



Redefining the Roles of creativity and Public Relations Skills in Entrepreneurship Business Education Curriculum for Self-Employment Opportunities

Pac Ordu

¹(Department of Business Education, Faculty of Education,
Federal University Otuoke, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria)

Corresponding Author: Pac Ordu

ABSTRACT: This study was embarked upon to find out the extent to which the NCE entrepreneurship curriculum of business education programme in Nigeria satisfies students' requirements for small scale business operation skills in South-South zone of Nigeria. The survey design was used for the study. Mean statistics was used to answer research questions. The findings of the study revealed that the NCE entrepreneurship curriculum does not satisfy students' needs of small-scale business operation skills in public relation and creativity skills. The findings also revealed that teaching and learning of entrepreneurship based on the NCE curriculum require adequate learning facilities to satisfy students' need for small scale business operation skills. Based on the findings, it is recommended among others that more emphasis should be placed on the provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities; educators need to invest more of their teaching resources in practical experiences.

KEYWORDS: Public relations, creativity, entrepreneurship, business, curriculum, skills

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I. INTRODUCTION

In this study, the term public relations skills refer to the art of interactions of a small business owner with the persons, organizations, groups of people, government agencies, suppliers, customers, and the general public who relate with the business enterprise. The survival of any business enterprise depends on the goodwill of the people and quality of interactions among the factors within the geographical area as well as the digital environment that the business organization serves. [1] cautioned that lack of knowledge necessary for adequate interactions with the digital resources is an impediment to new job creation by young graduates. For these interactions to impact positively on the market environment, the entrepreneur needs to possess some competencies some of which are public relations and creativity skills. Looking at the people, the business operations and the environment, [2] observe that since the digital software and hardware used in business operations are introduced by people, put into effect by people, it is also discarded by people. The implication of their opinion is that man can allow the introduction of innovation to flourish and he can back out of its patronage at his own will; a situation that is capable of leading to the collapse of any business outfit. This means that entrepreneurs need to possess high quality skills of business operations in order to cope with the challenges of sustaining their business enterprises. [3] informed that the way small business enterprises operated before covid-19 era may be different from the competitive way they are going to operate after covid-19 pandemic.

Commenting on the impact of people in terms of customers in the survival of business enterprises, [4] opine that business organizations depend on the services of the people for survival. This is because business organizations cannot operate and survive without the technical skills, labour, materials, components, and market for its products and services. This is due to the fact that only human resources in the environment can provide these factors for the operation of a business enterprise. The post covid-19 business environment has come with improved need for digital skill competencies. This school of thought advocates for carefully planned public relations strategies by the entrepreneur to be able to handle the emerging digital process, indicating that the entrepreneur and the business enterprise depend on the inputs of other people, the government and other organizations for one form of service or the other. In this regard, teaching and learning of entrepreneurship

education in post covid-19 era needs to integrate properly the basic components of public relations to guide her graduate entrepreneurs' relationship with the public, customers, suppliers, environment, and others. Correspondingly, an entrepreneur who has the requisite skills of public relations will find the art of business operations and management much easier than one who does not have.

This therefore means that the execution of public relations skills of an entrepreneur starts from the moment he embarks on a business feasibility study of a dream business. The possession of these skills enhances the quality of information he gets from the public, which invariably helps him to sustain the operations of his business enterprise. In the same way employees depend on their employers for salaries, so also [3] explains that entrepreneurs depend on the people for their skills, materials, market, patronage, for effective interactions leading to buying and selling of products and services.

However, public relations may be seen as the interaction of people and environment in in such endeavour as in business, government, social clubs, schools. The main aim of these interactions may be to win the goodwill of the people targeted. This target group may be the market population segmented during the feasibility study of a dream business idea; it may be customers whose aim could be the expectation of value for the money they are expending in exchange for goods and services.

