



21ST CENTURY SKILL REQUIREMENTS BY BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ANAMBRA STATE

Dr. Chinwe S. Okeke

Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe,
Anambra State/Nigeria
sussano18@gmail.com

Abstract

This research study investigated the 21st Century Skill Requirements by Business Education Students for Successful Business Entrepreneurship in Anambra State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design; hence three research questions guided the study. The population was eighty-two (82) Business Education lecturers in the two colleges of education NOCEN and FCET, Umuoze precisely. A sample of 36 respondents was used for the study. A- 30 items structured questionnaire was used to gather necessary information. The instrument was validated using face and content validity and a reliability figure of 0.75 was realized. Data analysis was done using mean and standard deviation. Findings showed that there are various innovative, digital and critical thinking skills required by Business Education students for successful entrepreneurship businesses. Based on the findings, recommendations were made some of which included that regular workshops and seminars should be organized for lecturers to upgrade their skills and knowledge for better transference on the students. Also, there is need to conduct up skilling exercise in a classroom setting for the students from time to time to develop their critical thinking and the school management should make the learning environment very enabling by providing necessary facilities, equipments and materials for effective teaching.

Keywords: 21st century, Skills, Successful, Business Education and Business entrepreneurship.

Introduction

The pace of changes in the business environment is becoming so alarming such that skills training should be imparted on the students in our academic institutions to make them valued. This is because acquiring certificates in this 21st century seems not to be the major criteria for jobs and for business take off, but what matters is the ability to deliver. Skill upgrade is therefore very vital for business success in our society today. Temmerman (2019) asserted that degree results and certificates are no longer enough in today's competitive, fast paced, technology-driven society, but to acquire needed skills to meet up with the wave. According to Mba and Umahurhu (2016), skill is the ability of a person to make purposeful movements that are necessary to complete or master a particular task. On the other hand, Onu (2009) posited that skill is any established habit of performing a task in a way that is remarkably acceptable by a worker on his specialized area. Obviously, skills are special talents acquired by people through education and training and which helps in establishing people now and in the future. This means that skills are acquired through effective training in both formal and informal setting. Training is a bit different from education. While training involves teaching a particular skill to a person to perform a specific task, education deals with imparting holistically on individuals to develop their social, intellectual and physical abilities. Hence, skill training is an important management tool used to provide specific training to people in order to fulfill a particular job requirement. In the business world today, employers only employ labour that offers the best skill. This is to say that the level of skill of labour determines to a large extent the level of their labour. Thus the skills possessed by a person equally relates with the level of life achievements since the skills acquired leverages the person and puts him ahead of others thereby distinguishing him from the rest of his competitors. Nwadiwe (2014) asserted that acquiring skill is basically considered to be a specific form of learning. Nwachukwu (2017) maintained that acquiring skill is significant to building a successful career which in turn helps to reduce the crime rate in the country through self-employment opportunities.



Business education by its content is expected to be a skill driven course poised to make its students distinguished from among the graduates in the labour market. According to Okoro (2013), it is a broad and comprehensive field of study whose instructional programme is endowed with the capacity to provide knowledge, skills, vocation and aptitude required to effectively manage personal businesses and at the same time function in the economic system. Okeke and Nzekwe (2019) affirmed that business education is a skill drilling and acquisition course which is capable of making its students or recipients employable or self employed on graduation in order to help facilitate economic activities in the country. Business Education as a course of study, have the capacity of molding students to graduate with such revealing and endearing skills. According to Inyang (2014), Business Education is a course of study which enables students to acquire further skills which are common and fundamental to all personal and occupational activities. Off course, it is the wish of every student to get good job or start up new business after graduation. But this can only be possible when they have acquired the needed and expected 21st century skills such as innovative skills, risk management and problem solving skills, digital skills and critical thinking skills. Twenty-first (21st) century skills are those type of abilities that today's students need to succeed in their careers. Stauffer (2020) categorised them into twelve some of which are creativity, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, technological, leadership and social skills and also subdivided into; learning, literacy and life skills. According to him, while learning skill draw attention to the mental processes of the students that will boost their adaptability and improve their modern work environment, literacy skills which are sometimes regarded as IMT an acronym for information, media and technology. This helps the students to understand the importance of finding facts and data; methods and outlet to publish the collected data and understanding the use of high powered machines and tools in modern business offices. On the other hand, life skills which is comprised of flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity and social skill (FLIPS) is very crucial to the development of business entrepreneurship since it helps to inculcate in the students certain unique skills as humility, decision making and reasonability, networking, relationship and efficiency skills.

