

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND THEIR ROLES IN FOSTERING SELF-EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AMONG POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS OF BUSINESS EDUCATION

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Abstract

The study examined the roles of entrepreneurship and office technology and management (OTM) skills in fostering self-employment opportunities among postgraduate students of business education in Universities in South-West, Nigeria. Two research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. A quantitative research design was used to achieve the specific aims of the study. The population comprised all postgraduate students of business education in Universities in South-West, Nigeria. A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting a total of 60 postgraduate students of business education, covering Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), Master of Education (M.Ed), Mphil and PhD. Self-developed instrument, titled: "Entrepreneurship and OTM Skills and Self-Employment Opportunities" was used for data collection, with 0.91 reliability coefficient value. Mean was used in answering research questions 1 and 2. Null hypothesis was tested using multiple regression analysis. The analysis revealed that risk taking, ICT, creativity, innovative, accounting, management, resourcefulness, distributive and leadership skills were among the required entrepreneurship skills for self-employment among postgraduates of business education. The analysis also revealed that technology, internet, problem solving, presentation, communication, typing and note-taking thinking, critical, attention-detail, customer service, effective time management, flexibility and adaptability skills were among the required OTM skills for self-employment among postgraduate students of business education. The analysis also revealed a significant relationship between entrepreneurship/OTM skills and self-employment opportunities among postgraduates of business education ($r = 0.740$, $p < .05$). The analysis further revealed that about 54% of the variance in self-employment opportunities among postgraduate students of business education was determined by the acquisition of entrepreneurship and OTM skills (54.3%, Adj. $R^2 = 0.543$). The study recommended, among others, that OTM curriculum should be constantly reviewed and updated to accommodate new skills needed by OTM graduates for self-employment.

Keywords: Business Education, Entrepreneurship Skills, Office Technology Management and Skills, Self-Employment.

Introduction

One of the challenges facing Nigerian economy today is the issue of graduates' unemployment and this precarious situation has become a great concern to the government and all well-meaning citizens. It is expected that University graduates should possess skills and ability to become self-employed. Self-employment is a form of labour market status which encompass a wide-range of different activities. Individuals may choose to be self-employed for different reasons, and as a result, the self-employed group may be highly heterogeneous and self-employed may be identified as entrepreneurial, single employee micro-businesses (Olanipekun, Sokefun & Akinlabi, 2021). Self-employment may comprise a far less desirable state chosen reluctantly by individuals who are unable to find appropriate paid employment under current labour market conditions. For example, individuals who need flexible working hours might choose self-employment if a paid employment contract offering sufficient flexibility is unavailable (Olanipekun *et al.*, 2021). Mustapha (2019) reiterated that self-employment is a situation where an individual creates, begins and takes control of the business decision rather than working for an employer. Afolabi, Kareem, Okubanjo, Ogunbanjo and Anikan (2017) described self-employment as act of working for one self. University graduates may decide to become self-employed due to a number of factors, and in view of this, the self-employed may be highly complex or heterogeneous. Some may be identified as entrepreneurial or sole-proprietorship micro business. Ajonbadi and Adekoya (2017) reiterated that many take self-employments as working definition of entrepreneurship but in their own opinion they see desire for independence entrepreneurship mindset as one of the major determinants of entrepreneurship. They identified the following as determinants of graduate's self-employment; entrepreneurship orientation, entrepreneurship mindset, self-esteem and mentorship and concluded that many graduates from Nigerian universities lack some of these attributes that can make them become self-employed.

The possession of entrepreneurship and office technology and management (OTM) skills may provide opportunity for business education graduates venturing to venture into office documentary businesses. A skill is the knowledge that enables an individual to meet established performance criteria. It is the ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustained efforts to smoothly and adaptively perform functions involving ideas, things and people and can be fostered through a dual form business education programme. Business education is an education that focused on skill building, development of students' creativity ideas, ability to do market research for venturing into new market-environment. The skills acquired through the exposure to a dual form of business education programme can help students to turn ideas into goods and services that can command commercial purpose. Also, business education is discipline that prepares students for gainful employment and sustainable livelihood (Ijirshar & Ayidiowu, 2015). Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) and Edokpolor and Oduma (2018) defined business education as an academic field of study aimed at preparing recipients for career progression in various occupations and professions; equipping recipients with the necessary knowledge and skills for entrepreneurial career; and providing recipients with the skills and knowledge about business venturing. The skills acquired through the exposure to a dual form of business education programme can provide opportunity for students to launch and manage entrepreneurial venture immediately after graduation. The skills acquired by students to launch and manage their own business could be referred to as entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurial skills comprise the themes of entrepreneurial processes and entrepreneurial traits/behaviors. The entrepreneurial skills comprise the themes of business foundations, communications and interpersonal skills, digital skills, economics, financial literacy, professional development, financial management, information management, marketing management, operations management, risk management, and strategic management. The skills dimension is concerned with specialized skill in all areas of human

