



## PROMOTING SELF-RELIANCE THROUGH THE ENHANCEMENT OF CREATIVITY IN BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN OYO STATE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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### **Abstract**

*Creativity has become one of the most sought-after skills from graduates across business and industry to attain self-reliance for sustainable development. The study adopted a descriptive design. Four research questions guided the study. The population comprised 1074 business education lecturers and students in tertiary institutions in Oyo State, south west Nigeria, out of which 97 lecturers and 320 business education students were randomly selected as sample. Questionnaire was used for data collection, while descriptive statistics (mean) and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The instrument was validated by three experts in business education and a reliability coefficient 0.75 was obtained which makes the instrument adjudged reliable. Results showed the following benefits of developing creativity as: enhancement of skill acquisition, promotion of entrepreneurship and self-reliant among others. Based on the findings, the study concluded that there is considerable need to enhance creativity in business education students for them to succeed in vocation and be self-reliant. The study recommended among others that business education lecturers should adopt student centred teaching strategies and make deliberate efforts to foster creativity among students to enable them become self-reliant upon graduation considering the high level of unemployment in Oyo State and the nation as a whole.*

**Keyword:** *Business Education, Creativity, Sustainable Development, Self-reliance, Tertiary Institutions, Vocations.*

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### **Introduction**

Creativity has become one of the most sought after skills from graduates across business and industry. The increasing level of unemployment in Nigeria and Oyo



State in particular necessitates that education for self-reliance should be the main thrust of the educational system. As a broad discipline, whose central theme is the well being of individuals, helping them attain a useful and satisfying life and be self-reliant, business education obviously needs to rise to the challenge of producing “job creators” instead of “job” seekers” (Lemchi, Ezema and Umana 2016). This need for business education to produce self-reliant individuals is even more imperative today, considering the high level of unemployment particularly among young men and women across the state. Obidile (2016), Okaro (2018), Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anekwe (2018) noted that the business education profession is an important part of the future of humankind to create certain skills needed for personal and national development. They stressed further that since sustainable development is the dream of any person, skills needed include among others: creativity and problem solving skills.

Creativity has been described as the generation of ideas and appropriate solutions to open-ended problems in any domain of human activity (Sogol and Dana, 2018). Sam (2014) defined creativity as the ability to solve problems, fashion products, define new questions in a domain, or in a way that is the usually considered noble, but ultimately becomes accepted in a particular cultural setting. Nwaigburu and Eneogwe (2013) opined that creativity includes ability to generate new ideals flexible as opposed to rigidity, associate and link facts, and brainstorm, analyze and incubate solutions. Usman (2016) repeating arguments posed throughout the 20th century argued that we are now in a new age of curiosity and competitive innovations where creativity is becoming increasingly important. Lately, creativity appears to be receiving a lot of attention, particularly, as it is seen as a critical success factor for states, organizations and individuals. As a result of the perceived great importance of creativity in the lives of individuals, calls have been made for the establishment of a creativity university to focus on the teaching and nurturing of the art and skills of creativity (Lemchi, Ezema and Ileoje, 2016). Researchers such as Okoro (2013), Obidile (2016), Okaro (2018), Nwagburu and Eneogwe (2013) argued that creativity is not an innate quality of only a few selected individuals. It is present in every one. It can be learned, practised and developed by the use of proven techniques for enhancing and stimulating creativity abilities, because it is a factor of nurture as well as nature, creativity can be developed, sharpened, and amplified.

