



Entrepreneurship Skills Required by Business Education Students towards the Attainment of Sustainable Economic Development Goals

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ABSTRACT

The research focused on evaluating the entrepreneurship skills necessary for achieving sustainable economic development goals in Bauchi metropolis. The study had two specific objectives and two research questions as its guiding framework. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the research. The total population consisted of 3,856 students enrolled in Business Education at Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic, Bauchi. Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size, a sample of 380 students was selected. Data collection was conducted through structured questionnaires. Mean and standard deviation were employed to address the research questions. The findings indicated a strong agreement among respondents regarding the importance of technical skills for Business Education students in relation to Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, respondents strongly agreed that management skills were essential for business education students to contribute to sustainable economic development goals in Bauchi state. The study recommended that government support and adequate funding should be provided at all levels to facilitate the development of technical and management skills among students.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received: January, 2023

Received in revised form: April, 2023

Accepted: May, 2023

Published online: June, 2023

KEYWORDS

Entrepreneurship, Skills, Economic,
Development, Goals

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, like many other developing countries, there is a pressing need to provide vocational and technical education to the growing population in order to equip them with marketable skills (Umar, 2021). The complexities of modern societies require education that can empower individuals with functional knowledge. The National Policy on Education (2014) emphasizes Nigeria's commitment to achieve national goals through education, highlighting the importance of acquiring appropriate skills, abilities, and competence, both mental and physical, for individuals to contribute to societal development.

Entrepreneurship skills are primarily focused on economic aspects and play a significant role in realizing transformational goals.

Basic business education, one of the components of business education, contributes to economic literacy and the general education of individuals. It provides knowledge about a country's enterprise system, explains the roles of businesses in the nation's economic institutions, and prepares individuals to participate effectively as citizens, workers, and consumers in society (Osuala, 2019). Quality entrepreneurship training is crucial for the economic vision of Nigeria's transformation agenda. Entrepreneurship education has the potential to improve the economic fortunes of the country and reduce poverty levels. Olorunmolu and Olufunwa (2018) and Etoneyeaku (2019) affirm that business education equips individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, abilities, and competencies for

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self-employment and self-reliance, leading to sustainable economic development. Business education, a component of vocational and technical education, focuses on acquiring practical skills, knowledge, attitudes, and related sciences related to occupations in vocational sectors of economic and social life (Etonyeaku, 2019). Entrepreneurship education, according to Olufunwa (2019), provides specialized training to students of vocational and technical education, enabling them to acquire skills, ideas, and managerial abilities for self-employment rather than relying on paid employment. Similarly, Olurunmolu and Olufunwa in Ezemoyih (2020) state that entrepreneurship education involves acquiring skills, ideas, and management abilities necessary for self-reliance and has the potential to improve the economic fortunes of the country and reduce poverty levels.

Problem Statement

In many developing countries, the development of entrepreneurial skills has been instrumental in economic growth, wealth creation, and improving the quality and variety of job opportunities for the less privileged (Kritikos, 2014). Entrepreneurship has multiple positive effects on the economy, such as stimulating innovation, fostering investment in human capital, and providing a more sustainable competitive advantage compared to deplorable natural resources. The acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by business education students enables them to establish new enterprises, generate employment opportunities, produce goods and services for society, introduce new technologies, improve outputs, and earn foreign exchange through export expansion or import substitution.

Abdullahi (2018) highlights the significance of building a critical mass of first-generation entrepreneurs for countries to accelerate their economic growth and development. Entrepreneurship serves as a means to enhance the quality of life for individuals and families and sustain a healthy economy and environment. In the context of the research area (Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic, Bauchi), students, both male and female, are

facing various issues including irrational behaviors like juvenile delinquency, theft, drug abuse, and political hooliganism, mainly due to unemployment. By focusing on entrepreneurship skills, prompt interventions can positively impact their lives by creating jobs, producing goods and services, introducing new technologies, and improving productivity. Bauchi metropolis has a high proportion of unemployed youth, including graduates and undergraduates, married and unmarried individuals (Umar, 2021). The knowledge of acquiring entrepreneurial skills through business education becomes essential in providing relevant and affordable skills at the grassroots level.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To determine the management skills required by students of business education for attainment of sustainable of economic Development Goals in ATAP.
- ii. To find out the technical skills required by business education students in attaining a sustainable economic development goal in ATAP.

