



Difficulties Confronting Students in the Acquisition of Practical Skills in Business Education in Tertiary Institutions in Delta State

Akpojotor, Benedicta Emujeboghene
Department of Business Education
Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the difficulties confronting students in the acquisition of practical skills in business education in tertiary institutions in Delta State. The survey research design was adopted in the study. Two research questions were put forward. The population of the study consisted of 963 business education students from colleges of education Warri, Mosogar, and Asaba (Tech) and Delta State University Abraka. The simple random sampling technique was adopted and the sample size was 200 students. A structured questionnaire was used to obtain data. The data collected were analyzed using mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (SD) to answer the research questions. Any item with a mean value of 2.50 and above was regarded as agreed while any item with a mean value below 2.50 was regarded as disagreed. The findings revealed that the quality and quantity of facilities available for teaching practical skills in business education is inadequate. The students agreed that most of the typewriters used in their typing pools were obsolete among others. The standard deviation (SD) scores ranged from 0.54 to 1.97 which shows high variability in the students' responses. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the business education students were confronted with numerous difficulties in the process of practical skill acquisition in tertiary institutions in Delta State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that computer laboratory should be adequately furnished with instructional materials/facilities appropriate for the practical skill acquisition of the business education students.

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INTRODUCTION

Today's world is extremely competitive, as companies want only the best applicants, while applicants seek to sell their skills to employers that offer them the highest salaries. However, the level of expertise possessed by an employee indicates a great deal about how much he or she will be paid, the level at which he or she will be positioned, and the value placed on him or her by the business. By and large, the talents acquired by individuals determine their level of success in life. In any organization, skilled workers produce higher-quality products than unskilled workers. Thus, acquiring competence confers an edge over the competition.

According to Ebube (2018), skill is the capacity to act competently. The term refers to both physical and mental ability. In other words, skill is associated with knowledge

or comprehension. Additionally, it entails physical competence. In this study, skill is defined as the capacity to demonstrate competence, mastery, or proficiency on the job. Any nation that wishes to expand its economy must first develop its human capital resources, and one of the primary components of human capital resources is a skill. Human capital is defined as the present value of a person's stream of current and future anticipated earnings (Becker, 1964; Mincer, 1974). It is, therefore, necessary for a nation's citizens to achieve a specific level of skills for the nation to be considered to have a high-quality human capital resource.

On the other hand, skill acquisition might be referred to as motor learning and coordination. It is a multidisciplinary discipline concerned with an aim, perception, action, and the standardization of the performer-



environment connection. According to Awoyobi and Onyeukwu, as cited in Uwameiye (2019), skill acquisition is the learning and professional training obtained by an individual to enable him/her to retain a job. Specifically, skill acquisition is viewed as a catch-all word that encompasses the knowledge and understanding of which behavioural and neurological elements influence the central nervous system's adaptability in response to the acquisition or reacquisition of motor skills (Magill & Anderson, 2007).

Aruajo and Davids (2011) characterize skill acquisition as a teleonomic process and functional interaction with the environment, rather than the production of an object which is the means through which skill learning occurs. That is, it is constantly modified by the surroundings. Several studies show that through repeating or practising a job, a person gains experience and skills that help promote economic development. To advance technologically, a leadership or government must be able to provide its citizens with sufficient skill sets. This responsiveness and skill acquisition drive the nation's business activity. Thus, marketable skills learned in business education can prepare graduates for self-employment, thus creating jobs. Hence, skill acquisition is crucial for business education programmes in colleges of education and universities to produce marketable graduates who can work independently or in the workforce.

Business education is a vocational program that teaches students attributes (skills) that will enable them to be employable or self-sufficient. Business education, according to Colby, Ehrlich, Sullivan, and Dolle (2012), entails teaching students the fundamentals, theories, and procedures of business to upgrade skills or provide individuals with the necessary abilities to seek meaningful work. From the foregoing, it is clear that the overall goal of business education is to assist students in developing the business skills required to fulfil their personal and professional objectives. According to Okoli (2009), entrepreneurial abilities are obtained when a person gains business skills and management competencies for creating and operating a small company enterprise. Among the business, skills are opportunity, recognition, and selection, which

is the capacity to perceive business prospects even in difficult situations; basic financial planning and management; and people and customer relationship management, among others. In other words, the goal of business education is to provide students with training that will enable them to acquire appropriate concepts, attitudes, knowledge, understanding, and skills for and about business, for their private use as managers, administrators, and teachers in any work environment that they are likely to encounter. To achieve the aforementioned objectives, business educators must play an important role because business education students require skills to be effective in their workplace, and business education must be taught with the appropriate instructional materials/facilities and teaching strategies to instil the necessary skills and attitudes in the students.

