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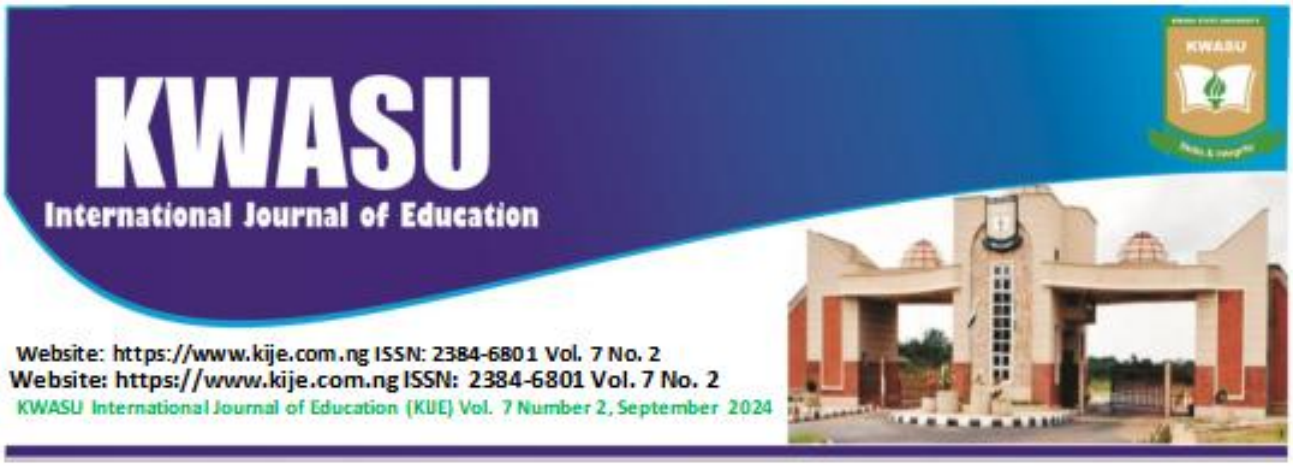
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INFLUENCE OF HUMAN RELATIONS AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS ON SELF-RELIANCE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES

BY

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Abstract

This paper examined the influence of human relations, innovation and problem-solving skills on self-reliance of business education graduates in South-West, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study while the population of the study consisted of 223 postgraduate Business Education students in the Universities in South-West, Nigeria. Since the population is manageable, the entire population of 223 respondents was used as the sample size for the study. A well structured questionnaire on 4 point-scale was used as instrument for data collected and was validated by three experts from Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education, Kwara State University, Malete while the reliability test for the instrument yielded coefficient a 0.87 using Cronbach Alpha. From the data collected frequency counts and percentage were used for demographic data, while mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions. Hypotheses were tested using independent samples t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that the human relations skills positively influenced self-reliance (mean = 3.25, SD 0.55) of Business Education graduates. Also, human relations skills positively influenced self-reliance (mean = 3.33, SD = 0.64). In addition, problem-solving skills influenced self-reliance (mean = 3.12, SD = 0.96). Furthermore, it was found that there was a significance

difference in the mean perception of male and female respondents regarding the influence of human relations skills on Business Education graduates' self-reliance (t218 = 0.01, P<0.05). There was a significant difference between the mean perception of respondents from federal and state universities regarding the influence of problem solving skills on self-reliance of Business Education graduates (t218 = 0.001, P>0.005). There was also a significant difference between the mean perception of respondents from federal and state universities regarding the influence of problem-solving skills on self-reliance of Business Education graduates (t_{218} = 0.001; P>0.05). It was concluded that no matter how efficient entrepreneurs may be in their businesses, if they lack human relations, problems-solving and innovation skills such as ability to develop new ideas to create new products and ability to open up a new market, success may still become a mirage since it will be hard to compete with competitors as well as meeting the needs of the society. It was recommended among others, that Business Education lecturers in the Universities should ensure that human relations skills needed are taught more vigorously through demonstration and practical methods to enable the graduates to open and manage small enterprises effectively. Also, Business Education graduates should as a matter of urgency enroll in business school for training in the area of human relations, innovation and problem solving skills which are needed for self-reliance.

