

Entrepreneurial Competencies Required of Business Education Graduates as Perceived by Business Educators and Operators of Small Scale Business Organisations in Delta State

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This study was conducted to determine the rating of entrepreneurial competencies required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship in Delta State of Nigeria. The population was all registered small-scale businesses and all business educators in tertiary institutions in Delta State. The population which was also the sample of the study consisted of 670 operators of small-scale business organizations in the three senatorial zones of the State and 138 business educators in the eight tertiary institutions in Delta State. This gave a population of 808 for the study. Questionnaire was used as instrument for gathering data for the study. one research question was answered and one research hypothesis was tested at 0.05 levels of significance. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation estimates, t-test and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics. Results from the data analyzed showed that critical personal competencies, was identified as required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship. It was discovered that operators of small-scale business organizations did not differ significantly on their mean rating of the critical personal competencies required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship. The results further showed that business educators in the three types of tertiary institutions in Delta State do not differ significantly in their mean ratings of all the critical personal cluster competencies required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others, that, educational institutions and private small business organizations should improve their collaborative efforts to create enabling environment for Business Education Graduates to imbibe necessary industrial experiences in the identified entrepreneurial competencies that will translate to a successful entrepreneurship career on graduation.

Keywords:

Entrepreneurship,
Competencies,
Business education,
Graduates,
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organization

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Background to the Study

The beauty of Nigerian educational objectives as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) is that it aims at the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies, both mental and physical, as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society. This provision is in conformity with one of the objectives of business education, which states inter alia, "to equip graduates with the right skills that will enable them to engage in a life of work in the office as well as for self-employment" (Agbobu and Tibi, 2004:24). Business Education therefore, is directed towards preparing individuals for the business world as employees, entrepreneurs, and employers of labour. Thus, the form of education intended in the National Policy on Education, is to make Business Education a requisite for entrepreneurial development.

It is on this note that Hajiya Uwani Yahaya; Chairman, Presidential Committee on Entrepreneurship Education (2007) informs, that the directive by the Federal Government to make Entrepreneurship Education compulsory in all higher institutions in the country was informed by the realization that the types of education offered students in most of the nation's tertiary institutions have constrained the entrepreneurial capacity of the youths to contribute meaningfully to national development. The Government took the action to checkmate the growing incidence of graduate unemployment in the country.

Obi and Udonquak (2008) note in their findings, that more than 86% of over 50,000 graduates from Nigerian tertiary institutions remained unemployed even two years after graduation. They ascribe this to lack of requisite skills from the graduates. The researcher is of the view that if lack of requisite skills were to be the only reason for graduate unemployment, the graduates of business education would be excused. This is because one of the main objectives of the business education programme is acquisition of requisite skills. That, graduates of business education have not shown enough enthusiasm in establishing business enterprises of their own in recent times leaves much to be desired. It is on this note that Nwazor (1998), Ojukwu (2000), Akpotohwo and Amahi (2006) on separate occasions observe, that the challenges of survival, which business education graduates face in Nigeria in recent times raise serious issues for business educators and enterprise operators.

The implication of the foregoing for business education is that, without the right acquisition of relevant entrepreneurial competencies, graduates of business education would find the industrial market most unrewarding and unfavourable in terms of job creation. This will in turn reduce the tendency of business education graduates besieging the State Ministries in search of government jobs that are either extremely few in supply or non-existent (Okorodudu, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

The spate of graduate unemployment in the country raises serious concern for business education graduates. In order to overcome the problem of unemployment and persistent mis-matches between graduates' qualifications and the needs of the labour market, tertiary institutions curricula should be structured to enhance the employability of graduates. It is no longer debatable that tertiary institutions in the state seem to produce large numbers of Business Administration, Business Education and Vocational Education graduates without

entrepreneurial tendencies. Thus, the curricula of most tertiary education institutions do not seem to satisfy the current entrepreneurial demands. This worrisome situation has exposed the fact that most business education graduates make little or no attempt to establish small-scale businesses of their own, despite the abundant business opportunities in Delta State.

