

## ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES REQUIRED BY BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES FOR SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract

*The need for business education graduates and students (would-be-graduates) to integrate properly into the world of work, in the contemporary business world to avert unemployment necessitated the study. The study adopted a survey research design. All the business education graduates who were entrepreneurs in the Plateau State constituted the population. Purposive sampling was used to select entrepreneurs (business education graduates) who were 240 managers of their businesses and had existed for five years and above. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire that had been modified from earlier studies and had a reliability coefficient of 0.76. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, and the t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that business education graduates needed to possess the following competencies for effective entrepreneurial development: strategic competency, conceptual competency, opportunity competency, opportunity, learning competency, and personal competency. The results also showed that there were no gender-related differences in the respondents' mean ratings of the strategic, conceptual, opportunity, learning, and personal entrepreneurial competencies needed for entrepreneurial development. It was concluded that business education graduates and students make an effort to imbibe and utilise the recognised entrepreneurial competencies for their own personal growth in order to avoid unemployment*

**Keywords:** Business education, Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurial competencies, Entrepreneurial development, Graduates

### Introduction

The various governments have to established number of programmes by subsequent administrations to encourage people to start businesses in order to eliminate unemployment, enhance the lives of Nigerians, and boost entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. These include, among others, the family economic advancement programme, the national employment directorate, the national poverty eradication program, SURE-P, and youth enterprise with innovation in Nigeria (YOU WIN). The Federal Government periodically established financial entities such the Nigerian agricultural and cooperation bank, micro finance bank, and Nigerian bank for commerce and industries to carry out the goals of these programmes (Ajibola, 2020).

The abilities and talents that entrepreneurs develop determine how successfully any culture develops entrepreneurship. By identifying significant business opportunities, having the motivation to manage risks appropriate for business success, and using the communication and management skills required to quickly mobilize the human, material, and financial resources that will enable the small business owners to succeed (Okoye & Onyeagba, 2021; Ezeibe, Ezenwaji, Omeke, Nwaoga & Diogu, 2011). Osemeke, (2012)

claims that by exerting the necessary effort, entrepreneurship growth results in the establishment of fresh businesses and creative ideas with application. Creativity that focuses specifically on generating economic value and may involve either new technology or novel applications of already existing technology is known as entrepreneurship development. In order for people and groups to adopt the role of entrepreneurs, a programme of activities called entrepreneurial development must be implemented. It is the process of beginning and maintaining entrepreneurial activities that might hasten the production of wealth. It seeks to accelerate the creation of new businesses, products, and services by taking full advantage of available opportunities. It might also be envisioned when people create new businesses, take advantage of chances, or use a distinctive method of manufacturing things or performing services while taking risks in order to gain money. Without a doubt, with the significant increase in the number of graduates created each year, graduates are expected to possess the necessary entrepreneurship skills to be able to establish their own businesses.

Commercial viability is the most important factor to take into account (Lilly, 2014). As young people learn how to

build and manage their own company endeavors, entrepreneurship development provides them with prospects for independence. It involves fostering a strong feeling of self-worth and accountability as well as stimulating innovative thinking (Okata, 2014). The development of entrepreneurial capabilities is facilitated through entrepreneurship education, which gives students the information, abilities, and drive to succeed in a range of contexts (Okata, 2014).

According to Rajadurai, Sapuan, Daud, Salina, and Abidin (2018), students (potential graduates) should develop entrepreneurial capabilities at their tertiary level of education and use them in the workplace to suit the needs of the global firm. However, due to a lack of personal, social, and professional abilities, many graduates of higher education programs and other technical and professional programmes make students struggle to find employment (Succi & Canovi, 2020). This implies that these graduates may require particular or general abilities for a seamless transfer into the modern job market. According to Pepple and Enuoh (2020), graduates must possess the necessary entrepreneurial competencies to be able to add value to businesses in the current economic climate. The future workforce (students) must therefore be forced to learn the entrepreneurial skills necessary in the modern business sector in order to succeed after graduation as both employees and employers of labour. The development of the necessary entrepreneurial skills could enable them to make the best possible use of the resources already available for entrepreneurship.

