

Research Article

Self-Rating of Postgraduate Business Education Students on Acquired ICT and Management Competencies for Handling Entrepreneurship Business Challenges in South-East, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study on self-rating of postgraduate business education students on their acquired ICT and management competencies for handling entrepreneurship business challenges was necessitated by the need to ensure that the graduates of the programme in South East Nigeria acquire relevant competencies for entrepreneurial success. Two research questions guided the study and four null hypotheses were tested. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of all 300 postgraduate business education students in all public universities in the area. The entire population was studied because the size was manageable. A 30 items five-point rating scale questionnaire validated by three experts was used for data collection. The test re-test was used to establish the reliability of the instrument using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and reliability coefficient values of 0.81 and 0.88 with an overall coefficient value of 0.85 were obtained. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions determine the closeness of the respondents meanwhile analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

The findings revealed that ICT and management competencies were much acquired by the subjects for handling entrepreneurship business challenges in South East Nigeria. Programme type and gender significantly influenced the respondents' mean ratings on ICT competencies but did not significantly influence their mean ratings on management competencies.

Based on the findings, it was concluded that, relatively, the postgraduate business education students used for the study have suitably acquired ICT and management competencies to be able to successfully run entrepreneurship ventures and handled related challenges. It was, therefore recommended among others that, government of states in the south east should provide financial aids for graduates of Business Education for entrepreneurship ventures.

Keywords: Self-rating, postgraduate business education students, competencies, entrepreneurship business challenges.

Introduction

In the present competitive market, no individuals can survive without being skillful and competent. This means that graduates of the business education require not just preparation for white collar jobs but knowledge, skills and competencies for self-employment and self-reliance as well. This was why the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN, 2013) emphasized the need for acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies (both mental and physical) to enable individuals to live in and contribute significantly to the development of the society. Federal Government of Nigeria established some measures to enable one to be successful business enterprises which include the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) Scheme by the military government in 1975 which faded out

after some time. In 1985, another military government introduced Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) and National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to address the issue of graduate unemployment but recorded very minimal success (Osemeka, 2012).

In addition, the successive civilian governments retained the NDE and introduced the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) at the federal level, and State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) at the state level, SMEDAN, SURE-P, UNESCO-TVE, GEEP, YOUWIN among others (Aremu, 2011) seem not have been achieve the desired goals. Oduwaiye (2011) however noted that all these measures have so far proved to be grossly inadequate in solving the problem of graduate unemployment in Nigeria which continues to assume a critical dimension due to lack of practical skills. The present government introduces policies called N-Power among others which seem to be in existence up to date. The policy also benefits business education graduates.

Business education is one of the occupational areas in vocational and technical education in Nigeria. It is a programme of instruction that covers accounting, marketing and office technology and management (OTM) among others. Onyemah (2011) outlined the major business subjects/courses at the secondary and tertiary levels to include office practice, book keeping, business mathematics, business communication, secretarial duties, word processing, and advertising among others. Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) summarized as the goal of business education to involve: (1) Preparing students for specific career in office occupations (2) Equipping students with requisite skills for job creation and entrepreneurship and (3) Exposing students with knowledge about business, including a good blend of computer technology, which incorporates Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Edokpolor and Egbri further explained that the main objective of the programme is equip the graduates with requisite attributes (knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes) to become gainfully employed in the world of work and pursue further studies at postgraduate levels.

Business education programme at the university level has a well-articulated curriculum encompassing information and communication technology, office practice, accounting, management and marketing components (Ezenwafor and Olaniyi, 2017). Accounting to Esene (2008), the programme is offered at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in Nigerian universities. Unfortunately, Ukor (2008) observed that most graduates of business education find it difficult to succeed in entrepreneurship because they lack the relevant competencies. This could be why many of the graduates enroll in postgraduates programmes instead of staying idle. For this group, self-rating of acquired competencies for handling entrepreneurship business challenges will enable them discover their deficiencies for better in order to become successful entrepreneurs in future. There are several areas of competencies covering accounting, marketing, human relation, ICT, management, and among others. This study, however, covered information and communication technology and management because they are appear to be very important areas of competencies needed for successful entrepreneurship.

