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Acknowledgement

The source of financial grants (***TETFund***) and another source(s) of funding must be dully aknowledged. The contribution of colleagues and institutions should also be acknowledged.

Thank you.

Rosemary Foluke Olanrewaju Ph.D
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ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract: The study investigated the entrepreneurial skills development among business education students in universities. The study adopted a descriptive research survey design. The total population for the study comprised 16 business educators and 220 studeents from the sampled universities. These are University of Ilorin, Kwara State University and Al-Hikma University in Kwara State. The population of 16 was sizeable for business educators and was therefore used for the study. However, 60 students were randomly selected. Two research questions were answered. A researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurial Skills Development among Business Education Students Questionnaire (ESDBESQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument had two sections for the problems of the study. Cronbach Alpha reliability test was used to determine the psychometric properties of the instrument which yielded 0.78. Data on research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that business educators and students agreed that students developed entrepreneurial skills (technical and marketing skills). Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that business education programmes provided an avenue for students to develop both technical and marketing skills and with this, business education graduates will be absle to think outside the box thus, know how to market their creativity to the world of work which will fetch them fortunes to live their lives comfortably. It was thereafter recommended that more attention should be given to the practical of the skills before students actually graduate. It was also recommended that business programmes in universities should include a content that will require students to showcase their understanding of the skills.

Introduction

Nigeria, like any other developing country is highly sensitive to the need of providing entrepreneurship education to her teaming population in order to equip them with saleable skills. The complexities of modern societies demand a type of education that can equip the individuals with knowledge that can make them highly functional in these societies. National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) highlighted Nigeria's desire to achieve her national goals through education; hence the need for acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence both mental and physical equipment for the individual to live and also contribute to development of the society.

Oluwafemi & Adeagbo (2020) defined skill as the art of having the power, authority and competency to carry out the required task in a job or profession by individuals. It has to do with acquisition and application of acquired capabilities and competencies to solve problems in a choosen career of profession. Therefore, entrepreneurial skills has to do with the effective application of knowledge, capabilities and competencies required in the dynamic process of creating wealth by an business education students when they graduate.

The need for entrepreneurial skills by business education students is as important as the

certification which comes after the programme. These skills are instruments for self-independence, creativity, accountability and self-realization for the recipients of business education programmes. Furthermore, these skills play the roles of providing skills needed for employment generation, increase in production through innovation, facilitation of technological transfer, increase resource allocation and utilization, reinforcing large scale production and enforcing effective and efficient use of individual potentials and energies (Ogedengbe, et al., 2015). It then follows that proper entrepreneurial skills development will lead to attainment of competency that will qualify business education students for gainful employment opportunities and managing of business successfully. In this study, the entrepreneurial skills examined were technical and marketing skills.

Alison (2019), explained that technical skills are the abilities, capabilities and expertise needed in the performance of specific tasks. They are practical and are related to information technology, mathematics, scientific tasks among others. It included technical writing, project management, big data analysis and social media experience. Also, Neil (2016) maintained that entrepreneurs need to have technical skills which will assist in promoting their business in the present electronic business world. These skills according to the author include conversion rate optimization which is abilities to turn website visitors into customers, search engine optimization, content marketing which has to do with marketing business contents and is capable of making successful entrepreneurs, user experience which has to do with providing improvement in the usability, accessibility and pleasure in the interaction between user and the product. In fact, Facebook, Uber and many other organizations have used these skills to achieve remarkable growth in their business.

Other technical skills according to Craig (2018) include e-mail marketing, data analytics social media (facebook, twitter, instagram), writing which enables entrepreneurs to think critically in other to make sound and profitable business decisions. The authors concluded by stating that out sourcing or delegation is another technical skills needed in business because one cannot do it all alone hence there is need for finding talented and well trained employees and put them to work in other to achieve success.

Marketing is a process of identifying and meeting human and social needs, through production of goods and services (Aniyehule, 2018). The aim of marketing is to understand the customers so well that the products or services suit them and attract patronage. Marketing skills are equally ability to identify the needs of consumers, developing goods and services to satisfy their needs and making them (goods and services) available to the consumer at the right time and places in order to maximize sales volume and achieve the profitability objective of the business (Oyerinde & Falana, 2016). Marketing skill is important because it will help entrepreneur to convince or induce prospective buyers to buy their

products and retain patronage for the survival of the business. The sales volume and revenue must be properly recorded and adequately accounted for, hence, the need for accounting skills (Egbri & Ogunleye, 2024).

Business Education refers to a broad and comprehensive field of study whose instructional programme is endowed with the capacity of providing required vocation skills, aptitude and knowledge to effectively and efficiently manage personal businesses and function in the economic system as a whole (Ore & Hassan, 2023). Business education as an academic field of study is designed to equip the recipients with knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to fit into the world of work and become self-reliant in their life adventures. It is a vocational programme that is created to provide beneficiaries with hand-on experiences at the end of the programme for the purpose of making them to be independent minds. Business education students are expected to develop various skills that will enable graduate to create something different with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychological and social risks, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction. Therefore, business education graduates should possess attributes that will make them be risk-bearers, coordinators and organizers, gap-fillers, leaders and innovators or creative imitators (NBEA, 2020).