In the NCE entrepreneurship curriculum, the public relations context as relative to inculcating in students the needed practical skill competencies is missing. Although the aspect of producing graduates with skills in public relations skills is reflected, the content does not contain the necessary ingredients to help students acquire the quality of skills expected in such a way that the skills could be internalized for use at work. This lack of proper skills acquisition is attributed to higher emphasis on theoretical teaching of entrepreneurship rather than practical teaching and learning.

1.1 BUSINESS CREATIVITY SKILLS

[5] explained that creativity in entrepreneurship is the exploitation and creation of new business ideas that can lead to creation of viable business opportunities. Entrepreneurship studies recognize that creativity skills imply the possession of skills by an entrepreneur to initiate worthwhile activities which non-entrepreneurs do not. The acquisition of creativity skills by the entrepreneur is important because its capabilities and related innovativeness have the potentials to significantly enhance the entrepreneur's chances of realizing his dreams in the competitive market. In this knowledge driven economy, the possession of effective creativity and digital skills by an entrepreneur is capable of placing is enterprise at a competitive advantage.

Due to the dynamic nature of the society, researchers are singing new tunes over the need for entrepreneurs to possess the skills of creativity. This knowledge involves the skills of identification of a viable opportunity and the creative combination of resources available in order to exploit the opportunity. Reading through Schumpeter's theory of creative destruction, entrepreneurs are creative destroyers since something in existence must be destroyed for a new thing to be created. It is the skills of the entrepreneur that fashions out the need to evaluate present products and services and to destroy and transform them to something new that is termed the creative destructive tendencies of entrepreneurs. [6] support this view when they emphasized that the entrepreneur's process of creative combination of resources needs to properly explore and exploit opportunities and ensure that no existing resource should constrain the creation and operation of a business enterprise.

From the above, it can be seen that the entrepreneur stimulates job openings through the creation of market opportunities within a geographical location. In this way, jobs are created for the teaming unemployed youths who loiter about hopelessly. [7] opine that there is a broad consensus that the way out of global unemployment trap is higher private sector investment. This type of investment involves the class of small business enterprises found on our streets. Creating this level of investment calls for the introduction of emerging knowledge delivery in the business education curriculum.

The teaching of creativity as represented in the NCE entrepreneurship curriculum would not meet the expectations of this level of skills development. Creativity involves practical work participation and the review of case studies to widen the horizon of students. These are totally missing in the curriculum and as such students are expected to lack in proper understanding of the concept of creativity skills possession in small scale business enterprises.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Schooling is primarily undertaken for successful graduate to enhance his economic, social, and psychological life. Udoha (2012) and [8] explain that graduate unemployment rate in Nigeria was put at about 19.7% in 2010 and 23% in 2020. The number of graduates produced annually is beyond the capacity of the labor market to absorb. This has invariably put Nigeria graduates unemployed and business education graduates on the streets searching for jobs. This unemployment matter of the youths was the main reason for the 2020 EndSars crises in Nigeria.

These graduates having passed through the entrepreneurship curriculum skills lack the necessary skill competencies to create wealth, the research is intended to investigating whether the entrepreneurship curriculum in the programme is properly structured to expose graduates to the skills needed for small business operation. The question is that if such curriculum was adequately implemented, graduates would be able of creating jobs for themselves rather than waiting for government to provide jobs. The study was undertaken to find the extent to which the NCE entrepreneurship curriculum satisfies students need for small scale business enterprise operation.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study was to find out the extent to which NCE entrepreneurship curriculum in terms of theory and practice is satisfying skills requirements for the creation and operation of small business enterprises. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the extent to which the NCE entrepreneurship curriculum satisfies students' needs in public relations skills for small scale business operation.
2. Find out the extent to which the NCE entrepreneurship curriculum satisfies students' needs in creativity skills for small scale business operation.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were developed to guide the study:

1. To what extent does the NCE entrepreneurship curriculum satisfy students' needs in terms of public relations skills for small scale business operation?
2. To what extent does the NCE entrepreneurship curriculum satisfy students' needs in terms of creativity skills for small scale business operation?

