

**PERSONAL COMPETENCIES AND JOB CREATION POTENTIALS OF BUSINESS  
EDUCATION STUDENTS IN STATE-OWNED TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN RIVERS STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Students majoring in business education at Rivers State's state-owned universities were the subjects of this study, which aimed to assess their entrepreneurial abilities and their capacity to generate new jobs. A moderately positive and statistically significant relationship was found between business management competency and the job creation potentials of business education students at state-owned tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Similarly, very strong positive and statistically significant relationships were found between marketing competency and the job creation potentials of business education students at the same institutions in Rivers State, as were financial management competencies. Students majoring in business education at Rivers State's publicly owned universities also show a robust, positive, and statistically significant correlation between their competence in human resources, their competence in themselves, and their ability to generate new jobs. Consequently, it was suggested that students of business education should make an effort to become competent in business management while they are in school. This would allow them to be self-sufficient when they graduate and start their own jobs.*

**Keywords: Personal Competency, Business Management, Business Education Students**

**Introduction**

There is no shortage of business prospects for recent grads, but the real question has always been how to make the most of these chances so that they can provide long-term benefits. Although capital is essential, it is insufficient to generate long-term employment opportunities; rather, entrepreneurs cannot launch successful businesses without the requisite capabilities. Since business education on its own failed to impart many of the qualities and competencies it set out to teach, entrepreneurship education became an integral part of business curricula. This is where students are likely to acquire these talents. Entrepreneurship education is crucial to a well-rounded business education, but alas, few entrepreneurs and higher education institutions recognize this. Business instructors don't appear to realize that entrepreneurship education is becoming less relevant due to the very specialized and prescriptive nature of higher education curricula and material.

The study also noted that one reason there isn't more entrepreneurship education is the high unemployment rate among college grads, particularly those with degrees in business. An unusual phenomena in Nigeria is the high rate of graduate unemployment. This is at least in part attributable to the country's systemic failure to adequately assess and reward students for developing marketable technical and vocational skills. Employers often express their displeasure with recent college grads looking for work nowadays. Many companies believe that recent grads do not have what it takes to succeed in today's corporate world. This demonstrates even more how the system disregards the goal of practical training and improvement in favor of acquiring theoretical information, despite the fact that graduates have little hope of a decent career without technical and vocational abilities.

It has been recognized by Okoroafor (2019) that entrepreneurial competence abilities are powerful and practical means of self-empowerment. Creating jobs and ensuring economic sustainability. Given the above, one might wonder how many business education students actually possess the necessary skills to be successful entrepreneurs, and how much of an impact these skills have on the number of jobs that graduates from these programs are able to create. It would seem that the goal

of business education is to produce well-informed and competent individuals who can find success in a variety of occupations, including teaching, office work, and entrepreneurship. Although it comes as a surprise and a disappointment, many business school grads are scouring online job boards for openings, seemingly without the entrepreneurial acumen necessary to go out on their own.

Although there have been many studies on the topic, this one is supposed to fill a vacuum in the literature by focusing on the specific area under investigation. Nevertheless, the majority of them rely on previous research that may not have gone into the topic thoroughly enough or that does not have the same geographical, subject, and unit of analysis scope as the current study. As an example, Okoye and Onyeagha (2021) identified the skills and knowledge that business school graduates in Anambra State needed to foster entrepreneurship. Ogundele (2020) looked studied how students of business education in Kwara State evaluated the skills and knowledge needed to start their own small businesses. In Anambra State, Okeke and Okanlanwo (2018) found out how entrepreneurs rated the technical competencies that business school graduates needed to start small and medium-sized businesses; in Lagos State, Falobi, Shaw, and Baribefe (2020) found out how students of business school needed to be entrepreneurs to start small businesses. Therefore, contrary to what has been said, there is scant evidence that research exist that match the breadth, geographical location, and substance of this study. Therefore, this work aims to fill the identified gap.

### **Concept of Personal Competency**

According to Adameji (2014), competence represents the capability to perform something, as opposed to the more conventional ability to exhibit knowledge. It also indicates being a competent, adequate holder of the necessary skills and information. While knowledge demonstration has always been an important skill, competence indicates the capacity to really perform something. There has been a noticeable uptick in the need for candidates with demonstrated competence, which is defined as a combination of adaptability and problem-solving skills. According to Beckton (2009), entrepreneurs require "soft skills" including leadership, ethics, communication, and the ability to adapt to varied work settings.

