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AN ASSESSMENT MECHANISM FOR THE ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCES AMONG FINAL YEAR STUDENTS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

The study is on an assessment mechanism for the entrepreneurial competencies among final year vocational and technical education students of tertiary institutions in Lagos State. The design adopted for the study is the survey. The population of the study included all the final year vocational and technical education students of tertiary institutions in Lagos State. There are four tertiary institutions in Lagos State that offer vocational and technical education programme. These institutions include: University of Lagos; Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka; Yaba College of Technology and Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education Ijanikin. Random sampling technique was used to select 200 students from the schools. Five research questions were raised for the study. A 39 items structured questionnaire was used to gather information from the respondents. The data collected were analysed using the mean. The findings of the study revealed that all the raised competencies were possessed by most of the students. These competencies were possessed by the students at varying degrees. The highest possessed categorized competencies are leadership skills, basic business skills and Perceptions of trustworthiness skills. It was recommended that students should be encouraged to put into practice the competencies acquired. Other environmental factors that hinder the development of an entrepreneurial culture among students should be encouraged.

Key words: Assessment, Mechanism, entrepreneurial competency, vocational and Technical Education and tertiary Institutions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to assess mechanism for entrepreneurial competencies among final year students of vocational and technical education in tertiary institutions. Specifically the study sort to find out:

1. the leadership competencies possessed by the students,
2. the communication skills possessed by the students,
3. the basic business skills possessed by the students,
4. the planning and organisational skill possessed by the students.
5. the perceptions of trustworthiness skills possessed by the students

Research Questions

1. What are the leadership competencies possessed by the students?
2. What are the communication skills possessed by the students?
3. What are the basic business skills possessed by the students?
4. What are the planning and organisational skills possessed by the students?
5. What are the perceptions of trustworthiness skills possessed by the students?

Methodology

Research Design

The design adopted for in this study was the survey. The population for the study comprised all final year vocational and technical education students of tertiary institutions in Lagos State. There are four tertiary institutions in Lagos State that offer vocational and technical education programmes. These institutions include: University of Lagos; Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka; Yaba College of Technology and Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education.

Sampling and Sampling Technique

Balloting was used to select 50 final year students from each school, totalling 200 students as the respondents.

Instrument for Data Collection

A structured questionnaire containing 39 items was used to collect information from the respondents. The items were in five clusters. The first cluster had 10 items and sought information on team leadership skills while the second cluster had items on communication skills. The 3rd cluster had 7 items on business skills while the 4th and 5th clusters have 8 and 5 items on

planning and organisation, and perceptions of trustworthiness skills respectively.

Validation of Instrument

Three experts in technology education programme, University of Lagos, Lagos State were used for face validation of the instrument, their suggestions and inputs were used to draft the final copy of the instrument.

Method of Data Collection

The structured questionnaire for data collection was distributed to the respondents by the researcher. Two days were given to the respondents to complete the questionnaire after which all the distributed questionnaire were retrieved by the researcher.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed in line with the research questions using mean and standard deviation. The mean scores were represented in bar chart in categories. The bar chart will show the level of possession of these skills in categories. The mean and standard deviation are presented in tables in clusters. A four point response mode was used and the items (skills) with mean score of 2.5 and above were regarded as possessed while the items with mean (skills) score below 2.00 were regarded as not possessed.

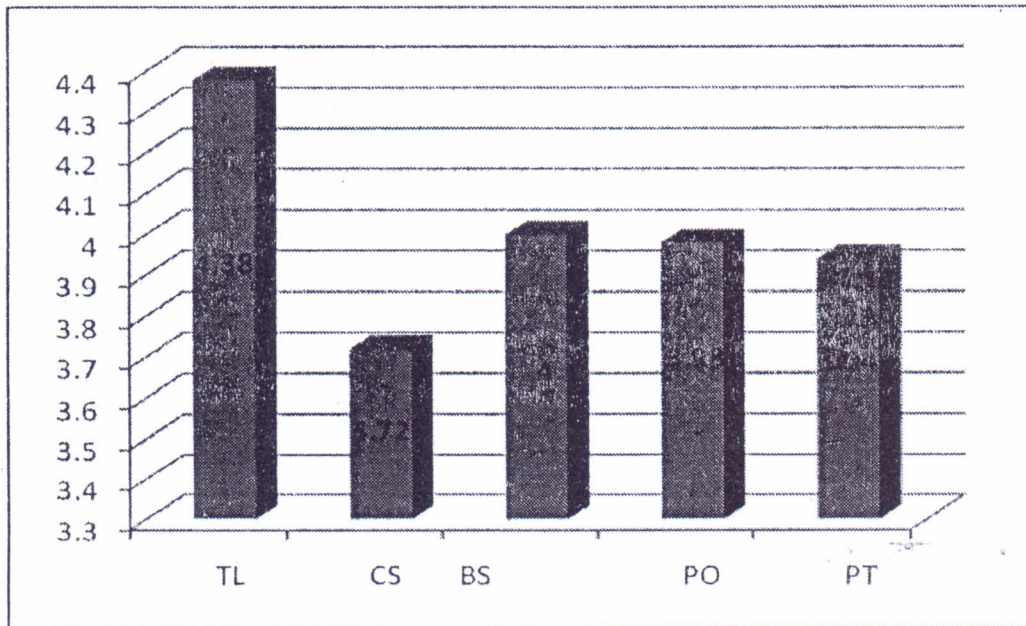
Results

Research Question 1: What are the leadership competencies possessed by the students?

