



SELF- MANAGEMENT AND PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS REQUIRED OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION FOR JOB PERFORMANCE IN AN ORGANIZATION

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Abstract

The study sought to assess the problem solving and self management skills required of business education students for job performance in colleges of education in South East, Nigeria. It adopts the descriptive survey design. Two research questions and two hypotheses tested at .05 level of significance were used. Population consisted of 147 Business Educators in public colleges of education in South East, Nigeria. A validated questionnaire with reliability coefficients of 0.78 was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses. Based on the data analysis, it was found that the itemized problem solving skills and self management skills were required by business education students for job performance in an organisation. The findings of the study showed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business education lecturers on the identified problem solving skills and self management skills required of business education students for job performance in an organisation. Recommendations were made among which include; business education lecturers should expose business education students to activities that will enable them develop these skills so as to perform well in any organisation they found themselves and also retain their jobs in this competitive society, curriculum planners should integrate the problem solving skills and self management skills in business education curriculum at colleges of education level so that students will learn these skills for job performance in any organisation they found themselves after graduation.

Keywords: *Self-management skills, Problem solving skills, Business Education, Job Performance, Organisation*



Introduction

Education is a basic necessity of life and an important factor which brings about changes both individually and nationally. It is the key for positive change in the society because of its far reaching effects on growth and development in all sectors of the economy. Education and training becomes very useful tools in preparing the individuals to realize his/her potential, contribute to the development of his/her personality and provide skills and knowledge that would raise output and generate income (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

Business education is a component of vocational and technical education programme that prepares an individual for career in business and also to be an intelligent consumer of economic goods and services. Business education provides students with needed competencies, skills, knowledge, understanding and attitude to perform as workers in industries, civil service and also proprietors of business. Onokpanu (2016) posited that business education is that aspect of general education that prepares students for employment and advancement in a broad range of office occupations, accounting profession, marketing occupations, teaching profession and entrepreneurship venture. It is also a type of education that helps someone to learn the facts, acquire the skills, develop abilities, solve problems and be able to have business like attitudes useful for success in business situations (Emeasoba, 2017). It is an important part of general education which emphasises skills acquisition for office use. For a business educator to perform maximally in an organization he needs to acquire certain skills such as communication skills, self management skills, technology skills, problem solving skills among others.

Self-management skill is the ability to effectively manage your emotions, thoughts, and behaviours in different situations which includes; managing stress, delaying gratification, motivating yourself, and setting and working toward personal and academic goals. Self-management encompasses a very broad range of skills, qualities, attitudes and experience. It can include some or all of the following: being able to analyse your situation, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, identifying resources and sources of support, managing your time, adopting attitudes that support your aims, taking a solution-focused approach to managing problems, managing your own emotions, coping when in distress, managing change, uncertainty and confusion. Self management skills refer to steps, strategies and skills that individual can use towards the achievement of goal (Gomez, 2017). It consists of



self observation, self goal setting, judgement, following systematic steps, considering one's inner voice, and accepting responsibility for one's decision (Linman, 2011). Self management strategies help in restructuring the work/ environment, increase self motivation, facilitate behaviours that contribute to the achievement of performance standards.

On the other hand, problem solving skills are highly sought after by employers as many companies rely on their employees to identify and solve problems. It is among the most important skill students must have when they start life after graduation. In this 21st century, one of the objectives of education is raising individuals, who can apply the information they learn to solve problems, develop strategies, and transfer their knowledge. Problem solving abilities are important skills for educational area because a healthy society or a healthy nation can only maintain its existence through adopting themselves into new conditions by problem solving abilities (Incebacat & Ersoy, 2016). Problem solving is the ability to solve problems and make decisions in a huge asset to employers; ability to effectively plan and organise creative thinking, innovative and inventive and are more likely to devise new ways of doing things that add value to the work environment; thinking critically and logically to evaluate situations , solve problems and make decisions. Saygili (2017) noted that problem solving is a process of moving toward a goal when the path to the goal is uncertain. Saygili further explained that in order to be effective at problem solving one is likely to need some other key skills, which include: creativity, researchable skills because defining and solving problem often requires research, team work skills, emotional intelligence, risk management and Decision. Cai and Lester (2010) also noted that problem solving process is a complex process that requires many skills to be used together. The elements of this process were understanding the problem, choosing the necessary information among the given choices, and reaching the solution after performing the necessary operations. On the other hand, Saygili (2017) noted that the stages of effective problem solving include the following:

- i. Problem identification: This stage involves detecting and recognizing that there is a problem, identifying the nature of the problem and defining the problem.
- ii. Structuring the problem: This involves careful observation, inspection, fact finding and developing a clear picture of the problem and to increase understanding.



- iii. Looking for possible solutions. At this stage possible courses of action is being generated by letting each person in the group express their views on possible solution.
- iv. Making a Decision: This stage involves careful analysis of the different possible courses of action and then selecting the best solution for implementation.
- v. Implementation: This involves accepting and carrying out the chosen course of action.
- vi. Monitoring/seeking feedback: This stage involves reviewing the outcomes of problem solving over a period of time and seeking feedback as to the success of the outcomes of the chosen solution.

