

**PERCEPTION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION LECTURERS
TOWARDS INNOVATION FOR SELF-RELIANCE OF
STUDENTS ON GRADUATION IN ENUGU AND ANAMBRA
STATE**

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Abstract

This study focused on examining the perception of business education lecturers towards innovation for self-reliance of students on graduation in Enugu and Anambra States. Two research questions were developed and answered in line with the purpose of the study. Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the probability of 0.05 level of significance and 106 degree of freedom. The population for the study was 108 business education lecturers. There was no sampling because the population was manageable. Descriptive survey design was used to generate data for the study. Structured questionnaire was employed to elicit information for the study. The questionnaire was face-validated by two experts in Business Education Department, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and one expert in Business Education Department, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability test. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.85. The questionnaire was administered on 108 business education lecturers in Enugu and Anambra States personally by the researchers with the help of three research assistants. All the copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and analyzed using mean and standard

deviation to answer the research questions, while t-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that business education lecturers perceive the need to equip students with innovative skills to ensure self-reliance of students on graduation. The findings also revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of business education lecturers in federal and state universities in Enugu and Anambra States on the perception of business education lecturers on their perception of innovation for self-reliance of students on graduation. It was recommended that a policy aimed at equipping students with innovative skills should be enacted in business education programme, to ensure self-reliance on graduation.

Keywords: Perception, business education lecturers, innovation, self-reliance, students, graduation

Introduction

Production of self-reliant graduates remains the core essence of business education programme. A programme, namely business education, that has its core value as the training of youth to have the ability to think autonomously and trust in their own instinct, is in the right direction, towards solving society's overall developmental problems. Self-reliance is defined by Warburton (2016) as being able to take decisions and do things personally, independent of other people's assistance. For the purpose of this work, self-reliance refers to students' ability to lead a life of dependence on internal resources to provide life with coherence (meaning) and fulfillment on graduation. This implies that on graduation, the self-reliant student should be able to think independently, embrace their individuality and strive towards their own goals bravely, in order to achieve self-reliance, by being innovation-minded (Hughes, Lee, Tian, Newman & Legood, 2018). Innovation describes the actual implementation of ideas that give rise to the introduction of new goods or services or improvement in

offering goods or services (Schumpeter, 1983; Schiederig, Tietze & Herstatt, 2012). According to Edison, Ali and Torkar (2014), innovation is a new or changed entity producing or redistributing value. Contextually, innovation is defined as the students' proficiency in producing or adopting, assimilating and exploiting a value-added novelty in economic and social spheres; development of novel techniques of production; and establishment of novel management systems. Hence, innovation is both a process and an outcome. It remains the effort of business education lecturers to produce innovative graduates with the above charisma.

According to Agbo, Ugwoke and Edeh (2019), one is ascribed a business education lecturer when one has gotten an academic qualification in subjects associated with business from the universities, and teaches business-related subjects in institutions of higher learning. In this work, a business education lecturer is a professional teacher of business who is constantly aware of the state of the art in business education (Agbo, 2018). This implies that a business education lecturer is any person that plays a very important role in making business education viable and visible in the society, acts as an agent of change in business education, delivers high-quality business education programmes that equip students with innovative skills for self-reliance on graduation, and he that is able to identify problems facing learning and teaching in business education subjects, and is able to suggest solutions to these problems. The business education lecturers being considered here are in federal and state universities in Enugu and Anambra States. Federal universities lecturers are employed by the Federal Government of Nigeria, while the lecturers in state universities are employed by the state governments. The business education lecturers strive to equip the students with novel innovative skills on graduation to encourage them to be self-reliant.