Introduction

The Business Education programme is majorly patterned on the principles of self-reliance. It is one of the educational programmes charged with the responsibility of skills and competency development. It is also regarded as an education for, and about business, because its main focus is on career development, employment generation and self-reliance. The concept of self-survival connotes one's ability to earn a living through exhibition of valuable and necessary skills required for successful engagement in entrepreneurship. Basically, the programme prepared its recipients to play an active role in an economy and at the same time utilize the knowledge as an entrepreneur.

According to Salami (2019), an entrepreneur is an individual who gathers and coordinates other business resources for production in both the required quality and quantity for the purpose of making a profit. Entrepreneurs are also seen as people who have the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities to gather the necessary resources, to take advantage of them and to imitate appropriate action to ensure success. The author further expressed that the entrepreneur plays a negotiating role between the larger society and its economic unit. Entrepreneurial action is likely to initiate changes for both the economic unit and its environment.

According to Badi and Badi (2021), entrepreneurship is the function of seeking investment, production opportunity, organizing an enterprise to undertake new production process. Entrepreneurship means making a living by working for yourself. Badi and Badi went further to state that the person who carried out the skills and attitudes of entrepreneurship is referred to as the entrepreneur. The entrepreneur exercises authority in the effective controlling of other factors in developing and applying new methods of production and above all, he bears the risks and uncertainties associated with these functions in a dynamic world of work. Olupayimo and Ademiluyi (2021) defined entrepreneurship as the inculcation in the individuals' entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, attitudes and competences that would make such individuals live happily, successfully in the society and contribute meaningfully to its development. Entrepreneurship can,

therefore, be seen as willingness and ability to seek out an investment opportunity, establish an enterprise based on this and run it successfully.

The issue of entrepreneurship and self-reliance has become a debate among the experts all over the world. Specifically in Nigeria, thorough observations have shown that unemployment is a serious threat to peaceful coexistence in Nigeria. Promotion of entrepreneurship among the Nigerian youths, Business Education graduates inclusively, is a form of government strategy to inculcate the spirit of business ownership into the blood stream of the youths, purposely to divert their attention from being employed to become job creators. Creation requires intuitive knowledge and skills that must be well mastered for easy planning, coordination and execution of a specific entrepreneurial activity (Binuomote, 2017)

Therefore, there is the need to emphasize acquisition of skills through Business Education. Ezenwafor and Olaniyi (2017) opined that Business Education is a key agent in the development of creativity and innovation in individuals for business success. It stimulates business interest and potentials and as well promotes acquisition of relevant skills and competencies for the establishment and operation of a new profit-oriented business venture. Skills are those activities that will enable an entrepreneur to manage his own enterprise. Nnaji (2020) defined skill as the ability to do something well and is usually gained through training or experience. Nnaji further stated that skill acquisition prepares individuals for successful entrepreneurial activities.

Gana and Abdulrahman (2018) indicated that entrepreneurial skills training as a specialized training given to people to acquire the skills, ideas and the managerial abilities and capabilities for self-employment rather than being employed for pay. An entrepreneurial skill is a deliberate attempt to provide trainees with relevant knowledge, appropriate skills, competence and right attitude to effectively run or manage a business outfit. It is a programme of instruction that enables the beneficiary to be properly equipped to establish and operate a profit oriented business venture. It is done through entrepreneurship education. Therefore, Business Education undergraduates need different types of skills such as human relations skills, innovation skills, problem solving skills, marketing skills, management skills and information and communication skills to run any kind of business enterprise. Out of these skills the study adopted three which are Human Relations, Innovation and Problem Solving Skills.

Human Relations is the study of group behaviour for the purpose of improving interpersonal relationships among employees. The study of human relations can help in workplace, and as a result, assist undergraduates in achieving career success after graduation. The better their human relationship, the more likely they are to grow in their businesses (Maffo & Oyewole, 2017). In the same vein, human relation in the workplace is a major part of what makes a business work. Employees must frequently work together on projects, communicate ideas and provide motivation to get things done. Without a stable and inviting workplace culture, difficult challenges can arise in the logistics of managing employees as a key factor of production. Businesses that engage in good workplaces and accurate well-trained workforce are more likely to retain and attract qualified employees. Such an organization fosters loyalty with customers and more quickly adapt to meet the needs of a changing market situation. Olupayimo and Ademiluyi (2021) asserted that possession of good human relations skills is another success factor for self-reliance. Self-reliance can be seen to mean being able to depend on oneself, one's resources rather than those of others. It has to do with what one can do for oneself. It also means relying on one's abilities and efforts to be independent.