Adewole and Adegbanjo (2022) submitted that entrepreneurs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be able to possess competencies such as communication, decision making skills, analytical and critical thinking skills and creative skills that will help graduates to identify and solve real – world problems. These skills are within the purview of business education. Akeke et al., (2022) define business education as the plethora of courses designed to provide students with any number of skills needed for success in business, especially those related to launching and running businesses. The need for business education as a form of education is crucial especially in this era of economic downturn and global pandemic affect the loss of jobs and poor performance of small firms established by graduates. Business education as a programme must work in tandem with the needs of the learners and the society (Utoware & Kren-Ikidi, 2013)

Business education provide learners with marketable skills for relevance in the world of work. In a changing world that is driven by technology, Business education

programmes must adapt to evolving technologies for it to perform its primary function of producing competent, skillful and dynamic entrepreneurs and potential both male and female that will effectively compete in the world of work. Considering the level of unemployment in Nigeria, it is obvious that there is a competency gap which the educational system must fill to guarantee graduate employability in the changing world (Utoware & Kren-Ikidi, 2013). Therefore, it is relevant to determine the perception of individuals on entrepreneurial competencies required by business education graduates for employment in the world business.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The high rate of business failure in Nigeria and graduates' inability to seize opportunities and achieve self-sufficiency are largely due to their lack of the entrepreneurial skills necessary in the modern business and labour environment, as well as persistent gaps between their educational backgrounds and societal needs. There is no longer any question that the country's tertiary institutions tend to produce a sizable proportion of business and vocational education graduates devoid of entrepreneurship abilities (Obidele & Onyeneke, 2023)

Therefore, we anticipated that graduates of business education who had been given the necessary training for the successful establishment and development of entrepreneurial activities would navigate the workplace with ease as employers and significantly contribute to the national development of their country. It is expected that having access to school would be a requirement for having access to opportunities, but some of them still appear to be without jobs. According to studies conducted by a few academics, Nigerian graduates—including those with a business education lack the entrepreneurial skills necessary to launch new enterprises and generate employment opportunities for others (Okolie, Nwosu & Mlana, 2019).

This raises concerns since there might be a gap between the abilities of these graduates and those needed for successful business development. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the entrepreneurial abilities (strategic, conceptual, opportunity, learning, and personal) necessary for business education graduates to develop their businesses successfully. The aforementioned problems highlighted the need for the current study

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to determine how entrepreneurial competencies required by business

education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development in Plateau State, Nigeria.

The specific purposes are:

- (1) To determine the strategic competency required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development
- (2) To ascertain the conceptual competency required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development
- (3) To assess the opportunity competency required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development
- (4) To evaluate the learning competency required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development
- (5) To determine the personal competency required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development

### Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- (1) What is the strategic competency required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development?
- (2) What is the conceptual competency required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development?
- (3) What is the opportunity competency required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development?
- (4) What is the learning competency required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development?
- (5) What is the personal competency required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development?

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

Ho<sub>1</sub> There is no significant difference in the strategic competency required by male and female business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development

Ho<sub>2</sub> There is no significant difference in the conceptual competency required by male and female business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development

Ho<sub>3</sub> There is no significant difference in the opportunity competency required by male and

female business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development

Ho<sub>4</sub> There is no significant difference in the learning competency required by male and female business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development

Ho<sub>5</sub> There is no significant difference in the personal competency required by male and female business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development

### Literature Review

#### Conceptual Clarification

#### Entrepreneurial Competency

According to Baum et al. (2001), competence is defined as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to carry out a particular job. Volery et al. (2015) have noted that competencies can be learned and attained through practice, learning and training. Therefore, entrepreneurial competencies can be seen as knowledge, motives, traits, self-images, social roles and skills required for successful entrepreneurship (Arthurs & Busenitz, 2006; Okolie et al., 2021). Man, et al (2002) see entrepreneurial competencies as a collection of higher-level features involving personality traits, skills, and knowledge. Entrepreneurial competence is defined as individual characteristics including attitude and behavior, which allow the entrepreneur to achieve business success (Okolie et al., 2013).