A student is one who goes to school with the aim to acquire knowledge. Students could be children, teenagers, or adults who go to school. Students could also constitute other people who are learning in some other ways in colleges or universities. A younger student such as obtains in primary school is called a pupil (Mazzaferro, 2018). As a convention, students would be taught by a teacher in primary and secondary schools and by a lecturer in universities (Hancock, Dyk, & Jones 2012). A student could also refer to a person studying for a specific profession. In this case, the teaching is called training, whereas the student may be referred to as a trainee (Kim & Dopico, 2014). In the context of this work, a student refers to one who enrolled to study business education in federal or state universities in Enugu or Anambra States. Those students are often taught by business education lecturers, who hold diverse perceptions on the need to equip the students with innovative skills for self-reliance.

Perception refers to the arrangement, identification and interpretation of sensory information so as to comprehend the presented information or the environment (Agbo, Ugwoke & Edeh 2019). Furthermore, Mahmmd (2012) defined perception as the ability to see, hear or conceive an idea of something through the senses, taking into consideration the normal limits to human perception. In this work, perception describes the way in which innovation for self-reliance of students on graduation is regarded, understood or interpreted by business education lecturers in Enugu and Anambra States.

Graduation explains the award of a diploma or academic degree, or the ceremony that is often associated with it, after which students become graduates. The date of graduation is referred to as graduation day (Masunaga, 2015). For the purpose of this work, graduation is the award of an academic degree certificate in business education to students of business education, after their successful completion of academic programme in business education.

Statement of the Problem

Business education is an academic programme that has innovation for self-reliance as its core value. The programme of business education equips the students with innovative skills that make them get paid employment or become self-employed. The authors are, however, concerned about the rising rate of unemployment among graduates of business education. This worsening unemployment situation suggests that the core value of business education inherent in producing self-reliant students on graduation is not being realized. Notwithstanding the fact that educational institutions in Nigeria produce many graduates of business education yearly, a lot of the graduates remain unemployed years after their graduation.

It is the view of the authors that business education lecturers seem not to perceive reasonably the need to adhere to innovation for self-reliance as the core value of business education, which results in many students of business education remaining unemployed after graduation. This is consequent upon lack of innovative skills among the students on graduation.

Nevertheless, the method of equipping the students with innovative skills for self-reliance needs to be determined by the lecturers. This demands for a thorough analysis of the perception of business education lecturers towards innovation for self-reliance as they are the ones instrumental to equipping the students with innovative skills. The need arises, therefore, to inquire into the perception of business education lecturers towards innovation for self-reliance of students on graduation.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to examine the perception of business education lecturers towards innovation for self-reliance of students on graduation in Enugu and Anambra States. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the extent to which business education lecturers in federal and state universities in Enugu and Anambra States perceive equipping students with innovative skills for self-reliance on graduation.
2. Determine the extent to which business education lecturers in federal and state universities in Enugu and Anambra States perceive follow-up-targeted innovative skills for self-reliance of students on graduation.

Research Questions

The study answered the following research questions:

1. To what extent do business education lecturers in federal and state universities in Enugu and Anambra States perceive equipping students with innovative skills for self-reliance on graduation?
2. To what extent do business education lecturers in federal and state universities in Enugu and Anambra States perceive follow-up-targeted innovative skills for self-reliance of students on graduation?

Hypotheses

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

- Ho₁:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of business education lecturers in federal and state universities in Enugu and Anambra States towards equipping student with innovative skills for self-reliance on graduation.
- Ho₂:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of business education lecturers in federal and state universities in Enugu and Anambra States towards follow-up-targeted innovative skills for self-reliance of students on graduation.

Methodology

The study used descriptive survey design. Hence, the study obtained data from people through the use of questionnaire, observation and

interviews. The study was carried out in Enugu and Anambra States of Nigeria. The population for the study was 108 business education lecturers. Consequent upon the manageable size of the population, there was no sampling. A structured questionnaire face-validated by two experts in Business Education Department, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and one expert in Business Education Department, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka was used for data collection. The response options for the questionnaire items were Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The authors ensured reliability of the instrument by administering the questionnaire on 40 business education lecturers in Imo and Ebonyi States. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability technique to obtain a grand alpha (coefficient) of 0.85, which implies that the instrument has a very high degree of internal consistency and is reliable to be used for the intended empirical purpose.