The desire of most developing countries including Nigeria is to have self-reliant economy capable of generating an internally self-sustaining growth. Uche (2016) affirmed this view point and submitted that no matter how hard an individual may work or whatever many brilliant ideas they may display, if they cannot connect with other people around, their professional life will suffer Uche further stressed that, human relations entails the ability to relate well with coworkers; accept criticisms, advice and suggestions from others, exercise confidence, good judgment and bring about increased customers' satisfaction through innovation. This emphasizes the need to acquire human relations skills for entrepreneurial development.

Innovation could be explained in many ways by many authors. Hennessey and Amabile (2020) defined innovation as the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization. Based on this view, entrepreneurs' creativity is the starting point of innovation. Innovative skills 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. The acquisition of these skills will enable undergraduates of Business Education to function effectively in the current highly competitive environment and strong market forces to turn business problems into business opportunities after graduation.

A business is built on the problems of customers' needs and without which there will be no business at all. This is why problem solving skills are important tools for success in operating an enterprise. There are many definitions of problem solving skills but at a basic level, it focuses on the ability to accurately assessing a situation and arriving at a positive solution. It involves methods and skills to find the best solution to problems. Solving problems is an analytical skill that many employers look for when reviewing candidate application forms. This particular skill is not restricted to a single sector, industry or role, though employers in the engineering and legal industries in particular tend to look for proficiency (Binuomote, 2016).

Ajaero (2016) stated that problem-solving skills for entrepreneurial development involve critical thinking, understanding of the business, team spirit, decisiveness and courage. Acquisition of these skills will enable undergraduates of Business Education to identify business problems and become critical thinkers so as to turn the identified business problems into opportunities.

Problem solving skills are highly sought after by employers as many companies rely on their employees to identify and solve problems. They are among the most important skills students must have when after graduation. In the 21stcentury, one of the objectives of education is raising individuals who can apply the information they learn to solve problems, develop strategies, and transfer their knowledge (Emeasoba & Nwatarali, 2020). Problem solving abilities are important skills for educational area because a healthy society or a healthy nation can only maintain its existence through adapting themselves into new conditions by problem-solving abilities (Incebacat & Ersoy, 2018). It also involves ability to devise new ways of doing things that add value to the work environment, thinking critically and logically to evaluate situations, solve problems and making decisions.

Saygili (2019) noted that problem solving is a process of moving towards a goal when the path to the goal is uncertain. Saygili further explained that in order to be effective at problem solving one is likely to need some other key skills, which include: creativity, researchable skills because defining and solving problem often requires research, team work skills, emotional

intelligence, risk management and decision. Lester in Emeasoba and Nwatarali (2020) also noted that problem solving process is a complex area that requires many skills to be used together. The elements of this process include understanding the problem, choosing the necessary information among the given choices, and reaching the solution after performing the necessary operations.

Thus, Deen (2018) observed that there is growing scientific evidence that Business Education is capable of stimulating employment, productivity, and economic growth by producing students who will be versed in business world and equipped with business knowledge for self-reliance. Self-reliance is a quality of depending on oneself instead of relying on others. When people are self-reliant, they are independent and autonomous. According to Spall (2020), self-reliance is trust in one's abilities to get through the challenges of life on the back of one's resourcefulness. Spall further explained that it is the ability to provide for oneself without the need for outside help. Also, it is the ability an individual has to establish a business of his own instead of working for another person. It is the ability to do or decide things by oneself. A person who is self-employed is said to be self-reliant. It is to be independent instead of working for another person.

Umoru and Nnaji in Tony-Okeme and Umoru (2021) described self-reliance as the ability of an individual to establish a business of his own instead of working for another person. They add that, it is the ability for independent decision making.

In a nutshell, self-reliance refers to the reliance on one's capabilities; knowledge, skills, competencies abilities to improve life or an individual depending on his/her own resources, skills, competencies, knowledge, among others for economic gains instead of being an employee. Thus, a self-reliant person is an individual who relies on oneself or on one's own powers and resources, depending less on other people in the management of human and material resources. However, to be self-reliant, there is need to possess entrepreneurship skills. Self-reliance may not be sufficient for business education students in the present competitive business world because it shows the ability to stand alone which may imply work and eat and cater for personal needs.