Research Questions

- i. What is the management skill required by students of business education for attainment of sustainable of economic Development Goals in ATAP?
- ii. What is the technical skills required by business education students in attaining a sustainable economic development goal in ATAP?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Nigerian government employed National Development Planning (NDP) to chart the course of the nation's economic progress while the former socialist states abandoned their central planning strategies and embraced the practices of the dominant market economy. Continuing the use of NDP, the oil dependent economy was in shambles after crude oil prices fell sharply in the early 1980s. The resultant economic crisis informed the choice of SAP as



the panacea, while the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), prodded its selection. The major thrust of SAP was the adoption of a market led economy by gradually loosening the administrative controls that tightly gripped the economy. Some of the policies geared towards broadening Nigeria's economic base included the following: a) liberalizing trade; b) dismantling commodity boards; c) stimulating export trade; d) providing easy access to foreign exchange; and, e) local sourcing of raw materials. Between 1983 and 1994, such government projects as the moribund National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the defunct Directorate of Foods Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), the Peoples Bank of Nigeria (PBN), Better Life for Rural Women, and the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) were established to stimulate entrepreneurship and enhance economic growth.

From 1994 to 2002, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and its complement, National Agency for the Eradication of Poverty (NAPEP), the consolidation of the banking industry and the Micro-Credit initiative were all designed to achieve notable economic objectives: a) to create a friendly environment for entrepreneurship; b) stem the downward slide of the economy; and c) ensure more robust economic growth and development. In short, the underlying intention behind the various policy tools was to cede more economic power to the entrepreneurial-led private sector. The privatization policy in particular, has remained the focus of the federal government since about 1990. Although Nigeria went into a free enterprise economy expecting significant economic growth and expansion rates, it has not materialized.

The role of the entrepreneur as an agent of economic growth and employment generation in the society has gained considerable attention both in the literature and the policy thrust of well-developed and developing economies (Lauder, Bookcock, and Presley, 1994). Some economic literature (Kemersch, McKenzie, and Nardinelli, 1986) recognizes the vital importance of

entrepreneurship, by calling it the fifth factor of production.

What makes entrepreneurship significant is the ability to create a commercial or industrial enterprise, and this can be very crucial to the advancement of social progress. The creation of small and medium scale enterprises and their subsequent expansion through successful development adds to the productive capacity of a nation. Moreover, it takes the growth of successful SMEs to grow into large and multinational corporations (Sum, Kow, and Chen, 2014). Entrepreneurship has been characterized as productive and unproductive (Baumul, 1993). Productive entrepreneurship contributes to economic growth while unproductive entrepreneurship results in net reduction in social income and wealth. Unproductive entrepreneurship is viewed as the manifestation of rent, seeking behaviors that add no positive value to society. Thus, only when entrepreneurship is productive can it make positive contribution to a nation's output.

Research has shown that that small scale businesses play crucial roles in the economic development of countries (Ogundele; 2016). They are more likely to employ more workers than their large scale counterparts. They complement large scale organizations as training workshops for skills development of industrial workers as well as establish forward and backward linkages to economic activities in the society. Malaysia and Indonesia as examples of countries whose spectacular economic development were attributed to the rapid development of the small and medium scale enterprises. Consequently, many countries now see small business as instrument for fighting poverty and under – development and are paying more attention in their economic policies toward the development of this class of enterprises. Marketing and innovation are the two key entrepreneurial functions of a business enterprise, according to Drucker (2016). The primary function of marketing is the creation of a customer. To the extent that customer patronage sustains a business enterprise, the managers of



the business are required to produce what society wants; this promotes social welfare and progress. Innovation can be viewed as the source of sustenance to the business enterprise. Without the innovative conduct, business enterprises will find it difficult to compete in the market place and may be doomed to extinction. It therefore takes the innovative spirit in a business firm to always strive for new and better ways of doing business and ensuring its long-term survival (Geus, 2000).