To measure entrepreneurial skills, some qualitative and quantitative researches have been implemented to develop and validate the measurement scale. Man et al. (2002) identified six main areas of entrepreneurial competencies in relation to an MSE context, opportunity, relationship, conceptual, organizing, and strategic and commitment competencies.

#### Business Education

Akeke et al., (2022) define business education as the plethora of courses designed to provide students with any number of skills needed for success in business, especially those related to launching and running businesses. Obidile and Onyeagba, (2019) sees business education as a specialized programme of instruction designed to provide individual with knowledge, skills and attitude for occupational work and advancement. It is also a field of study which prepares its recipients with relevant competencies needed to be productive in the society. This field of education occurs at multiple levels, including secondary and higher education institutes. It is a programme designs to achieve these aims by preparing their students for the world of work either as employees or employers of

labour. Business education has several components, as there are many different areas of the business industry as a whole. Business education teachers introduce students to the basics of personal finance, the decision-making techniques needed to be wise consumers, the economic principles of an increasingly international marketplace, and the processes by which businesses operate.

Business educators play a prominent role in preparing students to become responsible citizens, capable of making the astute economic decisions that will benefit their personal and professional lives. It provides training, skills, knowledge and abilities which could enable their students achieve self-reliance after graduation. It is therefore expected that business education students upon graduation should be able to venture into entrepreneurial activities and thrive successfully, instead of being unemployed or waiting for white collar jobs that are not readily available. In spite of these aims and expectations, lack of job competencies by universities graduates and high rate of graduate unemployment in the society as ascertained by some scholars like Oluyomi and Adedeji (2012); Obidile, Amobi and Uzoekwe (2017) create doubts as to the adequacy of the tertiary education programmes to impart the relevant competencies necessary to meet the demands of the entrepreneurial development.

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Strategic Competency and Entrepreneurial Development**

Strategic competency over the years there has been a growing in academic literature. Man et al. (2002), define strategic competence as the entrepreneur's ability to establish, evaluate and implement strategies for the entire firm. Man, et al (2008) made strategic competence operational by measuring the following behaviors: clearly knowing the expected directions and the impact of changes on the company's performance, giving priority to work that only aligns business objectives, redesigning the company for achieve the goal in a better way to connect or associate current actions with strategic objectives, observe progress towards strategic objectives, analyze results with respect to strategic objectives and establish strategic actions by assessing costs and benefits. Akeke. Oche, Akuegwu and Ushie (2022) opined that strategic planning is an essential skill for business education graduates employability in Cross River States, Nigeria. Similarly, Ndeti, Ngugi and Paul (2022) found that strategic competency is required by individuals to enable them effectively function in the turbulent

business environment for self-employment. In addition, Obidele and Onyenekeke (2023) established that analytical thinking, critical thinking, decision making skill, adaptability, reasoning skill, problem solving skill, and creativity as a set

Of strategic competencies required by successful entrepreneurs.

#### **Conceptual Competency and Entrepreneurial Development**

Conceptual competence reflects the mental capacity to coordinate overall business activities (Chandler & Jansen, 1992). According to Man et al. (2002), conceptual competence is the capacity for innovation, risk-taking, decision-making skills, observation and understanding of complex information. Man (2008) implemented this area of expertise by measuring the appropriate risk-taking behaviors related to work, understanding observations and problems, translating business ideas and observation into the business context, monitoring progress towards achieving goals in risky actions, exploring new ideas, observing problems in new ways and treating new problems as opportunities. Khan (2021) study focused on the conceptual competency and enterprise performance of food owners in Ruhulna City, Bangladesh. The study reveals that the conceptual competency of entrepreneurs (school graduate) is the most commonly contribute in terms producing new firms. In the same vein, Mashavira and Chipunza (2021) pointed out that managerial conceptual competency help graduates to excel in their business. Furthermore, Okolie, Igwe, Ayoola, Kanu and Mong (2021) found that on the average, young and older students develop conceptual competency will help graduates into job creators and job seekers. Similarly, Gontur, Davireng and Gadi, (2016) opined for firms to grow and contribute significantly to economic development of Nigeria, entrepreneurial competencies such creativity and innovation are the key factors, because they encourage growth and prosperity. This can be achieved through maximizing their current level of competencies.