Invariably, when students are trained in different skills, their vision will increase thereby propelling them to develop innovative ideas and better ways of doing things. Obviously, students who posses these skills will always have adaptive qualities needed to meet up with a constantly evolving business environment. Perhaps, this will promote employability and job creation through entrepreneurship business development (Agetue and Nnamdi, 2011). Odiya and Odiya (2013) identified some innovative skills as introduction of new business and methods, ability to access new source of raw material, ability to motivate and understand others in the work place. Meanwhile, Komarkova, Gagliardi, Conrads and Collado (2015) admitted that skills and opportunities is the key to examining entrepreneurial innovation capabilities. This is why Eke; Ozo and Oraeto (2016) saw entrepreneurship as the ability of a person to organize a business undertaking and assume the risks for the sake of profit. Comfort, Onochie and Omolewa (2016) explained that it as an economic process of creating incremental wealth by individuals who assume the major risk in terms of equity, time or career commitment by providing value for products or services. Apparently, entrepreneurship businesses are those privately owned businesses established based on skills acquired either from the teaching or non –teaching environment. These individuals are looked at as risk takers, and are automatically problem solvers, since their good grasp of things makes them more calculative in handling problems and manage risks in their work or their businesses.

Entrepreneurship is the process of discovering new strategies of combining resources of an organization for effectiveness and efficiency. Gaddefors and Anderson (2017) stated simply that it deals with creation or extraction of value. In recent time, entrepreneurship has become a powerful tool needed for creation of jobs and improving the economic power of the labour market as well as the entire economy. Though, there are many entrepreneurship skills which must be possessed by a person to venture into entrepreneurship businesses such as technical, financial and management skills, there are still lots of 21st century skills which will encourage successful entrepreneurship business startups such as digital skill, innovative skill, risk management and critical thinking skill. It is believed that these skills enable one to be proactive instead of reactive and which means that it is very important in today's' business environment.

In today's world, the impact of digitalization cannot be overemphasized. Nwosu (2007) stated that ICT skills make information processing, management and dissemination more effective and efficient and so, very essential since it will enrich the business education students with the technological awareness needed in entrepreneurship activities and business management. It is therefore very obvious that technology has advanced such that no one can survive in today's world of



business without being digitalized and technology alert. Indeed, this ICT skill gives the students understanding of the use of different gadgets and machines they come across. More so, graduates of business education are expected to have adequate managerial skills needed to manipulate other fixed and variable resources like land, capital, money and raw materials. Hence, management is seen as a process involved in planning and organizing the resources of a business to be able to achieve the objectives for which the business was established. According to Okoli (2010), management is the process of working with and through others to effectively achieve the goals of the organization by efficiently exploiting the limited resources. Because of the complex nature of management, it is very necessary that business education students are critical minded beings capable of taking up such tasks of making good use of the available resources and creating an enabling work environment in the future.

Critical thinking skill is very complex and dynamic such that it is usually not easy to pin it to a particular definition. Clarke (2019) defined critical thinking skill as self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored and self-corrective thinking. This invariably means that it is a self rational ability of a person, and business education students need this special skill to be able to think clearly and rationally about what to do, or what to believe concerning delicate business decision making. Though this particular skill is very difficult to teach the students, it is very important because poor critical thinkers lack dispositions and cannot be said to have liberally educated irrespective of the type of qualifications they possess. Sparks (2019) pointed that educators have special influence on their students since the students spend more hours with them than at home which ignites their lifetime love of learning. Through educators' effective lesson delivery, the students will be able to develop critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, communication, digital literacy, team working and entrepreneurship skills of the students to mention but a few. Hence, the best education to offer in the world today is to equip the students with transferable skills that will help them respond to whatever the future holds instead of loading them up with knowledge of theory. This is because the education system of yesterday does not suit today's students due to global connectivity. It is on the bases of the foregoing that the researcher is prompted to discover those expected 21st century skills training needed by Business Education students for successful businesses entrepreneurship.

