



IMPROVING BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME THROUGH SCHOOL-INDUSTRY COLLABORATION FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study was designed to determine strategies for improving business education programme through school-industry collaboration for capacity building in Imo State. Two research questions were developed for the study with two null hypotheses that was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study consisted of 41 business education teachers from tertiary institution in Imo State. There was no sampling because the population size was manageable. A four point rating scale validated questionnaire with reliability coefficient of 0.76 was used to collect data for the study. Mean was used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings of the study showed among other things that school-industry collaboration programmes are ineffective and poorly utilized in business education programme for capacity building. It was recommended that government, tertiary institution authorities and business educators should establish contact and partner with industries so as to improve business education programme for capacity building.

Key words: *business education, school-industry collaboration, capacity building*

Introduction

A nation is made up of people whose individual contributions are directed towards national growth. Individuals need to develop and acquire necessary skills for capacity building. Linkage between education and industry is essential for preparing individuals to be enthusiastic and efficient employees (Osinem, 2005). Such partnership is a positive response to educational initiatives to strengthen links with the industry sub-sector. Part of the ultimate goal of education and training is to prepare individuals to acquire appropriate mental, physical and social competences for the future.

Business education is a programme basically for skill acquisition, vocational and competency. According to Okpara (2014) business education is a component of vocational education which involves the acquisition of skills, knowledge and competence which make its recipients or beneficiaries proficient. Business education comprises activities that are aimed at planning, teaching, and developing through a variety of experiences that provide and improve the individual with the ability of influencing the environment and enhancing living through vocations that boost self-reliance. Iwuoha (2016) noted that the rapid change in the world of work makes it compulsory to improve the business education programme to



produce individuals for capacity building. Specifically, business education in Nigeria evolved from the country's economic, industrial and commercial circumstances and therefore requires collaboration with the industry to provide the needed assistance towards helping individuals acquire the necessary skills to be relevant in life. Business education focuses on impacting in its learners the appropriate skills needed to be self employed or be employable.

Unachukwu (2013) stated that graduate unemployment is one of the major problems facing Nigeria. It is believed that Nigerian graduates do not possess the skills suitable for industry sector of the economy which is a big challenge to the society. Onabu (2015) noted that as a result of neglect, higher Institutions lack the tools needed to inculcate in the students skills required by employers. The students industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) was introduced to tackle the problem of lack of skill and competence. According to Iruegbu (2017), the scheme seems to have not achieved so much as majority of the graduates employed in the industrial sectors are incapable of proffering technical solutions of the work expected of them to perform.

According to Uzundu (2016), school industry collaboration is the process of two or more people or organizations working together to complete a task or achieve a goal, school and business co-produce progress in job-specific skills integrating formal education and employment school industry collaboration is mutually accepted training partnership in which school learning experience and skills are complemented through industrial training experience. There are a number of factors influencing the increase in the number of unemployed graduates from tertiary institution in Nigeria. Ejeka and Iwuoha (2015) noted that one of such issues is the inadequate preparations of recipients of business education programme through effective career exploration activities, students industrial work experience, occupational orientation programmes, and field trip activities for practical knowledge to perform well in the world of work. Njoku (2013) added that lack of required facilities and conducive learning environment are hindrances to effective business education programme in Nigeria. There is therefore need to bridge the gap through school-industry collaboration. Ukamadu (2011) identified such collaborations to include engaging students in industrial training programme and ensuring that the students acquire skills; taking students for field trips, provision of scholarship and grants among others. Okeke (2014) added that it is pertinent that educational institutions train the students to the point of acquisition of productive, saleable or employable skills in both private and public industries and commerce thereby contributing to the economic development of the society.

Ibeziem (2012) stated that school industry collaboration helps learners develop functional skills for the world of work. It is a training outfit which integrated training into productive and relevant work to give the learner the opportunity of matching theoretical learning experiences with practical skills that lead to school industry linkage. Industry collaboration therefore, presents a wide range of benefits to individuals, school and the industry as well.