As a result, a major component of business education is preparing individuals to acquire the necessary skills to survive in a highly competitive labour market. According to Amoor (2014), business education, as an integral aspect of vocational and technical education, not only trains people for responsible citizenship but also instils in them the ability to produce new ideas that could stimulate economic progress. In the strata where business education has not realized this objective, there is still a high rate of unemployment, a weak economy, and a lack of technical growth (Eze & Okorafor, 2016). As a result, it is critical that business education students obtain the desired skills compatible with the programmes of study, demonstrate the application of professional skills in the job market, and be self-sufficient. Tertiary institutions spend a lot of time teaching theories at the expense of practical skills since there are not enough instructional materials and facilities to teach students the skills they need in the workplace. Okoh (2001) asserts that graduates of Nigerian institutes of higher learning lack practical skills. This simply implies that Nigerian graduates are "half baked," and as a result, there is a gap between what students are exposed to and what they are required to be exposed to gain the necessary practical skills in business education. Ugbah (2019) carried out a study on innovative strategies for promoting employment opportunities of business



educators for sustainable development. The author stated that business education graduates are unable to meet up with the vast employment opportunities in both private and public sectors of the economy due to the lack of maintenance of equipment and inadequate security, inadequate supply of modern equipment and instructional materials.

The teaching methodology is referred to as the technique chosen to accomplish a teaching goal. It is also regarded as a set of procedures and principles used by teachers to make the process of teaching and learning highly efficient for their students. Furthermore, it is viewed as the general principles, pedagogy and management strategies used for classroom instruction. Voss, Kunter, and Baumert (2011) asserted that teachers' general pedagogical knowledge is relevant to understanding quality teaching as understood by its impact on student learning outcomes. According to Oluwale (2015), teaching methods are of various kinds: human, natural, and scientific. He further stated that teaching methods are often concerned with facilitated learning or instructional resources/materials. The various teaching methods are students-centred, teacher-centred, entrepreneurial pedagogy and constructivism pedagogy.

The Student-centred approach is also known as learner-centred education this methods of teaching shift the focus of instruction from the teacher to the student. In other words, student-centred learning interchanges students from passive receivers of information to active participants in their discovery process.

The teacher-centred approach is the method of teaching where everything revolves around the teacher. The students are just to listen while the teacher pilots the affairs of the class. In this method, the students are sometimes considered to be "empty vessels," whose duties are to listen to and absorbed information.

Entrepreneurial pedagogy integrates a variety of innovative and active teaching approaches, which facilitate the integration of technology, and makes the learning process captivating and meaningful for the student.

Constructivism pedagogy believes that humans construct their knowledge through direct experience, as opposed to being taught

concepts in the abstract. A constructivist teacher believes that to learn, students need as much hands-on experience with objects, skills and people as possible.

However, it was observed that business education students appear to be confronted with some difficulties during the process of acquiring practical skills. Could these difficulties be a result of inadequate quantity and quality of facilities for practical skill teaching? Or an inadequate teaching methodology used in teaching practical skills in business education? The necessity to answer the above questions motivates this study, which will establish the extent to which business education students confront difficulties in their pursuit of practical skill acquisition.

Objectives of the Study

As a result, the specific purpose of the study is to determine:

1. Whether the quantity and quality of facilities for practical skill teaching are adequate.
2. Whether the teaching methodology adopted in teaching practice skills in business education is adequate.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed in line with the objective of the study.

1. Is the quantity and quality of facilities available for practical skill teaching of the business education student in the tertiary institutions adequate?
2. Is the teaching methodology adopted in teaching practical skills in business education in tertiary institutions adequate?

METHODOLOGY

A survey research design was used for the study. Nworgu (1991) defined a survey as a procedure used in obtaining data from a sample or relevant population that is familiar with the ideas related to the objectives of a study through an interview or questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to obtain data from students of business education in the university and colleges of education. The questionnaire has four-point rating scale options of strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed,



and strongly disagreed, with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The instrument was face and content validated by three experts. Two from the business education unit of the vocational and technical department, the University of Benin and one from the measurement and evaluation unit in the same university. The split-half technique was adopted to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. Four research assistants, one from each institution were engaged and given orientation on how to administer the questionnaire to the respondents.

The population of the study was 963, made up of 528 students from colleges of education Warri, Mosogar, and Asaba (Tech) and 435 students from Delta State University

all from the business education department. On the whole 200 students were randomly sampled out of the 963 and used as respondents for this study. The data collected were analyzed using mean (\bar{X}), standard deviation (SD) to answer the research questions. Any item with a mean value of 2.50 or above was regarded as agreed while any item with a mean value below 2.50 was regarded as disagreed.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question 1: Is the quantity of instructional material available for practical skill teaching of the business education students in the tertiary institutions adequate?