Surely, there are some entrepreneurial competencies which are often deemed to be essential for any successful legitimate business enterprise. There was therefore, the need to determine and establish the extent to which critical personal competencies are required of business education graduates. The above-mentioned issues revealed a need for the present study.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the study ascertained the level of relevance ascribed to the:

1. Critical personal competencies required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

1. What are the levels of relevance ascribed to the critical personal competencies required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship?

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated and was tested at 0.05 alpha significance levels:

Ho: Business Educators in tertiary institutions and operators of small-scale business organizations in Delta State do not differ significantly in their mean ratings of the critical personal competencies required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship.

Review of Literature

According to Akpotohwo (2005), what motivates the businessman in this unique risk-bearing activity is “profit”. And so, “profit maximization” becomes his watchword. But when the business becomes more complex and sophisticated, the entrepreneurial focus becomes that of “profit optimization”. Entrepreneurship is therefore a term used broadly in connection with the innovative modern industrial business leaders. It is useful to start by asking further who the entrepreneur is, what he does, how his activities affect the creation of wealth and job opportunities. Obobolo (2001) therefore describes an entrepreneur as an innovator or developer who recognizes and seizes opportunities; converts those opportunities into marketable ideas; adds value through time, effort, money or skills; assumes the risk of the competitive market place to implement these ideas; and realizes the reward from these efforts.

Shapero (1998), whom many consider to be the guru of entrepreneurship, believes that entrepreneurial activity occurs when something new and creative has happened. That is, an individual or group takes on an initiative, by bringing their resources together and thus operating with relative economy. They realize success or failure with the new endeavour. Some theorists such as Utomi (2005) and Porter (2009) have argued that entrepreneurship is critical to the economic development of any modern nation.

Furthermore, Hawkins, Coney and Best (1990), note that a society that does not admire risk-taking is unlikely to develop enough entrepreneurs to achieve great economic change and growth. Risk-taking therefore, is the underlining philosophy of entrepreneurship life, the value of which gives birth to new product introductions, new channels of distribution and new advertising themes. Thus, entrepreneurship involves one starting his own business and rising with it. However, Williams and Powell (1998), see it as the ownership and operation of a small-scale business. According to this view, this description is related to those endeavours which are established and ongoing but could benefit from upgrading and for redirection, through the refinement of entrepreneurial skills acquisition.

Some of the greatest rewards of entrepreneurship according to Akpotohwo (2005), citing Dale, are money and job satisfaction resulting from the first requisite for a new business, which also entails the greatest risks. Steinhoff and Burgess (1993) rightly observe that entrepreneurship is the spirit behind small-scale businesses, which is at the root of the British and American industrialization since 1750, under the guise of 'Industrial Revolution'. Thus, Hisrich (1998) in his study, described entrepreneurship as a process of creation, acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies to equip the individual to live, be self-reliant and contribute substantially to economic development of the society. This is conspicuously enshrined in the aims and objectives linked to Nigeria's Philosophy of Education.

In the separate views of Oshagbemi (1998), Okenwa (1999), and Omorojie (2004), the entrepreneur was conceptualized as the man who perceives business opportunities and takes advantage of the scarce resources to use them. It is he alone who bears the non-insurable risks in the enterprise, and it is he who directs the human and material resources to his business objective. Thus, to qualify as an entrepreneur, it is not sufficient to be a businessman just managing an enterprise. The entrepreneur has to be an originator of profitable business ideas.

According to Nwoye (1999), citing Schumpeter, the single function which constitutes entrepreneurship is INNOVATION. Whilst the business director is mostly engaged in "managerial" activities which are non-entrepreneurial, entrepreneurship involves the ability to gain command at and combine resources in a new way which will be profitable. Entrepreneurship therefore implies the ability to be prepared to risk personal energy and financial resources to achieve unpredictable results. Porter (2009) argues, however, that as far as production process are concerned in developing economies like Nigeria, the critical entrepreneurship function that is needed is the ability of "adaptation" of production processes to suit the local situation, not what Schumpeter called "innovation". The argument of Porter is that developing countries benefit more by merely modifying existing technology to suit local variations rather than developing that technology themselves from the start.

