

Business Education Students' Ratings of Financial Management and Customer Services Skills Needed For National Development in South-West, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate business education students' ratings of financial management skills and customer services skills needed for national development in South-West, Nigeria. Two research questions were raised to guide the study while two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was 2,682 year III NCE business education students of the Federal and State owned colleges of education in South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria. The sample for the study was 348 year III NCE Business Education students of the government owned colleges of education. The instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaire entitled Financial Management and Customer Service Skills Questionnaire (FIMACUSSQ) developed by the researcher. Three experts validated the instrument. Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument in which 0.78 reliability coefficient was obtained for the instrument. Mean, standard deviation and summated score percentages were employed to analyze data for answering research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that Business Education students rated as needed financial management and customer services related skills for national development. The hypotheses tested indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of business education students on the financial management related skills while the findings indicated that there was significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the customer services related skills needed for national development. It was recommended among others that business education students be exposed to practical handling of business activities through periodical excursion to companies, accounting and audit firms and other related businesses that would offer them with the relevant dexterity.

Keywords: Business Education, Customer Services Skills, Financial Management Skills, and National Development

Introduction

Financial management is at the heart of running a successful business. It affects every aspect, from managing cash flow and tracking business performance to developing plans that ensure that business owners can make the most of opportunities. Juneja (2018) defined financial management to mean planning, organizing, directing and controlling the financial activities such as procurement and utilization of funds of the enterprise. Acquisition of financial management skills will assist business owners in applying general management principles to financial resources of the enterprise. According to the institute of cost and works accountants of India (2010), financial management is managerial activity which is concerned with the planning and controlling of the firm's financial resources. Paramasivan and Subramanian (2017) pinpointed that financial management is mainly concerned with the effective funds management in the business. Financial management is the application of the general management principles in the area of financial decision-making, namely in the areas of investment of funds, financing various activities, and disposal of profits (Engineering, 2017). Financial

management skill is critical for putting a plan into practice. Financial management skills let business education graduates track and measure performances, identify problem areas and new opportunities, and minimise risks. Acquisition of financial management skills will aid a business owner in the areas of estimation of capital requirements, determination of capital composition, choice of sources of funds, investment of funds, disposal of surplus, management of cash and financial control. Apart from financial management skills, an enterprise owner needs skills in the area of customer service to assist in gaining success in the business activities.

Doyle (2018) posited that customer service involves having a thorough knowledge of business inventory, experience with company's products, and being able to help customers make the best choices for them. Customer service is the act of taking care of the customer's needs by providing and delivering professional, helpful, high quality service and assistance before, during, and after the customer's requirements are met (Mckinney, 2018). According to Investopedia (2018), Customer service is the process of ensuring [customer](#) satisfaction with a product or service. Often, customer service takes place while performing a transaction for the customer, such as making a sale or returning an item. Customer service can take the form of an in-person interaction, a phone call, self-service systems, or by other means. A self-employed person needs the afore-mentioned skills in order to wax in the achievement of business objectives which will in turn bring about national development.

National development as viewed by Bawa (2018) is a process of reconstruction and development in various dimensions of a nation and development of individuals. Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011) described national development as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation. National development is the ability of a country or countries to improve the social welfare of the people by providing social amenities like quality education, potable water, transportation, infrastructure and medical care (Anonymous, 2014). One of the geo-political zones in Nigeria where people need to be provided with sound education and skills training that will aid individuals in self-employment and facilitate national development is South-West.