The term "competency" has a lengthy history of usage in management literature. But its function and significance have just been recognized in the last several decades. "Lifelong learning" refers to the accumulation of all the information we need to do a job well, including experiences, facts, and attitudes. In any line of work, competence is paramount. Anyone can't just make a job for themselves unless they're good at it. According to Maduabum (2019), competence is demonstrated by the integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values when carrying out a task. Competency, according to Maduabum, may be cultivated with training that is sufficient for doing certain activities. Competence, according to Omojetah (2021), is defined as the practical capacity to employ relevant approaches and technologies in a given context.

Competency refers to a person's attitude, knowledge, and skill set. Many diverse tasks and contexts call for varied understandings of what it means to be competent. Both of these concepts are different in important ways. The competences, powers, and authority of knowledge, attitudes, and facts that are essential for completing tasks were outlined by Achilike and Okwuauso (2019). Several hundred possible competences were found and evaluated by Baridam (2017) in his survey of around 2010 managers. A competence, according to his definition, is "a capacity that exists in a person that leads to behaviour that meets the job demands within the parameters of an organizational environment and that, in turn, brings about desired results."

According to Spencer and Spencer (2018), competence is a personal quality that is directly linked to meeting or exceeding performance standards in a certain work or other endeavor. This proves that a person's personality and performance on the work are defined by observable qualities. Competency is a pretty fundamental and long-lasting aspect of an individual's character that may

foretell how they would perform in a broad range of contexts and work duties because of these underlying qualities. The difference between a competency that is causally-related and a competency that is criterion-referenced lies in the fact that the former determines whether an individual performs adequately or inadequately in relation to a set of predetermined criteria. It is widely acknowledged that competence encompasses a range of qualities necessary for effective work performance, including knowledge, skills, talents, and more. "Competence" is a vague and general term in practice. In a more practical sense, it aids performance. Competence is the capacity to effectively apply one's understanding, abilities, and mindset to the completion of a defined task. The ability to demonstrate competence is a key differentiator between average and exceptional performance.

Competency is defined as "the state of having the necessary skills or knowledge" by Onojetah (2021). A person is competent when they possess the information, mindset, values, and abilities necessary to carry out activities in a given context (James, 2014). One possible definition of competence is a set of personal traits that have only a tenuous relationship to meeting or exceeding expectations in a certain work or other endeavor. Competency is a pretty fundamental and long-lasting aspect of an individual's character that may foretell how they would perform in a broad range of contexts and occupations. When a skill is causally connected, it means it may genuinely predict or affect behavior and performance. According to Uzo-Okonkwo (2020), when a competency is based on a reference criteria, it indicates that it can accurately anticipate how well or poorly an individual would do on a given task.

### **Concept of Job Creation**

A "job," as used in this research, is any activity that requires an individual to actively engage in physical effort in order to produce monetary results. This research classifies occupations into two broad categories: employment and entrepreneurship. Work for compensation is defined in an employment contract between a business and its workers. On the other hand, an entrepreneurial job is one that one creates for themselves, where they put their own efforts into starting a firm. An entrepreneur's capacity to fill a need in society depends on his or her capacity to perceive where things are lacking. The capacity to contribute to one's surroundings is the defining characteristic of an entrepreneur and a source of new employment opportunities.

Learning to manage your own company is simply the tip of the iceberg when it comes to entrepreneurship. Think of oneself as someone who can do anything; that's the attitude. Indeed, the ability to launch one's own enterprise opens doors to virtually endless opportunities (Steve, 2018). One can maintain an entrepreneurial mindset even when employed by another party. Just how? Show your bosses that you're an asset to the company and that you want to see the country's bottom line grow by constantly challenging yourself to learn new things and take on more responsibility (Mariotti, 2016).

The current financial crisis has elevated the creation of jobs to the level of an immediate national priority because of the importance of jobs to economic health. Some jobs are not included. Although self-employed people and those working for free in the early stages of a company's launch are not included in the official employment count, payroll positions and multiple jobholders are. The world's most pressing economic problem now is how to create jobs. There is widespread worry about the state of the job market and gloom about any hope of improvement in many regions of the globe. Accordingly, the development of new jobs has become the world's top economic priority (Anyadike, Emeh & Ukah, 2021).

A person's capacity to master environmental scanning strategies for the purpose of identifying pressing social needs and, maybe, developing answers to those needs is directly related to their

likelihood of success as an entrepreneur. In an effort to address social issues, steps are taken to initiate processes, which in turn provide chances for human endeavor, often known as job creation. When business owners start companies and post openings for qualified candidates, we say that jobs are generated. Entrepreneurs, as pointed out by Tijani-Alawiye (2017), are those who effectively launch, build, and maintain innovative businesses with the aim of attaining broader socio-economic development objectives. Entrepreneurs essentially generate employment possibilities through their pursuit of entrepreneurial development.