Lemchi, Ezema and Ileoje (2016) remarked that creativity is vital to sustainable development adding that it involves developing problem solving skills, evolving new technologies and new ways of solving problems. Moreover, technology is



advancing our society at an unprecedented rate and creative problem solving skills are needed to cope with the challenges as they arise and thus ensure sustainable development. Of special importance is the role that educational system can play in promoting creativity. Presently, the business education delivery system in Oyo State tertiary institutions is yearning for creativity capable of enhancing self reliance for sustainable development. In spite of the fact that the Business Education as a profession is skill-loaded and has the capacity to equip individuals with saleable skills for self-reliance, it is regrettable lack of creativity hinders acquisition of these skills. Although higher institutions in Oyo State currently teaches entrepreneurship education to the students as part of business education curriculum, lack of creativity hinders the development of ideals and initiatives necessary for entrepreneurship development. Many development scholars have acknowledged that creativity is an essential aspect of entrepreneurship arguing that it is the starting point for the creation and main factor for achieving success in entrepreneurship (Kwabela, 2011). It is one of the major qualities of an entrepreneur. Usman (2016) equally observed that creativity seems to be the fundamental premise and the genesis of entrepreneurial activity. Creativity development is thus vital for success in entrepreneurship.

The need to engender the development of creativity among business education students as part of sustainable development of mankind cannot be over emphasized. In addition to enhancing the development of creative skills, the students should be encouraged to channel the skills towards productive activities. This will positively impact on the physical, mental, psychological, social and moral life of these young people. To enhance creativity according to Babalola (2016) three components such as: (a) expertise (involving technical, procedural and intellectual knowledge), (b) creativity thinking skill (flexible approach to problems), and (c) motivation (most especially intrinsic motivation) are notably important or critical. Business education traditionally equips learners with expertise (technical, procedural and intellectual knowledge) necessary for self-reliance. However, promoting intrinsic motivation and flexible approach to problem solving are two areas where business educators need to intensify efforts in order to enhance creativity in the students. Individuals are more creatively inclined when they see a task as intrinsically motivating. To promote creative thinking, business educators should strive to identify what motivates their



students and structure teaching and learning to suit that purpose. Rabi (2017) added that the main objective of creative thinking is to think beyond existing boundaries or box, to awaken curiosity, to break away from rational, conventional notions, ideals and formalized procedures, to rely on the imagination, the divergent, and to consider multiple solution and alternatives. Teaching students to attain this therefore becomes an herculean task.

Teaching students to endeavour to solve problems that do not have well defined answers is another way of enhancing creativity. This can be accomplished by allowing students to explore problems and re-define them, possibly drawing on knowledge that at first may seem unrelated to the problem in order to solve it. Thus, necessarily, sharp distinction must be drawn between convergent and divergent thinking (Shuaibu and Mbaegbu, 2012) Also, Kurato (2017) asserted that convergent thinking aims at a single, correct solution to a problem, divergent thinking on the other hand involves creative generation of multiple answers to a set of problems. In spite of the important role of the teacher in enhancing creativity in students, it has been observed that many essential attributes of creativity are most often discouraged in the typical school classroom. Furthermore, Sada and Adesina (2015) lent support to the above fact stating that perhaps the greatest deterrent to creativity is the conventional college teacher and of course poor teaching strategies. Usman (2016) noted that to teach creatively, teachers should use a variety of instructional materials and techniques, engage in series of research in order to be adequately equipped to deliver their lessons creatively, and provide learners with opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. Usman added that teachers should employ brain-storming and creative problem solving techniques, teaching the students how to generate unusual ideas, encouraging acquisition of domain-specific knowledge. Obidile (2016), Rabi (2017), Sogol and Dana (2018) specifically mentioned guided discovery, peer-tutoring and programmed instruction teaching strategies as effective in stimulate students' independence and critical thinking ability. They opined further that these student centred strategies are capable of enhancing creativity skills in students. Establishing a class environment that accepts and reinforces new ideas is another great way of encouraging creativity (Kwabela, 2011). The researchers in this study believe that the absence of creativity among students and graduates is an impediment to self-reliance and sustainable development, which if not stemmed would continue to increase the incidence of unemployment and poverty in the state and the nation as a whole.