The South-West geo-political zone states engage in business of various forms ranging from local textile, crop production, poultry farming, manufacturing of soaps and detergent, manufacturing of leather footwear, pure water firms, dying of cloth. In these states (Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti and Lagos), business activities are predominantly the occupation of people. There are Colleges of Education which are either owned by government or private individual. Those that are owned by government can either be owned by state or federal government and are established in order to cater for the educational needs of the people. Besides, the students are made up of male and female and the students used maximum of three years in the school. Also some of the students are from business background home and have acquired prerequisite training at their different homes and nothing to show for the knowledge acquired. This situation is suggestive of the fact that the graduates of business education still need certain relevant skills to facilitate smooth running of businesses and thereby be able to stand on their own and remain economically productive to the nation and consequently reduce the rate of unemployment in the country. It is on the basis of the foregoing that this study sought to investigate business education students' ratings of financial management skills and customer services skills needed for national development in South-West, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

There has been unemployment situation in Nigeria whereby many graduates are on the streets and in search of white collar job opportunities which are rarely available. This ugly situation continues to affect the society at large. Some of the graduates who are jobless are from business education background. The rate at which graduates are on the look for employment opportunities is alarming. One would wonder why this situation is still persistent despite the effort of government through various programmes to reduce the spate of unemployment. The graduates of business education are expected to organise businesses of their own instead of looking for government jobs. However, the situation at hand in the country reveals that some graduates are still roaming the street scouting white collar jobs. Hence, this study sought to investigate business education students' ratings of financial management skills and customer services skills needed for national development in South-West, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate business education students’ ratings of financial management skills and customer services skills needed for national development in South-West, Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined:

1. financial management related skills needed by business education students in colleges of education for self-employment.
2. customer services related skills needed by business education students in colleges of education for self-employment.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the financial management related skills needed by business education students in colleges of education for self-employment?
2. What are the customer services related skills needed by business education students in colleges of education for self-employment?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education students on the financial management related skills needed for national development based on their background (business and non-business background).
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education students on the customer services related skills needed for national development based on their institutions (federal and state).

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria. The population for this study comprised 2,682 NCE year III Business Education students of the Federal and State owned colleges of education in South-West, Nigeria. The population was made up of 1,081 and 1,601 male and female students respectively. The government owned colleges were made up of 4 Federal and 8 state owned colleges of education. The sample for the study was 348 NCE year III Business Education students of the government owned colleges of education in South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria. The instrument used for data collection was titled Financial Management and Customer Service Skills Questionnaire (FIMACUSSQ) developed by the researcher. The FIMACUSSQ consisted of two parts, 1 and 2. Part 1 focused on respondents’ demographic data while part 2 was made up of two sections, A and B based on the two research questions. The instrument consisted of 20 items in part 2. A with 10 items centered on financial management related skills to address research question1, B also with 10 items focused customer services related skills to answer research question 2. The instrument was on 5-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA, 5), Agree (A, 4), Undecided (UD, 3), Disagree (DA, 2) and Strongly Disagree (SD, 1). The instrument was validated by three experts. Corrections observed were accordingly effected. The reliability of the instrument was determined through application of Cronbach Alpha statistical method and a reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained. The instrument was administered on the respondents by the researcher and research assistants. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation was used to determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents views while t-test inferential statistics was employed to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Summated scores percentages for each item as responded to by the respondents were determined. 50% and above were taken to mean “agreement” while any item that resulted to less than 50% of respondents opinions was regarded as “disagreement”. The response options were summarised into “agree and disagree”. Null hypothesis was rejected where p-value was less than or equal to 0.05 level of significance, hypothesis was not rejected where p-value obtained was greater than 0.05.

Results

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on financial management related skills needed by business education students in colleges of education for self-employment. N=348

S/N	Items Statement	Mean	SD	%A	%D	Remarks
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1.	Identifying sources of capital to start a business	4.21	0.99	81.03	18.97	Agree
2.	Utilising financial resources	4.14	0.94	77.30	22.70	Agree
3.	Undertaking financial prudence	4.08	1.03	77.30	22.70	Agree
4.	Handling cash transactions to avoid financial loss	4.06	1.02	77.59	22.41	Agree
5.	Appropriating available financial resources to meet all needs	4.18	0.99	84.20	15.80	Agree
6.	Maintaining book-keeping records of transactions	3.91	1.12	67.82	32.18	Agree
7.	Negotiating credit facilities	4.03	1.09	75.00	25.00	Agree
8.	Obtaining loan from appropriate financial institutions	4.07	1.06	75.00	25.00	Agree
9.	Maintaining steady cash flow	3.61	1.24	56.61	43.39	Agree
10.	Preparing financial statement	3.80	1.21	63.22	36.78	Agree
	Grand Mean	4.01	0.97			Agree