### **Personal Competency and Job Creation Potentials of Business Education Students**

Personal talents refer to the unique qualities that each person possesses, including their work habits and personality. A person's character and the way they normally go about things are described here. Competencies in problem-solving, teamwork, goal-setting, planning, communication, and self-control are frequently associated with one's cultural fit. Whether in one's personal life, one's professional life, or one's commercial dealings and operations, personal talents are valuable. Students in business programs learn the following abilities and competences that are necessary for success as independent contractors:

- (a) **Self-Confidence:** Having self-assurance is a must for students in business education programs majoring in accounting and office technology management if they are to graduate job-ready. This ability is crucial for inspiring pupils to consistently pursue their moral convictions and persevere in the face of external obstacles. Being self-confident is having faith in one's abilities and the capacity to achieve one's goals in a given endeavor. The ability to have faith in one's own abilities is what motivates entrepreneurs to take calculated risks while launching and running their businesses. It gives him the will to keep going even when the going gets tough. Formal education or apprenticeship programs are where this competency is honed.
- (b) **Motivational Skill:** People do what they do with a success enthusiasm because they are motivated. That which energizes is the thought inside. Firm believers in the promise of "one day, it will be better" keep them going strong through thick and thin. The entrepreneur can either develop his own intrinsically driven talents or seek out the encouragement of others in his life, including family, friends, mentors, colleagues, and peers of a similar age.
- (c) **Communicative Skill:** What this means is that you may meet individuals and try to sell them your company ideas, products, or services, or you can meet people and try to convince them to buy your products or services. Among the many uses of communication skills include making personal visits, conversing with others, composing formal letters, making phone calls, and scheduling meetings. A solid grasp of the English language, good listening skills, the ability to perceive and understand information intelligently, proficiency with body language, a pleasant voice, and the ability to intelligently choose communication channels are all necessary for students of business education. Apprenticeships, technical or vocational schools, seminars, workshops, and on-the-job training all contribute to the acquisition of skill sets like these. When interacting with clients, employees, vendors, and even friends, a business owner without good communication skills might use crude and derogatory language.
- (d) **Planning Skill:** A combination of patience and restraint is required for planning. Eating half a meal instead of whole one is a skill that will come in handy for future movement. Saving a little bit of each paycheck is a good place to start when learning how to plan. Nobody can save even a small amount of money, let alone hundreds or millions of naira. One way to acquire this talent is to study the actions of others who have already achieved success in business.
- (e) **Saving and Investment Skills:** The ability to save money is one that may be honed via experience or by studying the methods employed by prosperous entrepreneurs. At the conclusion of each business cycle, it's a good idea to set away some of your revenue or

profit. The frequency of the cycle can be set to be daily, weekly, monthly, or annually. Investing is a byproduct of savings, and savings are necessary for investment to occur. Successful entrepreneurs have mastered the art of saving, which paves the way for investing.

- (f) **Adaptive Skills:** In response to novel environmental factors, one must learn to adapt. "No condition is permanent," they declare. The entrepreneur must be able to adjust to many types of surroundings in order to stay afloat. When doing business, you'll encounter both advantageous and unfavourable conditions. Still, even in a worst-case scenario, he wouldn't have to quit his business. In order to keep the firm running, he will need to acquire new entrepreneurial abilities. Eventually, he will regulate or repress the environment in order to extract the much-needed profit as he integrates into the ever-changing technical, social, and economic landscape.
- (g) **Managerial Skills:** Students in the Business Education program who are majoring in Accounting or Office Technology Management should work on their managerial abilities so they can effectively oversee the people and resources in their charge. Optimal management is required since these resources, both human and material, are limited or few. Managerially adept business owners treat their employees with the same respect and compassion that they would show a machine.
- (h) **Human Relations Skill:** Cohesive human performance is dependent on a set of abilities that enable people to live and work in close proximity to one another. Determine, in the field of human relations, what kinds of actions and mindsets motivate individuals to put forth their best effort. According to Nwadini (2015), human interactions occur when individuals are integrated into a work setting in a way that encourages them to work together cooperatively and successfully while also achieving economic, psychological, and social fulfillment. Having good people skills means you can get along with most people. Executives, business owners, managers, and foremen are required to possess this talent.

