



## COMPETENCIES USEFUL TO BUSINESS EDUCATORS FOR EFFECTIVENESS IN ICT RELATED BUSINESSES IN OLAMABORO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KOGI STATE

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### **Abstract**

*This study focused on competencies useful to business educators for effectiveness in ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State. There was one research question in carrying out the study. The population for the study comprised 134 business educators drawn from conventional secondary schools and UBE Junior Secondary Schools where business educators teach business subjects. The researcher used a structured questionnaire to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire contained 21 items carefully designed to provide answers to the research question. A 4-point rating scale was used to score the responses of the respondents with 2.50 set as the boundary limit. The data collected was analyzed with the use of mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) statistical tool. All the items that had mean ratings of 2.50 and above were considered useful while those with mean ratings of below 2.50 were considered not useful to business educators for effectiveness in ICT related businesses in the study area. The result was shown in a single table of findings. Results further indicate that business educators' knowledge of business plan designs, business SWOT Assessment, ability to identify close competitors, ability to provide customers' needs among others were accepted as competences useful to business educators for effectiveness in ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State. The researcher recommended that business educators wishing to be effective in ICT related businesses should take their good time to study their business environment as well as the psychology of the customers.*

**Keywords:** *Businesses, Competences, Effectiveness, Business Educators, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), SWOT.*

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### **Background to the Study**

Competencies constitute one of the major factors considered by entrepreneurs in recent times in their quest for effectiveness in most businesses. This is because



modern enterprises both locally and internationally these days face technological innovations which have practically affected every aspect of office work as well as business transactions. The effects of these office technological innovations are globally felt in science, commerce, industry, education, politics, and in all facets of livelihood, particularly in ICT related businesses (Anigbogu, 2011). As a result, skill requirements in many occupations including business are changing. This has in recent times given birth to what has been variously described as 'virtual office', 'paperless office', 'electronic office', 'automated office' or simply office of the future (Doswell, 2018). It is a known fact that most business transactions are rapidly changing as a result of office automation. This has brought about new methods in carrying out functions performed by entrepreneurs. At the centre of these new trends are the soft-skill business competencies in ICT related businesses. These new trends in technological innovations have placed greater responsibilities on business educators, especially on subject instructions in the area of office technology and Information Communication Technology (ICT). Etonyeaku (2019) observed that business educators in the past dealt with papers, worked with manual machines, relied on postal services for external communications and kept office records in the cabinets. The advent of office technological advancements requires new skills, new attitudes and the development of new professional and intellectual concepts among entrepreneurs and their employees (Adekambi, 2017).

Furthermore, this scenario has in recent times challenged the soft skill development of office employees especially in today's modern offices. It has, in fact, given business educators in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State a new task in the acquisition of competitive soft skills in order to be self-employed or remain relevant in their jobs. Office automation has permanently affected the performances of the business educators especially in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State. With the continued development of new telecommunication equipment, business educators in Kogi State must now be prepared to learn new and modern technologically oriented office procedures. The business educators, with 'technophobia' or the fear of computers, may likely not be able to withstand the transaction competitions that are prevalent in ICT related business ventures. Since the primary business of the modern office is to collate, record, sort, analyze, store and distribute information, electronic transactions therefore integrate all available software procedures as well as human resources such that transactions are not only



done accurately, speedily and comprehensively but also made available as, when, where and in the manner or format required (Doswell, 2018). Similarly, Nwogwugwu (2018) observed that as new businesses and job opportunities are generated every day, there is the need for business educators to be set for the new challenges by acquiring new soft skills for the operation of these new technologies. Nwogwugwu (2018) further maintained that business educators who are not well equipped to face the new challenges occasioned by the new technological advancements and tomorrow's ICT business environment as well as transactions, are sure to be embarrassed as their electronic skill deficiencies will render them irrelevant in their discharge of routine office functions in modern offices. Thus, business educators need to be digitally compliant in order to cope with the new challenges (Harvey, 2019). Electronic skills are described by Katz (2019) as specific abilities in the use of electronic office gadgets that are required for effective office operations and transactions especially in the business world. To be effective in the discharge of office routine functions, employees, especially in the ICT related businesses need to be proficient in the use of digital electronic office gadgets. Balogun (2010) described skill as knowledge; competency and behaviour that enable entrepreneurs meet established performance criteria

Similarly, Nwosu (2010) observed that office automation will enable secretaries, bank employees and other workers to perform their jobs more easily and with greater efficiency. Nwosu (2010) further maintained that these automated systems will also enable business educators to attain levels of procedures and operations found in modern business operations. Another similar view was shared by David-Newton (2010) when he explained that the nature of modern office automation permits access to financial, research, personnel, technology, economic and competitive data through the use of word processing equipment, on-line computer terminals and networking services. Others include electronic mail, telecommunicating and teleconferencing.

