

Marketing Skills Needed for Self-Reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo

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Abstract

This study determined the acquisition of marketing skills need for self-reliance among Business Education students in the University of Uyo. The study was carried out in the Department of Vocational Education, University of Uyo. It adopted a survey design. The population of the study comprised 165 respondents which were (78 males and 87 females) undergraduate students of the Department of Vocational Education. A sample size of 100 students consisting of 45 males and 55 females were selected for the study using stratified random sampling technique. A 15-item structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was .78, using Cronbach Alpha reliability tool. The three research questions were answered using mean statistic and the independent t-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.5 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that marketing skills such as advertising, sales promotion and sales forecasting skills are highly needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that marketing skills such as advertising skills, sales promotion skills and sales forecasting skills could enhance self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo. Also, it was recommended among others that Department of Vocational Education should conduct regular seminars and workshops for business education students on the need to acquire marketing skills so as to foster self-reliance among Business Education Students at graduation.

Key words: Acquisition, Marketing, Skill, Self-reliance and Business Education.

Introduction

Marketing due to globalization has been able to remove stress from the manufacturers/producers, marketers and the consumers. This is because the producers and consumers can be brought together in few minutes to satisfy their wants. The producer can call from the factory for raw materials of different sizes, shapes and colours for production at any time and location. The consumer can equally stay far away and marketing choices of their wants. Hence, marketing today has been able to ring goods and services to the door post of the consumers. Marketing as defined by Theodore (2008) is the process of planning and executing the conceptions, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchange that satisfy individual and organizational goals. In the same view, Kotler (2005) asserted that marketing is the process by which two or more individual or

organizations give and take something of value. The author stressed that marketing is typically the task of creating, promoting and delivering goods and services and strive to ensure consumer satisfaction.

In order to succeed in marketing, skills should be applied. Usen and Offiong (2016) recorded that skills is the ability to perform a task effectively. Usoro (2016) wrote that skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable one to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Marketing skills are the abilities to perform or handle an aspect of marketing effectively to the satisfaction of consumers through the supply of goods of the consumers and using the available skills to meet the needs of the end users. It is necessary for students to acquire among others such marketing skills like advertising skill, sales promotion skill and sales forecasting skill.

Amaechi (2008) defined advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor. In addition, Nwokoye (2004) opined that advertising is any non-personal communication through the mass media that is paid for by an interested party. Advertising when it is done skillfully can lead to self-reliance because in the process, more goods will be sold due to value added on the products. The person who advertises the goods and services will be sought for, paid more and maintained by business organizations. In support of this, Amaechi (2008) noted that advertising skill helps to persuade buyers to accept, resell, recommend or use the product, service or ideas being promoted. Along with advertising skills, there is need to acquire sales promotion skills for self-reliance.

Sales promotion is any activity that is used to stimulate sales of a product or service and usually occurring once or over a limited period of time. Longe (2008) defined sales promotion as any activity that is use to stimulate sales of product, it is a special promotion technique designed to encourage brand patronage. Sales promotion may be directed at customers in the form of consumer promotion or to middlemen as trade promotion. Roger (2009) stressed that the importance of sales promotion skills have increased tremendously in the modern times, that a lot of money are being spent on sales promotional activities to attract the consumers in our country as well as in other countries of the world, so much that some large companies have begun to appoint sales promotion managers to handle miscellaneous promotional tools. Acquisition of sales promotion skills by Business Education Students at graduation will enhance self-reliant opportunities that are revealed by market research. Another skill needed in this regards, are sales forecasting skills for self-reliance.

Sales forecast is an estimate of the monetary or unit sales of a product or service that an individual marketer or business organization expects in a specified period under a given marketing plan. Nwokoye (2004) asserted that sales forecasting is the measure of buyer demand that is explicitly used in the marketing plan, that, the sales forecasting figures are used in setting the budget sales operations as well as the allocation of these budgets over the different market areas. The acquisition of sales forecasting skills can lead to self-reliant among Business Education students at graduation. Nwokoye (2004) supported the above fact

while stating that acquisition of sales forecasting skills enable individual to gather and analyse information about the demand, consumers want, competition, government policies, new products and changes in the social structure in order to create self-reliance opportunities and in the long-run become an employer of labour. With this, Hays (2006) noted that individual's ability to forecast sales can enhance identification, anticipation and creation of self-reliance opportunities. Walter (2008) added that possession of sales forecasting skills foster the prediction of the number of sales of a product or service in the future so as to explore avenue for the production and sales of such products or service. The ability to carry out sales forecasting correctly, efficiently and effectively constitutes sales forecasting skill. Business Education Students are supposed to acquire marketing skills at graduation. Business Education involves the preparation of the students through theory and practice for skill acquisition to become self-reliance and saleable in the world of work. Skill acquisition as maintained by Udofia, Akpan and Udo (2016) is the process of equipping the recipient with efficient work performance. According to Offiong, Usoro and Akpanobong (2014), vocational education in Nigeria is facing many challenges.