Statement of the problem

Skills are those abilities which every student supposed to acquire before graduation to be able to be useful citizens in the country. This is particularly as regards business education students because of the nature of the content of the programme. However, there are many trendy skills that business education students require to be able to adapt in today's range of skills that the employers look out for. Incidentally, many of the students graduate with nothing or less to show off as special skills that will enable them become future business educators or owners of entrepreneurship business or even able employees in reputable organizations. This is in spite of all the trainings in and outside the classroom and even review of curriculum to include more skill related courses such as Data Base and Management Information System (MIS) to enable the business education students to fit into the 21st century skills requirements needed for successful entrepreneurship businesses.

Obviously, if this scenario continues, it may create serious gap such that the employability of the products of Business Education may become questionable. Okoli and Binumote (2015) in their research on Skills Training Needed by Business Education Students for Successful Entrepreneurship: Implication for Colleges of Education in Nigeria assessed ICT, risk management and innovative skills training needed by Business Education students. In the current study, the researcher adds critical thinking skills and digital skills as one of the 21st century skills needed for successful entrepreneurship businesses and employability.

Though the researchers adopted descriptive survey design which gives room for generalization of result in their study, they concentrated only in the colleges of education in the South West geopolitical zone and cannot be used to effectively conclude that the skills examined are needed by Business Education students in Anambra state. Based on this, the researcher deems it necessary to embark on the current study to examine other 21st century skill required by business education students for successful entrepreneurship business in Anambra state.



Research questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the innovative skills training required by Business Education students for business entrepreneurship?
2. What are the digital skills training required by Business Education students for business entrepreneurship?
3. What are the critical thinking skills training required by Business Education students for business entrepreneurship?

Methods

The study area was carried out in Anambra state. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consists of eighty two (82) lecturers of Business Education. This comprised 14 and 68 lectures from Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe (NOCEN) and Federal College of Education Technical. Umunze (FCET) respectively (HOD's of the two colleges, 2020). Though, the total population was a manageable size, the variance in the ratio of 14:68 was too high. Hence, to make the population of (FCET) relatively proportional with that of NOCEN, one-third (1/3) of FCET population was sampled using simple random sampling technique to arrive at 22 lecturers. The essence was to allow all the lecturers equal opportunities of being chosen as a respondent and which will later be generalized. Thus, the sample used for study was 36 lecturers obtained by the sum of 14 to 22. The major instrument used to gather information was a 30-items self-structured questionnaire. The validity of the instrument was done by two experts in the department of Business Education from NOCEN. A split half method of reliability of the instrument was done to obtain 0.75 and which was facilitated through Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient method to compare the responses. The questionnaire was administered on the spot by the researcher which made it possible to have a hundred percent return rate. Weighted mean rating and standard deviation were used to analyze the responses and 2.50 was taken as the criterion mean value of acceptance. Thus, any item that scored below this point was disagreed on.

Results

Table 1: Mean rating and standard deviation of the innovative skills training required by Business Education students for business entrepreneurship

n=36					
S/N	Item Statement	$\Sigma f\bar{x}$	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to introduce new product	125	3.47	0.64	Agreed
2	Ability to introduce new method	125	3.48	0.56	Agreed
3	Ability to turn ideas into reality	118	3.27	0.54	Agreed
4	Ability to create new wealth by diversifying or expanding the business area.	117	3.25	0.59	Agreed
5	Ability to be proactive in decision making	125	3.48	0.59	Agreed
6	Ability to relate with competitors.	108	3.00	0.82	Agreed
7	Ability to access new technologies and resources	124	3.44	0.78	Agreed
8	Ability to add value to customers satisfaction	111	3.09	0.86	Agreed
9	Ability to have self confidence	117	3.36	0.86	Agreed
10	Ability to identify and exploit new business opportunities	120	3.33	0.55	Agreed
Grand mean			3.32	0.68	

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

Table 1 is the mean and standard deviation of the respondents on the innovative skills needed by business education students for business entrepreneurship. The respondents agreed that all the listed items were the innovative skills required by business education students for their business entrepreneurship. The weighted mean of 3.40 indicated that the respondents agreed to the items.



