



## **Assessment of Entrepreneurship Skills Needed By Business Education Graduate-Students For Self-Sustainability In Rivers State Universities**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study examined entrepreneurship skills needed by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities. Four objectives, research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study was 308 Business Education graduate-students in Rivers State Universities. The entire population was sampled. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire, structured on a four (4) point rating scale. The instrument was validated by three experts two from the Department of Business Education and another from Measurement and Evaluation Department all in Faculty of Education. The test-retest method was used to measure the reliability of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.80 using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings from the study revealed that innovative skills and marketing skills are needed by Business Education graduate-students to a high extent. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that management of universities in Rivers State should establish centres for innovation and entrepreneurship for students to enable them enhance their innovative skills and marketing skills for self-sustainability in Rivers State.

**Keywords:** Assessment, Entrepreneurship Skills Needed and Self-Sustainability.

### **INTRODUCTION**

No Nation can maintain a sustainable economic and human development without the alleviation of unemployment, poverty and the promotion of skill acquisition. Rivers State looks forward to such advancement of human capacity and entrepreneurship skill building as a means of sustainable economic and human development without the alleviation of unemployment, and entrepreneurship skill building as a means of achieving self-sustainability and this can be achieved positively to himself and the nation. These contributions are based on the level of skilled manpower that are available.

Entrepreneurship remains a vital ingredient for economic development of any nation. A society is prosperous only to the degree to which it rewards and encourages entrepreneurial activity because it is the entrepreneurs and their activities that are the critical determinant of the level of success, prosperity, growth and opportunity in any economy. Onyemah (2011), envisaged that entrepreneurship plays a vital role in economic development through creation of utilities and generation of employment within a short period. Supporting the view of Onyemah (2011), Amesi (2015) opined that entrepreneurship means

wealth creation but suffice it to say that in the context of our present unemployment situation in Nigeria, entrepreneurship development is tantamount to self-reliance, self-employment or job creation. Obviously, entrepreneurship is the ability to create and build something from practically nothing. Entrepreneurial skills according to Olagunju (2016) is the ability of an individual to exploit an idea and create an idea and an enterprise whether big or small not only for personal gain but also for social and developmental gain. Hisrich and Peters (2012) posited that entrepreneurship skills are the ability to create something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the results rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence.

Entrepreneurship skills are developed through training that emphasizes the acquisition and development of appropriate knowledge and skill that will enable an individual to maximize the resources around him within the limit of his capability. It encompasses the ability of graduates after graduation to find a means of livelihood using their skills and competences for self-sustainability. Precisely entrepreneurship skill refers to the knowledge, competences which an individual needs in order to manage a business venture to its profitable level. Zehra (2016) opined that skills are the knowledge through actions or a unique performance in certain situations. Skills are attained and developed through training. Huse (2010) asserted that skills are the ability to do something well, due to knowledge, practice or tracing. These skills refers to the competences needed by teachers' in teaching entrepreneurship education in the school. In congruence with the National Policy on Education (NPE), Business Education is poised towards training and producing teachers and graduates who are qualified to teach all business subjects at the post primary level of education, leading to employability in the private and public sectors. In line with this philosophy, Business Education programme equips its graduates with the requisite competences to teach business in institutions of learning, produces teachers who can confidently engage in advanced studies in Business Education, produces outstanding entrepreneurs and promoters of successful industries in the world of work and enables graduates of the programme to understand the critical nature or complexity and diversity of the world for self-sustainability.

Business Education programme is offered with options in Accounting, Management, Marketing and Secretarial Studies in higher institutions of learning in Rivers State. These various options are intended to bring out the skills that are latent in the students. Osam (2009) opined that if students are expected to succeed in today's competitive market, they must be in possession of basic skills that are necessary to enable them start, nurture, finance, market and maintain their enterprises.

This therefore calls for full incorporation of entrepreneurship education as part of the curricula for those studying in the universities. The major concern for this is to have self-development and self-fulfillment to take more responsibilities for themselves. Gbenidio (2012) asserted that the type of skills these students need are ones that will enhance the development of a profitable investment. Such skills as financial, innovative, personnel management, managerial decision making, Information and Communication Technology, manipulative, creative thinking skills and so on will in no small measure make the recipients benefit and develop positive values of self-reliance, self-esteem, resourcefulness, creativity on graduation. Furthermore, the author identified innovative skills and marketing skills as the major entrepreneurship skills needed by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability. Innovative skills are practically the type of skills that allow individuals to become innovative in what they do. These are usually a combination of cognitive skills, behavioural skills, functional skills and technical skills. McGeown (2011), opined that innovation is the core action for the development and productivity of any economic activity. The author noted that through the acts of innovation nation's works of life heads towards attaining competitive advantage. Furthermore, the author posited that innovation is a change in the thought process of doing things or useful application of inventions and discoveries.