### Theoretical Review

The theories that guided this study were as follows:

1. Theory of Skill Acquisition by Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus (1986)
2. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

### Theory of Skill Acquisition by Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus (1986)

The early writings of philosopher Hubert Dreyfus and mathematician Stuart Dreyfus—based on their research of chess players and pilots—provide a foundation for the study of skill acquisition globally. According to the idea of skill acquisition put forward by Dreyfus Hubert and Dreyfus Stuart in 1986, formal system of deduction is an iterative process that entails taking on many forms and acquiring abilities that enable individuals to navigate the world. The contrast between "knowing that" and "knowing how" is central to the ideas of skill development put forward by Dreyfus and Dreyfus. One idea that is obtained via is knowing-how, and another is knowing-that. A structured method of deducing. According to "Five stages from Novice to expert" by Dreyfus and Dreyfus, people don't seem to make a magical transition from rule-guided "knowing that" to experience-based knowing-how; rather, they learn new abilities via a combination of classroom instruction and practical application. According to Hubert and Stuart, students need to go through a series of steps before they can claim to have mastered a subject. At least five distinct phases of task-specific knowledge and decision-making processes are exhibited by their skill acquisition process. Competence, proficiency, advanced beginning, and expertise are the five levels that make up this process.

If students enrolled in a business education program are taught a variety of courses—both theoretical and practical—and they have no prior understanding of these topics, then this statement is valid. Here is how this assumption is relevant to the study:

- i) Novice stage

- ii) Advanced beginner stage
- iii) Competent stage
- iv) Proficient stage
- v) Expert stage

**a. Novice Stage:**

Beginners in the novice level are not yet familiar with the tasks or contexts that will be required of them. They learn about these circumstances via the lens of their objective traits so that they might enter them. These characteristics are aspects of the work that may be identified even in unfamiliar contexts. There are other norms that novice practitioners are trained to follow while dealing with certain qualities. According to Dreyfus & Dreyfus, a beginner should not be held accountable for anything beyond adhering strictly to the rules, as they only have broad concepts and are still learning them. A lack of discretionary judgment is at the core of the novice's problem. Novices rely on context-free rules to direct their task performance since they lack expertise with the circumstance. Higher education students majoring in business learn the fundamentals of potentials and other relevant introductory material that will set them up for success in their chosen field..

**b. Advanced Beginner Stage**

An advanced beginner is defined as someone who can show just adequate ability. This individual has dealt with real-life challenges to the point that they can identify, or have a mentor identify, the important features of various scenarios. There is a highly precise definition of the word "aspects" in the Dreyfus model. Aspects are general, global traits that need previous experience in real-world scenarios for identification, in contrast to the quantifiable, context-free properties or features used by the unskilled beginner (Eno, 2014). Expert guidance from a teacher or mentor can help with this kind of thing (Akpama, Esang, Asor and Osang, 2016). While certain details may be made clear, it is not possible to make them totally impartial. Knowing what to look for in the past is crucial for aspect recognition. Guidelines for activities can be formulated in terms of qualities and aspects by the advanced beginner or their instructor. Although these action rules incorporate a large number of traits and elements, they often overlook their relative significance. Everything is given equal weight, in their view (Amadi & Abdullah, 2012). To sum up, at this point, the person is confronted with limited situational awareness. Every facet of the job is given the same weight. Students in business school may only begin to demonstrate exceptional performance based on their own unique experiences when they have replicated real-world scenarios for a sufficient amount of time.

**c. Competence Stage**

A learner's competency level was indicative of the length of time they had been employed. Developing this skill requires the student to start seeing their current activities through the lens of their future aspirations. Learners are self-aware when they have goals or plans, and those plans tell them what parts of the present and future to focus on and what to disregard (Ekong & Ekong, 2019). According to Gimba (2017), an effective learner would first engage in extensive deliberate, abstract, analytical thinking about the topic at hand before formulating a strategy to address it. Although they may not be as quick or adaptable as adept learners, competent learners have mastered the material and are able to handle the inevitable challenges that come with their job. You can obtain a degree of efficiency and organization with the assistance of the competent learner's conscious, purposeful planning. Some companies find that students at this level learn best through decision-making games and simulations that allow them to practice juggling numerous, complicated demands.

Osodeke and Wang (2019) argue that the competent level is institutionally supported and reinforced, and that many learners may remain at this level because their supervisors consider it as desirable. Competent performance is typically shown in the standardization and routinization of procedures,

which are aimed at managing the high turnover rate in most firms. The competent level of success is the main focus of most in-service education programs. To sum up, being competent enables one to establish organizational principles that allow them to swiftly access the precise rules that are applicable to their current responsibilities. As time goes on, the student in business education comes to feel more invested in the work. When students see several options, it's their job to pick the one that will help them succeed at their best.

