

COMPUTER AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS NEEDED BY TECHNICAL COLLEGE GRADUATES FOR SUCCESS IN FURNITURE-MAKING ENTERPRISE IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study determined computer and entrepreneurship skills needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State, Nigeria. Survey research design was used for the study. The population for the study comprised of 294, made up of 12 Furniture-making instructors, 57 Furniture-making students in the six Government technical colleges and 225 entrepreneurs in 75 registered Furniture-making industries in Lagos State. Three research questions guided the study. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using Mean. The findings of the study revealed that CADD skills, business planning skills and marketing skills were needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the identified skills be integrated into the technical colleges and skill acquisition centers curriculum for training of unemployed graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Computer, Entrepreneurship, Skills, Technical Colleges, Furniture-making, Graduates, Enterprise.

Introduction

The levels of technology entrepreneurship skills acquisition seem to be the basis for determining social, economic and industrial development of any nation. According to Irpiteraye-Adjekpovu (2013), World Education Forum was charged with the commitment to provide skills training opportunities for all by year 2015 to meet the knowledge and skills needs of all children, youths and adults. The author argued that the aspect of education that can help meet the above commitment is vocational education. Vocational education therefore, is an aspect of education that prepares individuals with appropriate skills to be self-reliant in a society. These skills can be acquired in technical colleges.

Technical Colleges in the opinion of Okoro (2006) are post-primary institutions that run vocational education programmes and offer various vocational subjects or trades in order to equip individuals with appropriate knowledge and skills required for self-employment. In other words, the goal of technical college is to teach students specific skills directed toward a specific type of work, such as Furniture-making.

Furniture is a movable household products made from wood such as tables, chairs, shelves and cabinets in a room or patio. According to Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2009), Furniture-making trade is aimed at introducing students to a career course (entrepreneurship) that can make them acquire productive skills essential for survival, self-employment that will reduce youth restiveness, robbery and achieving millennium development goals, thus facilitating the eradication of extreme poverty. Furniture-making in this study can be described as the practice of using various skills to design, construct, showcase and market varieties of products using different Woodworking techniques, facilities and consumable materials for self-employment, job creation and wealth generation. Therefore, for success in Furniture-making practice, specific skills are needed.

Nwokike (2011) defined a skill as the ability to do something well and expertly. Skills are those knowledge and competencies which individual can supply and gainfully utilized for the purposes of achieving optimum productivity in industries (Nwakolo, 2010). With reference to this study, skills are the ability which individual can demonstrate well and expertly for success in Furniture-making enterprise. Skills therefore, are needed to be taught in technical colleges in order to succeed as self-employed graduates.

A graduate according to Olaitan, Eze and Ogbonnaya (2009), is an individual who has completed a three

year technical college programme and is neither employed nor self-employed in any enterprise for successful living. A graduate in view of this study is an individual who has completed a three year technical college programme with little or no skills for success in Furniture-making enterprise.

In the opinion of Anyakoha (2009), an enterprise is a business project undertaken by an individual or a group of individuals which requires readiness and dedication on the part of the individual(s) engaged in the venture. Enome (2003) defined an enterprise as any activities for which there are specific returns. In other words, there are lots of opportunities when starting Furniture-making enterprise. Within the context of this study, an enterprise is a Furniture-making business project undertaken by technical college graduates for which there are specific returns. This suggests that various movable household products and fittings made from wood such as tables, chairs, and shelves make the Furniture-making enterprise endless, as far as the kind of products and fittings one can provide to customers. However, enterprise activities needed for success in designing and store information of Furniture-making products under the control of set of instructions could be demonstrated using appropriate computer skills

Computer in the opinion of Tutorials Point (2014) is an advanced electronic device that takes raw data as input from the user and processes it under the control of set of instructions (called program), gives the result (output), and saves it for the future use. According to Jayson (2009), computer skills are the ability to use computer to store information and do things with it according to a set of instructions. In this study, computer skills are the ability of technical college graduates to use computer to design and store information in Furniture-making according to a set of instructions. Des Moines Area Community College (2006) defined computer skills as the ability to use computer keyboard proficiency to store information; input and edit data; and adopt computer-aided design and drafting (CADD) to create graphical representations of building products. Computer skills in the view of Charmayne (2014) INCLUDE: word processing skills; COMPUTER GRAPHIC SKILLS; COMPUTER internet skills; and Computer-Aided Design (CAD) skills. The author argued further that Computer-Aided Design (CAD) is also known as computer-aided design and drafting (CADD).

Computer-aided Design and Drafting (CADD) are the computer technology used to designs a product and documents the design's process (Janssen, (2015). The author opined that CADD can be used to produce either two-dimensional or three-dimensional diagrams. CADD skills in the view of Michael (2014) are *the abilities to create graphical representations of varieties of furniture and building products*. CADD skills within the context of this study are the abilities of technical college graduates to design, draft and interpret detailed Furniture-making products using CADD software in an enterprise. The need to link CADD software skills to designs and interpretations of enterprise products in a complex business environment is fundamental to appropriate entrepreneurship skills acquired.