Statement of the Problem

Business education, by design, primarily aims at providing individuals with skills needed for self reliance. In the view of Ibekwe (2011) school industry collaboration is highly required to help schools send their students to industries to acquire practical skills to be relevant and competent in the world of work. However, a wide gap seems to exist in the expectations and perceptions of both institutions and industries, probably as a result of poor understanding of the indices of collaboration. Uwalaka (2012) noted that many graduates from Nigerian institutions are not qualified for employment in the world of work. This is linked to lack of practical experiences caused by insufficient facilities as well as poor communication between school and industry. Several tertiary institutions in Nigeria and in Imo State in particular lack the facilities required to help the students practice the practical aspects of the theories they receive. The problem of ill equipped laboratories and workshops result in poor skill acquisition and limit learners towards job performance. This therefore calls for Business education to encourage and actively be involved in industry collaboration in order to improve business education programme for capacity building. This study therefore sought to determine how business education programme can be improved through school- industry collaboration programme for capacity building among tertiary institutions in Imo State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the strategies for improving business education programme through industry collaboration for capacity building in Imo State. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. the effectiveness of industry collaboration programme in business education programme.
2. the challenges of industry collaboration in business education.

Research Question

The Following research questions guided the study

1. How effective are the available school-industry collaboration programmes in business education?
2. What are the challenges of industry collaboration in business education programme?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business education lecturers on the effectiveness of available school- industry collaboration in business education programme.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business education lecturers on the challenges of school-industry collaboration to business education programme.



Methods

The study adopted a survey research design which involved gathering data through the use of questionnaire. The population of the study consisted of 41 business education lecturers from the tertiary Institutions in Imo State. Structured questionnaire with four response options of Very Effective (VE) Effective (E) Moderately Effective (ME) and Ineffective (IE) The instrument was validated by experts in the field of study. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was used to test the reliability of the instrument and a coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. The researcher with the help of two research assistants administered and collected the instrument from the respondents.

The data collected for the study were analyzed using the arithmetic mean to answer the research questions and t-test statistics to test the hypothesis. Any item whose mean score was 2.50 and above was accepted while any item with the mean below 2.50 was considered as ineffective and therefore was rejected.

Results

The results of data obtained from the respondents are shown below:

Research Question One

How effective are the available industry collaboration programmes available for business education programme for capacity building in Imo State?

Table 1: Means ratings of business educators on the effectiveness of school industry collaboration programme available to business education programme for capacity building in Imo State (N =41)

S/N	Items on effective available programmes	X	SD	Decision
1.	Career exploration activities	2.29	0.62	Ineffective
2.	Student industrial work experience	2.51	0.84	Effective
3.	Work study programmes	2.40	0.73	Ineffective
4.	Occupational orientation programmes	2.52	1.09	Effective
5.	Field trips and exclusion programmes	2.30	0.57	Ineffective
6.	Teaching practice programmes	2.58	1.14	Effective
7.	Industrial workshop conferences and seniors	2.43	0.75	Ineffective
8.	Vacation jobs	2.39	0.51	Ineffective
9.	School Partnership programmes with NGO's	2.45	0.62	Ineffective
10.	Assessable grants to students	2.23	0.42	Ineffective
11.	Scholarship funds to students	2.46	1.93	Ineffective

Data contained in table 1 shows three items with a mean of 2.50 and above. This is an indication that the respondents considered the three items as effective. While the remaining eight items had a mean score below 2.50 which indicates that the items were considered ineffective by the respondents.

Research Question Two

What are the challenges of industry collaboration in business education programme?