#### **Opportunity Competency and Entrepreneurial Development**

Opportunity competency refers to the ability to recognize opportunities, seize opportunities, and identify customer needs. Seabela and Fatoki, (2014) viewed this competency as an entrepreneurial activity; actively seeking new opportunities, identifying opportunities, and developing the opportunities. One of the dominant roles of the entrepreneur is to have the

ability to detect and make the best use of business opportunities that is capable of stimulating the performance of the firm (Mohammed et al, 2017).

An opportunity is the chance to meet a market need, interest or want through a creative combination of resources to deliver superior value (Schumpeter, 1934; Casson, 1982). According to the definition that researchers consider opportunity to be laying at the heart of the entrepreneurial process, an entrepreneur is an individual who is able to identify, evaluate and exploit opportunities (Shane, 2000). According to Mohammed et al, (2017) entrepreneurs who need fast growth for their firms should take possession of this type of competency with deserved seriousness. Opportunity recognition is one of the major competencies that higher educational students need to develop in order to clearly understand and judge the market demands. Ge et al., (2016) acknowledge that entrepreneur by his ability to identify and exploit business opportunities to transform them profitable activities, Similarly, Sabau and Tau (2018, p. 6) think that entrepreneurs need to be able to recognize and exploit the market opportunity to start their new product because their product or service needs to fit the market need and available resources as well.

### **Learning Competency and Entrepreneurial Development**

According to Holcomb (2009), learning is the process through which individuals pick up new information, such as skills and specialized abilities, from experience or by watching others. They then assimilate and organize this information with their past knowledge in memory to make it retrievable for use in both routine and non-routine action. Learning competences entails acquiring specialized information and abilities in self-management, planning, market orientation, networking, leadership, issue analysis, negotiation, conceptual thinking, vision, persuasion, value clarity, teamwork, general awareness, and strategic orientation. Entrepreneurial learning is a novel method that combines higher education and entrepreneurship activities. Similarly, Adebayo and Adeleye (2015 ) defines entrepreneurial learning as learning to identify and seize opportunities as well as interacting socially to start, plan, and manage firms. Therefore, the focus of entrepreneurial learning competences is on what a person should know, understand, and be able to do in the context of starting, growing, and managing businesses for individual and collective benefit. As a result, academics have linked entrepreneurial learning competencies to entrepreneurial development as a key

area of emphasis (Martins, 2013). Obidile et al., (2023) opined that there is no significance difference in the mean rating of the respondents of learning skills required for entrepreneurial development. In addition, the study of Hoang et al., (2019) revealed that learning competency and other competencies such organizing, conceptual, and ethical have direct effect on performance of small business owners.

### **Personal Competency and Entrepreneurial Development**

Personal competency refers to important personal qualities and abilities that help in building up personal strength and enhance an individual effectiveness in performing certain challenging tasks such as managing one own business (Man & Lau, 2000). Some of the characteristics include resilience, open- minded, being enthusiastic, humor, self- disclosure, creativity, patience and self – confidence. Ogunmulade (2017) carried a study on entrepreneurial competencies required by technician for success of small-scale automobile maintenance enterprises in Lagos State. It was found that 24 personality competencies are required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintain industry. In addition, Zizile and Tendai (2019) pointed out that personal entrepreneurial competencies are crucial for the survival and development of SMEs. Similarly, Pepple and Enuoh (2020) claimed that personal traits and learner skills are positively related to business success.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted descriptive survey method. Survey design typically employs questionnaires and interviews in order to determine the opinions, attitudes, preferences, and perceptions of persons of interest to the researcher (Okon, Etifit, & Njoku, 2016)

### **Population and Sample**

The population used for this study consisted by 1717 students from the department of Business education, Federal College of Education Pankshin who studied and graduated from 2013 to 2018. This consist of 1305 NCE and 412 Degree graduates gotten from exams office department of business education. The population was limited to business education because getting the contact of other business education graduates from other schools will be difficult

The sample for this study was determine using Taro Yamane (1987) formula

$$s = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$
$$1717 / 1 + [1717 \times 0.05 \times 0.05]$$

1717 / 5. 2925  
324.4  
325

In order to ensure a representative sample of the entire population, the researchers used 325 graduates. Purposive sampling was used to select 325 entrepreneurs (business education graduates) who were managers of their businesses and had existed for five years and above. This decision was made in order to use entrepreneurs who were experienced and familiar with the work environment sampling technique. Thus, the sample consists of males and females graduates of business education Federal College of Pankshin.