Cronje, Du Toit, Marais and Motlatla (2004) described entrepreneurship as the process of mobilizing and risking resources (land, capital, human resources) to utilize a business opportunity or introduce an innovation in such a way that the needs of society for products and services are satisfied, jobs are created, and the owner of the venture profits from it. Entrepreneurship skills according to Amasa (2010) are the required capabilities to perceive business opportunities, take advantage of the scarce resources, control and coordinate available human and material resources for success in an enterprise. The author stated that acquisition of entrepreneurship skills are strong source of wealth creation that helps to alleviate poverty. In this study,, entrepreneurship skills are the ability of technical college graduates to perceive business opportunities, take advantage of the available resources for success in Furniture-making enterprise. Entrepreneurship skills needed for a successful business enterprise according Nwabuona (2004) include: communication skills, business planning skills and marketing skills. In the same vein, entrepreneurship skills required to be learnt in order to excel in an enterprise in the opinion of Timmons and Spinelli (2004) include: self-motivation skills; financial management skills; managerial skills; business planning skills; and marketing skills. Within the context of this study, entrepreneurship skills needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise include: business planning skills and marketing skills. However, a successful enterprise holds its existence to good business planning to succeed

A business is only as good as its plan. Business planning according to Nieman and Bennett (2004) is the formal process of developing goals, objectives, strategies, tactics, and action plans regarding the transformation of inputs (production factors such as natural and human resources, technology, capital and

entrepreneurship) into outputs (products and services). Business planning skill is the ability to set enterprise goals, objectives and develop a proper business plan (Glaister & Falshaw (2009). Business planning skills in this study are the abilities of technical college graduates to set goals, objectives and develop viable business plan of their own Furniture-making enterprise. For successful distribution of finished goods and services to customers, marketing is required to promote the enterprise.

Marketing is the total system of business activities designed to plan, price, promote, and distribute satisfying goods and services to potential customers (Stanton, 2002). According to Nwafor (2007), marketing skills are the abilities that keep the entrepreneur informed, knowledgeable and confident as to determine the most efficient method of physical distribution of goods and services in order to satisfy customers. In view of this study, marketing skills are the abilities that keep the technical college graduates informed and develop effective physical distribution network of Furniture-making products to satisfy customers.

Indeed, acquisitions of relevant CADD and business planning and marketing skills are veritable tools to Furniture-making graduates' success in enterprise and wealth generation, which serves important functions beyond satisfying intellectual curiosity. These will enable them to undertake, run and succeed in their own small-scale Furniture-making enterprise for a comfortable livelihood. Hence, the increasing rate of unemployed youths in the society will be reduced; graduates can be useful to themselves and to their community.

Statement of the Problem

The problem for this study was informed by the fact that, graduates from technical college Lagos-Nigeria in recent times seem unemployed, unable to show-case their trades through setting up their own small-scale business enterprise and deficient in relevant computer and entrepreneurship skills training for success in Furniture-making enterprise. In the same vein, Etonyeaku (2011) emphasized that the increasing rate of unemployment in the society might be due to lack of appropriate skills which might also make it difficult for youths to establish and run their own enterprise. Consequently, many of the youths have continued to fail; drop their trades and resort to menial jobs to meet their daily needs and sometimes been involved in various unskilled activities constituting themselves as nuisance to their community. It is against this background that this study determines computer and entrepreneurship skills needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to determine computer and entrepreneurship skills needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined:

1. CADD skills needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise.
2. Business planning skills needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise.
3. Marketing skills needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the CADD skills needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise?
2. What are the business planning skills needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise?
3. What are the marketing skills needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise?

Methodology

Survey research design was used for this study. Survey research design according to Nworgu (2006) is concerned with exploring people's opinions by the use of questionnaire. The design was considered adequate since the study obtained data from technical college instructors, students and entrepreneurs in

registered Furniture-making industries through the questionnaire. The study was carried out in Lagos metropolitan area of the South-Western zone of Nigeria. The Population for the study comprised of 294, made up of 12 Furniture-making instructors, 57 Furniture-making students in the six Government Technical Colleges and 225 entrepreneurs in 75 registered Furniture-making industries in Lagos State, Nigeria. There was no sampling because the population is of manageable size. The instrument for data collection was a Computer and Entrepreneurship Skill Structured Questionnaire (CESSQ) that address the research questions with 5 point scale response options of Highly Needed (HN); Needed (N); Undecided (U); Not-Needed (NN); Highly Not-Needed (HNN); with assigned weighted values of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The questionnaire was validated by three experts. A reliability co-efficient of 0.82 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha analysis to determine the internal constituency of the questionnaire items. Two hundred and ninety-four copies of the 32-items CESSQ were administered to the respondents in Lagos State by the researcher with the help of five research assistants. All the 294 copies of the 32-items CESSQ administered were retrieved and analyzed using *Mean* for answering the research questions. An item with the *Mean* of 3.50 and above were regarded as Needed; while any one with *Mean* score below 3.50 was considered as Not-Needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Results

Research Questions 1

What are the CADD skills needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise?

