



BUSINESS EDUCATION SKILLS: TOOLS FOR SUSTAINABLE OPTION IN A RECESSED ECONOMY

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Abstract

The paper assessed Business Education skills: Tools for Sustainable Option in a Recessed Economy.. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Two research questions and one null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprised 60 business education lecturers from Federal College of Education (Technical) Bichi, Kano and Federal College of Education (Technical) Gombe State. Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that Innovative marketing skills and management skills are needed for self sustainable option in a recessed depressed economy. It was concluded that Business Education students, need innovative marketing skill and management competencies for self-reliant and job creation.

Key Word: Innovative marketing skill, Management skill, Business Education, self sustainable

Introduction

The current global recession is tremendously affecting the economy of the country. Graduates unable to find jobs in spite of their education, qualification and commitment. The solution to this present predicament is for them to set up their own business. On the other hand, starting a new business or an enterprise is not an easy task. To realize such solution successfully, functioning education, special skill competencies and attitudes are required. Business education is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and competencies needed by individuals (skills, abilities, understanding and attitudes) that enable students to become a worthy human being and effective members of the society (Etonyeaku) 2012. Business education prepares its recipients for different roles in business as economically literate and intelligent citizens. As an aspect of Vocational Education, Business education is synonymous with skill acquisition. (Omish, Elespeth and Mohan) 2013. The authors opined that in the absence of paid employment, individuals with vocational skills set up a small business within the services needed by their communities and this has the capacity to boost the local economy from within and hence lead to the liberation of the people from the culture of dependence on external assistance. Omish, Elespeth and Mohan further states that as an aspect of Vocational education, Business Education is the key that alleviates poverty, promotes peace, conserves the environment, improves quality of life for all and helps in the achievement of sustainable development.

Skill is the ability to do something well. It is usually gained through training or experience. Okoli (2013) defined skills as the economic tools with which entrepreneurs acquire and solve societal problems. Okoli further asserts that an



entrepreneur must possess business skills that are necessary to enable them start, finance their own business enterprise and market the product or service.

Business skill is inculcating in the young people the need to see business opportunities, ideas and act on them promptly in order to take advantage over others..According to Ihekwoabain Shaibu and Mbaegbu (2012), Business skill occurs when an individual develops a new venture or new approach to an old idea or a unique way of giving the market place a product or service by using resource in a unique way of giving the market place a product or service by using resourced in a new way under conditions of risks. In their views, Steinhoff and BurgesinShaibu and Mbaegbu (2012) opined that business involves risk financial material and human resources in a new concept or opportunity with an existing firm. It is also the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth (Hasty and Readon, 2007).The Dictionary of the English Language (2016) defines self-sustainable as been able to support or sustain oneself without outside aid.

A country is said to be in recessed when there is decline in economic activities.The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER, 2010) viewed Recession as a significant decline in the economic activity spread across the country, lasting more than a few months/, normally visible in real gross domestic product (GDP) growth, real personal income, employment (non-farm payrolls) industrial production, and wholesale-retail sales.

The acquisitions of Business skills for sustainability seem to be the only way out in a recessed economy.These business skills are in the cluster, innovative skills and marketing skills.Hennessey and Amabile (2010) defined innovation as the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization.Based on this view, entrepreneurs creativity is the starting point of innovation.Innovative skills include, introduction of new products, new method of production, opening new market, exploring new source of supply of raw materials and carrying out new types of organization (Oduma 2012).

Marketing skills are important and essential skills which determine the success or failureof a business.Okpan (2006) identified marketing skills requisite for entrepreneurship development to include: ability to capture and retain the attention of customers, ability to promote and sell the organization product, ability to analyze demand and supply situation, ability to acquire effective sales habit, ability to be self-reliant and tact, ability to acquire good sales techniques, ability to carry out effective marketing and information research and ability to be polite cheerful and glooming.

Similarly Adidu and Olannye(2006)categorized the functions of an entrepreneur to include managerial functions and operative functions. The managerial functions are: planning, organizing directing controlling and decision-making.These are in tune with Ile (2001) who noted that individual need these competencies in order to be successful in business. He opined that these competencies help to check and monitor performance against set goals and plan while harmonizing individuals and group efforts to achieve business goals.Koontz O'Donnell and Weihich (1988) identified the basic functions of management as planning, organizing, staffing, leading and controlling. It is against this situation that it becomes necessary to



conduct this study to identify the Business Education skills as tools for sustainability option in a recessed economy.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to assess business education skill as tool for self sustainable option in a recessed challenged economy. Specifically, the study sought to identify the:

1. Innovative Marketingskills as a tool for self sustainable in a recessed challenged economy.
2. Management skills as a tool for self sustainable in a recessed challenged economy.