**Instrument**

Structured questionnaires were adapted from previous studies base on their relevance to this study. These include strategic competency, conceptual competency, opportunity competency, learning competency, and personal competency were adapted from the work of Ahmad (2007) and Man (2001), with a Crobach Alpha reliability value of 0.814 for strategic competency, 0.719 for conceptual competency, 0.750 for opportunity competency, 0.710 for learning competency and 0.744 for personal competency. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on these competencies using four-point scale (1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= undecided 4= agree, 5= strongly agree. To

arrive at the acceptable mean value is calculated as  $5+4+3+2+1= 15$ , since it is anchored of five-point likert scale we divide the sum by five.  $15 /5 = 3$ . Criterion mean is 3.00 therefore, any mean score of 3.00 or above will carry the mark agree as it is above the mean score below 3.00 will carry the mark disagree as it is below the cut off mean score.

**Method of Data Collection**

The data were collected by the researcher using online medium of administering copies of the questionnaire to the graduates in their various locations. 325 questionnaires were posted out, of which 240 of the copies were returned representing 73.84 percentage were retrieved from the respondents upon several calls. All retrieved questionnaire were adequately completed and were found usable for the study and the used for the analysis.

**Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected were organized and analyzed using statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation (SD) to test the research questions and t- test was used to test the hypotheses of the study at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

**Research Question 1:** What is the strategic competency required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development?

**Table 1: Strategic competency required by business education graduates**

CODE	STATEMENTS	SA (4)	A (3)	UD	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	MEAN	SD	Remark
SC1	I always monitor progress towards strategic goals	94	122	12	6	6	240	4.20	0.86	Accept
SC 2	I prioritizes work in alignment with business goals	90	130	18	2		240	4.30	0.64	Accept
SC3	I usually assess and look short terms day tasks in the context of long-term direction	44	114	40	24	18	240	3.57	1.13	Accept
SC4	I evaluate results against strategic goals	62	40	10	30	98	240	2.74	0.71	Reject

Table 1: reveals the mean responses of respondents on the strategic competency required by business education graduates on entrepreneurial development. The result shows that item 1, 2 and 3 the respondents agreed with the mean value of 4.20, 4.30, and 3.57 while item 4 is less than 3 so we reject it.

**Table 2: Conceptual competency required by business education graduates**

CODE	STATEMENTS	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total	MEAN	SD	Remark
CC1	I understand the broader business implication for ideas, issues and observation	108	112	10	10	-	240	4.32	0.75	Accept
CC2	I translate ideas, issues and observations into the businesses context	20	34	16	90	80	240	2.23	0.83	Reject
CC3	I take reasonable job-related risks	30	90	50	50	20	240	3.15	1.20	Accept
CC4	I monitor progress towards objectives in risky actions	44	114	40	24	18	240	3.59	1.12	Accept
CC5	I am well planned in making decisions	28	32	40	108	72	240	2.80	1.11	Reject
CC6	I remain proactive and responsive to change	72	138	22	6	2	240	4.15	0.71	Accept

Table 2 reveals the mean responses of respondents on the conceptual competency required by business education graduates on entrepreneurial development. Items 1, 3, 4 and 4 on the conceptual competency have value greater than 3, it shows that the respondents agreed with items. While 2, and 5 have mean value less than 3, it means that the items are rejected. This means

that conceptual competencies such understanding broad business implication for ideas, issues and observations into the businesses context, take reasonable job related risks, monitor progress towards objectives in risky actions and remain proactive and responsive to changes.