In this case, it can be seen that vocational education in the University of Uyo is equally charged with many problems such as poor funding of the programme by the federal government, non-availability of instructional facilities and clash of students industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) with other academic activities. Also, it has been noticed that many students in marketing options in vocational education, university of Uyo, failed to acquire marketing skills at graduation. These problems have created a vacuum between products from Business Education programmes from University of Uyo and their ability to acquire the needed marketing skills for self-reliance in the world of work. This situation has made the researchers to ask this pertinent question: Do students of Business Education need marketing skills, such as advertising skills, sales promotion skills and sales forecasting skills at graduation?

Statement of the Problem

Vocational Education is a specialized discipline of training designed to prepare students to acquire skills, knowledge, attitude and understanding so that after graduation, graduates should be able to make a successful transition from the University to become productive workers and self-reliant entrepreneurs. This is an indispensable programme of studies especially in the present era where the number of University graduates that are being turned out every year made the labour market to become very competitive.

It has been observed that graduates of Vocational Education programme are among the thousands of graduates faced with myriad problems and harsh realities which include: unemployment, poverty and conflict. These problems do not promote self-reliance. These problems could be attributed to the fact that most graduates of Business Education programme failed to acquire the necessary marketing skills such as advertising, sales promotion and sales forecasting skills among others during the course of their training, hence the problems hamper their ability to become self-employed and self-reliance. This prompted

the undertaking of this study in order to investigate the marketing skills needed on self-reliance among Business Education Students in University of Uyo.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the marketing skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in University of Uyo. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the advertising skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.
2. determine the sales promotion skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.
3. determine the sales forecasting skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and were tested at .05 level of significance.

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on advertising skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

HO₂₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on sales promotion skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on sales forecasting skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

Methodology

This study was carried out in the Department of Vocational Education, University of Uyo.

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. This design was considered appropriate since information on acquisition marketing skills need was sought from the respondents using questionnaire. The population of this study comprised 165 respondents being 78 of males and 87 of females' undergraduate students of Business Education, University of Uyo. The students in 200-400 levels in the Business Education units of the Department were used. The sample size of 100 students consisting of 45 males and 55 females were selected for the study. The selection covered levels 200 to 400 of Business Education unit of the Department of Vocational Education in University of Uyo. The sample size was determined using stratified random sampling technique. According to Ekuri (2004), stratified random sampling technique is a sampling technique that allows the researcher to strive to select that is a representation of the population being studied. The researchers developed a 15-item structured questionnaire titled, "Marketing Skills Need and Self-Reliance among Business Education Students Questionnaire" (MSNSBESQ) for data collection. The instrument was designed according to the variables of the study. The questionnaire was divided into two

sections (A and B). Section A contained the personal data of the respondents. Section B contained the statements on the variables grouped in three clusters (A-C) namely: advertising skills need, sales promotion skills need and sales forecasting skills need. The response options were: Very highly needed (VHN), highly needed (HN), moderately needed (MN), very low needed (VLN) and not needed (NN).

The research instrument was given to three experts in the Department of Vocational Education of the University of Uyo for face validation. The experts were requested to read through the instrument, vet the items for clarity, relevance and suitability. The inputs and corrections from these were incorporated into the final copy of the questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha Reliability method. After the analysis, a reliability coefficient index of .78 was obtained which deemed the instrument highly reliable. Data were collected through the administration of questionnaire by the researchers. The questionnaire was collected from the immediately after completion to avoid some of it missing out. The three research questions were answered using mean statistic and the independent t-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

Presentation and analysis of Data

Research Question 1: What are the advertising skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo?

Table 1: Mean responses of the respondents on the advertising skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo

S/No	Items	Mean	Remarks
1.	Persuading buyers to accept a product	3.40	HN
2.	Informing the target audience about a product or service	3.48	HN
3.	Stimulating demand for a product or service	3.35	HN
4.	Introducing a new product	3.45	HN
5.	Creating demand for a product where none existed	3.38	HN

Note: HN = highly needed

The result of data presented in Table 1 indicated that advertising skills is highly needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

Research Question 2: What are the sales promotion skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo?

Table 2: Mean Responses of the Respondents on the sales promotion skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo

S/No	Items	Mean	Remarks
6.	Stimulating sales of a product or service	3.34	HN
7.	Encouraging brand patronage	3.38	HN
8.	Persuading a potential customers to buy a product	2.88	HN

9.	Boosting sales of a product or service	2.84	HN
10.	Stimulating customers exposition	3.43	HN

Note: HN = highly needed

The result of data presented in Table 2 indicated that sale promotion skills are highly needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

Research Question 3: What are the sales forecasting skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo?

