



## **PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION CURRICULUM ON THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examined the perceived influence of business education curriculum on the entrepreneurship skills of university students in Kwara State. A descriptive research design was adopted for this research. Five hundred students made up the total population for the study. Research Advisors 2006 was used to select a sample of 217 students. Two specific purposes, two research questions, and two hypotheses were also formulated to guide the study. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.92. The data collected from the study were statistically analyzed using frequency and percentage for demographic data of the respondents, while mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Independent Samples t-test and Analysis of Variance. The findings of this study showed that business education curriculum positively influences the marketing and human resource management skills of university students to a moderate extent. It was concluded that business education curriculum had influence on the entrepreneurship skills of university students and also prepares them for entry and advancement in their chosen career or occupation. It was recommended that the students should be encouraged to work in the human resources department of organizations during their SIWES Programme to enable them to strengthen and broaden their human resource management skills. Since business education curriculum has a noticeable influence on the marketing skills of university students, curriculum planners should try to improve the marketing education content in the curriculum and also make it mandatory for the students to come up with different marketing models for different products before their graduation.*

**Keywords:** Business Education Curriculum, Entrepreneurship Skills

### **Introduction**

The growth and development of any nation is hinged on the level of education attained by its citizens. In other words, education is the bridge to the development of any nation. Education is the key to positive change in the society because of its far-reaching effects on growth and development in all sectors of the economy (Peter, 2010). Education is believed to be the bedrock of any country's development. For instance, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) declared in its National Policy on Education that education is an instrument "par excellence" for achieving national development. In other words, any meaningful growth and development of any country must be preceded by sound educational planning. The purpose of education is not just to make a student literate but it also endows them with rational thinking, knowledge, ability and self-sufficiency.

Entrepreneurship education is a course of study introduced to equip recipients with skills and to take advantage of opportunities in an environment to become self-reliant. Ekankumo and Kemebaradikumo (2011) stressed that entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students (especially those in tertiary institutions) with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial studies in a variety of settings. From these assertions, it is obvious that a well implemented entrepreneurship education programme will result in economic empowerment and development. Business education programme of universities provides a study in entrepreneurship skills acquisition to prepare students of the programme for business. Entrepreneurship education aims at raising students' awareness about business skills, knowledge, promoting creativity, innovation, and self-employment. This includes the acquisition of skills in areas that would be useful and make them self-reliant and independent productive citizens of society. Entrepreneurship is critical to the economic development of any nation. It is necessary for individuals to



acquire skills such as human resource management skills, creative thinking and innovative skills, marketing skills, financial management skills, and communication skills.

Entrepreneurship skills are skills needed to succeed in business most especially in teaching. Akunnaya (2012) defined entrepreneurship skills as those skills that will enable the individual to maximize the resources around him within the limits of his capabilities. Entrepreneurship skills are the basic skills necessary to enable one to start, develop, finance, and succeed in an enterprise. In the view of Andrea (2010) and Abdul (2018), entrepreneurship skills should consist of basic skills which include: human resource management skills, financial management skills, innovative skills, leadership skills, teamwork skills, communication skills and marketing management skills. Haruna (2012) viewed human resource management as the process of recruitment, selection, training and development of workers. Human resource management skills can be seen as the effective management of people at work. It examines what can be or should be done to make people more productive and satisfied at work. Marketing skills is the ability and knowledge to make good use of the four-Ps of marketing namely, product, price, place, and promotion. It involves the acquisition of knowledge, abilities, and utilization of the right skills, which will promote entrepreneurship by leading to proper and acceptable pricing of the product, making it available at the right place and time, and using the right promotional technique(s) to stimulate customers to buy the product (Gidado & Akaeze, 2014).

Business education is an important and integral part of general education which emphasizes on skills and competence acquisition for use in the office and to equally set up a business as an entrepreneur and employ others. Atakpa (2011) viewed business education as an embodiment of vocational knowledge and skills needed for employment and advancement in a broad range of business careers.

Curriculum is defined as the prescribed course of study, that students must learn to reach a certain level of education. Ibrahim (2014) defined curriculum as the sum of all the activities, experiences, and learning opportunities that institution(s) and teacher(s) have responsibility for, either deliberately or by default to make learning take place. This author explained that the curriculum includes formal and informal education, overt and covert; it recognizes and overlooks the intentional and unintentional actions that take place in school. Thus, curriculum is a planned activity of learning opportunities for a specific time frame guided towards changing learners' behaviour.