Alawode (2009), reviving Drucker's conception, sees an entrepreneur as one who always searches for change, responds to it and exploits it as an opportunity. The basic element in this concept is change. Udochukwu (2001), citing 1993 Harvard Business School Symposium, conceptualizes entrepreneurship as the attempt to create value by an individual or individuals, through (a) the recognition of significant (generally innovative) business

opportunity (b) the drive to manage risk-taking appropriate to that project, and (c) the exercise of communicative and management skills necessary to mobilize rapidly the human, material and financial resources that will bring the project to fruition.

From the above analysis, entrepreneurial tasks or competencies could be identified in competency-based programmes by taking a task list and validating it in the local business setting (Azuka, E. B., Nwosu, B. O., Kanu, I. N. and Agomuo, E. E. (2006). These tasks or competencies must be known to be needed for job or occupational success rather than what are believed to be needed. Competency-based education, no doubt has advantages to the employer, teacher and student. It gives the business community a measurable way to assess the local vocational curriculum. It also helps in identifying potential employees/occupation areas and guarantees that these employees or occupational areas will have actual job/occupational competencies.

It is noted that a curriculum based on validated tasks or competencies is the best proof of accountability that exist. A validated task list gives the teacher a communication base from which to articulate the programme to administrators, peers, students and advisory committees. It is a valuable curriculum – planning tool and provides the basis for selection of appropriate instructional strategies. On the part of the students, the first advantage of competency-based education is that it is the first instructional programme which tells the students in advance what they will have to do and how well they must do it to be adjudged as competent.

Competencies Required for Successful Entrepreneurship

Several authorities have come up with some major competencies required for successful entrepreneurship. These competencies are hereby discussed below:

Critical personal competencies

Hisrich and Peters (2002) introduced the concept of 'critical success factors' or 'critical personal competencies'. These are interacting influences contributing to the success of a business. These factors are considered critical, if their presence or absence have very significant effects in achieving the set objective of a business. The following is the summary of the critical factors often claimed to be responsible for success in small-scale businesses as exemplified by (Oshagbemi, 1998:12 and Ojukwu, 2000:35):

- a. Experience in the intended business;
- b. Viable idea which can be translated into a product or service to meet customers' demands;
- c. Perception of probability of success in starting, and sustaining the business when it is started;
- d. Hard work, self-confidence and luck;
- e. Availability of business opportunity in the society and the ability to identify it,
- f. Successful role model to emulate;
- g. Availability of capable local manpower, especially where specialized and technical skills are required to launch and operate the business.
- h. Government support through supportive set of institutions;

- i. Credit/supplier assistance and access to capital;
- j. Level of motivation i.e. a strong desire to start a business;
- k. Feasibility report before actual commencement of business to assess viability of the intended business;
- l. Right social connections;
- m. Ability to take risk, coupled with strong urge to succeed rather than avoiding failure;
- n. Pioneer in the type of business venture;
- o. Family support;
- p. Having a clear business goal;
- q. Level of education i.e. general literacy and especially business education;
- r. Nature of competition in the line of business;
- s. Choosing the right location
- t. Human relation skills;
- u. Information i.e. possessing knowledge about the business trends, sources of funds, market demands and technology relevant to the intended business. Capable local advisory service may be sought;
- v. Management ability i.e. knowledge in the functional areas of business such as organizational, financial management and decision making skills.