According to Ezenwakwelu and Ikon (2012) most economic success depend increasingly on the ability to create and innovate in today's highly competitive world. Oluwadare (2015) asserted that innovation describes the process of adding value to create ideas and innovative skills display that which is latent in graduates for self-reliance and to face the world of work. Marketing skills which is one of the major entrepreneurship skills needed by Business Education graduate students as identified by Gbenidio (2012)

for self-sustenance includes: the ability to set market goals, to determine the customers' need, ability to choose the markets to serve, identify advantages over other competitors, to determine reasonable prices for the right products, competency in serving the greatest possible number of customers, ability to demonstrate effective sales/promotion, advertising, determine why existing products are selling well or poorly, determine when to produce new products which the customers need, determine when to allow rational credit facilities to trusted customers, competency to set strategic plans to serve the identified market, ability to provide for seasonal market fluctuations (Enoh, 2013). The author added that the sole aim of marketing is to ensure that the products or services required by the customers or consumers are made available at affordable prices with good profit margins.

Osaam (2009) postulated that without entrepreneurship education entrepreneurial skills cannot be acquired. According to Akpomi (2009), Entrepreneurship Education is the type of education that involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and management abilities necessary for job creation. An Entrepreneur promotes employment rather than seeking for an employment. Therefore, there is need to embrace this type of education and provide all the necessary resources needed to make it functional. Business Education as an arm of vocational education which prepares its recipients for future membership and participation in the life of the society for its maintenance, growth and development affords graduates training for the world of work. Naboth-Odums and Uwanze (2014) noted that Business Education offers various career prospects or opportunities to its graduates basically in the industry, commerce and to be self-reliant. The technical and vocational skills acquired by graduates of Business Education are needed on a high rate in labour market in Nigeria for self-sustainability.

According to Ogbonna (2012), self-sustainability is the social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet essential needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity. Ogbonna furthermore posited that self-sustainability refers to dependence on one's abilities, judgments or resources or independence. It thus means the ability to rely on oneself to do whatever should be done. Ofoye (2015) affirmed that an individual is said to be self-sustained when he/she can depend less on other people and his family in the management of her human and material resources. The citizens will be self-sustained when they have possible cause to access and utilize the essentials of life which include good food, clothing, shelters, medications, transportations and functional education.

There is every need for the assessment of education courses in a systematic process using empirical data on knowledge, skill, attitude and beliefs to prepare graduates to face the world of work. The Federal Republic of Nigeria recognized the immense role of the development of Entrepreneurs for economic development (FRN, 2013). Therefore, the quality of instructional delivery for Entrepreneurship should be oriented toward inculcating the right type of value and attitude in the students. One of the pillars of the Nigerian Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) is "growing in the private sector". Consequently, Nigeria like other nations has accepted this market driven or private sector-led economy as the model to achieve rapid economic growth and development, efficient resource allocation, and utilization. It was also recommended by the World Economic Forum (2011) that governments should improve their Entrepreneurial ecosystem by bringing entrepreneurship to the classroom so that every student in the basic, secondary and tertiary level of education should learn entrepreneurship principles, welcome new ideas, and give support to all types of Entrepreneurs. Ubulom (2014) supported this idea by stating that Business Education centre can be helpful to its recipient in achieving entrepreneurial and employability skills in the present Nigerian work environment paving way or creating room for employment opportunities.

Practice has over the time perceived to have been ignored in the educational sector. This deficiently has robbed Nigeria the functionality in its educational system. However, when emphasis is placed on academic oriented programmes, devoid of the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills, students will lag behind in their different career paths in the constantly changing world. Undiayandeye (2015) identified lack of entrepreneurial skills among graduates and thus, degenerate to failed entrepreneurial journey of Business owners. This without being told has so much effect on self-sustainability. The researcher

