



MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES REQUIRED OF BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES FOR HANDLING ENTREPRENEURSHIP CHALLENGES IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract:

This study determined the managerial competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study. Four null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Related literature pertinent to the study were reviewed which exposed the need for the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted, using a population of 1124 entrepreneurs of small and medium scale enterprises. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 338. A structured questionnaire developed by the researcher was used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The reliability yielded coefficient values of .91 and .85. Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, t-test and ANOVA. Mean was used to answer the research questions and standard deviation was used to explain how the responses of the respondents varied. ANOVA and t-test were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that entrepreneurs of SMEs agreed that innovative and ICT competencies are required by business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State. The results also showed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of entrepreneurs on innovative and ICT competencies required of business education graduates based on gender and years of experience. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended among others, that the management of tertiary educational institutions through the centre for entrepreneurship development should work in collaboration with the existing entrepreneurs/ business organizations around them in providing entrepreneurship training to students in order to enable students develop self-employment initiatives through the programme.

Keywords: managerial competencies, business education graduates, entrepreneurship challenges

1. Introduction

Education is a basic necessity of life and an important factor which brings about changes for both an individual and the nation. The growth and development of any nation is hinged on the level of education attained by its citizens. In other words, education is the bridge to the development of any nation. Education is the key for positive change in the society because of its far-reaching effects on growth and development in all sectors of the economy. Education is critical to the development of human resources, impartation of appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude. It is a basis for transformation, industrialization and a high way to knowledge. The importance of Nigerian educational objectives as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014) is that it aims at the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies, both mental and physical, as equipment for an individual to live and contribute to the development of his society. This provision is in conformity with one of the objectives of business education, which states *inter alia*, to equip graduates with the right skills that will enable them to engage in a life of work in the office as well as for self-employment (Akpotohwo, 2017).

Business education is an aspect of educational programme offered at the higher institution of learning which prepares student for careers in business. Jubril (2010) defined business education as a specialized area of vocational education that provides educational training, skills development, attitudes adjustment towards business orientation and academic challenges. Bilyaminu (2011) viewed business education as an aspect of total education programme that provides the knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding needed to perform in the business world as a producer and/or consumer of goods and services. Business education is education for and about business (Esene, 2012). It is training in business skills that will enable a graduate after to set-up his own business and run it successfully without failure. According to Okolo (2014), through practical training of graduate will acquire creative, innovative and business skills which will transform opportunities and material resources into goods and services. Skills acquisition has been viewed as very critical tool for promoting business education programme. The curriculum of business education at tertiary level is well articulated. It covers many areas of career opportunities such as information and communication technology, management, accounting, marketing, secretarial studies (Aliyu, 2013). Business education programme is an important part of Nigeria's educational system which provides a solid foundation of knowledge and skills to graduates to become successful entrepreneurs. Business education, therefore, is directed towards preparing an individual for the business world as creative employees, entrepreneurs, and employers of labour. Thus, the form of education intended in the National Policy on Education, is to make business education a requisite for entrepreneurship development.

Entrepreneurship according to Agomuo in Akpotowoh, Watchman and Ogeibiri (2016) is a process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas, integrating them with management and organizational skills in order to build up people, money and resources to meet an identified need and thereby create wealth. Ojeifo (2013) noted that entrepreneurship is the willingness and the ability of an individual, a firm or an organization to identify an environmental change and exploit such an opportunity to produce goods and services for public consumption. The concept of entrepreneurship deals with several activities concerned with the establishment and operation of business enterprises. These activities include identification of investment opportunities, decision-making, promotion and establishment of business enterprises, aggregation of scarce resources required for production and distribution, organization and management of human and material resources for the attainment of enterprise objectives, risk bearing and innovation. Entrepreneurship is willingness and ability to seek out an investment opportunity, establish an enterprise and run it successfully. An entrepreneur is the engineer of a business idea. He is a promoter and also a founder of a business enterprise. Therefore, business education graduates require adequate entrepreneurial skills so as to succeed in their various entrepreneurial ventures. Despite the recognition of the economic benefits of entrepreneurship especially in terms of reducing poverty and graduate unemployment, entrepreneurial development in Nigeria has been marred with numerous challenges. These challenges according to Duru (2011) include high cost of doing business in Nigeria, lack of basic knowledge in science and technology, lack of strong patent law, inappropriate incentive structure among others.