Hisrich and Peters, Oshagbemi, and Ojukwu agree that potential business entrepreneurs could use the established parameters to determine whether they rate high or low on the scale of preparedness of entrepreneurs for successful launching into small-scale business ventures. By so doing, the elements of risks and uncertainties in entrepreneurship can be reduced to a great extent. Akpotohwo and Amahi (2006) seem to have acted on the suggestions of Oshagbemi and Ojukwu when they categorized the 22 critical factors into two categories namely; critical personal attributes and critical environmental helps. The summary of this categorization is stated below:

Category A: Critical personal attributes

- 1. Experience in the intended business.
- 2. Viable idea, which can be translated into a product or service to meet customers' demands; and their buying habits.
- 3. Perception of probability of success in starting and sustaining the business when it is started;
- 4. Hard work, self-confidence and luck;
- 5. Availability of business opportunity in the society and ability to identify it;
- 6. Level of motivation i.e. a strong desire to start a business;
- 7. Ability to take risk coupled with a strong urge to succeed rather than avoiding failure.
- 8. Pioneer in the type of business venture;
- 9. Having a clear business goal; and ability to identify when too many targets are set and the lack of resources to pursue all the opportunities.
- 10. Level of education, i.e. General literacy; especially in business education.
- 11. Choosing the right business location;
- 12. Human relations skill and ability to communicate effectively and to connect markets
- 13. Managerial ability i.e. knowledge in functional areas of business such as organization and decision making skills.

14. Successful role models to emulate;

Category B: Critical environmental helps

Akpotohwo and Amahi classified the critical environment helps which also have some elements of critical personal factors as follows:

1. Ability to identify capable local manpower; especially where specialized and technical skills are required to launch and operate the business;
2. Government support through supportive set of institutions;
3. Credit/ supplier assistance and access to needed capital;
4. Feasibility report before actual commencement of business to assess viability of the intended business;
5. Right social connections;
6. Family support;
7. Nature of competition in the line of business,
8. Information i.e. possessing information about the business trends, sources of funds, market demands and also, technology relevant to the intended business.

Fashoba, (2007) agreeing with the views of Akpotohwo and Amahi, believes that there is no enduring success without commitment. He maintains that there is no great success in life without great commitment. Successful entrepreneurs are committed to their course of action to realize their desired outcomes. Fashoba further observes that successful people in any field are not necessarily the best and the brightest, neither are they the fastest or the strongest. What you will find is that they are the ones with most commitment. Human relations skill also involves personal traits which are very important for successful management of small scale business enterprises.

Okenwa, (1999) reports that entrepreneurship personal traits include: being entrepreneurial, risk-taking ability, self confidence, task-result oriented, hard work, perseverance, resourcefulness, flexibility, initiative and creativity, relating well with people, foresight and perceptive ability. These will among other things make an individual bold to take calculated risk of starting a business with strong desire/urge to succeed rather than avoiding failure. Eleanor (2007) believes that successful people are committed to their course of action to realize their desired outcome; and that they believe in the power of commitment.

Added to the 22 critical success factors are such other critical issues such as: commitment (earlier discussed above), emulating role models, continuity, and consistency. Fashoba opines that a role model is a person who is regarded as an excellent example to copy or imitated by others who desire to achieve a similar accomplishment in the field of human endeavour. Role modeling is not idol worship, but a more easy way to achieve desired result by embracing its concept. It enables the entrepreneur move faster in the attainment of success. Life without a bearing is a burden. Take your time to locate who has been where you are going. Learn from such a person and improve upon his style. This is the whole essence of Role Modeling (Fashoba, 2007).

The researcher agrees with the views of Fashoba that continuity and consistency are the principles of positive mentality to commitment and role modeling. It will get the entrepreneur to the top and he will succeed when he combines the other 22 critical success factors. Since role modeling has already been included in the critical environmental helps, commitment, continuity and consistency can be included as part of critical personal attributes that are relevant for successful entrepreneurship career required of the graduates of Business Education. Ojukwu, having suggested a careful categorization of the critical success factors, emphasized that such factors are considered critical if their presence or absence have very significant effect in achieving the set objective.