Data for the study were collected using questionnaire, jointly distributed by the researchers and their three research assistants to the respondents and also collected back from them on completion. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions, while t-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The interpretation of results of the analysis made was guided by the following decisions: (a) Any item with a mean value of 2.50 and above showed that the respondents perceive to a high extent, whereas items with a mean value less than 2.50 showed that the respondents perceive to a low extent. (b) The hypothesis of no significant difference (H_0) was upheld for any item whose p-value is equal or greater than 0.05 level of significance. In the alternative, the hypothesis was rejected for any item whose p-value was less than 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results of the study were obtained from the research questions answered and hypotheses tested for innovation for self-reliance of students on graduation.

Research Question 1

Hypotheses 1

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test Analysis of Respondents Regarding Perception of Business Education Lecturers towards Innovative Skills for Self-reliance on Graduation

S/N	Item statement	\bar{X}	SD	t	P-value	Ext	Ho
1.	Innovation results in practical implementation of ideas.	3.43	0.50	0.03	0.96	HE	NS
2.	Innovation brings about introduction of new goods or services.	3.58	0.57	0.66	0.28	HE	NS
3.	Improvement in offering goods or services is a product of innovation.	3.04	0.60	0.74	0.06	HE	NS
4.	Innovation brings about a new or changed entity by creating or redistributing value.	3.50	0.50	2.05	0.19	HE	NS
5.	Through innovation more effective products, processes, services, technologies art works are provided.	3.56	0.52	1.87	0.06	HE	NS
6.	Business models are made available to	3.21	0.42	0.55	0.30	HE	NS

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	markets, governments and society through innovation.						
7.	Innovation involves the practical implementation of an invention.	3.52	0.48	0.27	0.67	HE	NS
8.	Organizations transform ideas into new improved products, service or processes through innovation.	3.41	0.56	0.24	0.47	HE	NS
9.	Production or adoption, assimilation, and exploitation of value-added novelty in economic and social spheres are achieved through innovation.	3.13	0.90	2.94	0.30	HE	NS
10.	Through innovation, an idea, practice, or object is perceived as new by an individual.	3.41	0.46	0.04	0.86	HE	NS
11.	Improvement of a product or service based on the known needs of current customers connotes innovation.	3.00	0.55	0.72	0.04	HE	NS
12.	Through innovation, a new product or service creates a new market which eventually displaces established competitors.	3.15	0.54	0.47	0.23	HE	NS

13.	Innovations are critical to long-term success in business.	3.22	0.66	2.08	0.26	HE	NS
	Cluster mean	3.58		1.14	0.38	HE	

Key: HE = High Extent; NS = Not Significant; Ext = Extent of Perception

The data in Table 1 revealed that the thirteen (13) innovative skills for self-reliance items had their mean ranging from 3.00 to 3.58. Each of the mean was above the cut-off point of 2.50. This indicated that all the 13 items were perceived to high extent by business education lecturers for innovation for self-reliance. The items had their standard deviations ranging from 0.42 to 0.90, showing that the opinions of the respondents were not far from the mean and they were close to one another in their opinions. The table showed as well that each of the 13 items had their p-values greater than 0.05 level of significance. This was an indication that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of business education lecturers in federal and state universities in Enugu and Anambra States on perception of business education lecturers towards innovative skills for self-reliance.

Research Question 2

Hypothesis 2

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test Analysis of Respondents Regarding Perception of Business Education Lecturers Towards Follow-up-Targeted Innovation for Self-reliance of Students on Graduation

S/N	Item statement	\bar{X}	SD	t	P-value	Ext	Ho
1.	Students are followedup to ensure they improve upon the innovative skills they acquired on graduation.	3.15	0.65	-0.12	0.51	HE	NS
2.	Follow-up with students on graduation	3.30	0.75	3.39	0.47	HE	NS