II. METHODS

The design for the study was a survey research and the population of the study was 1, 740 respondents made up of 158 business education lecturers and 1,582 business education NCE III students in all nine Colleges of Education offering business education that have been accredited.

The sample of the study was 420 respondents made up of 300 NCE III students and 120 lecturers. From the 1,582 NCE III business education students' populations, 50 students were randomly selected from six Colleges of Education offering business education. The six Colleges were purposively sampled.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire based on the two formulated research questions. This was divided into two sections with each section having ten items. The four-point rating scale was used and respondents were required to check (□) against a column to indicate their opinions. The options are Very High Extent – 4; High Extent – 3; Low Extent – 2; and Very Low Extent -1. The instruments measured respondents' opinions on the extent to which the NCE entrepreneurship curriculum of business education programme in Nigeria is meeting the skills of public relations and business management studies requirements for the creation and operation of small-scale business enterprises.

Five research assistants were engaged to assist the researcher in five of the Colleges of Education located at Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Delta, and Edo States, while the researcher personally handled the distribution and collection in Federal College of Education (Tech), Omoku. These five research assistants are academic staff (business educators) in the five College of Education. 420 questionnaires were distributed (120 to lecturers and 300 students) and all the 420 questionnaires were retrieved, giving a 100% response rate. This method of using lecturers as research assistants helped to prevent loss of the questionnaire. For answering the research questions, the cut-off point was put at 2.50 so that any material with a mean less than 2.50 was considered not acceptable while any material with a mean up to and above 2.50 was considered acceptable.

III. RESULT PRESENTATION

Research question one

To what extent is NCE entrepreneurship curriculum meeting students' needs in acquisition of public relations skills?

Table 1: Mean rating of respondents on implementation of public relations skills component of curriculum

S/N	Items	VGE 4	GE 3	LE 2	VLE 1	X	\bar{x}	Decision
	To what extent is entrepreneurship curriculum for NCE meeting students needs in acquisition of public relation skills?							
1	Integrating emerging digital skill competencies in entrepreneurship curriculum	105	94	142	79	1065	2.53	S
2	Teaching students public relations as it requires the use of the internet	89	78	150	103	993	2.36	NS
3	The application of out-of-school resources in the teaching of entrepreneurial public relation skills	113	86	135	79	1087	2.40	NS
4	Attending seminars to acquire information on entrepreneurial public relations innovative trends	90	68	122	140	948	2.25	NS
5	Teaching students the application Microsoft Power Point in the learning of public relations skills	125	100	102	93	1097	2.61	S
6	Leading students on field trips to examine the functions of entrepreneurial public relations skills	115	100	123	82	1088	2.59	S
7	Incorporating various instructional resources in the teaching of public relations skills	119	116	100	75	1129	2.38	NS
8	Giving students enough practical assignments on the acquisition of public relations skills	98	102	130	80	1078	2.36	NS
9	Teaching students how to benefit from the public relations skills of established small scale enterprises	111	90	109	110	1042	2.48	NS
10	Teaching students the benefits of regular exchange of information on public relations skills	78	104	140	79	1039	2.52	NS
	Total	1079	948	1253	920	10586	2.32	NS

Key: NS = Not satisfied, S = satisfied

Data in Table 1 show a mean of 2.32 which is lower than the cut-off point of 2.50. The implication of this is that the NCE entrepreneurship curriculum does not satisfy students' needs in terms of public relation skills for small scale business operation.