Relevant data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Mean Responses of the Respondents on the CADD Skills needed by Technical College Graduates for success in Furniture-making Enterprise

N = 32

S/N	Computer-Aided Design and Drafting Skills	\bar{X}	Remarks
1	Employ CADD software to convert the designs of woodworkers and architects into working drawings in Furniture-making.	4.00	Needed
2	Design products from rough -sketches to working -models using CADD software in Furniture-making.	3.98	Needed
3	Work from rough sketches and specifications using CADD software in Furniture-making.	3.80	Needed
4	Design products with woodworking and construction techniques using CADD software in Furniture-making.	3.86	Needed
5	Prepare multiple versions of designs for review by woodwork designers or architects in Furniture-making.	2.10	Not-Needed
6	Produce detailed design plans and drawings using CADD software in Furniture-making.	4.07	Needed
7	Specify dimensions, materials and procedures for new products using CADD software in Furniture-making.	3.96	Needed
8	Work entrepreneurially with other woodwork designers or architects in Furniture-making.	2.95	Not-Needed
9	Interpret detailed designs and working drawings using CADD software in Furniture-making.	4.29	Needed
10	Provide manuals on how to construct/assembling finished products using CADD software in Furniture-making.	4.01	Needed

Table 1 showed that eight out of 10 CADD skill-items had their *Mean* value above 3.50 and were positive. While items number five and eight had their value scores of 2.10 and 2.95, which are below the cut-off point of 3.50, as such, the majority of the respondents indicated that eight CADD skills are needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise.

Research Questions 2

What are the business planning skills needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise?

Relevant data are presented in Table 2.

Tables 2

Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Business planning Skills needed by Technical College Graduates for success in Furniture-making Enterprise

N=32

S/N	Business planning Skills	\bar{X}	Remarks
1	Set goals and objectives for Furniture-making enterprise.	3.91	Needed
2	Outline specific business goals for Furniture enterprise.	3.78	Needed
3	Budget the plan for Furniture-making enterprise.	4.02	Needed
4	Identify appropriate facilities for Furniture-making enterprise.	4.08	Needed
5	Locate a suitable site for Furniture-making enterprise.	3.96	Needed
6	Locate a suitable environment for showroom to display Furniture-making products.	3.83	Needed
7	Develop a simple business plan of Furniture enterprise.	4.10	Needed
8	Outline an executive summary for Furniture enterprise.	4.01	Needed
9	Write a company description for Furniture-making enterprise.	4.07	Needed
10	Analysis market for finished Furniture-making products.	4.02	Needed
11	Plan marketing strategies for finished Furniture --making products.	4.00	Needed

Table 2 revealed that all the 11 business planning skill-items had their *Mean* value ranged from 3.78 to 4.10 and were, therefore, found needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise.

Research Questions 3

What are the marketing skills needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise? Relevant data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Marketing Skills needed by Technical College Graduates for success in Furniture-making Enterprise

N = 32

S/N	Marketing Skills	\bar{X}	Remarks
1	Conduct market survey to determine customers' needs in Furniture-making.	4.01	Needed
2	Utilize the marketing mix of product, price, place, and promotion in Furniture-making.	3.91	Needed
3	Identify marketing areas in Furniture-making.	4.06	Needed
4	Fix prices based on cost of production & market situation in Furniture-making.	3.87	Needed
5	Promote products/items to targeted clients in Furniture making. -	3.96	Needed
6	Advertise through social media and Search Engine effectively for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.03	Needed
7	Present and display/showcase product properly in Furniture making. -	4.01	Needed
8	Negotiate sales and keep stock records in Furniture-making.	3.68	Needed
9	Organize regular market exhibitions for finished products in Furniture-making.	3.79	Needed
10	Develop effective distribution network in Furniture-making.	4.02	Needed
11	Transport finished products to targeted customers in Furniture making. -	3.91	Needed

Table 3 showed that all the 11 marketing skill items had their *Mean* value ranged from 3.68 to 4.06. This explains that 11 marketing skills were needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise.