In a competitive global economy, no nation can survive without developing a skillful and formidable workforce. This means that graduates from any discipline needed not just preparation for white collar jobs but both knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship, self-employment and self-reliance which are needed impetus for national development. As a result of this, schools are being challenged to produce students who are knowledge-producers, problem solvers and creative thinkers who can apply their skills to enrich their lives and communities. Consequently, it has become imperative for the nation to rethink her educational delivery practices in order to enhance the competitive ability of her teeming graduates. As a step in the right direction, Nigerian government introduced entrepreneurship which involves various skills for self-reliance and education as a compulsory course for all programmes in tertiary institutions. Therefore, the need for skills development by Business Educators for self-reliance cannot be over-emphasized.

Entrepreneurship success is the individual entrepreneur's distinct understanding and appraisal of the accomplishment of standards that are personally crucial to him or her. Entrepreneurship is not just about starting a business and generating profits. It involves creating employment opportunities, driving economic growth and improving the quality of life for many. To succeed, an entrepreneur needs to have a set of skills that can help them identify opportunities,

make effective decisions, turn their ideas into reality, overcome challenges and properly allocate resources to achieve goals (Robison & Brownson, 2022).

Being a successful entrepreneur means more than starting new ventures every other day. It means the right attitude towards a business and determination and gift to achieve success. A successful entrepreneur has a strong inner drive that helps to succeed in the business activities. A cursory look at the qualities of an entrepreneur will indicate the following: leadership, self-motivation, basic ethnics and integrity, creativity, risk-taking, determination, perseverance, adaptability, effective communication and networking. Entrepreneurs must be able to sell themselves and their products or services. They must have a passion for their unwavering diligence. Successful entrepreneurs are opportunistic and act on them. They are resilient in the face of failure and can learn from their mistakes (Salami, 2019).

There are, however, many factors that influence an individual's readiness to become an entrepreneur. Abdulwahab (2016) expresses that some people become entrepreneurs because they are unemployed, downsized or have their jobs outsourced. They become entrepreneurs for more economic stability and to help stimulate the economy. These individuals can be driven to become entrepreneurs for the sake of independence, maintaining a family tradition of entrepreneurialism, gaining status and creating new products and services. Discrimination based on gender and race can also contribute to the desire to become an entrepreneur.

Gender is an important aspect of entrepreneurial readiness discussion. A group of studies have indicated that men have more entrepreneurial readiness and have more interest to start a business than their female counterparts. Salami, Mafikuyomi and Ogundare (2020) reported that 67% of all businesses in Sweden was started by men, 28% by women and 5% by a joint venture between men and women. Also, Chiemeka-Unogu (2020) states that entrepreneurial engagements are more related to men than to women, whereas percentage-wise men accounted for 55% of those who wished to have their personal business. In a study by Jose-Luiz (2010), women and men were reported to have similar preparedness to become entrepreneurs predicted from self-efficacy in terms of confidence in securing a new idea for a product or service, (coming up with a new idea, design a product or service that will satisfy customer needs and wants), confidence in planning (estimate customer demand for a new product or service, determine a competitive price for a new product or service, design an effective marketing/advertising campaign for a new product or service), confidence in marshalling (get others to identify with and believe in visions and plans for a new business, and network), confidence in implementing personnel management strategies (supervise, recruit and hire employees, delegate tasks and responsibilities, inspire, encourage, motivate and train employees), and confidence in implementing financial strategies.

While each individual institution is unique, they do share similarities according to their type. For some prospective students, the choice to go to a university is an obvious one, as entry into many professions (medicine and architecture, for example) requires a higher education degree that is only offered by the universities. One will find that there is some overlap in the qualifications that each institution type offers. For instance, while universities are known for offering higher education degrees with an academic focus, some also offer Vocational Education Training (VET) for students to be able to acquire necessary entrepreneurship skills for self reliance.

In 2023, there are 262 universities in Nigeria, 147 were private, federal universities amounted to 52, while state universities were 63. Some of Nigeria's oldest universities were the University of Ibadan, the University of Nigeria, Nsuka, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and University of Lagos. These four institutions were founded between the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1960's (Ubogu, 2023).