### **Statement of the Problem**

Creativity is important for family sustainability and survival. Despite the abundant opportunities in business education in the field of marketing, office, salesmanship, accounting, information communication technology and finance, an appreciable number of business educators particularly graduates are still living in abject poverty hence unable to contribute meaningful to sustainable development of the nation. For individuals and families to overcome the numerous challenges that emanate from poor living conditions, creativity is absolutely necessary. It is needed to think out solutions to the problems and implement such decisions successfully (Nwagbguru and Eneogwe 2018). The major reason why students industrial work experience scheme and entrepreneurship training Was introduced into Business Education curriculum is to promote self-reliance through enhancement of creativity for sustainable development but these objectives are not been achieved today in the state as evident in a lot of business education graduates still looking for white collar job or doing menial jobs despite numerous opportunities available in business education. In addition to helping with problem solving, creativity can assist business education students identify problems even where others have failed to do so.

It is therefore critical that this study is undertaken to stem poverty emanating from Unemployment and promote students creativity skills in Business Education students in Oyo State tertiary institutions in order to enhance self-reliance for sustainable development.

### **Research Questions**

The follow research questions guided the study:

1. What are the benefits of developing creativity in Business Education student?
2. What are the activities that can stimulate creativity in Business Education student?
3. What are the strategies for enhancing/promoting creativity in Business Education student?
4. What are the obstacles to the enhanced of creating in Business Education student?

### **Methods**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Survey researches typically employ interview and questionnaires to determine the opinions, perceptions, and attitudes of people about issues under study. This study adopted this design since it



sought the opinions of Business Education lecturers and students on strategies for enhancing creativity in the students. This study was carried out in six Oyo State tertiary institutions that offer business education. The population for the study comprised all the business Education lecturers and students in Oyo state tertiary institutions in the area of study offering Bachelors degree, HND, OND and NCE in Business Education. Records showed that there were a total of 97 lecturers and 3,200 students in these institutions as at the time of the study, out of which all the business education lecturers were used and 310 Business education students were randomly chosen using simple random technique.

A structured questionnaire designed by the researchers was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into sections according to the four specific purposes and research questions. Responses to items in the questionnaire were based on a four-point Likert-type rating scale, ranging from strongly agree (SA) (4points), to agree (A) (3points), Disagree (D) (2 points) and strongly disagree (SD) (1 point).

The instrument was face and content validated by three experts from Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded overall reliability coefficient of 0.75 which made the instrument adjudged reliable.

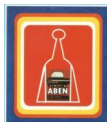
The copies of questionnaire were administered by the researchers by direct contact method and all the copies of the questionnaire were retrieved without losing any. Thus, there was 100% return of the instrument and all were duly used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. A mean of 2.50 was used as the benchmark for decision making for each item. Thus any item with a mean of 2.50 and above was considered as accepted by the respondents, while any item with a mean below 2.50 was considered as unaccepted by the respondents.

## **Results**

The mean ratings of the respondents (both the Business Education lecturers and students) on each of the items in the questionnaires were computed. The results are presented in the table according to the four research questions that guided the study.

### **Research Question 1**

What are the benefits of developing creativity in Business Education students?



**Table 1:** Respondents mean ratings on the benefits of developing creativity in the business education students.

S/N	Benefits of Developing Creativity in Business Education Students	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	It will significantly enhance skill acquisition	3.75	0.489	Accepted
2	It will encourage divergent thinking in the students	3.74	0.543	Accepted
3	It will assist students to survive with technological advancement	3.48	0.609	Accepted
4	It will enhance initiatives necessary for entrepreneurship	3.58	0.595	Accepted
5	It will aid the students grow their personality traits	3.51	0.609	Accepted
6	It will help critical thinking in the students	3.35	0.699	Accepted
7	It will enormously reduce unemployment	3.58	0.565	Accepted
8	It will assist in poverty reduction	3.55	0.633	Accepted
9	It is pivotal for self-reliance	3.50	0.652	Accepted
10	It will foster sustainable development	3.29	0.800	Accepted

$\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation (Table 1)

Table 1 show that all the respondents accepted that all the 10 benefits of developing creativity in the business education students are critical and important. Also, from the table all is all the items had mean ratings above 2.50 which is the benchmark for decision making (accepting or rejecting an items). Specifically, items number 1 and 2 seemed to appeal more to the respondents with high mean ratings of 3.75 and 3.74 respectively.