Key: SD= Standard Deviation, VHN= Very Highly Needed, HN= Highly Needed, MN= Moderately Needed, LN= Lowly Needed, NN= Not Needed

Table 1 reveals the mean ratings of respondents on the financial management related skills needed by Business Education students of Colleges of Education for self-employment. All the items recorded mean scores ranging from 3.79 to 4.20 indicating needed. Standard deviation ranges from 0.93-1.24 indicating that the respondents were not far from one another in their opinions. The percentages of the respondents who agreed on the financial management related skills needed were 81.03%, 77.30%, 77.30%, 77.59%, 84.20%, 67.82%, 75%, 56.61% and 63.22% respectively while the percentages of the respondents who disagreed were 18.97%, 22.70%, 22.70%, 22.41%, 15.80%, 32.18%, 25%, 43.39% and 36.78% respectively. The grand mean of 4.01 and standard deviation of 0.97 indicated that Business Education students of colleges of education needed financial management related skills for self-employment and national development.

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on customer services related skills needed by business education students in colleges of education for self-employment. N=348

S/N	Items Statement	Mean	SD	%A	%D	Remarks
11.	Using positive language when talking to customers	4.08	1.10	77.59	36.78	Agree
12.	Reading customer's mind	4.33	0.99	83.33	16.67	Agree
13.	Handling customer appropriately with peculiar problem	4.27	0.98	85.92	14.08	Agree
14.	Boosting customer's happiness with exclamation and emotion	4.23	0.94	79.60	20.40	Agree
15.	Calming customers in the event of hectic situation	4.10	1.02	77.87	22.13	Agree
16.	Handling surprises from customers	4.10	0.99	75.86	24.14	Agree
17.	Utilising persuasion when canvassing customers	4.22	1.01	83.05	16.95	Agree
18.	Understanding and share the feelings of customers	4.13	0.99	73.56	26.44	Agree
19.	Ending conversation with customers with confirmed satisfaction	4.15	0.98	78.16	21.84	Agree
20.	Managing non-patient customers	4.05	1.03	73.85	26.15	Agree

Grand Mean

4.17 1.00

Agree

Key: SD= Standard Deviation, VHN= Very Highly Needed, HN= Highly Needed, MN= Moderately Needed, LN= Lowly Needed, NN= Not Needed

Table 2 shows the mean ratings of respondents on the customer services related skills needed by Business Education students of Colleges of Education for self-employment. All the items recorded mean scores ranging from 4.05 to 4.33 indicating needed. Standard deviation ranges from 0.93-1.11 indicating that the respondents were not far from one another in their opinions. The percentages of the respondents who agreed on customer services related skills needed were 77.59%, 83.33%, 85.92%, 79.60%, 77.87%, 75.86%, 83.05%, 73.56%, 78.16%, and 73.85% while the percentages of the respondents who disagreed were 36.78%, 22.41%, 16.67%, 14.08%, 20.40%, 22.13%, 24.14%, 16.95%, 26.44%, 21.84% and 26.15% respectively. The grand mean of 4.17 and standard deviation of 1.00 indicated that Business Education students of colleges of education needed customer services related skills for self-employment and national development.

Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis between the Mean Responses of Male and Female Business Education Students regarding the Financial Management Related Skills Needed for Self-Employment. N= 348, (Business background=149; Non-Business background=199)

S/N	Items Statement	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	df	t-cal	Sig.	Remarks
1.	Identifying sources of capital to start a business	4.33	4.12	346	0.21	.05	S
2.	Utilising financial resources	4.26	4.07	346	1.86	.06	NS
3.	Undertaking financial prudence	4.26	3.97	346	2.62	.01	S
4.	Handling cash transactions to avoid financial loss	4.12	4.02	346	0.88	.38	NS
5.	Appropriating available financial resources to meet all needs	4.26	4.13	346	1.17	.24	NS
6.	Maintaining book-keeping records of transactions	4.04	3.81	346	1.89	.60	NS
7.	Negotiating credit facilities	4.19	3.93	346	2.14	.03	S
8.	Obtaining loan from appropriate financial institutions	4.08	4.07	346	0.06	.96	NS
9.	Maintaining steady cash flow	3.49	3.69	346	1.44	.15	NS
10.	Preparing financial statement	3.83	3.78	346	0.38	.71	NS

Key: X_1 = Mean of male business education students of Colleges of Education in South-West, X_2 = Mean of female business education students of Colleges of Education in South-West, **Df**= degree of freedom, **Sig.**= probability value (2 tailed), **t-cal**= calculated values of t-test, **S**= significant, **NS**= Not Significant.

Table 3 shows each of the calculated t-values and p-values for items 41-50. Only items 41, 43 and 47 have their p-values less than the level of significance (0.05). However, since the p-values of the remaining 7 items (42, 44, 45, 46, 48 49 and 50) are more than the level of significance, there is enough evidence not to accept the null hypothesis. This implies that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the financial management related skills needed by business education students of colleges of education for self-employment based on their background (business and non-business background).

Table 4: Summary of t-test Analysis between the Mean Responses of Business Education Students of Federal and State Colleges of Education regarding the Customer Services Related Skills Needed for Self-Employment. N= 348, (Federal=125; State=223)

S/N	Items Statement	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	Df	t-cal	Sig.	Remarks
11.	Using positive language when talking to customers	4.29	3.96	346	2.72	.01	S
12.	Reading customer's mind	4.52	4.22	346	2.74	.01	S
13.	Handling customer appropriately with peculiar problem	4.43	4.17	346	2.38	.02	S
14.	Boosting customer's happiness with exclamation and emotion	4.46	4.09	346	3.59	.00	S
15.	Calming customers in the event of hectic situation	4.26	4.01	346	2.17	.03	S
16.	Handling surprises from customers	4.30	3.99	346	2.89	.00	S
17.	Utilising persuasion when canvassing customers	4.34	4.15	346	1.67	.09	NS
18.	Understanding and share the feelings of customers	4.29	4.04	346	2.31	.02	S
19.	Ending conversation with customers with confirmed satisfaction	4.28	4.09	346	1.71	.09	NS
20.	Managing non-patient customers	4.27	3.93	346	3.01	.00	S

Key: X_1 = Mean of business education students of Federal Colleges of Education in South-West, X_2 = Mean of business education students of State Colleges of Education in South-West, **Df**= degree of freedom, **Sig.**= probability value (2 tailed), **t-cal**= calculated values of t-test, **S**= significant, **NS**= Not Significant.

Table 4 reveals each of the calculated t-values and p-values for items 51-60. Only items 57 and 59 have their p-values greater than the level of significance (0.05). However, since the p-values of the remaining 8 items (51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58 and 60) are less than the level of significance, there is therefore enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. This implies that there was significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the customer services related skills needed by business education students of colleges of education for self-employment based on their institution type (federal and state).

Discussion of Results

Financial management related skills needed by business education students in colleges of education for self-employment

The result in Table 1 showed that all the items 10 items relating to financial management related skills were rated as being needed by the respondents. Business Education students rated as needed the financial management related skills for self-employment and national development. The items rated agreed on include skills in the covering ability to identify sources of capital to start a business, ability to effectively utilize financial resources, ability to undertake financial prudence, ability to effectively handle cash transactions to avoid financial loss, ability to effectively appropriate available financial resources to meet all needs, ability to effectively maintain book-keeping records of transactions, ability to negotiate credit facilities, ability to obtain loan from appropriate financial institutions, ability to maintain steady cash flow and ability to prepare financial statement. With a grand mean of 4.01, the respondents indicated that they needed financial management related skills for self-employment and national development. The standard deviation of 0.97 showed that the respondents were closely related in their opinions regarding the financial management related skills needed by Business Education students on financial management related skills needed for self-employment and national development. The result of the study is in conformity with Binuomote and Okoli (2015) who reported that Business Education students needed technical and financial management skills to function well in this time of economic meltdown in Nigeria. Also, Eze, Ezenwafor and Igarahaha (2016) revealed that Business Education students highly needed accounting and office technology and management skills for self-employment.