In Nigeria, a state university is one of the public universities funded by or associated with state government. Most state universities in Nigeria (including Universities of Technology, Universities of Agriculture and Universities of Education) receive at least part of their funding from the state, although many have substantial income from tuition and fees, donations (such as from alumni or philanthropists) and revenue from royalties.

Despite the large number of private, state and federal universities that we have in South West Nigeria, only four universities are running postgraduate studies in Business Education programme, namely: Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu Ode, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti and University of Lagos, Lagos.

The people of South West, Nigeria, engage in businesses of various forms ranging from local textile-making, crop production, poultry farming, manufacturing of soaps and detergent, manufacturing of leather footwear, pure water firms, dying of cloth, among others. South-West Zone has six states which are Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo. Interestingly, business activities are predominantly the occupation of the people living there. There are universities, polytechnics and colleges of education which are either owned by private individuals, states or federal government, located in rural and urban areas of South West, Nigeria, in order to cater for the educational needs of the people. The students that have graduated from these schools consist of male and female and who have spent a minimum of four years in the schools. They fall between the ages of 22 and 35 years. Also, some of these graduates are from non-business background parents, while some others are from business background homes and have acquired the prerequisite training with years of experience from their different homes. Unfortunately, most students with the business orientation despite such background have nothing to show for the knowledge acquired.

Based on the foregoing, there is a problem in training skills for business education graduates. It is against this situation that this study was conducted on the influence of human relations, innovation and problem solving skills for self-reliance among Business Education graduates in South-West, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The incorporation of entrepreneurship skills in the curriculum of Business Education is based on the need for graduates to be self-reliant. This is not only to make Business Education graduates' self-reliant but also to attain entrepreneurial success. Entrepreneurial prosperity requires acquisition of skills by every individual who intends to establish a business due to the complexity of business environment, most especially in Nigeria.

It is observed by the researcher that the objective of self-reliance is very important to be attained in Business Education programme. In the first instance, instead of the recipient of the programme to become job providers, they become job seekers. In the society today, hardly do business students or graduates engage in any profitable ventures, instead they join their

colleagues claiming job scarcity. Many involve in deviant attitudes that contribute nothing to the development of the society. Igbo cited in Salami (2019) pointed out that scarcity of jobs in the country has culminated into various forms of social problems such as Boko Haram menace, Farmers/Herdsmen conflict, Political Thuggery and Yahoo Boys activities, among others. This generates concerns among stakeholders as to whether the aims and objectives of Business Education right from its inception to produce self-reliant personnel are being realized.

Business Education graduates who have gone through the undergraduate programme in higher institutions are expected to have acquired entrepreneurial skills training such as human relations skill, innovation skills and problem solving skills that will enable them own their businesses and become employers of labour. In the absence of all these, graduates roam about the streets of Nigeria looking for white collar jobs that are barely in existence. This means that Business Education programme graduates currently lack the capacity to impart and develop in students the needed skills to be functional entrepreneurs. In other words, the traditional Business Education programme is no longer sufficient to develop the skills needed for successful entrepreneurial activities and it is clearly underscored by the alarming number of unemployed Business Education graduates in the society (Binuomote 2016).

The worsening economic situation in Nigeria suggests the necessity for every Nigerian adult to seek for self-reliance. The future of Nigeria's development then depends upon the well prepared and skilled youths who can contribute meaningfully to the development of their society which can be achieved by laying more emphasis on entrepreneurship education.

Unfortunately, while most of these graduates that expected to become employers of labour, often join in the search for scarce paid employment thereby increasing the already high unemployment rate in the country despite the abundant entrepreneurship opportunities. This study focuses on determining if Business Education graduates are sufficient in skills required for them to be self-reliant. Careful observations of current trends create doubts about whether Business Education graduates possess skills required to successfully engage in entrepreneurship activities.

Business Education is a double-major programme which ideally enables students after their graduation to be self-employed or be employed if opportunity arises. The major focus of Business Education is to produce self-reliant graduates. This is the reason entrepreneurship education was included in the curriculum. With the unabated unemployment situation, the question arises of where does the problem lies despite the efforts of government and other stakeholders to see that unemployment is eradicated in the society? One may ask whether the curriculum is inadequate; whether there are some certain untapped skills requiring special attention so that the aims and objectives of Business Education can be realized. To the best of the knowledge of the researcher's knowledge, it seems that no recent study has been conducted on this problem; hence the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the influence of human relations, innovation and problem solving skills for self-reliance among Business Education graduates in South West, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent of influence of:

1. human relation skills on Business Education graduates 'self-reliance in Southwest, Nigeria.