Table 3: Mean responses of the respondents on the sales forecasting skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo

S/No	Items	Mean	Remarks
1.	Measuring of buyers demand	2.93	HN
2.	Gathering information about the consumer demand	2.81	HN
3.	Projection for achieving sales revenue	3.37	HN
4.	Predicting the number of sales of a product	3.51	HN
5.	Making informed business decisions	3.18	HN

Note: VHN =Very Highly Needed, HN = Highly Need

The result of data presented in Table 3 showed that sales forecasting skills are greatly needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

Testing of Null Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the advertising skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

Table 4: t-test analysis of the difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the advertising skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo, Uyo.

Gender	n	Mean	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Males	45	2.83	98	0.428	1.960	NS
Females	55	2.62				

Note: Not significant, S = significant, p = 0.05

The result presented in Table 4 showed that the calculated t-value of 0.428 was less than the t-critical value of 1.960 at .05 level of significance and 98 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore upheld. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the advertising skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the sales promotion skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

Table 5: t-test analysis of the difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the sales promotion skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

Gender	n	\bar{x}	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Males	45	3.56	98	0.325	1.960	NS
Females	55	3.30				

Note: Not significant, S = significant, $p = 0.05$

The result presented in Table 5 showed that the calculated t-value of 0.325 was less than the t-critical value of 1.960 at 0.5 level of significance and 98 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore upheld. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the sales promotion skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the sales forecasting skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

Table 6: t-test analysis of the difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the sales forecasting skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

Gender	n	\bar{x}	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Males	45	3.83	98	0.428	1.960	NS
Females	55	2.62				

Note: Not significant, S = significant, $p = 0.05$

The result in Table 6 indicated that the calculated t-value of 0.428 was less than the critical t-value of 1.960 at .05 level of significance and 98 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was upheld. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the sales forecasting skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo.

Discussion of Findings

Advertising Skills Need and Self-Reliance

The result presented in Table 1 showed that advertising skills are highly needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo. The result implies that acquisition of advertising skills by Business Education students can promote self-

reliance. The findings is in consonance with the study of Amaechi (2008) who found out that advertising skills help to persuade buyers to accept, resell, recommend or use the product, service or idea being promoted. The result of the data presented in Table 4 indicated that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the advertising skills needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo. The result was not significant because the calculated t-value was less than the critical t-value, thus, the null hypotheses was upheld.

Sales Promotion Skills Need and Self-Reliance

The result in Table 2 showed that acquisition of sales promotion skills are highly needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo. The implication of this finding is that the acquisition for sales promotion skills by Business Education Students can foster self-reliance. The findings of this study correlates with the findings of Hopkins (2008) who found that the sales promotion skills by business education students enhance, identification of new customers, counteract completion, and take advantage of self-reliant opportunities that are revealed by market research.

Sales Forecasting Skills Need and Self-reliance

The result presented in Table 3 revealed that the sales forecasting skills are highly needed for self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo. The implication of the findings is that acquisition of sales forecasting skills among Business Education students can enhance self-reliance. The findings of this study is in line with the findings of Nwokoye (2004) who accepted that acquisition of sales forecasting skills enable individual to gather and analyze information about the demand, consumers want, competition, government policies, new products and changes in the social structure in order to create self-employment opportunities and in the long-run become an employer of labour.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that marketing skills such as advertising skills, sales promotion skills and sales forecasting skills could enhance self-reliance among Business Education Students in the University of Uyo. Advertising skills could lead to self-reliance because in the process, value would be added to the products advertised and more goods could be sold. This will gain the advertiser employment. In addition, sales promotion skill could lead to self-reliance, in that one who is able to identify new customers, counteract competition through using different sales plans and mounting of sales activities skillfully could also be employed or appointed as sales manager in a business enterprise. Furthermore, acquisition of sales forecasting skills and ability to predict and project sales volume correctly, effectively and efficiently such as person would remain an asset, thereby would be sought for and employ in business company or could remain as a consultant with personal business outfit hence, became self-reliance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study it was recommended that:

1. The head of business unit in the Department of Vocational Education should conduct regular seminars and workshops for students on the need to acquire advertising skills to foster self-reliance among Vocational Education Students in the University of Uyo.
2. Lecturers in the Department of Vocational Education should regularly invite marketing companies to the department to organize conferences for the students on sales promotion skills.
3. Department of Vocational Education should invite a sales manager for a seminar for Business Education undergraduate students on the topic “sales forecasting: a key to business success.

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