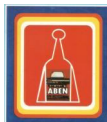
### Research Question 2

What are the activities that can stimulate creativity in Business Education students?

**Table 2:** Respondents mean ratings of activities that stimulate creativity in Business Education Students

S/N	Activities that can stimulate creativity	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Inducement and ingenious activities	3.49	0.572	Accepted
2	Innovations and entrepreneurial activities	3.99	0.474	Accepted
3	Activities that require problem solving initiative.	3.53	0.608	Accepted
4	Brainstorming activities	3.72	0.483	Accepted
5	Organizing collaborative groups.	3.74	0.826	Accepted
6	Study books that can boost creativity	3.56	0.569	Accepted
7	Generating idea and transforming them into something of value	3.42	0.844	Accepted
8	Teaching with diversity of instructional resources.	3.57	0.681	Accepted
9	Exercises that involve discovery and exploration strategies	3.64	0.538	Accepted

$\bar{X}$  = Grand mean, SD = Standard Deviation (Table 2.)



The result of research question 2 in the table 2 show that the respondents accepted all the nine items outlined in the study as activities that can stimulate creativity in business education students. The implication of this is that all the items are possible stimulants of creativity in individuals. Significantly, items 2 (creative and entrepreneurial activities) recorded the highest mean rating of 3.99, implying that creativity or innovation and entrepreneurship are closely connected.

### Research Question 3

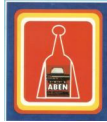
What are the strategies for promoting creativity in Business Education Students?

**Table 3:** Respondents means ratings on strategies for promoting creativity in business education students.

S/N	Strategies for Enhancing Creativity in Business Education Students	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	stimulation of divergent thinking in students	3.51	0.802	Accepted
2	Engaging in practical classes and assignment	3.57	0.814	Accepted
3	Urging to develop positive self-esteem.	3.56	0.529	Accepted
4	Intensifying education in the class	3.51	0.700	Accepted
5	Encouragement of sizeable classes to give opportunity to interact in smaller group	3.41	0.817	Accepted
6	Increasing the ICT capabilities of the business education students and their lecturers	3.29	0.938	Accepted
7	Promoting intrinsic motivation and flexible approach to problem solving	3.31	0.729	Accepted
8	Business education students should regularly be exposed to excursions and exhibitions	3.28	0.825	Accepted
9	Assessment should be based not only on written tests and evaluation but also on exhibition of creative abilities.	3.36	0.740	Accepted
10	Students' ideas should be respected and encouraged	3.32	0.745	Accepted
11	Students centred methods of teaching and learning should be adopted.	3.34	0.852	Accepted
12	Parental encouragement is critical	3.44	0.792	Accepted
13	Discouragement of gender stereotyping	3.30	0.768	Accepted

$\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation (Table 3.)

Table 3 above indicates that all the thirteen 13 strategies suggested in the study are appropriate measures for promoting creativity in Business Education Students. This is clearly shown as all the 13 items recorded mean rating above 2.50 which is the benchmark for accepting or rejecting items.



#### Research Question 4

What are the obstacles to the enhancement of creativity in Business Education?

**Table 4:** Respondents mean ratings of obstacles to enhancement of creativity in Business Education

S/N	Obstacles to Enhancement of Creativity in Business Education Students	X	SD	Decision
1.	Absent of self-confidence by students	3.29	0.80	Accepted
2.	Death interest on the part of the students	3.32	0.72	Accepted
3.	Negative attitude or thinking	3.27	0.78	Accepted
4.	Lacks of motivation by teachers	3.26	0.81	Accepted
5.	Inadequacy of conducive learning environment	3.43	0.71	Accepted
6.	Use of traditional strategy of teaching that inculcates rote learning.	3.79	0.61	Accepted
7.	Self-role stereotype	3.49	0.73	Accepted
8.	Fear of criticism	3.37	0.73	Accepted
9.	Eagerness for quick production of results	3.36	0.76	Accepted
10.	Ethic schedule that doesn't provide time for retention	3.39	0.77	Accepted

$\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation (Table 4.)