Information and communication technology (ICT) competencies involve ability to use (ICT) computer hardware and software resources for different transactions from conducting feasibility study to sourcing funds, establishing and running an enterprise. According to Okoro (2013), ICT competencies include ability to send e-mail, ability to receive e-mail, skills in producing documents with word processors. All these competencies are very essential for organizational success. Emeasoba and Ezenwafor (2014) reported that Office and Technology Management (OTM) lecturers in tertiary institutions possessed computer operation competencies to a high extent. In support, Okoye (2017) noted that ICT competencies were required by business education graduates for effective entrepreneurship practice. To Oliseh and Ihimekpen (2016), relevant ICT competencies include ability to send and receive e-mail, to use e-business, e-commerce, send and receive fax messages, use collating machine and produce accounting jobs using spreadsheet software in management.

Management refers to coordination of the human, financial and material resources of an organization to achieve its goals and objectives. According to Gibson (2011), relevant management competencies for entrepreneurship include the ability to supervise and control human and material resources of an enterprise effectively and efficiently, search for business opportunities, source start-up capitals, register the business and manage business risks. Others are ability to develop and implement a broad-based investment plan and manage time among others. Binuomote and Okoli (2015) reported that management competencies were required by business related graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise. Ezeani, Ifeanyemetalu and Ezemoyih (2012) had noted that acquisition of management competencies is important for successful operation of a business.

Competencies refer to knowledge, skills and behaviours that enable an employee to meet an established performance criterion. Enete, Amusa and Eze (2010) viewed competencies as essential knowledge and skills obtainable in a profession and those which the professionals in the field must possess and demonstrate at optimal level for effective service delivery. Quality service or job performance can only be rendered when an individual has the knowledge, competencies and attitude required in the profession which can enable them for becoming self-employment.

Self-employment refers to a situation where an individual creates, begins and takes control of the business decision rather than working for an employer. Ezenwafor and Olaniyi (2017) explained that self-employment is the act of working for oneself. It is the act of generating one's income directly from customers, clients or other organizations as opposed to being a paid employee in a public or private establishment.

Entrepreneurship entails the willingness and ability to seek out an investment opportunity, establish an enterprise based on this and run it successfully. According to Azih (2011), entrepreneurship consists of generating business ideas, identifying investment opportunities, making decisions towards exploiting the opportunities, formulating organizational objectives, conducting market research and surveys, combining service resources, establishing an enterprise, starting the business, distributing and promoting the organization's products and services; organizing the human and material resources for the attainment of the objectives of the enterprise, as well as bearing risks and uncertainties, innovations and diversifications. Owenvbiugie and Iyamu (2011) affirmed that entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of vision, change and creation. It requires an application of energy and passion towards the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions. Furthermore, Ighalo (2011) perceived entrepreneurship as the process of using available capital in any form for business endeavours in an open and free-market economy for the sole purpose of doing new things within a new philosophy of values, purpose, utility, quality and use which satisfies needs.

The subjects used in this study are male and female postgraduate business education students acquired ICT and management competencies for running PGDBE or Master and Doctoral programme. These variable was influence their level of acquisition of ICT and management competencies for handling entrepreneurship business challenges. These variables may influence their level of acquisition of ICT and management competencies for handling entrepreneurship business challenges. This is because doctoral students are expected to have acquired more experience in the world of work thereby eliciting responses that may differ from masters' students.

Okagbare (2009) posited that the rate of business failure among graduates of business education is higher among female than their male counterparts. Abanyam (2016) reported that male and female respondents differ on entrepreneurial competencies for self-employment. Emeasoba and Ezenwafor (2014) revealed that gender have no significant effect in the respondents mean ratings on their possessed computer operation and networking competencies. Binuomote and Okoli (2015) stated that gender and programme type have a significant effect on the possessed management competencies.

