institutions in the country.
References