However, the result in Table 3 indicated that only items 41, 43 and 47 had their p-values less than equal to the level of significance (0.05) while all other items 42, 44, 45, 46, 48, 49 and 50

respectively had their p-values greater than the level of significance. This shows that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education students regarding the financial management related skills needed for self-employment and national development based on their gender. Also, the result in Table 3 showed that only item 43 had its p-value less than the level of significance out of 10 items while the remaining 9 items had their p-values greater than the level of significance. This implies that there was no significant difference in the mean rating of Business Education students regarding the financial management related skills needed for self-employment and national development. This outcome is in contradiction to the study of Olawoyin (2017) who found that there was significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education students regarding the financial management competencies required towards stemming the tide of unemployment in Nigeria. Also, the outcome of the study is in opposition to Binuomote and Okoli (2015) who reported that there was significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education students regarding the financial skills training needed for successful entrepreneurship.

Customer services related skills needed by business education students in colleges of education for self-employment

The result of the study in Table 2 revealed that all the 10 items were rated highly needed. Business Education students rated customer service related skills as being needed for self-employment and national development. The skills include ability to use positive language when talking to customers, ability to read customer's mind, ability to handle customer appropriately with peculiar problem, ability to boost customer's happiness with exclamation and emotion, ability to calm customers in the event of hectic situation, ability to handle surprises from customers, ability to utilize persuasion when canvassing customers, ability to understand and share the feelings of customers, ability to be able to end conversation with customers with confirmed satisfaction and ability to manage non-patient customers. With the grand mean of 4.17, it is therefore concluded that Business Education students in South-West, Nigeria needed customer service related skills for self-employment and national development. The standard deviation of 1.00 is a pointer to the fact that the respondents were very close in their opinions regarding the customer service related skills needed for self-employment and national development. The result of this study lends credence to the study of Harley, Ogege and Ideji (2014) who found that customer service management is engine to improving the profitability of banks.

However, the result of the analysis in Table 4 revealed that all the 10 items on the customer service related skills had their p-values less than the level of significance (0.05). This implies that Business Education students were significantly different in their mean ratings on the customer service related skills needed for self-employment and national development based on their gender. However, the result of the analysis in Table 18 revealed that only items 57 and 59 had their p-values greater than the level of significance (0.05) while items 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58 and 60 had their p-values less than the level of significance. This shows that there was significant difference in the mean ratings on the customer service related skills needed by Business Education students in South-West, Nigeria for self-employment and national development. The result of this study is in contradiction to the findings of Harley, Ogege and Ideji (2014) who reported that there was inverse relationship between banks customers services and profitability in Nigeria banks.

Conclusion

The study concluded that business education students' rated needed financial management related skills and customer services related skills for national development. It was also concluded that the respondents were not significantly different in their mean ratings regarding the financial management related skill needed for national development based on their institution type (Federal and State) while there was significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents regarding the customer services related skills based on their background (business and non-business background).

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended as follows:

1. Business Education students should be exposed to practical handling of business activities through periodical excursion companies, accounting and audit firms and other related businesses that would offer them with the relevant dexterity.
2. Business Education students at the college of education should be grouped into teams at the beginning of year three and saddled with the responsibility of developing a product, market,

sales and record daily transactions and prepare financial statement at the end of the business period and same be submitted to the coordinator for that purpose before graduation. This exercise is believed to acquaint them with the skills necessary for financial management in self-employment.

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