#### **d. Proficiency Stage**

As one gains experience, they go from competent to proficient. In general, a good performer views things in their entirety, not just its parts, and they base their actions on guiding principles. The skilled performer uses maxims as a guide, but they can't be applied without first having a thorough comprehension of the circumstance (Fitzgerald, 2010). Maxims, in Fitzgerald's view, also represent what would seem as incomprehensible degrees of the circumstance to a good or beginner performance. An expert performer learns via experience what to anticipate in each given scenario and how to adapt their approaches accordingly. The skilled performer can now tell when the typical scenario is missing—that is, when the expected usual image is not there—thanks to their experience-based capacity to detect whole circumstances. A good performer's ability to make decisions is enhanced by their comprehensive understanding. The performer now has a viewpoint on which of the numerous features and characteristics provided are the most significant, making decision making less laborious.

But those who learn to rely on their gut feelings and make up their own rules for making judgments and planning exhibit this level of competence. They go from following rules to following intuitions based on tacit knowledge. Even if he has an innate grasp of the issue at hand, the business education student approaches it critically. He should be able to confidently analyze potential avenues for capital formation, the best place to set up shop, and any other business strategies that pop into his head at this point in his business education, allowing him to become self-employed or find gainful employment upon graduation.

#### **e. Expertise Stage**

Ekong and Ekong (2019) state that while performing at an expert level, one does not depend on an analytical principle to link their knowledge of the circumstance to the right action. The skilled performer, drawing on their vast store of knowledge, has a sixth sense for what's going on and quickly narrows down on the precise area of the problem at hand, rather than wasting time thinking about a wide variety of fruitless possibilities. According to Abanyam (2014), specialists often have a good grasp of the topic at hand and know exactly what to accomplish. The ability to accomplish a task well becomes second nature to an expert after he has done it countless times. He follows his gut instincts rather than planning his every step with precision. The notion that the agent has to practice in order to retain the knowing-how is also emphasized. Over time, the agent will become less proficient and may even go back to the competence level if he doesn't practice. Expert performance, according to the Dreyfus Model of Skill Acquisition, is holistic rather than fractionated, procedural, and based upon incremental steps; thus, it is extremely frustrating to attempt to record verbal descriptions of an expert's performance (Ekong and Ekong, 2019). The capacity to generate employment opportunities, which might lead to the employment of a business student, becomes crucial at this stage.

The five tiers represent shifts in two broad areas of competence development. A shift away from relying on general principles and toward using specific examples from the past serves as one example. The alternative is a shift in how a demand scenario is perceived and understood, moving away from viewing it as a collection of unrelated elements and instead viewing it as a totality, of which only some aspects are important.

According to the thesis, an entrepreneur may and will turn a fresh concept into a profitable invention by establishing protocols for the recursive flow of operations. In 1949, Joseph Schumpeter initially put out the notion. Instead than focusing on the traits of specific entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial groups, the author sought to understand the function of entrepreneurship. According to his thesis, economic progress is dependent on the prevalence of entrepreneurial activities in a given economy, and entrepreneurship, which he termed "creative response," is the central phenomena or determining element in this process. According to Schumpeter, entrepreneurial acts are the creative uses of productive resources that lead to the introduction of new ideas or the reimagining of existing ones. Profit, he said, is the driving force behind entrepreneurship, whereas issues like societal resistance to new ideas, psychological resistance to change, and the inherent uncertainty in business decisions all work against the growth of entrepreneurs. According to Schumpeter, young business owners often use tried-and-true methods of raising capital, such putting money aside, taking out loans, and reinvesting their profits. Entrepreneurs in the present day can utilize this facet of Schumpeter's theory to their advantage while seeking both startup and working finance. For this reason, the Schumpeter theory of entrepreneurship suggests that there is more to entrepreneurship than just launching a company. Individuals find opportunities, distribute resources, and generate value through this process. It is thought that in order to find value, unfulfilled demands need to be identified among graduates of business education programs in order to turn creativity into economic objectives. When seen as an enterprise, entrepreneurs contribute to the growth of new knowledge and abilities that may be used to tackle various societal problems. Instead of relying on savings to launch a small firm, aspiring entrepreneurs will now realize they need to take calculated risks and find other sources of capital. Also, depending on their abilities and available funds, business school grads might work for any of these companies. Basic understanding of how to run a firm to a certain quality is essential for starting a small-scale enterprise.

## CONCLUSION

Students majoring in business education at Rivers State's publicly-owned universities were the subjects of this study, which aimed to assess their entrepreneurial abilities and their capacity to generate new jobs. This study's findings suggest that business education students who want to start their own businesses and become successful entrepreneurs must consistently work to improve their business management, marketing, financial management, human resources, and personal competencies so they can take on the challenges of the entrepreneurial world.

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