Business education curriculum is a continuous process of planning and development that involves the selection of learning experiences calculated to help in the attainment of the programmes goals and objectives. In the view of Ibrahim (2014), business education curriculum is designed to educate students in the skills, processes, understandings and responsibilities necessary for success in the world of business. Dike (2009) viewed business education curriculum as an educational process of action about opportunities for engagement of students to be educated in business and educational related disciplines. Business education curriculum in this context is responsible for equipping students with skills, attributes, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours required for teaching, entrepreneurship, administrative and clerical work. Business education presumably provides human resource management, financial management, innovative, creative thinking, marketing, and communication skills, amongst others.

Bearing in mind that business education, being one of the vocational programmes in Nigeria, is targeted at empowering students with skills for the world of life and creating for them employment opportunities. As attested by Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) which maintained that business education is to among others impart skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary for gainful employment or self-reliance economically. The curriculum focuses on fostering students' acquisition of necessary skills in human resource management, communication, financial management, creativity and innovation, marketing, and 21st century technological needs for teaching, administrative/clerical fieldwork, and self-reliance. To Strengthen this view, Chukwurah (2011) maintained that business education curriculum is prepared to provide students with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values required for graduates' gainful employment or self-reliance.

Universities in Nigeria are so numerous, comprising both public (federal and state) and private universities. There is a need to understand the mode of operation of each institution. The field of business education is not restricted to either the public or private institution, this is one of the reasons for the selected choice of institutions covered in the study. It is imperative to know the efficiency of the curriculum and the influence it has on the entrepreneurship skills acquisition of students from the perspective of private and public universities, as well as what factors limit the effectiveness of the curriculum. Private universities are owned and controlled by private individuals and have a small population size, which makes teaching and learning effective. The federal universities, on the other hand have more funding from the government than the state universities. The reason for the choice of the federal university is that it



comprises different people from different parts of the country and has the largest population of business education students. The state has an equally large population, but it is usually less than that of the federal institutions. There is also the availability of adequate resources; funds from the allocation of the state are also made available for the effective running of the university.

Gender generally refers to male and female individuals, the university system is characterized by both female and male students. Adigun et al. (2015) posited that gender is the range of physical, biological, mental, and behavioural characteristics pertaining to and differentiating between the feminine and masculine populations. Business education as a course is not gender biased and cuts across both genders; hence, there is a need to examine the responses of both genders on the effectiveness of the curriculum.

Having gone through the variables that constitute the background of this study, it can be understood that the curriculum is the roadmap to acquire essential working skills and career competency for employment opportunities in Nigeria. The study will fill the missing gap and streamline the skills acquired in school with the skills required in business. Since business education is for and about business. Hence, this study was conducted to determine the perceived influence of business education curriculum on entrepreneurship skills of university students in Kwara State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Business education is a programme of study that prepares individuals with multiple skills for teaching and entrepreneurial activities. Despite the laudable philosophy of business education programme in Nigeria, recent studies have shown that business education graduates do suffer labour market discrimination in areas of administrative, banking and financial institutions in the country. Oduma (2010) reported that most employers of labour continue to reject business education graduates, arguing that their skills are only needed in the classroom. Ali (2010) stated that the dearth of employment related skills, entrepreneurship skills, and ignorance of the work environment among youths have caused economic and personal hardship within the past few years. With so many graduates in the labour market, employers look for evidence of skills that would make an individual stand out from the crowd. In the last decade, there has been a growing economic downturn in the country, leading to a drop in the capacity of government and corporate organizations to provide employment to graduates of institutions of higher learning (Ibrahim, 2017). This has been the case with graduates of business education from universities. The situation has led to a paradigm shift from relying on government jobs to the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills for self-reliance.

Various findings, observations, and interactions with owners of business organizations have pointed to the possibility of business education university students not having desirable skills for starting, operating, and managing their business enterprises. Okoro (2013) observed that business education curriculum is inadequate and has very little capacity to develop skills in students for job opportunities and entrepreneurship consciousness in the country. Many employers are known to have complained that graduates of business education cannot communicate effectively, write correct letters or memos, provide leadership in the absence of the manager, take initiative, work without supervision, work as a team, keep simple financial records, operate simple office machines, keep a proper filing system, cover meetings, and take accurate minutes. In addition, they are not creative, not innovative, lack good communication skills, lack marketing skills, lack human resource management skills, lack the ability to work under pressure, and lack a maintenance culture (Ibrahim, 2017). Without the possession of the aforementioned entrepreneurship skills, which are germane to business, it will be difficult for one to establish and run a business enterprise smoothly.

Based on the factors and issues emphasized above, there seem to exist skills gap (in human resource management and marketing skills) which may vitiate prospective entrepreneurial viability in the curriculum of business education in the university.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do business education curriculum influence marketing skills of university students?
2. To what extent does business education curriculum influence human resource management skills of university students?