Drucker (2017) suggests some ways for a business to be innovative: producing at a lower price; inventing new and better products; creating new conveniences and even designing a new organization. Basically, the Nigerian private sector can be categorized into these broad industrial spheres: Oil, Agriculture and Industrial/Services (including non-oil mining). The Nigerian economy has depended largely on crude oil for its sustenance, which contributes over 90 per cent of its foreign exchange. Diversification of the resource base of the economy informed the establishment of SAP and the orientation towards a market-led economy. But in terms of entrepreneurial development, it can be argued that the oil industry has minimally contributed. This is because its Nigerian content has been estimated at less than 5 per cent. Most of the entrepreneurial activities of the oil industry are initiated outside the country's boundaries, with Nigerians playing a passive role, at best. Agriculture, on the other hand, has been the main occupation of Nigerians and engages the majority of its people. Entrepreneurially, agriculture presents far more opportunities for entrepreneurial development in the sense that it is a breeding ground for micro- business.

According to the European Commission (1992) classification of SMEs, based on number of employees, a micro enterprise is a firm that has between 0 and 9 employees, and since most Nigerian farmers operate at the subsistence level, they are mainly micro-businesses. However, farming as a business enterprise, with an entrepreneurial bent is still in its infancy. The mode of farming in most

communities has remained traditional. But in terms of the number of people engaged in agriculture and its Nigerian content, the agricultural sector should be a major contributor to GDP.

For the purpose of this study, the industrial/services sector encompasses all commercial activities undertaken in the country excluding crude oil and agricultural production. This is the sector where entrepreneurial talents would be expected to be markedly exhibited because of a) the vast opportunities that exist in the production of goods and services and b) the major role of agricultural is the supply of raw materials needed for the industrial production. Most references to entrepreneurship, therefore, focus on the industrial and services sector. For example, Edmondson (1997) observes, the Chief Executives of seven small, fast growing technology companies banded together in Paris to form an association for businesses that double their sales at least every five years^{II}. Similarly, Lauder, Bookcock and Presley (2013) report that in Germany, SMEs provide approximately two-thirds share of employment, hold two-fifths of all investments and contribute 46 percent towards GDP. Supporting the link between entrepreneurship and industrial/service business (Sum, Kow, and Chen, 2014) highlighted the attention being accorded the development of small and medium enterprises in countries like Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, Mexico and Malaysia. Recent policy measures of the Nigerian government towards agriculture and small and medium scale industries funding signify their entrepreneurial quality.

Having established the vital importance of entrepreneurship to economic growth and development, why is the Nigerian state still confronted with high levels of unemployment, poverty, weak exchange rates and inflation (Fakiyesi, 2021). The contra-evidence of these anti-developmental indices suggests that the level of entrepreneurial development is still far less than optimal. Given that a gap could exist between the actual and potential growth in gross domestic products, for example when an economy is operating inside its production

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possibility curve (Kamerschen and Valentine, 2019), it then implies inefficient resource deployment and weak entrepreneurship. The often touted magic of foreign direct investment (FDI) may be a mirage where indigenous entrepreneurial seasoning is lacking.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design has adopted for the study. The area of the study was Bauchi metropolis. The population of the study comprised 3,856 (males and females) that are offering Business Education in tertiary institutions. A sample was derived using stratify sampling technique. 380 respondents were being selected from the institutions. The instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire which will adopted by the researcher. The items in the questionnaire were organized in accordance with research questions to guide the study. The instrument was validated by two lecturers from Vocational Technology Education, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi. The data that analyzed using arithmetic mean and standard deviation to answer all research

questions formulated in the course of the study. The decision rule for each item in the questionnaire were being determined by the scores of the responses. A decision was accepted if the average mean is ≥ 2.50 , while a decision was rejected if the average mean is ≤ 2.50 .

RESULTS

Research Question One: What are the management skills required by business education students in attaining a sustainable economic development?

Table 1 showed that the results the management skills required by business education students in attaining a sustainable economic development. The table revealed that, all of the four items were agreed, while none of the item were disagreed. This shows that the management skills required by business education students in attaining a sustainable economic development were accepted on a grand total mean of 3.39 and the table shows the standard deviation of the items within the range of 1.06 – 1.19.