The programme therefore inculcates into the learners the skills and abilities needed for a fulfilling career in paid business jobs as well as skills for establishing and managing personal businesses. Graduates of business education in Nigeria are expected to possess practical skills needed by industries in order to effectively fit into practical business skills available to students of business and be employer of labour thereby, helps in reducing unemployment in the country (Ajisafe et al., 2015). To this end, it is crystal clear that there are skills which are expected to be developed by business education students. Therefore, this study investigated entrepreneurial skills development among students studying business education in universities in Kwara State.

Statement of the Problem

Business education is a programme that equips and empowers its recipients with knowledge, techniques and skills needed to be independence and self-reliance. The programme is therefore built on the philosophy of providing employment opportunities to the populace, teaching business management skills, reducing poverty, developing creative ideas, innovating new ways of doing job for the purpose of satisfying human wants. Oluwafemi & Adeagbo (2020) noted that unemployment and poverty is still prevalent in Nigeria despite the teaching of business skills and literacy. The researcher then observed that many business education graduates cannot own and manage business enterprises that compete favourably in the present modern day business environment. Oluwafemi & Adeagbo (2020) found that business education graduates do not acquire

business management skills, technical and personal skills in Oyo State. Also, Egbri & Ogunleye (2024) found that managerial skills, marketing skills and ICT skills were possessed to a low extent while accounting skills were possessed to a high extent in Ekiti State. The previous studies reviewed were not conducted in Kwara State, and this made the present study to be needed to fill this gap whether technical and marketing skills are being developed during the course of study by business education students in universities in Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the entrepreneurial skills development among business education students in Kwara State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the extent of technical skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State; and
2. examine the extent of marketing skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent of technical skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State?
2. What is the extent of marketing skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study and was tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance:

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students' perceptions on the extent of technical skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students' perceptions on the extent of marketing skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The descriptive survey design was preferred because it largely focuses on vital facts, beliefs, opinions, demographic information, attitudes, motives and behaviours of respondents giving responses to the research instrument (Osinbajo et al., 2014). The population of this study consisted of 16 Business Educators and 220 students. The 16 business educators and 60 business education students in universities in Kwara State were sampled for the study.

A questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurial Skills Development among Business Education Students Questionnaire (ESDBESQ)" designed by the researcher was used to collect data from the respondents. To ensure the face and content validation of the questionnaire, the researcher submitted the draft of it to two (2) experts in the

Departments of Business Education at Universities of Ilorin, Kwara State University, Malete and Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin. All the validators were senior lecturers. Items in the questionnaire were reviewed to ascertain that the statements in the instrument actually covered the contents that they were expected to measure. The experts' constructive criticisms and suggestions were incorporated to improve and prepare the final version of the instrument. The Cronbach Alpha Method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. To determine the internal consistency of the question items of the questionnaire, the instrument was administered to six lecturers with two from each university and 18 students with six from each university in Kwara State. The Alpha reliability test yielded correlation coefficient of 0.75.

Data collected to answer research questions was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using independent samples t-test. The decision rule for the research questions was that any question item with a mean of 2.50 and above was rated "Agreed" while question items with a mean of 2.49 and below was rated "Disagreed". Decision rule for analyzing hypotheses was: reject H_o when the observed P-value was less than or equal to the value of 0.05 alpha level of significance and do not reject H_o when the observed P-value was greater than the value of 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results and Interpretation

Research Questions One: What is the extent of technical skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State?

Table 1: *Mean on the extent of technical skills development by business education students*

S/N	Business education students have abilities to:	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	provide solutions to contemporary business scenarios.	3.55	.701	Agreed
2.	think and develop a new way of approaching business issues.	3.44	.716	Agreed
3.	turn website visitors into customers to grow the business.	3.42	.711	Agreed
4.	use technologies to develop their businesses.	3.38	.813	Agreed
5..	write business plans that will investors.	3.33	.915	Agreed
6.	invent new business ideas that will grow the business.	3.30	.711	Agreed
7.	analyze business data to smoothen the operations of the business.	3.27	.713	Agreed
8.	use digital skills to grow the businesses.	3.20	.618	Agreed

9.	efficiently manage the businesses and other aspects of administration.	3.11	.714	Agreed
	Average Mean and SD	**3.33**	**.735**	**Agreed**

Field Survey (2025)

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation on the extent of technical skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State. The table shows that the respondents agreed that business education students developed technical skills in during the course of their studies because the mean scores of all the nine items tested were above 2.50.

Research Questions Two: What is the extent of marketing skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State?