endeavour. It is expected that University undergraduate students must be equip with skills not only for understanding their capabilities but also for coping with different situations in life (Adeyemi & Olabosinde, 2022).

Entrepreneurial skills have been described as the expertise and abilities required to take part in entrepreneurial career tasks (Edokpolor & Chukwuedo, 2018; Edokpolor & Abusomwan, 2020). According to Akudolu (2010), some of the entrepreneurial skills and capacities that undergraduates are expected to acquire through entrepreneurial education are innovativeness, self-motivation, confidence, creativity, dynamism, resourcefulness, ingenious, endurance, risk daring, pressure management ability and willingness to accept both positive and negative results of life ventures. Other entrepreneurial skills include verbal and non-verbal expression, problem solving, team player, and listening and empathy skills. Other entrepreneurial skills include verbal and non-verbal expression, problem solving, team player, and listening and empathy skills (Adeyemi & Olabosinde, 2022). OTM is one of subset of business education programme specifically designed for secretarial profession and business. OTM programme is designed to offer students training in different skills for employment in various fields of endeavour as potential employers and employees (Ukata & Nmehielle, 2021).

Office Technology and Management (OTM) programme is an aspect of business education programme which equips graduates with the right skills to engage in various work in the office as well as self-employment. OTM programme was targeted at empowering students with employability skills, imparting knowledge and abilities necessary for gainful employment or self-reliant. OTM skills often referred to as soft skills, non-technical, or employability skills, functional skills are skills that facilitate the creative and productive application of disciplinary skills and knowledge in the workplaces (Ademiluyi, 2021). Nnaji (2019) pointed out that the National Board for Technical Education designed the OTM programme to equip recipients with office skills for employment in various fields of endeavour. It includes acquisition of vocational skills in OTM, students are equipped with effective work competencies and socio-psychological work skills which are very essential to every day interactions with others. OTM is a skill based programme which has its fundamental principles that is followed in order to achieve the desired objectives of self-employment (Nnaji, 2019).

Structural-functionalist theory was the theory that underpinning this study. The theory was postulated by Perrin in 1976. The theory postulated that an understanding of the functional importance of education as a means of solving social problem (unemployment) in order to regulate and create new social order (job creation). Considering this, the functional as originated from the functionalist school of thought (Perrin 1976), society function the way it does based on interdependent relationships that exist among the various social institutions that make up society. Thus, the society is likened to human body whereby each part functions for the continuous regulation of the whole body. The implications of this theory to the current study was that there is need for functional education, an education system that provide students required and needed skills for self-employment.

Statement of the Problem

University graduates supposed to have received the right training that equipped them for job employability and ability to be self-employment. However, the current status of university graduates in Nigeria is pathetic and unemployable by the organization. Despite that, universities and other higher institutions continue to produce thousands of graduates yearly into the saturated labour market. These sets of graduates have continued to fueled unemployment rates which might be attributed towards increases in crime and other related insecurity activities in the country presently. Government and other stakeholders have taken several steps towards addressing the situation, but the scenarios still continue. This what prompted the study in examining whether the acquisition of entrepreneurship and

OTM skills could help in fostering self-employment opportunities among postgraduate students of business education in Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the role of entrepreneurship and OTM skills in fostering self-employment among postgraduate students of business education in Universities in South-West, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to examine the:

1. level of entrepreneurship skills required by postgraduate students of business education for self-employment.
2. level of OTM skills required by postgraduate students of business education for self-employment.
3. joint contribution of entrepreneurship and OTM skills on self-employment among postgraduate students of business education.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study.