Okoro (2013) reported that of all businesses started each year in Nigeria, only 50 percent exists up to 18 months while less than 20 percent last beyond two years. This shows a high failure rate of 40-45 percent in the first two years and more than 50 percent not surviving beyond five years of their being established. This shows that gender has a great role to play in business operation. The high failure rate of business in Nigeria clearly shows that they are associated with numerous challenges which the operators could not handle. It was on this background that the researchers conceived this study to ascertain the self-rating of postgraduate business education students on their acquired ICT and management competencies for handling entrepreneurship business challenges in South-East Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

One major objective of Business Education is to equip graduates with skills to function as successful entrepreneurs and create jobs instead of being job seekers. However, the current endure is that most business education graduates make little or no attempt to establish entrepreneurship ventures of their own despite the abundant business opportunities in the country. Instead, they continue to besiege government offices and other establishments in search of jobs that are either extremely few in supply or even non-existent. The problem of this study, therefore, is that Nigerian business education graduates do not engage in entrepreneurships as expected in order to create jobs and reduce the level of graduate unemployment in the country. A large number of them enroll in postgraduate programmes merely to avoid staying idle possibly because they are not sure they possess the requisite competencies for entrepreneurship success. By rating themselves on acquired ICT and management competencies the subjects will discover their deficiencies and use suitable strategies to upgrade themselves.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain the level of ICT and management competencies acquired by postgraduate business education students for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria by given them the opportunities to rate themselves. Specifically, the study determined postgraduate business education students self-rating on their acquired:

- 1) Information and communication technology competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South East Nigeria.
- 2) Management competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) What is the rating of postgraduate business education students on their acquired information and communication technology competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria?
- 2) What is the rating of postgraduate business education students on their acquired management competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- 1) Respondents do not differ significantly in their mean rating on acquired information and communication technology competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria based on programme to type (PGDBE/Masters/Ph.D).
- 2) Male and female postgraduate business education students do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on acquired information and communication technology competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria.

- 3) Respondents do not differ significantly in their mean rating on acquired management competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria based on programme to type (PGDBE/Masters/Ph.D.).
- 4) Male and female postgraduate business education students do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on acquired management competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria.

Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for this study consisted of 300 postgraduate business education students in public universities in the area of study. The entire population was used for the study without sampling as the sample size was not too large. A 30-item structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study using a five-point rating scale with response categories of Very Much Acquired, Much Acquired, Moderately Acquired, Little Acquired and Very Little Acquired. The questionnaire was validated by three experts; two in business education and one from measurement and evaluation unit from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. A test re-test method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument by administering it on 20 postgraduate business education students from University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria who were not included in the study population. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and reliability co-efficient values of 0.81 and 0.88 for clusters B1 and B2 respectively with an overall coefficient value of 0.85.

The instrument was administered to the subjects in their schools through direct approach which facilitated a response rate of 288 copies (representing 96 percent) were retrieved with an attrition rate of twelve copies (representing 4 percent) and used for data analysis.

Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions based on the real limits of numbers on a five-point scale and determine the closeness of the respondents' means. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A null hypothesis was rejected where the calculated p-value was less than the 0.05 level of significance as it meant that there was significant difference. Conversely, where the calculated p-value was equal to or greater than the level of significance 0.05, it meant that there was no significant difference and the hypothesis was not rejected. However, where there was a disagreement among the three groups, the Scheffe Post-hoc test was conducted to determine the group in which such disagreement relates.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the rating of postgraduate business education students on their acquired information and communication technology competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria?

Table 1. Respondents' mean ratings on acquired ICT competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria (N =288)

S.No	ICT Competencies	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
	Ability to:			
1	Send e-mail	4.60	0.43	Very Much Acquired
2	Producing documents with word processor	4.20	0.48	Much Acquired
3	Receive and send fax messages	4.70	0.42	Very Much Acquired
4	Create agenda using contra vision electronic software	3.69	0.50	Much Acquired
5	Efficiently use spreadsheet software for work	3.54	0.53	Much Acquired
6	Receive or google information using the	4.24	0.48	Much Acquired

	internet			
7	Use tele/video conferencing	3.20	0.59	Moderately Acquired
8	Conduct research using the internet	3.50	0.54	Much Acquired
9	Use editing text on the screen using suitable commands	3.36	0.58	Moderately Acquired
10	Perform basic data processing	4.56	0.44	Very Much Acquired
11	Log on or shut-down a computer system	4.50	0.45	Very Much Acquired
12	Use Core draws and PowerPoint	3.61	0.53	Much Acquired
13	Use boarders to decorating a document	3.40	0.56	Moderately Acquired
14	Identify and use existing documents formats to create new documents	3.61	0.53	Much Acquired
15	Create website	3.31	0.57	Moderately Acquired
Cluster Mean		3.87		Much Acquired