The data for answering research question one is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean Rating of the Responses of Business Education Students on the adequacy of the quality and quantity of facilities available for practical skill teaching of the business education students in the tertiary institutions

S/N	ITEM STATEMENTS	\bar{X}	SD	REMARKS
1	The computers in the laboratory are not adequate for the practical training of the students.	3.54	0.95	Agree
2.	The power supply to the computer room is epileptic	3.78	0.78	Agree
3.	The printers for students to participate in practice on how to print out documents are inadequate.	3.59	0.97	Agree
4.	The computer laboratory has inadequate scanners for students' use	3.52	0.66	Agree
5.	The typewriters in the typing pool are adequate for the practical training of the students	2.45	1.84	Disagreed
6.	Most typewriters in the typing pool are obsolete.	2.98	1.04	Agree
7.	The school computer laboratory is well stocked with computer laptops.	2.35	1.25	Disagree
8.	There is internet connectivity in all the computers used in the computer laboratory.	2.23	1.40	Disagree
9.	The internet is always available for students to use in the computer laboratory.	1.89	1.97	Disagree
10.	The students are mostly taught keyboarding using the typewriter as an alternative to the computer due to the epileptic power supply.	3.19	0.98	Agree

Table 1 shows the mean distribution of opinion of the students on the quality and quantity of facilities available for practical skill teaching of the business education students. The students agreed to six of the items and disagreed with four items. The students agreed that the quality and quantity of instructional materials available for teaching practical skills are inadequate. They disagreed with the fifth item which states that typewriters in the typing

pool are adequate for the practical skill training of the students. This implies that typewriters in the typing pool are not adequate for the practical skill training of business education students.

Furthermore, the students agreed that most of the typewriters used in the typing pool were obsolete and that they are mostly taught keyboarding using the typewriter as an alternative to computer due to epileptic power



supply. The students however disagreed that the school computer laboratory is well stocked with computer laptops. They also disagreed that there is internet connectivity in all the computers used in the computer laboratory and that the internet is always available for students to use in the computer laboratory. Therefore, the quality and quantity of facilities available for teaching business education students' practical skills should be enhanced. The standard deviation scores ranged from 0.66 (item 4) to 1.97 (item 9). This shows high variability in the opinions of the students. The finding conforms to the findings of Ugba

(2019) which stated that business education graduates are unable to meet up with the vast employment opportunities in both private and public sectors of the economy due to the lack of maintenance of equipment and inadequate security, inadequate supply of modern equipment and instructional materials.

Research Question Two

Is the teaching methodology adopted in teaching practice skills in business education adequate?

The data for answering research question two were presented in table two

Table 2: Mean Rating of the Responses of Business Education Students on the adequacy of teaching methodology adopted in teaching practice skills in business education.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENTS	X	SD	REMARKS
11.	The students are taught using the student-centred teaching pedagogy	2.27	1.73	Disagree
12	The teacher gives students a variety of practical assignments to undertake.	3.41	0.87	Agree
13	The entrepreneurial pedagogy is mostly used in the institution.	3.08	1.14	Agree
14	Teacher centred is the most dominant method of passing instruction to students.	3.01	0.54	Agree
15	Constructivist pedagogy is mostly used in tertiary institutions to enable students to learn practical skills in business education individually.	2.59	1.30	Agree

Table 2 shows the mean distribution of opinions of students on the teaching methodology adopted in teaching practical skills in business education. The students agreed to four of the items on the table and disagreed with one. This implies that students are exposed to different teaching pedagogy except for student-centre. The standard deviation (SD) scores ranged from 0.54 (item 14) and 1.73 (item 11). This shows high variability in the responses of the students. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Voss, Kunter, and Baumert (2011) who affirmed that teachers' general pedagogical knowledge is relevant to understanding quality teaching as understood by its impact on student learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Skill acquisition is the process of acquiring skills. According to Awoyobi and Onyeukwu (2005), as cited in Uwameiye (2019), skill acquisition is the learning and professional training obtained by an individual to enable him/her to retain a job. Above all,

the process involved in skills acquisition have numerous challenges. Based on the analysis of data and findings of this study, it can be concluded that business education students are confronted with numerous difficulties in the process of practical skill acquisition in tertiary institutions in Delta State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The computer laboratory should be adequately furnished with instructional material/facilities appropriate for the practical skill acquisition of the business education students.
2. The institutions should ensure that modern equipment/internet facilities are made available for the training of the business education students.
3. Business educators should ensure that they apply the best pedagogy



appropriate for teaching students practical skills.

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