therefore deemed it necessary to carry out an empirical study on this note, to assess entrepreneurship skills needed by Business Education graduates for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The level of unemployment and lack of entrepreneurial skills among graduates has remained one of the fundamental challenges affecting the economic development and stability of Nigeria even after entrepreneurship has been integrated in the curricula of Nigerian universities to equip graduates with requisite skills for self-sustainability and reduce unemployment rate in the absence of a white-collar job. This problem has affected Business Education programme where entrepreneurship education is taught to enable students acquire skills. Today, however, it seems that Business Education graduates are constantly facing the problem of unemployment because of lack of innovative and marketing skills. Most graduates of Business Education lack these entrepreneurial skills even if entrepreneurship is taught in higher institutions of learning (Kingsley, Akpelu & Ken-ine, 2017). Nevertheless, it is obvious that without having these skills, Business Education graduates' self-sustainability will be hindered. Hence, there seems to be no empirical evidence on the extent to which these graduates acquire innovative and marketing skills for self-sustainability in Rivers State. This gap is what this study aims to fill.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to assess the entrepreneurship skills needed by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which innovative skills are needed by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities
2. Determine the extent to which marketing skills are needed by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are the innovative skills needed by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities?
2. To what extent are the marketing skills needed by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities?

### **Hypotheses**

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education graduate-students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent to which innovative skills are needed for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education regarding the marketing skills needed for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities.

## **METHODS**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 308 Business Education graduate-students in the Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in Rivers State. The entire population was studied because the population was not too large to warrant sampling. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Assessment of Entrepreneurship Skills Needed by Business Education Graduate-students for Self-Sustainability in Rivers State (AESNBEGRS)". The instrument has two parts. Part "A" focused on the respondents' personal data, while part "B" contain two cluster B1 and B2 with 10 items covering the research questions. Part A was designed on a 4-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE-4points), High Extent (HE-3points), Low Extent (LE-2points) and Very Low Extent (VLE-1point) respectively.

The instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Business Education and another from Measurement and Evaluation Department all in Rivers State University. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the test-retest method for a measure of its stability. Copies of the

instrument were administered to 20 Business Education graduate-students in Niger Delta University (NDU) in Bayelsa State who were not part of the study sample. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) method and a reliability coefficient of 0.08 was obtained which indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study. The three hundred and eight (308) copies of the questionnaire distributed were all retrieved. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while z-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A hypothesis was accepted if the value of a computed t is less than a critical value, and was rejected if otherwise.

## RESULTS

The results from the study were presented as follows:

**Research Question 1:** *To what extent are the innovative skills needed by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities?*

**Table 1: Mean Responses on the Extent Innovative Skills are Needed by Business Education Graduate-Students for Self-Sustainability in Rivers State Universities**  
N308

S/No.	Items	RSU N=78			IAUE N=230		
		$\bar{X}$	St.D	Rmk	$\bar{X}$	St.D	Rmk
1.	The ability to recognize and use tools and materials for production is needed for self-sustenance.	3.19	0.89	HE	3.50	0.97	HE
2.	The ability to initiate a profitable business is needed for self-sustenance.	3.37	0.69	HE	3.04	0.81	HE
3.	The ability to access and manage funds in business is needed for self-sustenance.	3.05	0.82	HE	2.79	0.61	HE
4.	The ability to organize and build network is needed for self-sustenance.	3.06	0.82	HE	2.60	0.67	HE
5.	The ability to introduce things is needed for self-sustenance.	2.35	0.70	LE	2.75	0.66	HE
<b>Grand Mean/St.D</b>		<b>3.00</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>HE</b>	<b>2.88</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>HE</b>

**Source:** Field work, 2021

Data presented on table 1 revealed that innovative skills are needed by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability to a high extent. This is evident in the mean responses of Business Education graduate-students. The grand mean and standard deviation of 3.00, 2.88, 0.78 and 0.74 respectively indicated that the respondents believe that innovative skills are needed to a high extent by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities.

**Research Question 2:** *To what extent are the marketing skills needed by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities?*

**Table 2: Mean Responses on the Extent Marketing Skills are Needed by Business Education Graduate-Students for Self-Sustainability in Rivers State Universities**

S/No.	Items	N308					
		RSU N=78			IAUE N=230		
		$\bar{X}$	St.D	Rmk	$\bar{X}$	St.D	Rmk
1.	The ability to capture and retain the attention of customers for economic survival is needed for self-sustenance	3.29	0.64	HE	2.75	0.82	HE
2.	The ability to promote and sell organizational products is needed for self-sustenance.	3.23	0.69	HE	2.74	0.67	HE
3.	The ability to carry out market survey and purchase goods at affordable prices is needed for self-sustenance.	3.05	0.77	HE	2.61	0.66	HE
4.	The ability to deliver and distribute the products and services in an organization is needed for self-sustenance.	3.26	0.71	HE	2.38	0.59	HE
5.	The ability to discover and identify wants and needs of a client is needed for self-sustenance.	1.14	0.58	VLE	2.72	0.92	HE
<b>Grand Mean/St.D</b>		<b>2.88</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>HE</b>	<b>2.84</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>HE</b>