Table 1: Mean response on management skills required by business education students in attaining a sustainable economic development

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D	Rank
1	Theories and examples being taught by lecturers in class rooms are required by business education students in attaining a sustainable development goals	2.96	1.09	Agreed
2	Artificial practical experiments and simulation or imitation of real life are required by business education students in attaining sustainable development goals	3.41	1.11	Agreed
3	Organized field experience trainings, such as ITF are required by business education students in attaining sustainable development goals	4.06	1.06	Agreed
4	Real life field experiences are required by business education students in attaining sustainable development goals.	3.54	1.19	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.39	1.11	Agreed

Source: Field work (2021)

Research Question Two: What are the factors militating the development of technical skills in business education?

Table 2 showed that the factors militating the development of technical skills in business education. The table revealed that, all of the five items were agreed, while none of the item were disagreed. This shows that the

technical skills required by business education students in attaining a sustainable economic development were accepted on a grand total

mean of 3.13 and the table shows the standard deviation of the items within the range of 1.03 – 1.10.

Table 2: The mean response on factors militating the development of technical skills in business education

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Lack of money limits the development of entrepreneurial skills among business education	3.10	1.10	Agreed
2	Time is a factor that limits the development of entrepreneurial skills among business education student.	3.26	1.09	Agreed
3	Lack of Awareness/knowledge limits the development of entrepreneurial skills among business education student	2.99	1.03	Agreed
4	The Attitude/social setting of the people limits the development of entrepreneurial skills among business education student	3.08	1.11	Agreed
5	The available technology limits the development of entrepreneurial skills among business education student	3.21	1.07	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.13	1.08	Agreed

Source: Field work (2021)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the analysis, the following findings were found:

- Result from research question two revealed that the respondents strongly agreed that the management skills required by business education students in attaining a sustainable economic development were accepted.
- Result from research question three revealed that the respondents strongly agreed that the factors militating the development of technical skills in business education were accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Results from first research question indicated that the management skills required by business education students in attaining a sustainable economic development was accepted as effective with a grand total mean of 3.39 and a deviation of the items within the range of 1.06 – 1.19. Hence, the presumption was accepted on the basis of higher number of acceptance, this was related to the study conducted by Harvey and Brown (2021). In the past, managers were trying to achieve success in

a relative unchanging and predict able world. However, today they deal with fast developments. They face the continuous innovations in computer and information technology and turbulent world, changing markets and unstable ways of life. To deal with such a variable forces, managers must have the ability to transform and update. Growth management provides ways to regularly change and improve organizations. The goal of improving the organization is to achieve more effectiveness of organization and to increase opportunities for people to build their own potential power to bring actions.

Results from two research question indicated that the factors militating the development of technical skills in business education was accepted as effective with a grand total mean of 3.13 and a deviation of the items within the range of 1.03 – 1.10. Hence, the presumption was accepted on the basis of higher number of acceptance, this was related to the study conducted by Reynolds (2005), entrepreneurship can be conceptualized as the identification of opportunities and the creation of new businesses or organizations. It is a dominant driver of economic growth and job creation: it

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creates new companies and jobs, opens up new markets, and nurture new skills and capabilities. Entrepreneurship has grown as a concept and in the level of importance, placed on the development and sustainability of the economy. Also Ronstadt (2014) Technical skill are individuals who take significant risks regarding capital, time and the commitment of his/her career providing value through the products or services that may be new or exclusive, but the value somehow must be infused by the employer to locate and obtain the skills and resources.

CONCLUSION

The thrust of this paper is entrepreneurship in higher education institutions in Nigeria: an imperative for sustainable development. The paper emphasized the need to get Nigerian youths trained on various skills including: creativity and innovation, technical skills and managerial experience. The implication of this work is that for Bauchi to encourage entrepreneurship and reduce unemployment, Business education should be taken serious and highly encouraged; otherwise, the desire of Bauchi and Nigeria to encourage self-employment and job sufficiency through business may end up as mirage. Therefore, business education promotes economic life of the participants and that of the society. Also, In the course of the research work, the researcher encountered some constraints which include difficulty in covering all the respondents as some are already on vacation and lack of adequate support from the relevant stake holders in Entrepreneurship industry in terms of information and other inputs which will be useful to the research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings the study made the following recommendation:

- i. To promote the flame of management in Nigerian higher education, the management skills activities of students should be well financed and supported.

- ii. Government should give adequate attention to technical development in the country through the provision of good economic environment to encourage individual participation in business.

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