### Research Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean response scores of male and female students regarding the perceived influence of business education curriculum on marketing skills of university students.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean response scores of private, state and federal university students regarding the perceived influence of business education curriculum on human resource management skills.

### Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered most suitable for the study because it involves the use of a structured questionnaire to gather the required data from respondents. The population of the study comprised 500 business education students in the three selected universities in Kwara State. A sample of 217 business education students was selected from the total population using Research Advisors 2006. The proportionate sampling technique was used to select the exact number of students from each university. A structured questionnaire containing 20 items, developed by the researcher, was used to collect data from students. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: A-C. Section A contained items on the demographic data of respondents; this was used for the test of hypotheses, while Sections B and C consisted of 10 items each relating to the research questions. The instrument was structured on a 4-point rating scale as follows: High Extent (HE) 4 points, Moderate Extent (ME) 3 points, Low Extent (LE) 2 points and No Extent (NE) 1 point.

The instrument used for this study was validated by three experts in business and entrepreneurship education department from the faculty of education, Kwara State University, Malete. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.92. The researcher administered the questionnaire and waited for the collection of the completed copies of the questionnaire for analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using frequency and percentage for demographic data of the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Independent samples t-test statistics was used to test null hypotheses one while ANOVA was used to test hypothesis two at 0.05 level of significance. The decision on the research questions was based on the classification stated above: high extent 3.50 – 4.00, moderate extent 2.50 – 3.49, low extent 1.50 – 2.49 and no extent 1.00 – 1.49. For the hypotheses if the observed probability value is equal to or less than the fixed probability value 0.05, the null hypothesis was to be rejected and if otherwise, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

### Results

**Research Question One:** To what extent does business education curriculum influence marketing skills of university students?

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent business education curriculum influence marketing skills of university students**

S/ N	Item Statements	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1.	It provides me with the skill of conducting survey to identify the needs of my customers and meeting such needs.	3.52	0.59	High Extent
2.	It provides me with skills to segment my market for making good sales.	3.48	0.64	Moderate Extent
3.	It provides me with appropriate advertising skills.	3.40	0.77	Moderate Extent
4.	It provides me with pricing mathematics skills to calculate mark-up and mark-down.	3.15	0.74	Moderate Extent
5.	The curriculum of business education provides me with personal selling skills.	3.35	0.83	Moderate Extent
6.	It provides me with data interpretation skills to analyze market trends.	3.29	0.84	Moderate Extent
7.	It provides me with the right promotional skills.	3.42	0.72	Moderate Extent
8.	It provides me with the right attitude to be on the front line	3.32	0.67	Moderate Extent



	and want a lot of involvement with others.			
9.	It provides me with the right attitude of keeping my moods in check.	2.94	0.84	Moderate Extent
10.	It provides me with right skills to work under pressure.	3.05	0.90	Moderate Extent
<b>Weighted average</b>		<b>3.29</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>Moderate Extent</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Analysis of data in Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent to which business education curriculum influence marketing skills of university students. The Table reveals that the respondents indicate that all constructs influence the marketing skills of university students to moderate extent (mean = 3.29, SD = 0.75).

**Research Question Two:** To what extent does business education curriculum influence human resource management skills of university students?

**Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent business education curriculum influence human resource management skills of university students**

S/N	Item Statements	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1.	It provides me with interpersonal skills to relate with others.	3.58	0.63	High Extent
2.	It helped me develop skill of team work effectively.	3.43	0.70	Moderate Extent
3.	Leadership skills are acquired through business education programme.	3.35	0.76	Moderate Extent
4.	Communication skills acquired through business education curriculum help me to effectively discuss and explain issues.	3.44	0.72	Moderate Extent
5.	It developed my self- regulating skills to control my feelings when dealing with staff and other colleagues.	3.31	0.76	Moderate Extent
6.	It provides graduates with skills to understand weakness and strength of others for effective personnel management.	3.24	0.83	Moderate Extent
7.	It provides me with skills to be able to motivate others at work.	3.37	0.80	Moderate Extent
8.	It provides me with empathy skills to be able to consider others feelings when taking decisions	3.28	0.75	Moderate Extent
9.	It provides me with social skills to be friendly with others.	3.29	0.73	Moderate Extent
10.	It equips me with skill of recruitment and selection.	3.40	0.83	Moderate Extent
<b>Weighted average</b>		<b>3.37</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>Moderate Extent</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Data in Table 2 show the mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent to which business education curriculum influence human resource management skills of university students. The Table reveals that the respondents indicate that all constructs influence the human resource management skills of university students to moderate extent (mean = 3.37, SD = 0.75).