In view of the above assertion, it could be said that the level of industrial development expected to be generated through entrepreneurial development compared to the need of the country has not been achieved. It is on this basis that Ezeh and Ezeh (2011) reported that every year in Nigeria, a number of entrepreneurial ventures spring up but many eventually collapse within a short time frame. This situation has indeed worsened since the country started experiencing the recent economic depression which has eaten into the economy like a canker-worm. In view of the present economic depression in the country, there is no doubt that business education graduates who are expected to venture into various entrepreneurial businesses require adequate managerial competencies so as to be able to run these businesses successfully. These competencies would enable them to successfully handle the various business challenges. It will further equip them to surmount challenges arising from either the internal or external business environment.

The success and failure of any business depend largely on the competence of an entrepreneur. Effective entrepreneurs run successful SMEs because of their innate and practical abilities. SMEs have gained recognition in the field of management because of their strategic role in promoting a nation's economy in terms of reducing poverty by providing employment opportunities. Small and medium-scale enterprises make up the largest proportion of business all over the world and play tremendous roles in employment generation as well as immensely contributing to the Gross Domestic

Products (GDP) of many countries. Yusuf and Dansu (2013) reported that SMEs make up about 97 percent of businesses in Nigeria and provide an average of 50 percent of Nigeria's employment and industrial output. SMEs are largely present in Anambra State. Anambra State is a State where a large percentage of her citizens are entrepreneurs or owners of SMEs. The presence of small and medium scale enterprises has increased economic activities in the State and has helped to improve the revenue base of the State. SMEs have been a major engine of economic growth and technological progress. The significant role played by SMEs can be attributed to the level of their innovativeness and flexibility. But their ability to innovate depends to a large extent on the competence of management, their size and the availability of resources (Adobi, 2012; Hamilton, 2009).

Competence, according to Rahman (2012), means a skill and standard of performance. To be competent means that an individual has acquired at a particular time the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of the person to perform successfully at a specified proficiency level in a given work. Man, Lau and Chan (2006) viewed competency as the capacity to perform a task or task skillfully and effectively. There are various types of competencies required of a manager namely human resource competency, self-management competency among others. However, this study focused on managerial competencies. Managerial competencies are the skills, motives and attitudes necessary to a job and include such characteristics as communication skills, problem solving, customer focus and the ability to work within a team. Managerial competences are needed by all managers in all organizations for discharging their duties effectively and to gain effectiveness in their duties in order to achieve objectives. Managerial competencies therefore are competencies which are considered essential for staff with managerial or supervisory responsibility in any service or programme area, including directors and senior posts.

Managerial competencies, according to Ademiluyi (2007), are required by business education graduates in starting, developing and managing an enterprise. It includes skills in decision making, control and negotiation, essential in creating and growing a new business venture. Ademiluyi further opined that managerial competencies are simply business skills which individuals acquire to enable them function effectively as an entrepreneur. It simply referred to sum total of all attributes and abilities required for successful operation of small and medium scale enterprises. A manager can be competent or incompetent. Ezeani, Ifeonyemetalu and Ezemoyih (2012) identified management incompetence as one of the specific reasons for business failure. Business operation of organizations is conducted in competitive working environment and ever changing environment. In order to cope with the changing and complex business environment, manager requires developing some competencies to survive in the organization. However, there are various managerial competencies that business education graduates require for successful handling of business challenges in the contemporary business environment. For the purpose of this study, emphasis would be placed on the managerial competencies identified by Caganora and Cambal (2012). These include innovative competencies and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competencies.