1. What is the level of entrepreneurship skills required by postgraduate students of business education for self-employment?
2. What is the level of OTM skills required by postgraduate students of business education for self-employment?

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between joint contribution of entrepreneurship and OTM skills and self-employment among postgraduate students of business education.

Method

Research Design

A quantitative research design was used to achieve the specific aims of the study. The design was appropriate because it enable the authors to establish the extent of relationship between independent variables (entrepreneurship and OTM skills) and problem variable (self-employment opportunities).

Population and Sampling Procedure

The population of the study comprised all postgraduate students of business education in Universities in South-West, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting a total of 60 postgraduate students of business education, covering Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), Master of Education (M.Ed), Mphil and PhD as a sample size of the study.

Data Collection Instrument

A self-developed instrument, titled “Entrepreneurship/OTM Skills and Self-Employment Opportunities” was used for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into four sections A, B, C and D. Section A focused on demographic characteristics of the respondents. Section B focused on

entrepreneurship skills. Section C focused on OTM skills and section D focused on contribution of entrepreneurship and OTM skills on self-employment opportunities.

Data Collection Instrument Validity and Reliability

Face and content validity were conducted on the questionnaire. This was done by given some copies of the questionnaire to two experts one in business education and the other in measurement and evaluation, Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), Ijagun, Ogun State of Nigeria. A test retest reliability method was conducted among 9 postgraduate students of business education in TASUED. Data collected was subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistic, which yielded a coefficient value of 0.91.

Data Collection Procedure

Primary method of data collection was used in this study. The authors with the help of three (3) research assistants were involved in the process of questionnaire administration. However, a total of 60 copies of the questionnaires were distributed and all the copies were retrieved back within three (3) weeks.

Data Analysis

The IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyze the data collected from the respondents. The statistical tools employed for the data analysis was Mean and Multiple Linear Regression.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of entrepreneurship skills required by postgraduate students of business education for self-employment?

Table 1: Mean responses on the level of entrepreneurship skills required by postgraduate students of business education for self-employment opportunities.

| Items | Mean | Decision |
|------------------------|------|----------|
| Risk taken skills | 2.67 | Required |
| ICT skills | 2.82 | Required |
| Creativity skills | 2.77 | Required |
| Innovative skills | 2.91 | Required |
| Accounting skills | 2.56 | Required |
| Management skills | 2.59 | Required |
| Resourcefulness skills | 2.81 | Required |
| Distributive skills | 2.74 | Required |
| Leadership skills | 2.64 | Required |
| Cluster Mean | 2.72 | |

Table 1 revealed that cluster mean was 2.72 which greater than the bench mark of 2.50. This implied that risk taking, ICT, creativity, innovative, accounting, management, resourcefulness, distributive and leadership skills were among the required entrepreneurship skills for self-employment among graduates of business education.

Research Question 2: What is the level of OTM skills required by postgraduate students of business education for self-employment?

Table 2: Mean responses on the level of OTM skills required by postgraduate students of business education for self-employment opportunities.

| Items | Mean | Decision |
|-------------------------------------|------|----------|
| Technology skills | 2.95 | Required |
| Internet skills | 2.69 | Required |
| Problem solving skills | 2.85 | Required |
| Presentation skills | 2.73 | Required |
| Communication skills | 2.77 | Required |
| Typing and note-taking skills | 2.90 | Required |
| Critical skills | 2.86 | Required |
| Attention-detail skills | 2.65 | Required |
| Customer service skills | 2.93 | Required |
| Effective time management skills | 2.99 | Required |
| Flexibility and adaptability skills | 2.76 | Required |
| Cluster Mean | 2.83 | |

Table 2 indicated that cluster mean was 2.83 and the bench mark mean of 2.50. Since $2.83 > 2.50$, this implied that technology, internet, problem solving, presentation, communication, typing and note-taking, critical, attention-detail, customer service, effective time management, flexibility and adaptability skills were among the required OTM skills for self-employment among graduates of business education.

Testing of Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between joint contribution of entrepreneurship and OTM skills and self-employment among postgraduate students of business education.