**Source:** Field work, 2021.

Data presented on table 2 showed that marketing skills are needed by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability to a high extent. This is evident in the mean response of Business Education graduate-students. The grand mean and standard deviation of 2.88, 2.84 and 0.72, 0.76 respectively indicated that the respondents believe that marketing skills are needed to a high extent by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities.

**Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education graduate-students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent to which innovative skills are needed for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities.

**Table 3: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Mean Rating of Business Education Graduate-Students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the Extent to which Innovative Skills are Needed for Self-Sustainability in Rivers State Universities.**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	St.D	df	A	z-cal	z-crit	Remarks
Business Education Graduates in RSU	78	2.99	0.77	308	0.05	1.10	1.96	Accepted
Business Education Graduates in IAUE	230	2.88	0.74					

**Source:** Field survey, 2021.

Data presented in table 3 showed the z-calculated value of 1.10 at 308 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated z-value of 1.10 is less than the z-critical (z-crit) of 1.96 null hypothesis was therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education graduate-students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru

University of Education on the extent to which innovative skills are needed for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education regarding the marketing skills needed for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities.

**Table 4: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Mean Ratings of Business Education Graduate-Students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Regarding the Marketing Skills Needed for Self-Sustainability in Rivers State Universities.**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	St.D	df	A	z-cal	z-crit	Remarks
Business Education Graduates in RSU	78	2.88	0.72					
				308	0.05	1.40	1.96	Accepted
Business Education Graduates in IAUE	230	2.84	0.76					

**Source:** Field survey, 2021.

Data presented on table 4 showed the z-calculated value of 1.40 at 308 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated z-value of 1.40 is less than the z-critical (z-crit) of 1.96, the null hypothesis was therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education graduate-students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent to which marketing skills are needed for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Extent to which Innovative Skills are Needed by Business Education Graduate-Students for Self-Sustainability

The findings of this study revealed that innovative skills are needed by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability to a high extent. The finding of this study is in line with the findings of Ezenwakwelu and Ikon (2014), who noted that innovative skills are needed by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability. Supporting the view of Ezenwakwelu and Ikon (2014), Oluwadare (2015) who identified innovative skills as a factor which is latent in Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability. This agrees to the fact that most economic success depends increasingly on the ability to create and innovate to face the world of work in today's highly competitive world. In the view of McGeown (2011) noted that innovation is a change in the thought process of doing things or useful application of inventions, findings and self-sustenance. Furthermore, findings from hypothesis 1, revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education graduate-students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent to which innovative skills are needed for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities.

### Extent to which Marketing Skills are Needed by Business Education Graduate-Students for Self-Sustainability

The findings of this study showed that marketing skills are needed to a high extent for self-sustainability by Business Education graduate-students in Rivers State Universities. This fact was proven in the respondents' responses as they believed that marketing skills are needed for self-sustenance in the business world. The findings agreed with an earlier assertion by Enoh (2013), who noted that marketing is a skill that is significantly needed by Business Education graduate-students for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities. In line with the above finding, Olawoyin and Adegoke (2018) in their study postulated that marketing skills are needed for self-sustainability of Business Education graduate-students in Oyo State as there was no significant difference in the mean responses of the graduate-students. Hence, requisite marketing skills are needed by Business Education graduate-students as an easy path to cope

with unemployment. Also, findings from hypothesis 2 revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education graduate-students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent to which marketing skills are needed for self-sustainability in Rivers State Universities.

## CONCLUSION

The evidence obtained in this study showed that innovative skills and marketing skills are needed for self-sustainability of Business Education graduate-students in Rivers State Universities. Therefore, the study has proven that Business Education graduate-students need to be equipped with entrepreneurial skills to be employed in any organization to survive in this competitive world of work.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Management of universities in Rivers State should establish centres for innovative and entrepreneurship for students to enable them enhance their innovative skills for self-sustainability.
2. Management of universities should establish a university where exchange of goods and services on a chosen market day to equip students with practical market skills for self-sustenance.

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