Research Questions

The Following Research Questions Guided The Study:

1. What innovativemarketing skills are needed for self sustainable option in a recessed challenged economy?
2. What Managementskill are needed for self sustainable option in a recessed challenged economy?

Hypotheses

To further strengthen the above research questions, one null hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance was raised for the study:

- 1 There is no significant difference in the mean response ofmale and female business educators on business skills as a tool for self sustainable option in a recessed challenged economy.

Method

The study adopted descriptive survey research design.This research design was considered appropriate for the study to elicit information from business educators. The study was carried out in two Federal colleges of education. namely, Federal College of Education (Technical) Bichi, Kano State andFederal College of Education (Technical) Gombe, Gombe State.The population for the study comprised 74 business educators in the schools.The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Business Education Skills Needed Questionnaire (BESQ). The questionnaire was structured in a4-point Likert type scale of strongly Agree 4 points, Agree 3points, Disagree 2 points and strongly Disagree 1 point.

The instrument was face-validated by three experts in business education.The researcher adopted personal contact approach of data collection. One research assistants was hired and briefed to join the researcher in administering and retrieving copies of the questionnaire.Out of the 74 copies of the instrument administered, 60 copies were appropriately filled and retrieved.

The data collected in the study were analyzed using mean for answering the research questions while t-test statistics was employed for testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for testing the hypotheses was that if the calculatedt- value is less than the critical t-value the hypotheses should be



accepted. On the other hand if the calculate t-value is greater than the critical t-value the hypotheses should be rejected.

Result

Research Question 1

What innovative marketing skill is needed for self sustainable in a recessed challenged economy?

Table1: Mean ratings of the responses of male and female on innovative marketing skills for self sustainable in a recessed challenged economy.

S/N	Item Statement	Male \bar{X}	Female \bar{X}	Decision
1.	Ability to generate new business ideas Agreed	3.35	0.86	Agreed
2.	Ability to introduce new products Agreed	3.81	0.67	Agreed
3.	To communicate marketing ideas Agreed	3.47	0.98	Agreed
4.	Ability to promote product of the organization Agreed	3.93	0.38	Agreed
5.	Ability to adopt good human relations Agreed	2.84	0.99	Agreed
6.	Ability to open new market Agreed	3.78	0.89	Agreed
7.	Ability to relate with competitors Agreed	3.88	0.74	Agreed
8.	Ability to negotiate sales Agreed	3.59	0.71	Agreed
9.	Ability to gain access to technology on Innovation in business Agreed	3.08	0.87	Agreed
10.	Ability to add value to customer satisfaction Agreed	3.81	0.37	Agreed
11.	Ability to meet customers need Agreed	3.11	0.38	Agreed
12.	Train customers on the use of a Product Agreed	3.88	0.37	Agreed
13.	Ability to handle customers complain Agreed	3.66	0.92	Agreed
14.	Capture customers interest to buy Agreed their product	3.91	0.56	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.58	0.69	Agreed

The data in Table 1 reveal that all the fourteen items on innovative marketing skills were agreed by the respondents as tool for self sustainable option in a recessed challenged economy. The mean distribution of the male and female business educators ranges from 3.08 to 3.93 and 3.03 to 3.89 respectively. This implies that the lecturers



unanimously agreed with all the items listed as innovativemarketing skills for self sustainable.

Research Question 2

What Management skill is needed for self sustainable option in a recessed challenged economy?

Table2:Mean ratings of the responses of male and female on marketing skills for self sustainable in a recessed challenged economy.

S/N	Item Statement	Male		Decision	Female		Decision
		X	SD		X	SD	
1.	Undertake basic steps in starting a business	3.28	0.58	Agreed	3.12	0.17	Agreed
2.	Plan and effectively control business activities	3.23	0.54	Agreed	3.11	0.63	Agreed
3.	Implement plans for goal attainment	3.44	0.96	Agreed	3.47	0.95	Agreed
4.	Manage time and meet job schedule	3.27	0.64	Agreed	3.22	0.87	Agreed
5.	Direct the business activities	2.98	0.90	Agreed	2.91	0.91	Agreed
6.	Evaluate business activities	3.20	0.70	Agreed	3.02	0.77	Agreed
7.	Organize human resources	3.32	0.96	Agreed	2.54	0.86	Agreed
8.	Organize material resources	2.52	0.76	Agreed	2.50	0.82	Agreed
9.	Recognize the need of employee	3.00	0.67	Agreed	2.90	0.58	Agreed
10.	Monitor employee’s performance	3.29	0.61	Agreed	3.25	0.59	Agreed
11.	Recognize the need of employee	2.95	0.92	Agreed	2.90	0.90	Agreed
12.	Determine personnel salary	3.23	0.62	Agreed	3.24	0.70	Agreed
13.	Take appropriate decision when necessary ³	3.21	0.73	Agreed	3.20	0.73	Agreed
14.	Query employee’s misconduct	2.74	1.04	Agreed	2.69	0.81	Agreed
15.	Use oral and written communication	3.96	0.63	Agreed	3.90	0.81	Agreed
16.	Knowledge of personnel management	3.58	0.78	Agreed	3.25	0.69	Agreed
17.	Knowledge of inventory control	3.38	0.67	Agreed	3.36	0.54	Agreed
18.	Manage and effectively supervise subordinate	3.07	0.47	Agreed	2.90	0.84	Agreed
19.	Appraise employee performance	3.18	0.72	Agreed	2.90	0.84	Agreed
20.	Knowledge of factorsin overhead control	2.60	0.46	Agreed	2.65	0.42	Agreed
	Grand Means and SD	3.18	0.72	Agreed	2.3.11	0.77	Agreed