**Table 3: Opportunity competency required by business education graduates**

	STATEMENTS	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total	MEAN	SD	Remark
OC1	I sought high quality business opportunities	110	102	14	8	6	240	4.26	0.90	Accept
OC2	I take an idea or concept and make something out of it	58	178	4	-	-	240	4.22	0.46	Accept
OC3	I scan the environment to explore opportunities	74	90	12	36	28	240	3.60	1.12	Accept

Table 3 reveals the mean responses of respondents on the opportunity competency required by business education graduates on entrepreneurial development. From 3.60 to 4.26 shows that the respondents agreed with all the identified items. This means that

opportunity competencies such as seeking high quality business opportunity, using idea to make something out of ideas and they scan the environment to exploit opportunity.

**Table 4: Learning competency required by business education graduates**

CODE	STATEMENTS	SA	A	D	UN	SD	Total	MEAN	SD	Remark
LC1	I learn proactively	116	114	6	2	2	240	4.42	0.67	Accept
LC2	I learn as much as I can in my business	44	114	40	24	18	240	3.59	1.19	Accept
LC3	I keep up to date in my business	30	90	50	32	18	240	3.15	1.20	Accept
LC4	I apply learned skills and knowledge to actual practice	50	56	4	92	30	240	3.07	1.02	Accept

Table 4: reveals the mean responses of respondents on the learning competency required by business education graduates on entrepreneurial development. From 3.07 to 4.42 shows that the respondents agreed with all the identified items. This implies that

opportunity competencies such as learning proactively, learning much from the business, abreast with update information and trend in his business lines and application of skills learned and knowledge acquire to practical application to the business.

**Table 5: Personal competency required by business education graduates**

CODE	STATEMENTS	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total	MEAN	SD	Remark
PC1	I maintain a positive altitude	44	114	40		11	240	3.10	1.07	Accept
PC2	I prioritize task to manage my time	46	94	50	32	18	240	3.49	1.16	Accept
PC3	I recognize and work on my own weaknesses		90	50	50	14	240	3.13	1.20	Accept

Table 5 reveals the mean responses of respondents on the personal competency required by business education graduates on entrepreneurial development. From 3.10 to 3.49 shows that the respondents agreed with all the identified items. This means that personal competencies such as maintaining positive attitude, prioritize task to manage time and recognizing and working on areas of weakness.

Hypothesis Testing  
Hypotheses One:  $H_{01}$  There is no significant difference in the mean strategic competency required by male and female business education graduates' perceptions of male and female business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development

**Table 6: t test Results on Strategic competency of business graduates in Plateau State**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t cal	t crit	Remark
Male	120	4.15	0.72	238	1.277	1.96	NS
Female	120	4.32	0.75				

Table 6: shows that the calculated t- value (t- cal) = 1.277 and the critical t- value (t crit) or table value of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance for the two- tailed test and 238 degree of freedom. Since t – cal is less than t- crit. The test is not statically significance. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected or upheld. The implication of this results that there is no significant difference between male and female on the strategic

competency require by business education graduate for entrepreneurial development

Hypotheses Two: ( $H_{02}$ ). There is no significant difference in the conceptual competency required by male and female business education graduates' perceptions of male and female business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development

**Table 7: t test results on conceptual competency of business graduates graduate for national development in Plateau State**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t cal	t crit	Remark
Male	120	4.32	0.75	238	1.43	1.96	NS
Female	120	4.14	0.73				

From table 7, the calculated t- value of 1.43 is less than the t- tabulated value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore retained. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business education graduate on the conceptual competency to entrepreneurial growth.

Hypotheses Three: (Ho<sub>3</sub>). There is no significant difference in the opportunity competency required by male and female business education graduates perceptions of male and female business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development

**Table 8: t test results on opportunity competency of business graduates graduate for national development in Plateau State**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t cal	t crit	Remark
Male	120	4.33	0.75	238	1.46	1.96	NS
Female	120	4.20	0.86				

From the table, the calculated t- value of 1.46 is less than the t- tabulated value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore retained. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business education graduate on the opportunity competency to entrepreneurial growth.