Table 2: Mean rating and standard deviation of the digital skills training required by business education students for business entrepreneurship

S/N	Item Statement	$\Sigma f\bar{x}$	\bar{x}	n=36		Remarks
				SD		
11	Ability to start and boot a computer system.	118	3.29	0.89		Agreed
12	Ability to navigate word processing to compose message	118	3.29	0.89		Agreed
13	Ability to create files and folders	111	3.08	0.87		Agreed
14	Ability to access the internet uploads and downloads information using smart phones and computer system.	117	3.25	0.59		Agreed
15	Ability to access the e-mail	120	3.35	0.53		Agreed
16	Ability to operate excel	125	3.43	0.78		Agreed
17	Ability to protect document with codes and pass words.	123	3.43	0.78		Agreed
18	Ability to print, save and retrieve information.	126	3.50	0.67		Agreed
19	Ability to create slides and make PowerPoint presentations.	120	3.35	0.53		Agreed
20	Ability to store information using software	108	3.02	0.86		Agreed
Grand mean			3.30	0.74		

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

Data analysed in Table 2 showed that the respondents agreed that all the items were the digital skills required by Business Education students for their business entrepreneurship or fit into job vacancies on graduation. This was shown by their mean ratings, standard deviation and the weighted mean values.

Table 3: Mean rating and standard deviation of the critical skills training required by business education students for business entrepreneurship

S/N	Item Statement	$\Sigma f\bar{x}$	\bar{x}	n=36		Remarks
				SD		
21	Ability to recognize problems and finding ways of solving them instead of running away from them	123	3.42	0.94		Agreed
22	Ability to gather and extract relevant information.	120	3.34	0.85		Agreed
23	Ability to making structured reasoning concerning problems.	111	3.09	0.86		Agreed
24	Ability to draw conclusion and make inferences	118	3.08	0.87		Agreed
25	Ability to understand the need for prioritization and order of precedence in problem solving.	102	2.84	0.75		Agreed
26	Ability to be creative in recognizing investment opportunities.	117	3.25	0.59		Agreed
27	Ability to be a good listener and create room for taking corrections.	113	3.15	0.95		Agreed
28	Ability to comprehend and use language with accuracy and clarity.	111	3.09	0.86		Agreed
29	Ability to be curious about the environment and adapt to change	122	3.40	0.84		Agreed
30	Ability to understand motivation techniques.	57	1.58	0.69		Disagreed
Grand mean			3.02	0.82		

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

Table 3 showed the mean and standard deviation of the critical skills required by Business Education students for their business entrepreneurship. Besides item number 30, the respondents agreed to all other items. This was shown by their mean ratings as well as the weighted mean.



Discussion of Findings

The result from research question 1 showed that all the listed items are innovative skills training needed by business education. This is in consonance with the views of Agetue and Nnamdi (2011), and Odia and Odia (2013) who said that when students are trained in different skills, their vision will increase thereby propelling them to develop innovative ideas such as being able to introduce new business, methods and ability to access new source of raw materials as well as finding better ways of doing things. Perhaps, this will promote employability and job creation through entrepreneurship business development.

Meanwhile the result from research question two revealed that business education student requires lots of digital skills to become entrepreneurs in the future. Hence all the listed digital skills training were seen to be needed. This agrees with Nwosu (2007) who earlier stated that ICT skills make information processing, management and dissemination more effective and efficient and so, very essential since it will enrich the business education students with the technological awareness needed in entrepreneurship activities and business management.