2. problem solving skills on Business Education graduates' self-reliance in South-West, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the extent of the influence of human relations skills on Business Education graduates' self-reliance in South-West, Nigeria?
2. What is the extent of the influence of problem solving skills on Business Education graduates' self-reliance in South-West, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

$H_0$1: There is no significant difference between the mean perception of male and female respondents regarding the influence of human relations skills on Business Education graduates' self-reliance.

$H_0$2: There is no significant difference between the mean perception of respondents from federal and state universities respondents regarding the influence of problem solving skills on self-reliance of Business Education graduates.

Method

This study adopted a descriptive survey design while the population of the study consisted of 223 Business Education Postgraduate students in four public universities running postgraduates programmes in South West, Nigeria. The census sampling technique was used as a sample. Since the population is manageable, the entire population of 223 was used as the sample size for the study. This was the case because according to Azih and Ama (2020) whenever the population is manageable, it is ideal to study the entire population. A well structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled: Influence of Entrepreneurship Skills on Self-Reliance (IESESSQ) questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into two – parts A and B. Part A was designed to elicit demographic information of the respondents such as gender while Part B consisted 18 items into two clusters B1 to B3 which are structured on a 4-points rating scale on self-reliance of Very Highly Extent (VHE), Highly Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The items were scored as follows: VHE= 4, HE= 3, LE = 2 and VLE = 1. The face and content-validity of the instrument was established using the opinions of two experts in the field of Business Education and one expert in measurement and evaluation, Kwara State University, Malete. Trial-testing method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument using 20 Business Education postgraduate students in Kaduna State who were not part of the study population. Data collected in the trial-testing were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha which yielded coefficient values of 0.55, 0.64 and 0.54 for clusters B1 and B2 respectively with an overall coefficient value of 0.87. The researcher personally administered copies of the questionnaire on the respondents with the help of two research assistants adequately briefed. All copies of 223 questionnaire distributed were retrieved and used for data analysis. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity of the respondents' opinions. The t-test was used to test the null hypotheses as 0.05 level of significance. A

hypothesis was rejected where the p-value is less than the alpha value of 0.05 but accepted where the p-value is greater or equal to the alpha value.

Results

Research Question One

What is the extent of the influence of human relations skills on Business Education graduates' self-reliance in South-West, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Perception of respondents on the influence of human relation skills on graduates' self-reliance

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Empathy promotes self-reliance.	3.39	0.68	Very High Extent
2.	Conflict resolution is capable of influencing self-reliance.	3.38	0.64	Very High Extent
3.	Teamwork influences self-reliance.	3.34	0.69	Very High Extent
4.	Negotiation skills promote self-reliance.	3.27	0.56	Very High Extent
5.	Emotional intelligence influences self-reliance.	3.27	0.52	Very High Extent
6.	Constructive criticism encourages self-reliance.	3.37	0.73	Very High Extent
7.	Team building influences self-reliance.	3.29	0.57	Very High Extent
8.	Collaboration in business influences self-reliance.	3.37	0.70	Very High Extent
	Grand Weighted Mean	**3.33**	**0.64**	**Very High Extent**

Source: Field Survey, 2024 N = 223

Analysis of data in Table 1 reveals the mean and standard deviation of the respondents regarding the extent of the influence of human relation skills on Business Education graduates' self-reliance in South-West, Nigeria. The data from the table suggests that the respondents believe that Empathy promotes self-reliance to a very high extent. Also, conflict resolution and team work are capable of influencing self-reliance, (mean =3.39, 3.38, and 3.34 respectively). Similarly, according to the respondents, negotiation skills promotes self-reliance (mean = 3.27), and emotional intelligence influences self-reliance (mean = 3.27). Equally, the respondents indicated that constructive criticism could influence self-reliance, team building is capable of influencing self-reliance and collaboration in business can influence self-reliance to a very high extent (mean = 3.37, 3.29 and 3.37 respectively).