Innovative competencies refer to ability of entrepreneurs to engage and support new ideas and creative processes. Hennessey and Amabile (2010) defined innovation as the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization. Based on this view, entrepreneurs' creativity is the starting point of innovation. Innovation generally is the term used for the process of developing new products or processes, improvements on products or processes or new ways of doing things. It can result in inventions or the ability to generate entirely new outcomes through refinement in products and processes: technology or administration in an organization either in each of these items separately or in all of them collectively. Innovativeness refers to entrepreneurs' propensity to creatively initiate and support new ideas, experimentation and creative processes that may result in new products, services or technological processes, or the exploitation of new markets (Zhou & Li, 2012). With the advent of the innovation economy, the ability to innovate becomes more fundamental to competitive success and firm survival as industries, business models and products change more rapidly and radically. The challenging and ever dynamic business environment also makes it imperative for both practicing and prospective entrepreneurs to possess innovative ability.

Innovative competencies for entrepreneurial development include introduction of new products, new methods of production, opening new markets, exploring new sources of supply of raw materials and carrying out new types of organization (Oduma, 2012). For effective innovation to take place, the entrepreneur must ensure that he is well equipped and able to carry out innovative activities, which include: basic research activity, applied research activity, and development research activity among others. The acquisition of these competencies will enable graduates of business education function effectively in a rapidly changing global environment. Unemployment exists partly because most of the products of educational system look for jobs that do not exist. According to Ademiluyi (2007), most business education graduates lack the ability to succeed in private enterprise. There is therefore the need to identify those skills, competencies, attributes and attitudes which may enhance the survival entrepreneurial ventures amidst the ever-challenging business environment in the global economy.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are transforming the global economy and creating new opportunities for advancement. ICT has permeated the business environment, becoming the root of the success of modern corporations, and providing governments with an efficient infrastructure. Information and communication technology refers to the use of computers and other telecommunication equipment (Telephone lines and wireless signals) middle ware as well as software, storage and audio-visual systems to create, access, store, transmit and manipulate information. Etifit, Eminue and Udoh (2016) identified the following as some ICT competencies for handling entrepreneurship challenges: database management competencies, online advertisement competencies, e-mailing competencies and inventory management competencies. Information and Communication Technology as applied to business education according to Igberaharha in Okoro (2013) involves the use of networks, expert systems, and artificial intelligence in what is now known as electronic commerce (e-commerce) or electronic

business (e-communication business). E-commerce helps to facilitate the exchange of information, goods and services between companies and builds good human relation with their customers.

Information and Communication Technology has introduced new forms of entrepreneurship based on the use of information. ICT predominates all aspects of our lives including that of governments, business, markets, productivity, education, and the labour market. It therefore became imperative that we integrate to the fullest the new technologies in the implementation of the business education programme. ICT help business students to acquire database management skill, communication skill, e-mailing skill, online advertisement skill, inventory skill, data processing skill, among others. The National Policy on Education (2014) emphasized the need to empower youths with ICT skills to prepare them for competitiveness in the global environment, integrating ICT into the mainstream of education, and training, it became imperative to adopt these new technologies in order to expand access to the education (by use of synchronous learning, access to the internet and world wide web). ICT also strengthens the relevance of business education to the work place, which is in conformity to Prosser's environmental theory of vocational education. The ICT competency need of graduates of business education according to Oluka (2016) arises as a result of technology changes rising more rapidly all over the world. Technological needs of the industries appear to grow faster than the training and improvement training programmes in the institutions.

A variable that could easily come into focus in the context of managerial competencies required for successful handling of business challenges is gender. Gender as a concept simply refers to the sex of an individual either male or female. However, business education graduates are male and female students of business education programme who have successfully fulfilled the requirement of award of a Bachelor of Science degree in business education and may become entrepreneurs in the future. According to Onyebu (2014), gender is relevant in education because it has been linked to achievement and participation in certain professions. Onyebu further noted that most of the previous studies on the entrepreneurial competencies of female business owners have focused on specific aspects of their competencies or skills, and specifically consider women's competencies relative to those of their male counterparts. On the other hand, there is a considerable body of research that suggests that women may be weaker in financial skills than men (Okunnu & Akinjole, 2016). Therefore, considering gender in this study could yield useful practical information to the study.