Table 1 shows that four out of the 15 items on information and communication technology competencies listed have mean scores ranging from 4.50 to 4.70 which mean that they are very much acquired. Seven items have mean scores ranging from 3.50 to 4.24 which mean that they are much acquired while the remaining four have mean ratings ranging from 3.20 to 3.40 which indicates that they are moderately acquired. The cluster means score of 3.87 showed that, on the whole, postgraduate business education students in the area of the study indicate that they acquired much ICT competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range indicating that the respondents are not wide apart in their ratings.

Research Question 2

What is the rating of postgraduate business education students on their acquired management competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria?

Table 2. Respondents’ mean ratings on acquired management competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria (N =288)

S.No	Management Competencies	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
Ability to:				
1	Develop suitable business plan	3.50	0.61	Much Acquired
2	Organize small scale business	3.83	0.57	Much Acquired
3	Coordinate business activities effectively	3.50	0.62	Much Acquired
4	Supervise business effectively	4.69	0.49	Very Much Acquired
5	Apply integrated business skills	4.54	0.52	Very Much Acquired
6	Maintain constant alertness to market changes and technical trends	3.44	0.63	Moderately Acquired
7	Observe business ethnics	3.20	0.66	Moderately Acquired
8	Interpret market information	3.62	0.58	Much Acquired
9	Manage time effectively	4.38	0.54	Much Acquired
10	Motivate self and others for business growth	4.56	0.51	Very Much Acquired
11	Manage crises whenever they occur in the business	3.50	0.61	Much Acquired
12	Manage customers relations effectively	3.56	0.60	Much Acquired
13	Manage employees suitably	4.40	0.55	Much Acquired
14	Manage stock to avoid stock outs	4.60	0.50	Very Much Acquired
15	Control stock to avoid overstocks	4.43	0.53	Much Acquired
Cluster Mean		3.93		Much Acquired

Table 2 shows that four out of the 15 items listed have mean scores ranging from 4.54 to 4.69 which mean that they are very much acquired. Nine items have mean scores ranging from 3.50 to 4.43 which mean that they are much acquired while the remaining two items have mean ratings of 3.20 and 3.44 which indicate that they are moderately acquired.

The cluster means score of 3.93 showed that, on the whole, postgraduate business education students in the area of the study indicate that they acquired much management competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range indicating that the respondents are not wide apart in their ratings.

Testing the Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Respondents do not differ significantly in their mean rating on acquired information and communication technology competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria based on programme to type (PGDBE/Masters/Ph.D.).

Table 3. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) summary of respondents’ mean ratings on their acquired ICT competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria based on programme to type.

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	P-value	Remarks
Between Groups	1.526	2	.763	34.574	.000	Significant
Within Groups	4.055	285	.022			
Total	5.581	287				

Table 3 shows that the calculated F-value is 34.574 at 2 and 285 degree of freedom with a p-value of .000 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05. This means that there is significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on acquired ICT competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges based on programme type and the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 4. Scheffe post hoc test on respondents’ mean ratings on their acquired information and communication technology competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria based on programme to type.

(I) programme type	(J) programme type	Mean Difference (I-J)	P-value
PGDBE	M.Sc.	.08455*	.002
	Ph.D.	-.11684*	.000
M.Sc.	PGDBE	-.08455*	.002
	Ph.D.	-.20139*	.000
Ph.D.	PGDBE	.11684*	.000
	M.Sc.	.20139*	.000
Significant.			

The Scheffe post hoc test of multiple comparisons in Table 4 shows that the difference is between students of PGDBE programme and those on M.Sc. programme on one hand and students on M.Sc. programme and those on Ph.D. programme on the other hand.

Hypothesis 2

Male and female postgraduate business education students do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on acquired information and communication technology competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria.