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	enhances their commitment to innovation.							
3.	Students are followed up to encourage their strategic orientation towards innovation.	3.45	0.54	0.75	0.13	HE	NS	
4.	Follow-up with students on graduation encourages them to maintain clear responsibilities.	3.54	0.68	-1.14	0.31	HE	NS	
5.	Following up with students on graduation enables them maintain innovative culture.	3.61	0.60	0.33	0.51	HE	NS	
6.	Students are followedup on graduation to encourage them to change management when necessary as innovators.	3.39	0.86	0.35	0.40	HE	NS	
7.	Follow-up with students on graduation encourages them to integrate all employees when necessary.	3.54	0.54	0.19	0.61	HE	NS	
8.	Collaboration is achieved by students on graduation motivated by follow-up exercise.	3.02	0.64	1.72	0.31	HE	NS	
9.	Optimum performance	2.05	0.60	1.73	0.42	HE	NS	

	is ensured through follow-up of students on graduation.						
10.	Follow-up studies enhance risk tolerance of students on graduation.	3.01	0.61	0.22	0.22	HE	NS
11.	Incremental innovation results from follow-up studies.	3.04	0.59	0.19	0.12	HE	NS
	Cluster mean	3.27		0.69	0.39	HE	NS

Key: HE = High Extent; NS = Not Significant; Ext = Extent of Perception

The data in Table 2 indicated that the eleven (11) items on follow-up-targeted innovation for self-reliance of students on graduation had their mean ranging from 2.95 to 3.61. Each of the means was above the cut-off point of 2.50. This showed that all the 11 items were perceived to high extent by business-targeted education lecturers for follow-up innovation for self-reliance. Those items had their standard deviations ranging from 0.54 to 0.75, which was an evidence that the respondents' opinions were not far from the mean and were close to one another in their opinions. The table also showed that each of the 11 items had its p-value greater than 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of business education lecturers in federal and state universities in Enugu and Anambra States on the perception of business education lecturers towards follow-up targeted towards innovation for self-reliance of students on graduation.

Discussion of Result

The result of the study indicated that business education lecturers perceived to high extent the 24 innovation for self-reliance items as fundamental in ensuring self-reliance of students on graduation. The result of this study is in line with the findings of Thornhill (2006) in a

study on knowledge, innovation and firm performance. The author found out that for any academic programme to live up to its objective of producing self-reliant students on graduation in the modern society, equipping the students with incremental innovative skills is a prerequisite. The result of this study also agrees with the work by Omiyi in Agbo, Ugwoke and Edeh (2019) and in Godin (2019) that with globalization in place in the highly competitive Information and Communication Technology (ICT) era, business education should insist on its core value of producing graduates well equipped with innovative skills for self-reliance.

The findings of the study from test of hypotheses further showed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of business education lecturers in federal and state universities in Enugu and Anambra States in the 24 innovation for self-reliance items needed to produce self-reliant students on graduation. The implication of this finding is that it served to authenticate the question raised and answered in this work. It also indicated that the area of operation of the two groups of respondents did not significantly affect their perceptions on innovation for self-reliance items identified in the study.

Conclusion

Innovation for self-reliance of students on graduation in contemporary society will produce students of business education who, on graduation, would be better placed to compete favourably in the job market, be self-reliant, and also shoulder other global economic challenges. Equipping students with innovative skills would make them able to generate ideas, solve problems, and implement the generated ideas, hence making them truly self-reliant. Innovation for self-reliance of students on graduation and follow-up towards innovation for self-reliance are inevitable for students of business education to live up to global economic demands on graduation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings made and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. For purpose of producing self-reliant students on graduation, business education lecturers should emphasize generation of ideas, problem-solving, and implementation of the ideas as central in their teaching.
2. In order that the programme of business education lives up to its core value of producing self-reliant students on graduation, follow-up towards innovation for self-reliance is indispensable.
3. Business education lecturers should be subjected to regular workshops, conferences and seminars aimed at updating their knowledge of innovation in tune with prevailing global economic realities of the contemporary society.

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