Another variable that could come into focus in the context of managerial competencies for successful handling of business challenges is years of experience of entrepreneurs. There is recognition in the literature of the significance of the contribution of entrepreneurial experience to venture performance (Palmer, Carr & Semaj, 2014). The authors noted that prior entrepreneurial experience can lead to success. Similarly, specific experience in similar businesses ensures survival and growth. It could be said however that the older the entrepreneurs are in their businesses, the more they are equipped to apply adequate managerial competencies for successful handling of business challenges.

Considering that the success or failure of business education graduates in Anambra State to successfully handle the ever-present business challenges amidst the present economic depression in Nigeria depend to a large extent on their acquisition of appropriate managerial competencies; it is essential to identify the managerial competencies required of these graduates so as to ensure their survival and sustainability in the country.

2. Statement of the Problem

The increased rate of graduates' unemployment in Nigeria has been blamed for the dwindling economic viability of the country. Most worrisome is the rate of unemployment and under-employment amongst tertiary institutions graduates including the business education graduates. Unfortunately, it seems that this rise in unemployment is propelled by graduates over dependent on government paying jobs which are often limited. Akhuemonkhan, Raimi, and Sofoluwe (2013) opined that because of dependence on government jobs or paid employment most graduates lack the entrepreneurial capability or competences to start-up business ventures when they fail to get paid jobs. Similarly, another challenge in our present economy as noted by Onyesom and Uwaifo (2013) is the frequent collapse of existing private businesses especially among young entrepreneurs due to lack of experience, competence and inefficiency in overall business management. This could be an indication that business schools and programmes lack the ability to produce entrepreneurs that can create jobs, sustain their businesses and energize the low productivity of the private sector. This situation indicates a mismatch between the type of education received by graduates and the needs of the economy. It appears that business education graduates lack competencies such as innovative and ICT competencies required for successful handling of entrepreneurship challenges. It therefore becomes imperative that this study is carried out to determine the opinion of entrepreneurs on the managerial competencies required of business education graduates for inclusion into undergraduate curriculum and successful handling of entrepreneurship challenges in the state.

2.1 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to ascertain the managerial competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State. Specifically, the study determined:

- 1) Innovative competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State.
- 2) ICT competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State.

2.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) What are the innovative competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State?
- 2) What are the ICT competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State?

2.3 Hypotheses

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

- 1) Male and female entrepreneurs do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on innovative competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State.
- 2) Entrepreneurs with different years of business experiences (0-5; 6-10; 11 & above) do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on innovative competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State.
- 3) Male and female entrepreneurs do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on ICT competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State.
- 4) Entrepreneurs with different years of business experiences (0-5; 6-10; 11 & above) do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on ICT competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State.

3. Method

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This research design according to Nworgu (2015), is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. The study was conducted in Anambra State. The State is located in the South-eastern part of Nigeria. The population for the study consisted of 1124 entrepreneurs of small and medium scale enterprises registered with the Anambra State Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Industry. A sample size of 338 small and medium scale entrepreneurs in Anambra State was used for the study. The instrument for data collection for this study was a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts in the field. To establish the instrument's reliability, the questionnaire was administered to 20 entrepreneurs of SMEs in Enugu State who were not part of the population of the study. The application of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 using Cronbach Alpha reliability yielded coefficient values of 0.91 and 0.85. The researcher and three research assistants administered the questionnaire to the respondents.

The copies of the questionnaire successfully retrieved were used for data analysis. Out of the 338 copies of questionnaire distributed, twenty-nine were incompletely filled and twelve were not returned, hence forty-one copies of the questionnaire were not

utilized. Thus, 297 copies of the questionnaire which represented 87.87% return rate were used for data analysis. The level of acceptance or rejection of the questionnaire items was determined based on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The data collected were analyzed using the arithmetic mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and determine the closeness of the respondents' means respectively. The t-test statistic was used to test null hypotheses 1 and 3, while the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistic was used to test the null hypotheses 2 and 4 all at 0.05 level of significance. A null hypothesis was rejected where the P-value is less than the stipulated level of significance (0.05). On the other hand, where the P-value is greater than or equal to the stipulated level of significance (0.05), the hypothesis was accepted.