The standard deviations of all eight item structures range from 0.52 to 0.70. This indicates that the respondents' responses are not widely dispersed, as they are near their respective mean scores. The table shows a calculated weighted average mean of (3.33) and a standard deviation score of 0.64. This indicates that the respondents expressed a high level in ratings all the constructs. This implies that human relation skills positively influenced the self-reliance of Business Education graduates in South-West, Nigeria to a very high extent (mean = 3.33, SD = 0.64).

Research Question Two

What is the extent of influence of problem-solving skills on Business Education graduates' self-reliance in South-West, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Perception of respondents on the influence of problem-solving skills on self-reliance

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
9.	Critical thinking skills in problem-solving influence self-reliance	3.83	0.74	Very High Extent
10.	Observational skills in problem solving influence self-reliance	3.98	0.69	Very High Extent
11.	Decision making skills in problem solving influence self-reliance.	3.99	0.80	Very High Extent
12.	Monitoring and feedback seeking influence self-reliance.	3.07	0.80	High Extent
13.	Ability to handle difficult economic situation influences self-reliance.	3.11	0.81	High Extent
14.	Effective change management skills give way to self-reliance.	3.16	0.87	High Extent
15.	Self-control in problem-solving influences self-reliance.	3.16	0.87	High Extent
16.	Self confidence in problem-solving can influence self-reliance.	3.30	0.94	Very High Extent
17.	Ability to avoid problems influences self-reliance.	3.35	0.97	Very High Extent
18.	Analytical and evaluation skills in problem solving influences self-reliance.	3.37	1.07	Very High Extent
	Grand Weighted Mean	**3.12**	**0.96**	**High Extent**

Source: Field Survey, 2024 N = 223

Analysis of data in Table 2 reveals the mean and standard deviation of the respondents regarding the extent to which problem-solving skills influence the self-reliance of business education graduates in South-West, Nigeria. The data from the Table submits that the respondents believe to a very high extent that; Critical thinking skills in problem-solving can influence Self-reliance, observational skills in problem solving can influence (or can be of influence) and decision-making skills in problem solving can influence self-reliance (mean = 3.83, 3.98 and 3.99) respectively. Equally, the respondents rated the following item of the construct to a high extent; monitoring and feedback seeking can influence self-reliance, ability to handle difficult economic situation can influence self-reliance and Effective change management skills can give way to self-reliance (mean = 3.07, 3.11 and 3.16). Also, according to the respondents, self-control in problem-solving can influence self-reliance to a high extent (mean = 3.16). Table 2 also reveals that; self confidence in problem-solving can influence self-reliance, ability to avoid problems can influence self-reliance and analytical and evaluation skills in problem solving can influence self-reliance to a very high extent (mean = 3.30, 3.35 and 3.37)

The standard deviations of all the ten item structures range from 0.69 to 1.07. This indicates that the respondents' responses are not too widely dispersed, as they are near their respective mean scores. The table shows a calculated weighted average mean of (3.12) and a standard deviation score of 0.96. This indicates that the respondents expressed a high level in rating all the constructs. This implies that problem-solving skills positively influenced self-

reliance of Business Education graduates in South-West, Nigeria to a high extent (mean = 3.12, SD = 0.96).

$H_0$1: There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female respondents regarding the influence of human relations skills on Business Education graduates' self-reliance.

Table 3: Independent Samples t-test of mean ratings on human relations skills and self-reliance

Group Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	DF	P-value	Decision
Male	68	3.46	0.48	2.48	218	0.012	**$H_0$2 Rejected**
Female	155	3.29	0.45				

Source: Field Survey 2024 N = 223 P<0.05

The data in Table 3 reveals that 68 respondents representing 29.5% were male, while 155 of them representing 70.5% were female. This implies that there were more female business education postgraduate students than their male counterparts in four public universities running postgraduates' programmes in Southwest, Nigeria.

The mean ratings of the respondents show that; human relations skills positively influenced self-reliance of Business Education graduates in South-West, Nigeria to a very high extent as supported by a grand weighted mean and standard deviation of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.33, SD = 0.64).The Table reveals that there was a significant difference in the mean perception of male and female respondents regarding the influence of human relations skills on Business Education graduates' self-reliance (t_{218} = 0.012,P<0.05).Therefore, the outcome of the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female respondents regarding the influence of human relations skills on Business Education graduates' self-reliance was rejected. This implies that male and female postgraduate students of business education express divergent views in their responses regarding the influence of human relations skills on Business Education graduates' self-reliance, with male respondents having the highest mean (X=3.46).