The result in table 4 indicated that the respondents agreed with all the 10 perceived obstacles to enhancement of creativity in Business Education students. Specifically, Item 6 (use of traditional method of teaching that inculcates rote learning) was considered the greatest obstacle to creativity as it recorded the highest mean rating of 3.79

#### Discussion

The findings of this clearly suggested the importance attached to the development of creativity in Business Education students. Answers of respondents to the 10 benefits of developing creativity outlined in the study were accepted by the respondents, with majority of the items recording above 2.50 which is adjudged to be high mean responses. This is a clear indication that this study is timely and findings will greatly assists in preparing business education well timed for self-reliance. Hence, creativity is capable of significantly reducing the level of unemployment particularly among the young people and women. Ndabuisi, Okalo and Amekwe (2018) rightly stated that promotion of creativity and entrepreneurship can help generate job creation. They further agreed to the findings of this study that creativity is capable of stimulating youth empowerment, entrepreneurship development and self reliance to attain sustainable development. Specifically, two of the outlined benefits that



recorded the highest mean ratings are: significantly enhance skill acquisition and encouragement of divergent thinking in students. Divergent thinking is often used by various authors as synonym for creativity (Nwaigwu and Eneogwu, 2013). Divergent thinking involves creativity in generation of multiple answers to set of problems.

Kwabela (2011), Babalola (2016) and Okoro (2018) equally agreed that there is strong link between creativity and divergent thinking and submitted that creativity is pivotal to creativity and self reliance. Responses to activities that can stimulate creativity in business education students shows that respondents rated innovation and entrepreneurial activities highest ( mean of 3.99). This is in line with the findings of Kwabena, ( 2011), Babalola, (2016) and Kurato, (2013) that there is a close relationship between creativity and innovation. Creativity is one of the important qualities of an entrepreneur yearning for sustenance and development. It is regarded as a critical success factor for entrepreneurial activities. Kurato (2013) stressed further that the fundamental premise and genesis of entrepreneurship is creativity. Brainstorming activities were also rated high by the respondents in this study. This agrees with the views of Ruddy (2019) who observed that brainstorming is one of the best known creativity supporting activities and can be used for generating a large number of ideas or solutions. It is one of the most popular techniques used to induce creativity and can enhance an individual's capacity for divergent thinking (Okoro, 2018). Organising collaborative group activities (with mean of 3.74) were rated important in this study, confirming the assertion by Sahlberg (2019) that problem solving in carefully organized group situation is not only effective, but also an economical use of time. Furthermore, reading books that can boost creativity which was accepted as one of the important activities in line with the view of scholars such as Kelly (2019), Rudy (2019), Andani (2019) and Okoro (2018) who argued that innovation as a factor of nature is critical to creativity and that creativity can be learned, developed, sharpened and amplified.

Results of strategies for promoting creativity in business education in Table 3 indicates that encouraging students to develop positive self-esteem, engaging student's adequately in practical classes and assignments, encouraging divergent and flexible thinking, as well as promoting intrinsic motivation with a mean ratings of 3.56, 3.57 and 3.51 respectively were the most highly rated strategies for enhancing creativity in business education students. Supporting these findings, Sahlberg (2019), Lemchi, Ezema and Ileoje (2016) submitted that among the important



strategies for enhancing creativity are: (a) expertise (technical, procedural and intellectual knowledge), (b) flexible approach to problem solving and (c) motivation, especially intrinsic motivation. Promoting intrinsic motivation is clearly an important area where business educators can engender creativity in students because individuals are more creative when they see a task as intrinsically motivating and valued for its own sake. This was the view of Lemchi, Ezema and Ileoje (2016) that teaching strategies are capable of stimulating focus and team spirit.