4. Results

Research Question 1: What are the innovative competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean ratings of entrepreneurs on the innovative competencies required of business education graduates (N = 297)

S/No Innovative competences Ability to:	Mean	SD	Decision
1. Introduce new methods of productivity	3.51	.50	Strongly Agree
2. Combine ideas and knowledge into new value	3.61	.49	Strongly Agree
3. Explore new sources of supply of raw materials	3.58	.50	Strongly Agree
4. Open new markets	3.47	.50	Agree
5. Gain access to technology on innovation in small scale enterprises	3.47	.50	Agree
6. Add value to customers satisfaction	3.52	.50	Strongly Agree
7. Meet customers needs	3.52	.50	Strongly Agree
8. Figure out how to make products work better	3.51	.50	Strongly Agree
9. Bring best ideas into reality	3.50	.50	Strongly Agree
Cluster Mean	3.52		Strongly Agree

Table 1 shows a cluster mean of 3.52 indicating that the entrepreneurs strongly agreed on the innovative competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State. Item by item analysis in Table 1 shows that the respondents agreed that all the items are innovative competences required of business education graduates. The standard deviations of 0.49 to 0.50 showed homogeneity in their responses indicating greater consensus of opinion.

Research Question 2: What are the ICT competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean responses of entrepreneurs on the ICT competencies required of business education graduates (N = 297)

S/No ICT competences Ability to:	Mean	SD	Decision
1. Carry out online advertisement	3.40	.49	Agree
2. Produce documents with the word processor	3.60	.49	Strongly Agree
3. Edit texts on the screen by inserting materials	3.40	.49	Agree
4. Conduct business research using the internet	3.46	.50	Agree
5. Receive vocal messages using the internet	3.54	.50	Strongly Agree
6. Produce accounting jobs using spreadsheet software	3.53	.50	Strongly Agree
7. Create agenda using contra vision electronic software	3.60	.49	Strongly Agree
8. To send and receive fax messages	3.40	.49	Agree
9. Use telex/video conferencing	3.46	.50	Agree
10. To prepare reports, memos, invoices and letters	3.53	.50	Strongly Agree
Cluster Mean	3.49		Agree

Data in Table 2 show a cluster mean of 3.49 which reveals that the entrepreneurs agreed on the ICT competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State. Item by item analysis in Table 2 shows that the respondents agreed that all the items are the ICT competences required of business education graduates. The standard deviations of 0.49 to 0.50 are within the same range showing homogeneity in respondents' responses.

4.1 Testing of Null Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Male and female entrepreneurs do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on innovative competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State.

Table 3: Summary of t-test on the innovative competencies required of business education graduates in Anambra State

Innovative competences	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	P-value	Decision
Male	189	3.53	0.15	295	.584	Not significant
Female	108	3.51	0.13			

Table 3 shows that male and female entrepreneurs do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the innovative competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State. The p-value of .584, which is greater than the significant level of 0.05 shows that there is no significance difference in the mean responses of entrepreneurs. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups is accepted.

Hypothesis 2: Entrepreneurs with different years of business experience do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on innovative competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State.

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA on the innovative competencies required of business education graduates in Anambra State

Source of Variance	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	P-value	Decision
Between Groups	3.134	2	1.567	.965	.382	Not significant
Within Groups	477.478	294	1.624			
Total	480.613	296				

Table 4 shows that the three groups of entrepreneurs with different level of business experiences do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the innovative competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State. F-ratio (2, 294) is .965 and *P-value* (.382) is greater than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Hypothesis 3: Male and female entrepreneurs do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on ICT competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State.