**Test of Hypotheses**

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant difference between the mean response score of male and female students regarding the perceived influence of business education curriculum on marketing skills of university students.

**Table 3: Summary of t-test of the difference between the mean responses of male and female regarding the perceived influence of business education curriculum on marketing skills of university students**

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	p-value	Decision
Male	106	3.89	0.15	21.51	215	0.00	Rejected
Female	111	2.72	0.54				

Source: Field survey, 2023

P<0.05



Data in Table 3 reveal that there are 106 male respondents and 111 female respondents. The male and female respondents' responses show that business education curriculum positively influence marketing skills of university students to moderate extent ( $\bar{x} = 3.89$ ;  $SD = 0.15$ ) and ( $\bar{x} = 2.72$ ;  $SD = 0.54$ ). The table reveals that there is a significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students regarding the perceived influence of business education curriculum on marketing skills ( $t_{215} = 21.51$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of private, state and federal university students regarding the perceived influence of business education curriculum on human resource management skills.

**Table 4: Summary of ANOVA result showing difference in the mean responses of private, state and federal university students regarding the influence of business education curriculum on human resource management skills**

Sources	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	58.161	2	29.081			
Within Groups	38.106	214	.178	163.316	0.00	Rejected
Total	96.267	216				

Source: Field survey, 2023

The result of analysis of variance as presented in Table 4 reveals that the calculated value of F was 163.316 ( $F_{214} = 163.316$ ) and the observed probability value is 0.00 which is less than the fixed probability value of 0.05 ( $P < 0.05$ ). This implies that students, based on institution type differ significantly in their responses regarding their perception about the influence of business education curriculum on human resource management skills.

**Table 5: Post Hoc Tests**

(I) Experience	(J) Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Private	State	0.064	0.83
	Federal	1.091	0.00
State	Private	-0.064	0.83
	Federal	1.027	0.00
Federal	Private	-1.091	0.00
	State	-1.027	0.00

Source: Field survey, 2023

Data in Table 5 shows the Post Hoc test, which compares the students' responses based on institution type two at a time to see where the difference in the groups occur. The Table reveals that significant difference lies between all groups except for comparison between private and state university ( $P = 0.83$ ), state and private university ( $P = 0.83$ ) which is greater than the fixed probability value of 0.05 ( $P > 0.05$ ). This means that mean ratings of students from private university is higher.

### Discussion of Findings

The first finding of the study reveal that business education students perceived that business education curriculum influences students' marketing skills to a moderate extent. This means that business education curriculum had a noticeable influence on the marketing skills of university students. The finding corroborates Gidado and Akaeze (2014) who asserted that acquisition and utilization of the right marketing skills will promote entrepreneurship by leading to proper and acceptable pricing of the product, making it available at the right place and time, and using the right promotional technique(s) to stimulate customers to buy the product. The null hypothesis tested for this further revealed that there was a significant difference between the mean response score of male and female students regarding the influence of business education curriculum on marketing skills ( $t_{215} = 21.51$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). The finding is contrary to the findings of



Ibrahim (2017) who stated that business education curriculum had no significant influence on marketing skills of graduates of colleges of education.

The second finding of the study reveal that business education students perceived that business education curriculum positively influences human resource management skills acquisition of university students to a moderate extent. The findings corroborate Adamu (2013) who opined that for an entrepreneur to be successful, he must possess skills in the processes of recruitment, selection, evaluation, promotion, punishment, severance, and remuneration of his staff. These skills will help an entrepreneur to effectively manage the human resource of his or her business organization. The study further revealed in the null hypothesis two tested that there was a significant difference in the mean response score of private, state, and federal university students regarding the perceived influence of business education curriculum on human resource management skills. The finding is contrary to the findings of Arogundade (2011) who stated that graduates of tertiary institutions (business education inclusive) do not have sound knowledge and skills, which would make them self-reliant.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that business education curriculum had a positive influence on entrepreneurship skills of university students. This implies that the curriculum of business education prepares the students for entrepreneurship skills acquisition and prepares them for entry into and advancement in a broad range of business careers. Therefore, the current business curriculum is adequate to impact the skills covered in the study.

### **Recommendations**

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

1. Curriculum planners should try to improve the marketing education content in the curriculum and make it mandatory for the students to come up with different marketing models for different products before their graduation.
2. Business education students (both male and female) should be encouraged to work in the human resources department of organizations during their SIWES Programme to enable them to strengthen and broaden their human resource management skills.
3. The school management or department should organize seminars that will give students the opportunity to interact with successful business owners, as this will enable them to have the requisite knowledge of what is expected in the present world of work.

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