Discussions of the Findings

The findings of this study revealed that eight CADD skills were needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State, Nigeria. These CADD skills include ability to: employ CADD software to convert the designs of woodworkers and architects into working drawings in Furniture-making; design products from rough-sketches to working-models using CADD software in Furniture-making; work from rough sketches and specifications using CADD software in Furniture-making; design products with woodworking and construction techniques using CADD software in Furniture-making; prepare multiple versions of designs for review by woodwork designers or architects in Furniture-making; produce detailed design plans and drawings using CADD software in Furniture-making; specify dimensions, materials and procedures for new products using CADD software in Furniture-making; work entrepreneurially with other woodwork designers or architects in Furniture-making; interpret detailed designs and working drawings using CADD software in Furniture-making; and provide manuals on how to construct/assemble finished products using CADD software in Furniture-making. The findings were in line with the opinion of Michael (2014) who argued that CADD skills *needed for creating graphical representations of varieties of building products* include ability to: design plans using CADD software; work from rough sketches and specifications; design products with engineering and manufacturing techniques; add details to plans from their knowledge of building techniques; prepare multiple versions of designs for review by engineers and architects; and specify dimensions, materials, and procedures for new products. The findings also supported the view of Janssen (2015) who stated that CADD skills facilitates the manufacturing process by transferring detailed diagrams of a product's materials, processes, tolerances and dimensions with specific conventions for the product in question. The findings and the opinions of authors above helped to justify the findings of this study on CADD skill-items needed for success in Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State, Nigeria.

The data presented in table 2 revealed set goals and objectives for Furniture-making enterprise; outline specific business goals for Furniture-making enterprise; budget the plan for Furniture-making enterprise; identify appropriate equipment/facilities for Furniture-making enterprise; locate a suitable site for Furniture-making enterprise; locate a suitable environment for showroom to display Furniture-making products; develop a simple business plan of Furniture-making enterprise; outline an executive summary for Furniture-making; write a company description for Furniture-making enterprise; analysis market for finished Furniture-making products; and plan marketing strategies for finished Furniture-making products were in agreement with the findings of Nieman and Bennett (2004) who posited that steps involved in business planning include ability to: set goals and objectives; be aware of opportunities; forecast the environment; determine alternative courses of action; evaluate the alternative courses of action; select and implement a course of action; formulate support business plans; and budget the plan. The result of the findings also supported the work of Glaister and Falshaw (2009) who stated that business planning skills for an enterprise include ability to: set goals and objectives; evaluates the business opportunity and guides a start-up or existing business; communicates the business idea and goals to decision makers, outlines the strengths of the business; identifies existing and potential challenges; identifies areas for growth; secure financing; write the company description **business**; illustrate the market analysis; explain the structure and management team; identify suitable location; forecast the environment; determine alternative courses of action; identify appropriate equipment/facilities; draw schedule activities for the business enterprise; find markets; identify customer for patronage. The findings and work of authors above gave credence to the findings of this study on 11 business planning skills-needed for success in Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State, Nigeria.

The findings of this study disclosed conduct market survey to determine customers' needs in Furniture-making; utilize the marketing mix of product, price, place, and promotion in Furniture-making; identify marketing areas in Furniture-making; fix prices based on cost of production & market situation in Furniture-making; promote products/items to targeted clients in Furniture-making; advertise through social media and search engine effectively in Furniture-making; present and display/showcase product properly in Furniture-making; negotiate sales and keep stock records in Furniture-making; organize regular market exhibitions for finished products in Furniture-making; develop effective distribution network in Furniture-making; and transport finished products to targeted customers in Furniture-making. The findings were in line with the views of Obiyai and Ekubo (2011) who **argued that** skills in marketing include ability to: advertise products; identify customers to patronize; maintain good customer relationship; keep record of sales and revenue; transport products to buyers; provide good leadership and networking; fixes moderate and competitive prices; review prices; periodically suit current market situation; recognize business opportunities; and identify market channels. This finding were also in agreement with opinion of Stanton (2002) who stated that marketing skills that positioned entrepreneur in contact with the people who want to buy ones' products and services include ability to: identify marketing areas; advertise; fix prices based on cost of production & market situation; sell products; and keep accurate record of products. The findings and the study of authors on marketing skills above helped to add value to the findings of this study on marketing skill-items needed by Technical College graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, computer and entrepreneurship skills such as CADD skills, business planning skills and marketing skills with their 30 corresponding skill-items were needed by technical college graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State, Nigeria. These skills, if packaged into curriculum and modules specifications could be used to train technical college graduates to enable them set-up, run and succeed in their own Furniture-making enterprise. Consequently, the problems of unemployment and poverty among Furniture-making graduates will be reduced in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

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

1. Identified computer and entrepreneurship skills should be integrated into the technical college and skill acquisition centers curriculum for training of unemployed graduates for success in Furniture-making enterprise.
2. Government and administrators of technical colleges should organize seminar and workshop for Furniture-making instructors on computer and entrepreneurship skills needed by Furniture-making graduates in Lagos State, Nigeria.

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