From this study, other creativity enhancement strategies identified are intensification of entrepreneurship education, splitting of large classes into smaller groups, allow students freedom to express themselves better and regular exposure of students to excursions, field trip and exhibitions. Also, parental encouragement, increasing ICT capabilities of lecturers and students and adoption of student centred strategies for teaching business education were equally established as effective strategies for promoting creativity. This is in line with the assertion of Choleman (2017) that home is widely acknowledged as the first learning environment of every individual and parents, especially mothers are the first teachers of children and as such have very important role to play in nurturing creativity. Parents should plan creative activities and provide opportunities for their children to develop creative mind right from their tender years, through their school age and adolescence for sustainability. Amadi, Abdumalik and Khoshbak (2019) supporting the result of this study remarked that several computer-based supporting techniques are available hence increasing the ICT capabilities of business education lecturers and students will assist them benefit from these resources for enhancing their creativity especially in marketing networking than use of the traditional teaching strategies. Andani, (2019) in agreement with this study further stated that for business education students to develop creative skills, learner or student-centred strategies which incidentally are in line with global best practices should be adopted to foster creativity. Lemchi, Ezema and Ileoje (2016) added that to teach creatively, teachers should use a variety of instructional strategies and materials, engage in series of research to equip them properly for creative delivery, and provide learners opportunities to learn beyond the classroom eliminating in promoting independence and freedom.

The results in Table 4 indicated that the greatest obstacle to enhancement of creativity in Business Education as perceived by the respondents is the use of teaching method (traditional) that stifles creativity with a mean rating of 3.79. Kwabela (2011) remarked that the greatest deterrent to creativity is the conventional college teacher as well as poor methods of teaching. This finding also buttresses the



observation by Paulus, Dzindibet, and Kohn (2017) that many essential attributes of creativity are discouraged in the typical school classrooms. To enhance student creativity business education teachers employ a variety of teaching strategies, especially student centred strategies that will encourage divergent thinking in students. Lack of conducive learning environment is among the obstacles rated high by the respondents. This is to be expected because Uwem (2016) pointed out that creativity is encouraged by the establishment of a class environment that accepts new ideals and making the individuals meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own goals. Closely related to this obstacle is the insistence on traditional ways of doing things while also building routines to achieve profitable outcomes (Habeeb 2014 & Igbokwe 2015). Every student deserves a learning environment that poses no threat to their health and safety. Business education lectures should thus strive to ensure that there is conducive learning environment that encourage generation of new ideals and solutions to problems as well as giving students freedom to think outside the box or beyond the existing routine ways of doing things.

### **Conclusions**

Creativity is a valuable skill and importance attached it in learners is quite high. However, an enabling environment and teaching strategies that can stimulate creativity in students makes learning more interesting and interactive. Consequently, creativity is urgently needed for enhancing skill acquisition, promoting entrepreneurship and self-reliance and development of divergent thinking in Business Education students. Conventional or traditional strategies of teaching, insistence on rigid or routine ways of doing things, lack of motivation and fear of criticism are identified obstacles to creativity while innovation/entrepreneurial activities and brainstorming session can tremendously enhance creativity in students. In order to achieve the task of producing self-reliant individuals in Oyo State, there is serious need for Business Education teachers to adopt the strategies that will spur innovations and enhance creativity in their students for them to succeed in entrepreneurship/vocation and other ventures for sustainable development.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- a. Business Education practitioners should embrace the strategies identified by this study to foster creativity among their students to enable them become self-reliant upon graduation.



- b. Business Education lecturers should encourage divergent and flexible thinking in their students, and desist from insisting on routine or established way of doing things.
- c. In line with the global best practices, student-centred teaching strategies should be adopted in teaching of business education students to encourage creative thinking in the students.
- d. There should be a synergy between business education lecturers and stakeholders to proffer solutions to problems confronting the enhancement of innovation and creativity amongst Oyo State business education students.

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