Hypotheses Four: (Ho<sub>4</sub>). There is no significant difference in the learning competency required by male and female business education graduates perceptions of male and female business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development

**Table 9: t test results on learning competency of business graduates graduate for national development in Plateau State**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t cal	t crit	Remark
Male	120	4.20	0.90	238	1.51	1.96	NS
Female	120	4.21	0.82				

From the table, the calculated t- value of 1.51 is less than the t- tabulated value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore retained. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business education graduate on the learning competency to entrepreneurial growth.

Hypotheses Five: (Ho<sub>5</sub>). There is no significant difference in the personal required by male and female business education graduates perceptions of male and female business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development

**Table 10: t test Results on personal competency of business graduates graduate for national development in Plateau State**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t cal	t crit	Remark
Male	120	4.42	0.67	238	1.53	1.96	NS
Female	120	4.09	0.85				

From the table, the calculated t- value of 1.53 is less than the t- tabulated value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore retained. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business education graduate on the personal competency to entrepreneurial growth.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

Findings of the study in hypothesis one revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of both male and female business education graduates on the extent of strategic competency on entrepreneurial development. This finding tallies with the findings of Azmi et al., (2018) which stated that strategic competency is required by SMEs owners for business success. Also, the findings are in congruent with Akeke et al., (2022) that there is no significant difference between students of the two universities on strategic competency for business education graduates' employability. This means that strategic competency is an essential skill for business education graduates to be employed and they conclude that leaders should include activities that will enhance strategic skills of students.

For hypothesis two, the results revealed that that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education graduates on the conceptual competency required for entrepreneurial development. Supporting this finding, Khan (2021) averred that conceptual competency of school graduate is the most commonly contribute in terms of producing new firms in Bangladesh. This is also in agreement with the study of Mashavira et al., (2021) who pointed out that managerial conceptual competency help graduates to excel in their business. Furthermore, hypothesis three indicates there is no significance difference in the mean ratings of male and female business education graduates on the extent of opportunity competency in achieving entrepreneurial development. This finding is in consonance that of Mohammed et al., (2017), Sabau and Tau (2018), and Ge et al., (2016) established that entrepreneurs need to able to recognize and exploit opportunity to start their new product.

The null hypotheses 4 revealed no significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female respondents in respect of learning competency required by business education graduates for entrepreneurial development. This is in line with the views of Obidile et al., (2023) and Hoang et al., (2019) revealed that learning competency is important for small business performance.

Finally, hypotheses revealed no significance difference in the ways male and female business education graduates perceived personal competency for entrepreneurial development. This finding is supported by the results of Ogunmulade (2017) and Zizile and Tendai (2019) pointed out that personal competencies are crucial for survival and development of firms.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, we can expressly say that this study established that entrepreneurial competencies are critical factors that influence entrepreneurial success of business education graduates. The study concluded that strategic, conceptual, opportunity, learning and personal competencies are required by business education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development in Plateau State. Our contribution to knowledge in this paper is in two folds, the review of the literature section provides a structured review of entrepreneurial competency with citations to many authors in the field. This study also showed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of the five entrepreneurial competencies in this study. This means that when graduates of business education are fully equipped with the skills needed to as establish their business, this will help them to succeed in their chosen business. Nonetheless, as part of limitation of this study, we advise user of this study not to generalize the findings of the research to reflect the exact the factors and competencies that affect business education graduates in Nigeria. The study is only limited to only business education graduates in Plateau State, we recommend that similar study should be replicated to cover other geo political zones of the country.

### **Recommendations**

In line with the conclusion reached in this paper, it is recommended that:

1. Business education graduates should keep updating themselves on strategic competencies because it is crucial for entrepreneurial success and growth
2. Business education graduate should keep improving on their conceptual skills because it will help them solve complex problems that exist in the organization
3. Business education graduates and students should endeavour to imbibe and put into use opportunity, learning and personal competencies for their entrepreneurial development to avert unemployment
4. Business education instructors should regularly undergo training and retraining to stay current with needs of the modern business environment and incorporate them into their lessons for students.

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