Anigbogu (2011) stressed that the major challenge in the effective operations of the automated office technology vis-à-vis electronic transaction skills are the psychological and social factors involved in training employees to understand, accept and adapt to new organizational and human relationships and assimilate new procedures. Anigbogu (2011) further explained that with insufficient socio-



technological training, business educators often resist change in the work environment. Even where they are found, they are not proficiently trained and are not versatile in the use of available Office Technology gadgets (Anigbogu, 2011). It appears that many Business Educators lack the requisite skills/knowledge to use new technological equipment In ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State. Hence Kadiri (2009) in his investigation on the extent of utilization of computer office facilities reported that some business educators in Kogi State lack requisite office skills needed for smooth operations in the discharge of their functions in modern offices.

Kotler and Keller (2019) maintained that there is a serious competition in ICT related business activities. Specifically, ICT related businesses in Kogi State function in a competitive environment. In this experience, business educators continue to devise efficient means of improved performance on daily basis. Part of the survival strategies is to be in tune with the use of modern office technology in the discharge of their routine office functions.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The present day survival challenges require business educators in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State to possess competitive competencies in order to be effective in ICT related businesses and be self-employed. Today, all kinds of businesses are further challenged by the global economic melt-down. This has forced many businesses to fold leaving their proprietors with no option of survival. This is a pertinent situation that has forced business educators to question further and to inquire into the causes of these misfortunes. The obvious answer has been that many proprietors of most collapsed business organizations do not possess the needed business skills to operate such businesses. With the hopeless practices of salary pruning and salary mutilation by employers of labour, business educators are further challenged to seek for self-employment options in order to escape the dangers of these mundane activities of employers of labour. It is on the premise of this search and the eagerness to be self-providing through the establishment of ICT related businesses that this study seeks to ask: what are the competences useful to business educators for effectiveness in ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State?



### **Research Question**

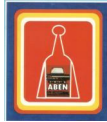
What are the competencies useful to business educators for effectiveness in ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State

### **Methods**

Descriptive Survey research design was used in this study. The descriptive survey is a type of research design in which a group of people or items are studied. It involves a one-time observation of independent and non-manipulative variables (Asika, 2017). In this case, data are usually collected, organized and analyzed and then described as they exist in their natural setting without interfering with them (Uzoagulu, 2018). The population of this study consisted of 134 business educators. This number is spread across 67 secondary schools in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State (Source: KGSEB, 2014). The entire population was as well used as the sample for the study, since this number is manageable. This is in line with the views of Nwana (2015) where he noted that it is better to study the entire population when they are small and the time requirement for the execution of the exercise is enough. In this study, therefore, the entire population was studied. Olaitan and Nwoke (2018) suggested that in order to obtain a most reliable result of investigation, the entire population should be studied.

The data for the study was generated through the use of a structured questionnaire on business competences useful to business educators for effectiveness in ICT related businesses. The questionnaire contained 19 (nineteen) items carefully designed to elicit answer to the research question in the study. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents in the 67 schools covered by the study by the researcher with the help of a Research Assistant. Thus, all the 134 (one hundred and thirty four) copies of the questionnaire were retrieved.

Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) was used as the statistical tool for analyzing the data obtained from the respondents. In doing this, a 4-point rating scale was developed for scoring the responses provided by the respondents as follows: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4 points; Agreed (A) = 3 points; Disagreed (D) = 2 points; Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1 point. A boundary limit of 2.50 was used for the research questions. Any item of the instrument with a mean rating of 2.50 and above was considered useful and any item with a mean rating below 2.50 was considered not useful to the business educators for effectiveness in ICT related businesses in Kogi State.



## Results

The findings of this study are as presented in the table below. The findings of the research are presented and the data are analyzed in line with the research question that guided the study.

### Research Question

What are the competences useful to business educators for effectiveness in ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State?

**Table 1:** Mean Ratings of Respondents on Competences Useful to Business Educators for Effectiveness in ICT Related Businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State (N=134)

S/N	Business skills	SA	A	D	SD	X	Remarks
1.	Good knowledge of business plan designs	55	50	15	14	3.1	Useful
2.	Possession of good knowledge of business SWOT assessment	60	28	26	20	3.0	Useful
3.	Ability to identify close competitors	51	38	29	16	2.9	Useful
4.	Ability to provide customers' needs	87	45	1	1	3.6	Useful
5.	Ability to reach out to prospective customers	88	19	20	7	3.4	Useful
6.	Ability to device strategies to outcompete rivals	52	35	19	28	2.8	Useful
7.	Ability to penetrate the market	60	35	29	10	3.1	Useful
8.	Ability to dominate the market	80	46	8	0	3.5	Useful
9.	Ability to effectively use e-skills	54	40	30	10	3.0	Useful
10.	Ability to communicate effectively	48	46	38	2	3.0	Useful
11.	Ability to establish business linkages	41	35	33	25	2.7	Useful
12.	Ability to maintain business relationship	33	36	39	26	2.6	Useful
13.	Ability to provide quality customer services	40	39	38	17	2.8	Useful
14.	Ability to redeem business promises	56	41	29	8	3.1	Useful
15.	Ability to handle controlled business credit transactions	40	37	43	14	2.8	Useful
16.	Ability to respond to prompt demands of customers	60	41	25	8	3.1	Useful
17.	Ability to satisfy customers' desires without stress	51	48	30	5	3.1	Useful
18.	Ability to demonstrate high level of financial literacy	50	40	29	15	2.9	Useful
19.	Ability to keep accurate records of business transactions	44	55	28	7	3.0	Useful
20.	Ability to demonstrate good knowledge of the business background	47	41	21	25	2.8	Useful
21.	Ability to understand the customers' behaviours	66	52	13	3	3.4	Useful