Research question two

Table 2 Mean rating of respondents' on implementation of creativity skills components of curriculum

S/N	Items	VGE 4	GE 3	LE 2	VLE 1	X	\bar{x}	Decision
	To what extent is entrepreneurship curriculum for NCE 111 meeting students' needs in acquisition of business initiatives skills?							
1	Integration of digital skills in the learning process of business initiatives	62	77	165	116	925	2.20	NS
2	Teaching students the need to be constructive in reasoning as a concept of business initiative skills	84	75	154	107	976	2.32	NS
3	Encouraging creativity among students aimed at acquiring business initiative skills	86	92	136	136	998	2.37	NS
4	Establishing profiles of information on entrepreneurial initiative skills	97	102	105	116	1020	2.42	NS
5	Scanning the market for profiles of entrepreneurs aimed at studying their initiative skills	96	115	120	89	1058	2.51	S
6	Giving assignments to students on entrepreneurial initiative skills	82	60	143	135	929	2.21	NS
7	Need for students to exchange business information on entrepreneurial initiative skills	94	110	130	86	1052	2.50	S
8	Attending to all topics relating to entrepreneurship initiative skills development	88	90	122	120	986	2.34	NS
9	Exposing students to entrepreneurship initiative models of entrepreneurs	67	87	108	158	903	2.15	NS
10	Encouraging creativity as important factor of	71	95	118	136	941	2.24	NS

entrepreneurship initiative skills							
Total	827	903	1301	1169	7446	1.77	NS

Key: NS = Not satisfied, S = satisfied

Table 2 shows a mean of 1.77 which is less than the cut-off points of 2.50. this means that the NCE entrepreneurship curriculum does not satisfy students' needs in terms of business creativity skills for small scale business operation.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

Findings in Table 1 indicate a mean score of 2.32 which is lower than cut-off point of 2.50. this means that the NCE entrepreneurship curriculum for business education does not meet students' needs for the creation and operation of small-scale enterprises in terms of public relation skills. Acquisition of public relations skills by the entrepreneur helps him in his relationships with employees, the customers and the general public. The findings of this study support [9] who holds that entrepreneurs depend on the people for skills, materials, market and communities for interactions leading to buying and selling. It is observed from the findings that the possession of good public relations skills is necessary for the entrepreneur to be able to have the goodwill of the public. The result of this study further supports the findings of [10] to the effect that the possession of public relations skill promotes organizational image thereby creating goodwill. This is in line with the finding of [7] that workers, customers, the public and suppliers want pleasant entrepreneurs who coordinate interesting business outfits with products the services they would patronize.

Table 2 shows that the business creativity skills component of NCE entrepreneurship curriculum does not satisfy students' needs for business operation. The implementation of the entrepreneurship curriculum does not take into account the practical aspects of creativity skills components and therefore does not satisfy students' needs for small scale business enterprises operation. This result is in line with [11] who noted that entrepreneurs and researchers are singing new tunes over the need for start-up entrepreneurs to possess the skills of creativity. This means that possession of creativity skills involves the innovative combinations of resources that are available to the entrepreneur in order to exploit a business opportunity.

These results support the findings of [12] that business creativity skills are the sources of innovation which has become a successful paradigm for firms in many industries. They are also in agreement with the opinion of [13] that the importance of business initiative skills is the possession of skills to identify worthwhile business activities. Therefore, [3] explained that since creativity skills are important for entrepreneurs, it is necessary that business education students require the skills to be able to function well in the business world.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. There is need for emphasis on skill acquisition in public relations and creativity development in the entrepreneurship education curriculum
2. It is also necessary to establish a standard in which only professional business educators are employed to teach in the Business Education programme. This will enhance teaching and learning of foundational principles of entrepreneurship in Business Education with a view to integrating the definition of core teaching areas in business education programme.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

It is evident from the findings that the challenges of poor acquisition of public relations and creativity skills are attributed to poor implementation which results from the fact that Colleges of Education do not approach the teaching of entrepreneurship courses as skill-oriented components. Business Education programme has a close link with skills acquisition in public relations and creativity. Since these Colleges do not have adequate provisions for the acquisition of skills in terms of curriculum implementation for entrepreneurship, graduates lack the skills and confidence to venture into self-employment. These results from the fact that these Colleges do not apply practical teaching in the curriculum due to lack of facilities but rather, teaching and learning rely heavily on the theoretical components. The Colleges of Education lack the necessary facilities to implement the teaching of practical entrepreneurship business education courses.

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