$H_0$2: There is no significant difference between the mean perception of respondents from federal and state universities respondents regarding the influence of problem-solving skills on self-reliance of Business Education graduates.

Table 4: Independent Samples t-test of mean ratings on problem solving skills and self-reliance

Group Institution Ownership	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	DF	P-value	Decision
Federal	69	3.75	0.99				
				-4.54	218	0.001	**$H_0$6**
State	154	4.37	0.72				**Rejected**
Source: Field Survey 2024			N = 223				*P<0.05*

The data in Table 4 reveal that 69 respondents representing 30% were from federal university; while 154 of them representing 70% were from state universities. This implies that there were more business education postgraduate students in state universities than federal universities running postgraduate programmes in Southwest, Nigeria. The mean ratings of the respondents show that; problem-solving skills positively influenced self-reliance of Business Education graduates in South-West, Nigeria to a high extent as supported by a grand weighted mean and standard deviation of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.12, SD = 0.96).The Table reveals that there was a significant difference between the mean perception of respondents from federal and state universities regarding the influence of problem-solving skills on self-reliance of Business Education graduates. (t_{218} = 0.001,P<0.05).Therefore, the null hypothesis that state that there is no significant difference between the mean perception of federal and state universities respondents regarding the influence of problem-solving skills on self-reliance of Business Education graduates was rejected. This implies that postgraduate students of business education from federal and state universities expressed divergent views in their responses regarding the influence of problem-solving skills on self-reliance, with respondents from state owned institutions having the highest mean (X =4.37).

Discussion

In this section, the findings of the study are discussed.

The results in Table 1 on research question one show that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 were rated as "Very High Extent". On the whole, the weighted mean 3.33. The results therefore show that the respondents rated items as "High Extent". Finding therefore revealed that human relations skills positively influenced Business Education graduates self-reliance in South-West, Nigeria to a very high extent. This is because "attitude determines attitude" therefore, effective human relation skills could guarantee the process of self-reliance. The finding corroborated with Aniefok and Christabel (2022) who indicated that there is positive relationship between communication, conflict resolution, negotiation and multi-tasking skills of an entrepreneur and organizational sustainability of small scale enterprises. Based on this opinion of these experts, it can be concluded that human relations skills is the interaction between individuals who are in formal structure such as work relationship, arranged functionally to achieve the stated goals of the business enterprises with persuasive communication in person to inspire excitement and work activities with enthusiasm productivity, happiness and satisfied cooperation on both sides.

The results in Table 2 on research question two show that items 9,10, 11, 16, 17and 18 were rated as "Very High Extent" while items 12, 13.14 and 15 were rate "High Extent. On the whole, the weighted mean was 3.12. The results therefore, show that the respondents rated items as "High Extent". The findings of research question two in Table 2 revealed that problem-solving skills positively influenced self-reliance of Business Education graduates in South West, Nigeria to a ""High Extent". The findings is in line with that of Akeke, Oche, Akuegwu and Ushie (2022) that students of Business Education programme should exposed to practical ways of running business enterprises while in schools through personal involvement in planning, marketing and managing school-based businesses. They also believed that problem-solving skills is needed for Business Education students' self-reliance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that human relations skills positively influenced self-reliance of business education graduates. No matter how efficient entrepreneurs may be in their businesses, if they lack human relations and innovation skills such as ability to develop new ideas to create new products and ability to develop new ideas to create new products and ability to open up a new market, success may still become a mirage since it will be hard to compete with competitors as well as meeting the needs of the society. This skill will teach Business Education graduates how to be genuinely enthusiastic in doing their business.

Recommendations

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

1. The current curriculum of Business Education in the universities should be reviewed to incorporate problem solving skills and risk management that will equip graduates with human relations skills to reduce risks, avoid physical hazard and transfer risks to another individual or organization through hedging, business insurance and employee insurance.
2. Business Education graduates should as a matter of urgency enroll in business school for training in the area of human relations, innovation and problem solving skills which are needed for self-reliance.

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