A number of research studies carried out in many states of Nigeria focused more on the single skill requirement needed or possessed by entrepreneurs or employees for effective management of business organizations. These include: Igbo 1999, Ndozianychukwu 2004, Ohakwe 2004, Akpotohwo and Amahi 2006, Umemezia 2006, Okpan 2006, and Azubuike 2006 respectively. None of these studies to the best of the researcher's knowledge was carried out to specifically identify and determine in grouped clusters the entrepreneurial competencies required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship from the view points of business educators and operators of small-scale business organizations in Delta State.

Method

The study utilized the cross-sectional survey design. The population for this study was all the 670 small-scale businesses in the three Senatorial Zones and all the 138 business educators in Delta State. This produced a total population of 808 for the study. Since the population was enough for study, there was no need for sampling. The instrument that was utilized for data collection was the researcher's structured questionnaire titled: "Entrepreneurial Competencies Required of Business Education Graduates for Successful Entrepreneurship" (ECREBEGSE). The researcher developed the instrument with the assistance of relevant literature, and inputs from specialist in entrepreneurship education. The instrument has two parts. **Part I** contains the institutional data of the respondents. While **Part II** comprises a section which was organized in a cluster such that the respondents expressed their opinions on a four points scale modified by (Nworgu in Ehiemetalor and Nwandiani, 2001) as follows: Highly Relevant (HR) 4, Relevant (R) 3, Not Too Relevant (NTR) 2, Not Relevant (NR) 1. Part II contains 18 items on critical personal competencies cluster.

The instrument was subjected to both face and construct validation. Three experts in Business Education and two experts in Measurement and Evaluation subjected the instrument to face validation. They provided some suggestions that improved the validity of the instrument. Also, the twenty-four items instrument was subjected to construct validation using the Principal Component Extraction Method and the Varimax rotation system. In all, six items were dropped after the construct validation leaving a total of eighteen (18) items.

The reliability of the instrument was established using a pilot test which was carried out using 50 small-scale business proprietors in Benin metropolis; and 20 business educators from Colleges of Education Ekiadolor and Igueben. The Internal consistency of the instrument

was sought using data collected from the responses of the 70 respondents in the pilot test. The data collated were subjected to Cronbach Coefficient Alpha measure of internal consistency using (SPSS) for the analysis. Results of the reliability indices showed a 0.74 coefficient. While the overall result of the pilot test yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.92, which was considered high enough for the measure of internal consistency of the instrument.

Data Collection

The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of twelve research assistants who were adequately briefed in a training session on what was expected of them during the exercise. 613 instruments were returned out of the 670 administered to operators of small-scale business organizations; while 122 instruments were returned out of the 138 administered to business educators in tertiary institutions in Delta State. In all, 735 out of the 808 administered questionnaires for the study were retrieved from respondents. The returned instruments constituted 92% and 88% rates respectively.

Simple descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data gathered from the questionnaire. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the degree of relevance of the items that relate to the research question in the questionnaire. Nominal values such as (4, 3, 2, and 1) were assigned to different options of the item response categories of the instrument with their upper limits as follows: HR (4 - 4.00), R (3 - 3.00), NTR (2 - 2.49), and NR (1 - 1.49) respectively. The two directional null hypotheses H_0 , formulated for the study was tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test. The null hypothesis was retained when the calculated t- value is less than the critical t- value and rejected when calculated t- value is greater than or equal to the t-critical value.

Findings

Research question

What are the critical personal competencies required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship? Summary of results obtained from the two groups is shown in Table 1 Below.

Table 1: Business Educators and small-scale business operators mean and standard deviation ratings of the critical personal^x competencies required of business education graduates