Table 1: Responses of the respondents on the leadership competencies possessed by the students

S/N	Team leadership cluster	SD	Mean	Remark
1.	Minimizes politics in the workplace	0.94	3.16	Possessed
2.	Expects excellence from all employees	0.46	3.75	Possessed
3.	Shares information with employee	0.51	3.48	Possessed
4.	Demonstrates good people skills	0.63	3.68	Possessed
5.	Takes charge mentally	0.90	3.16	Possessed
6.	Is a good coach or mentor	0.56	3.69	Possessed
7.	Is a good leader	0.48	3.68	Possessed
8.	Is a team builder	0.65	3.52	Possessed
9.	Is a consensus builder	0.59	3.52	Possessed
10.	Makes good first impression evaluation	0.65	3.48	Possessed

The table of perceptions of trustworthiness skills showed that all the skills are possessed by most of the students though in varying degrees ranging from mean rating of 3.52 as the lowest to 3.68 as the highest. Among the five categories of skills, their levels of possessions are represented in a bar-chart below.



Note:

- TL is team leadership skills category
- CS is communication skills category.
- BS is basic business skills category.
- PO is planning and organisational skills category.
- PT is perceptions of trustworthiness skills category.

The bar-chart showed that among the categories, team leadership, basic business and perceptions of trustworthiness skill categories are highly possessed than the other two.

Findings of the Study

1. Skills associated with team leadership are possessed by the students though these skills are possessed at varying levels.
2. Communication skills are possessed by the students.
3. The students have acquired basic business skills.
4. The students can effectively plan and organise business enterprise.
5. They can exhibit trustworthiness in their business.

Discussion

The findings of the study showed that the students possessed team leadership competencies. Cunningham and Lischeron (1991) and Ribbor and Lang (1996) identified team leadership as a very important entrepreneurial competency. The findings from this study are in agreement with their views. The findings show that students may be more successful in their enterprises if they demonstrate team leadership competencies such as "Minimizes Politics in the Workplace", "Expects Excellence from All Employees", "Demonstrates Good People Skills", "Shares Information with Employees", and is a "Good Coach and Mentor".

Communication in an enterprise helps to increase the social interaction and communication among director and employees (Koppelman 2000 & Stern, 1991). The communication skills are believed by entrepreneurs to be very important and consistent with the success of an enterprise. An entrepreneur should have good written, verbal, and interpersonal communication skills. An entrepreneur should also display a willingness to listen to others. For the entrepreneur who operates in an organisational context, as the instructor does, these competencies are essential for successfully carrying out his/her duties.

The findings on basic business competencies indicated that meeting deadlines, being committed to the business venture, ability to manage money and awareness of health and safety regulations are possessed by the students of vocational and technical education. These skills are very important for budget preparation, interaction with customers, inventory control, and cash control which are carried out by an entrepreneur in conjunction with the accounting and administrative personnel.

The overall finding in the planning and organisational category agreed with the literature, which emphasized the importance of planning and organisation skills for entrepreneurs (Lenko, 1995; Ribbor & Lang, 1996). Planning and organisational skills are important for entrepreneurs who must succeed. The three competencies viewed as important in the planning and organisational cluster—"Is Not Afraid of Mistakes," "Has the Ability to Multi-task," and "Has the Ability to Assess Risks,"—were also competencies that students viewed as skills need for their performance improvement. The literature showed that a successful entrepreneur must demonstrate the willingness to make and learn from mistakes in order to

progress. They must also be able to assess risks properly and carry out several tasks at the same time.

Perceptions of trustworthiness skills are possessed by the students. These competencies are believed to be very important for those who want to be successful entrepreneurs. Lenko (1995) showed that without a strong commitment to the goals entrepreneurs will likely fail. This commitment is often shown in the tenacity displayed to accomplish a task (Stevenson, 1995). Therefore, entrepreneurs must be loyal, committed, dependable, trustworthy, and possessed integrity and honesty.

It can be verified from the study that among all the categories of competencies team leadership skills, basic business skills and Perceptions of trustworthiness skills rank highest in what students possessed.

Conclusion

Based on the data and the literature reviewed relative to this study, the following conclusions were reached. All the thirty-nine (39) skills indentified were possessed by the students of vocational and technical education. Although these skills are possessed at varying degrees when these skills are categorized as team leadership, communication, basic business, planning and organisational, and Perceptions of trustworthiness the highly possessed category are team leadership, basic business, and Perceptions of trustworthiness. As shown by the result of the study that all the identified competencies are possessed by the students, it therefore, shows that though they possess these skills most don't do well in the business enterprise and also don't even venture into business but rely on white collar job which are not available.

Recommendations

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

1. The competencies acquired by students when in the school should be put into practice.
2. Environmental factors that hinder the development of an entrepreneurial culture among students should also be addressed.
3. Ways of sourcing fund to start business should be emphasized when in school.
4. Other qualities of an entrepreneur should also be emphasized.

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