Results in table 3 showed that all the items listed except item number 30 are critical thinking skills needed by business education students to fit into jobs or start their own businesses successfully on graduation. This is in line with Clarke (2019) who remarked that critical thinking means being self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored and self-corrective thinking.

Conclusion

Business Education as was designed before and in the current curriculum is positioned to equip the students or recipients with necessary diverse 21st century skills to meet the challenges of owning entrepreneurship businesses. The result of the research findings has equally been able to prove that there are expected needed innovative, digital and creative thinking skills for successful business entrepreneurship, despite all challenges in the business environment.

Recommendations

On the bases of the result of the findings, these recommendations are made

1. There is need to partner with some established skill acquisition centres where the students will be taken to from time to time for practical learning before their graduation to help them improve their innovative skills.
2. Regular workshop and seminars should be organized for lecturers to upgrade their skills and knowledge for better transference on the students especially on the digital skills. This is because many lecturers are not e- technology friendly.
3. There is need to conduct up skilling exercise in a classroom setting for the students from time to time to develop their critical thinking and the school management should make the learning environment very enabling by providing necessary facilities, equipments and materials for effective teaching.

References

- Agetue, F.N.& Nnamdi, A. E. (2011).Entrepreneurship training: a tool for job creation in Nigeria. *Journal of Teacher Perspective*, 5(3)475-482.
- Clarke J.(2019). Critical Dialogues: thinking together in turbulent times. Bristol: policy press.
- Comfort, M.A, Onochie, M.P & Omolewa, E.E (2016) the role of entrepreneurship education in the achievement of Nigeria vision 20:20:20. *International journal of innovative research and development*. 5(5), 323-328.
- Ekeke, D.I, Ozo, J.U, & Oraeto C. (2016). Integrating the relationship quality construct in entrepreneurial context. An empirical review. *Journal of National Institute of Marketing*, 2(2), 10-20.
- Gaddefors, J. & Anderson, A.R.(2017). Entrepreneurship and context when entrepreneurship is greater than entrepreneurs. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship Behaviour and Research* 23(2) 267-278.



- Komarkova, I., Gagliardi, D., Conrads, J. & Collado, A. (2015). Entrepreneurship competence: An overview of existing concepts, policies and initiatives. *Joint Research Centre Work Papers* 11, 1-158.
- Mba, C.O. & Umurhurhu, E.B. (2016). Improving the teaching and learning of computer aided drafting and designing (CADD) for effective skills development in Nigerian tertiary institution. *International Technology Research Journal (INTERJ)*, 4(1), 24-29.
- Nwachukwu (2017). The significant factor of creative search and constant practicing. *Journal of Technical Education*. Badan higher ground publishers.
- Nwadiwe, O.O. (2014). Improving the specific of learning of learning and the interest of automobile technology students in technical colleges in Ogun state. Ogun Nsukka: University of Nigeria.
- Nwosu, E.N (2007). Job creation through business education and the challenges of national economic empowerment and development strategies (NEEDS). *ABEN book of reading* 1, 18- 27.
- Odia, J. & Odia, A.A.(2013). Developing entrepreneurial skill and transforming challenges into opportunities in Nigeria. *Journal of education and social research*. 3, 289- 298.
- Okeke, C.S. & Nzekwe, A.I.(2019). Availability and utilization of innovation strategies in teaching and learning business education in tertiary institutions for improved economic development in Anambra state. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Business and General Education (BUSGEN)* 1(8).192-201.
- Okoli, I. E.(2010). *Comparative and international management*. Awka: Allied micro computer concept ltd.
- Okoro J. (2013). Strategies for enhancing the teaching of ICT in business education programmes as perceived by business education lecturers in universities in South – South Nigeria. *International education studies*, 6(10), 78-89.
- Onu, F.M. (2009). Skills required by secondary school students for entry into bee keeping occupation in Enugu state. *Vocational Association Journal*, 15(1), 112-115.
- Sparks S. (2019). Why teacher- student relationship matter. Retrieved from <http://mobile.edweek.org> on 27th August, 2020.
- Termmerma, N. (2019). When degree just isn't enough, also offer up skilling. Retrieved on 23rd July from <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190304094729650>.