A: Critical personal Competencies Cluster	Mean	S.D	Remarks
1. Ability to exhibit self-confidence in a chosen business.	3.65	.60	HR
2. Ability to exhibit viable ideas.	3.63	.56	HR
3. Personal experience in the intended business.	3.50	.61	R
4. Ability to have a clear business goal.	3.56	.64	HR
5. Possession of general literacy	3.15	.89	R
6. Ability to choose/select the right business location.	3.59	.63	HR
7. Ability to identify available business opportunity in the society.	3.36	.68	R
8. Ability to take calculated risk.	3.27	.79	R
9. A strong desire to start a business.	3.36	.70	R
10. Ability to be a pioneer in the type of business venture.	2.40	1.00	NR
11. Ability to identify successful role models to emulate in a chosen business.	3.14	.71	R
12. Ability to prepare an acceptable feasibility study/ report in a chosen business.	3.24	.77	R
13. Ability to adapt promptly to changing nature of competition in the line of business.	3.05	.88	R
14. Ability to identify/utilize government supports.	2.81	.88	R
15. Ability to identify credit/supplier assistance.	2.77	.89	R
16. Ability to identify and effectively utilize available local manpower.	2.99	.84	R
17. Ability to have the right social/political connections.	2.44	.98	NR
18. Acquisition of adequate knowledge in Business	3.06	.84	R
Grand Mean	3.17		Relevant

Table 1 shows the mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation ratings of business educators and operators of small-scale business organizations on level of relevance of the critical personal competencies required of business education graduates. The respondents rated the competencies in items 10 and 17 as not relevant with a mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation of 2.40, 1.00 and 2.44, 0.98. The items not required include: ability of being a pioneer in the type of business venture they may be involved in, and ability to have the right social/political connections. Four items (items 1, 2, 4 and 6) were highly required. The other items in the cluster are required. The grand mean (\bar{x}) for the cluster is 3.17.

Hypotheses

Business educators in tertiary institutions and operators of small-scale business organizations in Delta State do not differ significantly in their mean rating of the critical personal competencies required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship.

Table 2: t – test comparison between Business Educators in tertiary institutions and operators of small-scale business organizations in Delta State on the critical personal competencies required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship.

Variable	Critical Personal Competencies Required of Business Education Graduates					
	SD	N	Df	Calculated t-Value	Critical t-Value	Decision
Business Educators	56.44	10.70	122			Retain
			733	-0.47	1.96	null
Operators of Small-Scale Businesses	57.03	12.94	613			hypothesis

• P < .05

Table 2 shows the mean difference between business educators and operators of small-scale business organization with respect to the critical personal competencies. The mean score for business educators is 56.44 and that of the operators of small-scale businesses is 57.03. The calculated t- value is -0.47 and the critical t- value is 1.96. The critical t- value is greater than the calculated t- value. The null hypothesis is therefore retained. Business educators and operators of small-scale business organization do not significantly differ in their mean rating of the critical personal competencies. Therefore, there is a general agreement by both business educators and operators of small-scale business organizations on the relevance of 16 of the 18 items listed in the critical personal competencies required of business education graduates. However, they agree that ability of being a pioneer in the type of business venture and ability to have the right social/political connections are not required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship.

Discussion

The findings from the result of the analysis of the research question in table 1 shows that business educators in tertiary institutions and operators of small-scale business organizations in Delta State rate the critical personal competencies as generally relevant and therefore required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship. However with a grand mean of 3.17, it is difficult to reconcile why the competencies adjudged as relevant can be associated with low mean ratings of 2.81 and 2.77 on items 14 (ability to identify and utilize Government supports through supportive agencies) and item 15 (ability to identify credit/supplier assistance) respectively. The reason for the researcher's expression of surprise stemmed from the impression given by Oshagbemi (1998) and which agrees with the researcher's view that recognizing Government supports through its supportive agencies and identification of credit/supplier assistance have become so critical to the success of any business that have survival instinct for any potential entrepreneur to ignore. The findings in items 10 and 17 also reveal that ability of being a pioneer in the type of business venture and ability to have the right social/political connections are not required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship.