Table 2: *Mean and standard deviation on the extent of marketing skills development by business education students*

S/N	Business education students have abilities to:	Mean	SD	Remark
10.	identify the needs of consumers.	3.48	.751	Agreed
11.	develop goods and services to satisfy customers' needs.	3.44	.792	Agreed
12.	makes goods and services available to the consumers at the right time and places.	3.39	.809	Agreed
13.	retain patronage for the survival of the business.	3.36	.864	Agreed
14.	strategically place the business to bring about high sales volume.	3.32	.955	Agreed
15.	design adverts that increase customers' patronage.	3.27	.728	Agreed
16.	communicate effective about the products and/ or services to customers.	3.23	.750	Agreed
17.	analyze market conditions to the favour of the business.	3.21	.824	Agreed
18.	Use social media to facilitate sales.	3.14	.713	Agreed
	Average Mean and SD	**3.32**	**.798**	**Agreed**

Field Survey (2025)

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation on the extent of marketing skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State. The table shows that the respondents agreed that business education students developed marketing skills during the course of their studies because the mean scores of all the nine items tested were above 2.50.

Hypotheses Testing

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students' perceptions on the extent of technical skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State.

Table 3: T-test result on the perceptions of lecturers and students on the extent of marketing skills development by business education students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	T-Cal.	Df	t- crit.	Sig. (2tailed)	Decision
Lecturers	16	3.20	0.32					
				14.45	74	1.81	0.607	Not Rejected
Students	60	3.77	0.67					

Field Research (2025)

The analysis of data from table 3 above reveals that there were 16 lecturers and 60 students for the study. Perceptions of lecturers and students were not different on the extent of technical skills development by business education students with (X = 3.20; SD = 0.32) and (X = 3.77; SD = 0.67). The table therefore reveals that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students' perceptions on the extent of technical skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State ($t_{486} = 0.607$, $p>0.05$).

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students' perceptions on the extent of technical skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State.

Table 4: *T-test result on the perceptions of lecturers and students* on the extent of marketing skills development by business education students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	T-Cal.	Df	t- crit.	Sig. (2tailed)	Decision
Lecturers	16	3.25	0.40					
				14.55	74	1.93	0.611	Not Rejected
Students	60	3.73	0.62					

Field Research (2025)

The analysis of data from table 4 above reveals that there were 16 lecturers and 60 students for the study. Perceptions of lecturers and students were not different on the extent of marketing skills development by business education students with (X = 3.25; SD = 0.40) and (X = 3.73; SD = 0.62). The table therefore reveals that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students' perceptions on the extent of marketing skills development by business

education students in universities in Kwara State ($t_{486} = 0.611$, $p>0.05$).

Discussion of Findings

Analysis of research question one revealed that business education students developed technical skills during the courses of their studies in universities in Kwara State with average mean and standard deviation of M = 3.33; SD = .735. The result was against the findings of Oluwafemi and Adeagbo (2020) who found that business education graduates did not acquire business management skills, technical and personal skills in Oyo State.

Testing of hypothesis one found that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students' perceptions on the extent of technical skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State ($t_{486} = 0.607$, $p>0.05$). Both groups of respondents did not differ in their perceptions which was clearly shown in research question one that business education students developed technical skills in their courses of studies. This was also not in line with the findings of Udo and Babangida (2017) who stated that business education students do not acquire maximum skills needed for the promotion of sustainable entrepreneurial business in Nigeria. This is seen in this study because technical skill is one of those skills needed for sustainable economic development and this is not acquire by business education graduates.

Analysis of research question two revealed that that business education students developed marketing skills during the courses of their studies in universities in Kwara State with average mean and standard deviation of M = 3.32; SD = .798. This finding was related to the findings of Egbri and Ogunleye (2024) who found that managerial skills, marketing skills and ICT skills were possessed to a low extent while accounting skills were possessed to a high extent in Ekiti State.

Testing of hypothesis two found that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students' perceptions on the extent of marketing skills development by business education students in universities in Kwara State ($t_{486} = 0.611$, $p>0.05$). Both groups of respondents did not differ in their perceptions which was clearly shown in research question two that business education students developed marketing skills in their courses of studies. This was also not in tandem with findings of Aniyewhule (2018) who stated that students are deficient in relevant marketing skills needed to market businesses.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship is a vocational study embedded in business education programme. The aim of the course is to equip the graduates of the study to develop certain skills that place them in the limelight of self-reliance. Therefore, technical and marketing skills are important qualities that business education students are expected to develop during the courses of their studies. Developing this is tantamount to achieving the aim of the course. It was then concluded that possession

of these skills by business education students is a key to unlocking wealth and economic relevance in the present now.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, it was recommended that curriculum of business education should be reviewed to accommodate expansion of teaching on entrepreneurial skills in universities. Also, government and other relevant stakeholders in education such as Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN), school administrators should provide contributions to vocational centers where students can practice what they learn before they actually graduate from universities.

Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

I certify that this is an original work and is not under assessment at any other publication.

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