Table 3: Regression results on the relationship between joint contribution of entrepreneurship and OTM skills and self-employment among postgraduate students of business education.

| Model | <i>r</i> | R^2 | <i>Adj. R</i> ² | <i>SE</i> |
|-------|-------------------|-------|----------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | .740 ^a | .547 | .543 | 3.73799 |

a. Predictors: (Constant): Entrepreneurship and OTM skills

b. Dependents variable: Self-employment

Table 3 showed that there was significant joint contribution of entrepreneurship and OTM skills on self-employment among graduates of business education); $R = 0.740$, $P < .05$. The table further revealed {54.3% ($Adj. R^2 = 0.543$)} that about 54% of the variance in self-employment among graduates of business education was accounted for by the linear combination of the independent variables (entrepreneurship and OTM skills).

Discussion

The analysis of research question 1 revealed that risk taking, ICT, creativity, innovative, accounting, management, resourcefulness, distributive and leadership skills were among the required entrepreneurship skills for self-employment among graduates of business education. These findings were in support to Egbeyemi, Enilolobo and Babayemi (2023) who found that saleable skills that make

business education graduates self-employed include: computer literacy skills, poultry farming, fish farming, soap making among others, it was equally revealed that entrepreneurship training provides employment opportunities for final year students and entrepreneurship education serves as a catalyst for economic growth and development and as well as Chiekezie, Nzewi and Erhinmwionose (2016) reported that acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is an indispensable means of making jobs available.

The analysis of research question 2 indicated that technology, internet, problem solving, presentation, communication, typing and note-taking, critical, attention-detail, customer service, effective time management, flexibility and adaptability skills were among the required OTM skills for self-employment among graduates of business education. These findings correlate with Ile and Okafor (2023) showed that database management skills, and risk management skills were highly required of OTM graduates for self-employment. Ukata and Nmehielle (2021) reported that ICTs skills and leadership skills as generic skills technologies are high exposing the employment potential of OTM students.

Finally, the analysis of research hypothesis revealed that there was significant joint contribution of entrepreneurship and office technology management (OTM) skills on self-employment among graduates of business education); $R = 0.740$, $P < .05$. The table further revealed (54.3%, Adj. $R^2 = 0.543$) that about 54% of the variance in self-employment among graduates of business education was accounted for by the linear combination of the independent variables (entrepreneurship and OTM skills). These findings were tandem with Oyinloye, Asonibare and Oluwalola (2021) who reported that hard and soft skills are required by OTM graduates for effective performance in modern office which include; technology skill, internet skill, computer skill, problem solving skill, presentation skill, communication skill among others. Nnaji (2019) argued that OTM programme has equipped many graduates for self-employment while Ojianyaegbu (2021) found that hard skills and soft skills are highly required by OTM students for self-employment.

Conclusion

Having examined role of entrepreneurship and OTM skills in fostering self-employment among postgraduate students of business education, the following conclusions were drawn based on the findings that risk taking, ICT, creativity, innovative, accounting, management, resourcefulness, distributive and leadership skills were among the required entrepreneurship skills for self-employment among graduates of business education. Technology, internet, problem solving, presentation, communication, typing and note-taking, critical, attention-detail, customer service, effective time management, flexibility and adaptability skills were among the required OTM skills for self-employment among graduates of business education as well as there was significant joint contribution of entrepreneurship and OTM skills on self-employment among postgraduates of business education.

Recommendations

The authors recommended that:

1. University lecturers should endeavour to impart entrepreneurial skills on all their students which will result in the development of a good business plan, leads to additional skills, and act as a tool for setting up businesses and enhances the running of successful business ventures.
2. More entrepreneurship training programme should be intensified to all levels of education curriculum to promote human empowerment and development through entrepreneurial skill acquisition for self-employment.
3. Office Technology and Management curriculum should be constantly reviewed and updated to accommodate new skills needed by OTM graduates to be self-employment.

4. OTM lecturers should endeavour to always encourage the students to be innovative and contribute in the improvement of the economy after graduation instead of remaining idle waiting for paid jobs.
5. Lecturers should be versatile in the use of new technologies and make use of them.
6. Government should endeavour to provide all the needed infrastructure in schools and management should make such infrastructure available to the Departments that need them so that they can be utilized in teaching to make the students efficient for self-employment.

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