Information in Table 2 reveals the responses of the respondents onmanagement skills as tool for self sustainable option in a recessed challenged economy. All the items on management skill are considered needed bybusinesseducators. The cluster mean of 3.18 and 3.11 respectively also showed that they were in unanimous agreement in their responses.



Table 3:t- test Analysis of Male and Female Lecturers on Business Education tool as self-sustainable option in a recessed challenged economy.

Status of Respondents	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	42	3.38	0.72	58	0.35	1.96	Accepted
Female	18	3.11	0.77				

The findings of the t-test statistics on Table3 show that the t-calculated (t-cal) value of 0.35 is less than the t-crit value of 1.96 at $P \leq 0.05$ level of significance and at 58 degree of freedom (df). This indicated that, there is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female business educators on business skills as a tool for self sustainable option in a recessed challenged economy.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of the findings was presented based on the two research questions and the tested null hypotheses. Research Question 1 sought to find out What innovative marketing skill are needed as self sustainable option in a recessed challenged economy? The respondents agreed that the 14 identified innovative marketing skills are tools for self sustainable. Some of the identified innovative marketing skills include the following: Ability to generate new business ideas, meet customers need among others. Ability to open new market, Ability to create new wealth, Ability to gain access to technology on innovative in business, Ability to add value to customer satisfaction , ability to train customers on the use of a Product amongst others..

This finding is line with Ayonmike (2011) who asserted that innovative ability was one of the important business skills needed by technical and vocational education graduates to succeed in their business. Bianze (2005) found out that the skills that are needed by an individual to succeed on the marketing include: ability to calculate time of production, determine what customer needs, search for market, record financial transaction and promoting and selling the organizational products among others. In addition, Kotelr (1999) stated that activities in marketing involve getting the right goods and services to the right persons at the right place with right communication promotion and determining the extent of acceptance of the products in the markets. Result of the t-test statistic in Table 3 revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean response of male and female business educators on business skill as tools for self sustainable option in a recessed challenged economy with calculated t-value of 0.35 less than t-critical value of 1.96.

The findings of this study regarding Research Question two management skills needed for self sustainable option in a recessed challenged economy, shows that the respondents agreed that the twenty identified skills are needed for self sustainability. The identified skills include: undertake basic steps in starting a business , Plan and effectively control business activities , Implement plans for goal attainment , Manage time and meet job schedule, direct the business activities and Monitor employee’s performance among others. The findings of this study agreed with the findings



of Osuala (2000) who posited that management is the process of achieving an organization's goal through the coordinate performance of five specific functions; namely: planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling. Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert (2000) stressed that management is a process, hence, it entails systematic way of doing things. It emphasizes that all business managers regardless of their particular aptitude or skills engage in certain interested activities in order to achieve the desired goals of their business venture.

In the same vein, the result of the t-test analysis in Table 3 showed that there was no significant difference in the mean response of male and female business educators on business skills as a tool for self-sustainable option in a recessed challenged economy.

Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it could be concluded that innovative marketing and management skills are business education skills for self-sustainable in a recessed challenged economy. It is then imperative that Business Education students and members of society who intend to survive in this economy today must be acquainted with these competencies for self-reliant and job creation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Conferences, workshops and seminars should be organized by Educational bodies and it should focus on business skills needed for self-reliance and job creation. Prospective graduates and unemployed youths should be invited to participate in these activities for the acquisition of business skills required in setting up a business.
2. Business Education lecturers in colleges of Education should ensure that Innovation in marketing skills and management skills are thought often through demonstration and practical to ensure that students graduate with relevant skills and competencies set up a business and manage it effectively.
3. A normal and functioning curriculum must change as society changes. Curriculum content of Business Education should be reviewed to meet current needs and demand of its recipients and the society at large. It should be reviewed to incorporate more practical than theories.
4. Government should encourage training and retraining of business education to acquire current knowledge and competencies needed since they cannot give what they do not have.
5. Finally, Business education is a capital intensive programme. Adequate provision should be made to ensure that equipment and machines needed in training its recipients are available and adequate.



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