Table 2: Mean rating of Business educators on the challenges of school industry collaboration in business education programme for capacity building in Imo State

S/N	Items on Challenges to school Industry Collaboration	X	SD	Decision
1.	Poor academic Performance of students	2.62	0.41	Agreed
2.	Disruption of Academic Calendar by frequent industry action	2.81	0.38	Agreed
3.	Short contact period available to SIWES	2.51	0.48	Agreed
4.	Poor attitude of students on SIWES	2.63	0.33	Agreed
5.	Poor attitude of students of Teaching Practice	2.78	0.20	Agreed
6.	Poor follow up activities by business education	2.55	0.62	Agreed
7.	Wrong placement of students in industries	2.81	0.28	Agreed
8.	Lack of experienced liaison officer to supervise students	3.21	0.33	Agreed
9.	Poor communication between schools and industries	2.90	0.66	Agreed
10.	Lack of information on the current and available school industry	3.51	0.26	Agreed
11	Lack of occupation orientation programmes	2.92	0.43	Agreed

Data contained in table 2 shows the eleven items with a mean of 2.5 0 and above. This is an indication that the respondents considered the items as challenges of school industry collaboration in business education programme for capacity building in Imo state.

Results of Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business education lecturers on the effectiveness of available school-industry collaboration in business education programme.

The result of the comparison is shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: t test analysis of mean differences in the mean responses of business educators on the available school-industry collaboration in business education programme.

Respondents	No.	X	SD	DF	Standard Error	T-cal	P -value	Lev	Decision
Male business educators	15	2.50	0.60	148	0.15521	-0.53	0.349	0.05	Not Sig
Female business educators	26	2.57	0.71						

The Data in Table 3 show a t calculated value of - 0.53 with a degree of freedom of 148 and P value of 0 .349 which is greater than 0.05. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business education lecturers on the available school industry collaboration required to improve business education programme for capacity building in Imo State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business education lecturers on the challenges of school-industry collaboration in business education programme.

The result of the comparison is shown in Table 4 below:



Table 4: t- test analysis of mean differences in the mean responses of business educators on the challenges of school-industry collaboration in business education programme.

Respondents	No.	X	SD	DF	Standard Error	T-cal	P Value	Lev	Decision
Male business educators	15	2.21	0.70	148	0.15521	-0.53	0.349	0.05	Not Sig
Female business educators	26	2.29	0.78						

The Data in Table 4 show a t- calculated value of - 0.53 with a degree of freedom of 148 and P value of 0.349 which is greater than 0.05. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business education lecturers on the challenges of school industry collaboration in business education programme.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the analysis showed that the majority of school industry programmes available to business education program were considered ineffective. Such programmes like, work study programme, vacation jobs, research partnership grants, among others. The findings are in agreement with the study of Nwosu and Ojo (2014) which stated that school industry collaboration that results in quality and skilled students have not been given adequate and required attention in business education programme and therefore there are no serious linkages between the schools and the industries for effective partnership. The study also revealed that there were several challenges to effective school industry programmes available to business education programme for capacity building in the tertiary institutions in Imo state. The findings relate to the findings of Eze (2016) that identified several challenges like; short contact period available to SIWES, disruption of academic calendar by frequent industrial action, among others as hindrances to effective school industry program. The two hypotheses tested were upheld indicating that the respondent were of the same view and shows that they agreed that business education programme can be improved through school-industry collaboration for capacity building.

Conclusion

School- industry collaboration programmes aims at solving the problems of lack of required skills which leads to unemployment. The deplorable state of teaching facilities, poor communication between institutions current and available school industry collaboration programmes, poor attitude of students to SIWES, poor follow up activities. From the findings of this study, institutions should partner with the industries to help students acquire practical skills of the theories learnt in schools avoid producing half baked graduates who are not relevant and competent in the world of work. The study therefore concluded that school industry collaboration should be encouraged towards improving business education programmes for capacity building.



Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. School industry collaboration should be strengthened by school management to increase students practical skills needed in the world of work.
2. Liaison offices for industries should be established in every higher Institution to bridge the communication gap between schools and industries.
3. Seminars and works should be organized from time to time to educate students and business education lecturers on the current school industry collaboration programmes in existence.

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