Table 5: Summary of t-test on the ICT competencies required of business education graduates in Anambra State

ICT competences	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	P-value	Decision
Male	189	3.49	0.11	295	.582	Not significant
Female	108	3.49	0.10			

Table 5 shows that male and female entrepreneurs do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the ICT competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State. The p-value of .582 which is greater than the significant level of 0.05 shows that there is no significance difference in the mean responses of SMEs entrepreneurs. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups is accepted.

Hypothesis 4: Entrepreneurs with different years of business experience do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the ICT competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State.

Table 6: Summary of ANOVA on the ICT competencies required of business education graduates in Anambra State

Source of Variance	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	P-value	Decision
Between Groups	.695	2	.348	.308	.735	Not significant
Within Groups	332.201	294	1.130			
Total	332.896	296				

Table 6 shows that the three groups of entrepreneurs with different level of business experiences do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the ICT competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in

Anambra State. F-ratio (2, 294) is .308 and *P-value* (.735) is greater than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

5. Discussion

The results of the study indicated that entrepreneurs of SMEs strongly agreed that the listed innovative competencies are required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State. This implies that Business education graduates should strive hard to acquire innovative competencies in order to be reliant in the world of work. This will make business education graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations. This finding is in consonance with that of Adesoga (2017) whose study strongly agreed that innovative competencies were required for the successful operation of small and medium scale enterprises. Adesoga further stated that innovative competencies are required by business education graduates for the world of work and for self-employment. In support of this, Okoli and Binuomote (2015) held that innovative competencies are the requisite for introduction of a new product and new method of production, opening of new market, exploring a new source of supply of raw materials and carrying out new types of organization. Innovativeness is entrepreneurs' propensity to creatively initiate and support new ideas, experimentation and creative processes that may result in new products, services or technological processes, or the exploitation of new markets.

The test of the first hypothesis indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female entrepreneurs on innovative competencies required of university business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State. This agrees with Okoli and Binuomote (2015) who reported that there was no significant difference among male and female entrepreneurs. This implies that the acquisition of these competencies will enable business education graduates to function effectively in an environment of strong market forces and complex technological advancement irrespective of gender. The second hypothesis revealed that entrepreneurs with different years of business experience do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the innovative competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State. It follows that the null hypothesis was not rejected. This also agrees with Adesoga (2017) who reported that there was no significant difference among respondents' responses.

The results of the study revealed that entrepreneurs of SMEs agreed that the listed ICT competencies were required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State. This implies that business education graduates could use a variety of technologies to identify and solve problems in an interconnected digital world. This corroborates that of Okoro (2013) who stated that business education graduates require ICT competencies in order to function effectively in this technological era. Information communication technologies (ICTs) are transforming the global economy and creating new opportunities for advancement. In

addition, Oluka (2016) stated that ICT competencies are required of graduates for self-employment and that ICT competency need of graduates arises as a result of technology changes rising more rapidly all over the world. The results of the third hypothesis indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female entrepreneurs on the ICT competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State. Also, the fourth hypothesis revealed that entrepreneurs with different years of business experience do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the ICT competencies required of business education graduates for handling entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State. This agrees with Jimoh (2014) who revealed that there was no significant difference among male and female academic staff of the institution.

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that business education graduates require innovative and ICT, human relations competencies for effective handling of entrepreneurship challenges in Anambra State.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) National Universities Commission, NCCE, NBTE and other Agencies of education should develop a benchmark curriculum of business education that would emphasize on managerial skills and competencies. This would prompt tertiary institutions to take vital initiatives to review the competencies in the minimum standard and work out strategies to support skills development needed by all students while in school.
- 2) Tertiary education management through the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development should work in collaboration with the existing entrepreneurs/business organizations around them in providing entrepreneurship training for students to enable them develop self-employment initiatives through the programme.
- 3) Periodic workshops and awareness campaign should be organized for business educators on how best to impart skills on the students.
- 4) Instructional delivery should be more practical rather than theoretical. This will avail students the opportunity of practicing skills taught to them by their teachers.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

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