Table 1 above shows that 21 items contained in the table were all indicated as useful to business educators for the effectiveness in ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State. Thus, each of the 21 items had mean score ratings of 2.5 and above used in this study as the minimum benchmark for the acceptance of each of the item. The implication therefore, is that the entire 21 item competences are useful to business educators for effectiveness in ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government of Kogi State. The business competences include: good knowledge of business plan designs; demonstration of good knowledge of business SWOT assessment (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, etc); ability to identify close competitors; ability to provide customers' needs; ability to reach out to prospective customers; ability to device strategies to outcompete rivals; ability to penetrate the market; ability to dominate the market; ability to demonstrate the use of e-skills; ability to establish business linkages; ability to maintain business relationship; ability to provide quality customer services; ability to redeem business promises; ability to demonstrate controlled business credit transactions; ability to respond to prompt demands of customers; ability to satisfy customers' desires without stress; ability to demonstrate high level of financial literacy; ability to keep accurate records of business transactions; ability to demonstrate good knowledge of the business background; and ability to understand the customers. Each of these items yielded a mean score above the benchmark score of 2.5. Thus, the basis of their acceptance as the useful business competences by Business Educators effectiveness in ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The discussion of findings is made based on the research question that guided this study. Thus, result of data analyzed in table 1 indicated that 21 (twenty-one) itemized competences were all accepted. The implication therefore, is that the 134 business educators whose responses were elicited for analysis in the study 'Agreed' that the 21 (twenty-one) items business competences were all useful to business educators for establishing ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State.

This result indicated that business educators need good knowledge of business plan designs and the possession of good knowledge of Business SWOT Assessment. Good knowledge of business plan design involves a demonstration of sound



knowledge of what it takes to start-up a business venture especially in the ICT related field. Good knowledge of business plan involves knowledge of business start-up requirements, business step by step procedures needed to establish a new business in a given environment. In this regard Hisk (2015) had earlier noted that sound knowledge of business plan design is a pre-requisite for new entrepreneurs to successfully establish their new businesses. The business plan design relating to capital out lay, risks and operational requirements. Again, respondents' responses equally indicated that the possession of good knowledge of Business SWOT assessment is needed by business educators for establishment of ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State. This skill had a mean rating of 3.0. This high score indicates that the possession of good knowledge of Business SWOT Assessment is actually needed. The Business SWOT Assessment connotes that the business educator should be able to spot out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to his new business. Again, respondents' responses indicated that ability to identify close competitors; provide customers' needs; reach out to prospective customers and the ability to device strategies to outcompete rivals are essential business skills needed by business educators for establishing ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State. Each of these business skills rated mean scores of 2.9, 3.6, 3.4 and 2.8 respectively. Business skill requirements as indicated above by respondents are vital for the establishment of ICT related businesses. Thus, Olaitan (2018) stressed that the possession of fundamental business skills like ability to understand customers' behaviours, provide competitive customer services as well as initiating strategies to outcompete competitors are all very essential in running a private business.

Furthermore, subjects of this study indicated with high mean ratings that ability to penetrate the market, dominate the market, ability to effectively use e-skills to communicate effectively, establish linkages and maintain business relations were all accepted and reported as 'useful'competences for effectiveness in ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government of Kogi State.

Again, based on the responses of the respondents, the ability to provide quality customer services, redeem business promises, handle controlled business credits, respond promptly to demands of customers as well as the ability to satisfy customers' desires without stress were all accepted and indicated as useful competences for



effectiveness in ICT related businesses by business educators in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State. Interestingly, these skill items rated mean scores of 2.8, 3.1, 2.8, 3.1 and 3.1 respectively.

These high ratings underscore the essential nature of these competences as pre-requisite for effectiveness in ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State.

Finally, the subjects of the study Agreed that the ability to demonstrate high level of financial literacy, keep accurate records of business transactions, demonstrate good knowledge of the business background as well as the ability to understand the customer' behaviours and purchasing powers were all indicated as useful competences for effectiveness in ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State. These items earned mean ratings of 2.9, 3.0, 2.8 and 3.4 respectively. These ratings are enough and above the 2.5 minimum score for acceptance of each item this study. Thus, the basis of their acceptance as pre-requisite competences for effectiveness in ICT related businesses. This finding is in agreement with the opinions of Bala (2019) where he emphasized that entrepreneurs' high level of financial literacy, business records management, knowledge of business activities and the understanding of customers' behaviours and purchasing powers are very essential in the operation of small scale businesses

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study revealed that all the 21 competences are useful to business educators for effectiveness in ICT related businesses in Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State.

### **Recommendations**

The researcher recommended as follows:

1. That emphasis should be placed on those competences that are useful by business educators for effectiveness in ICT related businesses in the training of business educators.
2. Finally, on-the-job training programmes should be designed for business educators to acquire the needed competences.



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