Table 5. Summary of t-test analysis of male and female postgraduate business education students' rating on acquired information and communication technology competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria (N=288)

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	α	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Male	83	3.12	.15	0.05	286	2.93	0.000	Significant
Female	205	3.10	.10					

Table 5 shows that t-value of 2.93, at degree of freedom of 286 and the p-value of .000 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05. This means that male and female postgraduate business education students differed significantly in their ratings on acquired ICT competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South East Nigeria and the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 3

Respondents do not differ significantly in their mean rating on acquired management competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria based on programme to type (PGDBE/Masters/Ph.D).

Table 6. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) summary of respondents' mean ratings on their acquired management competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria based on programme to type.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value	Remarks
Between Groups	.043	2	.033	11.168	1.88	Not Significant
Within Groups	1.615	285	.022			
Total	1.658	287				

Table 6 shows that the calculated F-value is 11.168 at 2 and 287 degree of freedom with a p-value of .000 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on their acquired management competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges based on programme type and the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Hypothesis 4

Male and female postgraduate business education students do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on acquired management competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria.

Table 7. Summary of t-test analysis of male and female postgraduate business education students' rating on acquired management competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria.

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	α	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Male	83	3.27	.19	0.05	286	-3.77	.100	No Significant
Female	205	3.17	.21					

Table 7 shows that t-value of -3.77 at degree of freedom of 286 and the p-value of .100 which is greater than the alpha value of 0.05. This implies that male and female postgraduate business education students do not significantly differ in their mean ratings on acquired management competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South East Nigeria and the hypothesis was not rejected.

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that postgraduate business education students indicated that they have acquired much ICT competencies for handling entrepreneurial business challenges in South-East Nigeria. This finding agrees with Okoro (2013) who revealed that ICT competencies were highly possessed by university postgraduate business education students to handle entrepreneurship business challenges in Nigeria. It also agrees with Emeasoba and Ezenwafor (2014) who reported that Office and Technology Management lecturers in tertiary institutions in Anambra and Enugu States possessed computer operation competencies to a high extent. Furthermore, the finding supports Okoye (2017) who averred that business education graduates require ICT competencies for effective entrepreneurship practice.

The finding further revealed that programme type and gender significantly influenced postgraduate business education students' mean ratings on their acquired ICT competencies. The finding agrees with Abanyam (2016) who reported that male and female respondents differ on entrepreneurial competencies for self-employment but disagrees with Emeasoba and Ezenwafor (2014) who revealed that gender has no significant effect in the respondents mean ratings on their possessed computer operation and networking competencies. This disagreement could be as a result of the status of the subjects since Emeasoba and Ezenwafor used practicing lecturers of an option in Business Education while the current study used postgraduate business education students who have not experience in teaching.

Furthermore, the study revealed that postgraduate business education students indicated that they have acquired much management competencies. This is in line with Ezeani, Ifeanyemetalu and Ezemoyih (2012) noted that acquisitions of management competencies are important for successful operation of a business enterprise. It also supports Binuomote and Okoli (2015) who revealed that management competencies were required by business related graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise. Therefore, they have competent in ability to plan for small or medium scale businesses, ability to source funds for the running of a small scale business among others.

The findings further revealed that programme type and gender did not significantly influence the mean ratings of the subjects on their acquired management competencies. The finding agrees with Abanyam (2016) who reported that male and female respondents differ on entrepreneurial competencies for self-employment. However, finding disagrees with Binuomote and Okoli (2015) who revealed that gender and programme type have a significant effect in respondents' mean ratings on their possessed management competencies.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that, relatively, the postgraduate business education students used for the study have suitably acquired ICT and management competencies to be able to successfully run entrepreneurship ventures and handled related challenges.

Recommendations

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

- 1) Postgraduate Business Education students used in the study should carefully venture into entrepreneurship ventures on graduation as they have relevant competencies to succeed.
- 2) Business Education lecturers should encourage and motivate Postgraduate Business Education students to start their own business on graduation instead of joining the long of unemployed graduates.
- 3) Government of states in the south east should provide financial aids for graduates of Business Education for entrepreneurship ventures.

- 4) The federal government should address the problems of insecurity to enhance entrepreneurship development in the country as a panacea to unemployment and poverty.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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