In any case, critical personal competencies are relevant and therefore required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship. The finding agrees with the views of Fashoba (2007) that commitment, continuity and consistency are the principles of positive mentality to commitment and role modeling. It will get the entrepreneur to the top and he will succeed when he combines the other 22 critical success factors which include the critical personal competencies. He observes that these competencies can be included as part of critical personal attribute that are relevant for successful entrepreneurship career required of business education graduates. Hisrich and Peters, Oshagbemi (1998) and Ojukwu (2000), Akpotohwo and Amahi (2006), having suggested a careful categorization of the critical success factors, emphasized that such factors are considered critical if their presence or absence have very significant effect in achieving the objective of the enterprise.

This finding also agrees with the work of Azubuikwe (2006) who notes that entrepreneurship is about self-reliance in employment, in creativity, and in risk-taking. Tibi and Egwuelu (2004) also agree that success in entrepreneurial education requires more from the trainee's willingness to accept responsibility for his own work. They emphasize that the trainee must be guided to learn a great deal about his own capabilities and develop interest in pursuing goals which are compatible with what he wants in life. They opine that the risk and failure may be present; the trainee takes risks by assuming responsibility for his actions and failure is accepted as learning experiences in the learning scenario. Meredith et al (1998) supports this finding when he asserts that some entrepreneurs succeed only after experiencing many failures. Learning from past experiences will help to channel the trainee's actions to obtain more positive results, and success will result from persistent efforts.

Onu (2005) agrees with the finding by observing that local successful entrepreneurs have indicated an educational need in the areas of finance, strategic planning, marketing (especially in distribution) and management. Although formal education is not the ultimate in starting a new business as shown in the success of some high school dropouts, Carnegie (2003) agrees that it provides a good background especially if it is related to the field of the venture concerned. The study however failed to agree with two of the components of the critical personal competencies as suggested by Hisrich and Peters, Oshagbemi and Ojukwu, and Akpotohwo and Amahi. These competencies are: ability of being a pioneer in the type of business venture; and ability to have the right social/political connections.

Findings on Hypotheses

Findings from the test of hypothesis in table 2 showed no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in tertiary institutions and operators of small-scale business organizations on the cluster under the critical personal competencies required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship. The finding is in agreement with the works of Akpotohwo and Amahi (2006) who categorized the 22 critical factors into critical personal attributes and critical environmental helps. Their study reveals a general agreement on the 11 factors out of the 13 critical personal attributes considered important for entrepreneurship success. However, 2 critical personal attributes (pioneer in the type of business venture and level of education) were considered not too important. The factor of 'a successful role model to emulate' conflicts with the finding of this study as it reveals that it is

not relevant. However, the findings show the critical personal factors, which are necessary for a successful entrepreneurship. This has a lot of implication for entrepreneurship competencies needed by graduate entrepreneurs for effective management of small-scale businesses.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

Business educators in tertiary institutions and operators of small scale business organizations in Delta State rate the critical personal competencies as generally relevant and therefore required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship. The findings also reveal that being a pioneer in the type of business venture and ability to have the right social/political connections are not required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship. The findings reveal that ability to conduct interview for hiring of employees is not required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship. It however shows that business educators in tertiary institutions and operators of small-scale business organizations rate managerial competencies as relevant and therefore required of business education graduates for successful entrepreneurship. The findings of this study have some educational implications for entrepreneurship education.

Recommendations

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

1. The curriculum planners should include the teaching of the identified entrepreneurship competencies in the curriculum for entrepreneurship education in our tertiary institutions (that is, the Universities, Colleges of Education and the Polytechnics), so that graduates from these institutions can establish their businesses and succeed.
2. Business Educators should impart on the students the relevant identified competencies which will help create employment opportunities, build self-confidence/innovative tendencies, develop risk management capabilities, and reduce the level of unemployment and all forms of social vices especially among young graduates.
3. The study will enable business educators in the tertiary institutions review their instructional strategies/methods towards equipping business education students for the world of work as employers of labour and thus contributing to the economic development of the country.
4. The State Government through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry should work in collaboration with business educators in the tertiary institutions to organize workshops and seminars on contemporary issues in entrepreneurship education. This will assist in the continuous updating of competencies acquisition by both the business educators and the potential graduates of business education on current information on how to succeed in business.

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