Abazou (2016) in the same vein noted that the problem solving skills involve identification of the problem, defining the main element of the problem, examining the possible solutions, acting on the resolving problem and looking for lessons to learn. These skills can effectively lead to efficiency in job performance in an organization. Gomez (2017) also explained that problem solving skills involves the ability to identify problems, look at them objectively, decide based on facts, develop practical and creative solutions, and follow a process to solve them without being overwhelmed by them or being dependent on others to solve them. Even the hardest problems can be solved with the right mindset and working systematically towards a solution. Therefore, problem solving skills involves identification of problems and being able to profer solutions to the problems.

Job performance assesses whether a person performs a job well. It is the assessment of whether an employee has done their job well. It's an individual evaluation one measured based on a single person's effort. Greenberg and Baron (2008) described job performance as an individual level of variables, or something a single person does. This differentiates it from more encompassing constructs such as organizational performance or national performance which are higher variables. Job performance is simply the measurement of an employee's behaviour which will impact on organizational performance. Alamdar, Muhammad, Muhammad and Wasin (2011) believed that employee performance very much depends on perception, values, skills, competencies and attitudes. There is a significant difference between the self-management skills and problem solving skills of male and female students in their job performance. This is supported by Gomez (2017) in his study where his findings stated that individuals exhibit different self management skills in an organization.



The national policy on education places the responsibility of developing in youths and adults relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes for performing operations in business occupations in the hands of business educators through a well-developed and articulated curriculum. The policy also directed the teaching of business education programmes in colleges of education. This is done with the hope that graduates of business education programme would find relevant jobs in the world of work thereby contributing meaningfully to the economic development of their society and to ensure employability of youths and adults in business education. Thus, the present study will investigate the self-management and problem solving skills required of business education students in colleges of education for job performance in South East Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Self-management skill helps one to effectively manage his emotions, thoughts, and behaviours in different situations which includes managing stress, delaying gratification, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward personal and academic goals while problem solving skills is the ability to solve problems and make decisions in a huge asset to employers; effectively plan and organise, being innovative and inventive, being able to devise new ways of doing things that add value to the work environment; thinking critically and logically to evaluate situations, solve problems and make decisions.

In recent times, industries are demanding skilled labour force in view of increasing and emerging technological practices. Employers of labour often complain that some of these graduates though professionally or technically qualified are unemployable, in that they lack the requisite, essential skills or competencies needed in the job for sustainable employment. These skills create a gap in their knowledge which must be filled to make them suitable to compete for few, existing vacancies that crop up from time to time. This signifies that, business education students are not receiving the type of education that will prepare them for life in a competitive world that demands innovation, creativity and critical thinking. In addition, this development has equally diminished the chances of students of business education being employed in emerging industries as well as hindering the acquisition of employability skills for futuristic needs. In order to meet this challenges, the students must be trained and developed to acquire new but improved life-long skills and knowledge such as self-management and problem solving skills among others. This study is therefore poised to look at the required self management and problem



solving skills for business education students to enable them compete favourably in the labour market.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the problems solving skills required of business education students in colleges of education for job performance?
2. What are the self-management skills required of business education students in colleges of education for job performance?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business education lecturers on problem-solving skills required of business education students in colleges of education for job performance.
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business education lecturers on self-management skills required of business education for job performance.

Method

The descriptive survey research was used in this study. The population of the study was 147 comprised of all lecturers of business education at public colleges of education in South East, Nigeria. No sample was used because the population is not large. A four point response type of Highly Required, Moderately Required, Slightly Required and Not Required questionnaire with two sections and 22 items were used. The instrument was validated by experts in business education and measurement and evaluation from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. Test-re-test method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained using pearson product moment correlation coefficient. Data were collected by researcher and research assistant. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions. The decision was based under the principle of upper and lower limit of the mean thus.

3.50	4.00	Highly Required
2.50	3.49	Moderately Required
1.50	2.49	Slightly Required
1.00	1.49	Not Required



When the mean value of an item was 2.50 and above it was regarded as required and below 2.50 was regarded as not required. t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis will be upheld if the calculated value is less than the significant level of 0.05 and rejected if the calculated value is equal to or greater than the significant level of 0.05.

Results

Research Question 1

What are the problem solving skills required of business education students in colleges of education for job performance in an organization?

Table 1: Mean responses of lecturers of business education on the problem solving skills required of business education students in colleges of education for job performance in an organization?

S/N	Items Statement: The Problem Solving Skills Required of Business Education Students in Colleges of Education for Job Performance.	Respondents				Mean	SD	Decision
		H R	M R	S R	N R			
1.	Being able to identify a problem	97	37	10	3	3.55	0.71	HR
2.	Ability to understand the problem.	104	33	6	4	3.61	0.70	HR
3.	Ability to determine the technicalities in solving a problem..	70	63	9	5	3.35	0.75	MR
4.	Being innovative in solving problems.	7	20	40	80	1.69	0.75	SR
5.	Having analytical thinking towards situations.	63	72	8	4	3.32	0.70	MR
6.	Being able to gather resources to solve problems.	2	10	60	75	1.59	0.68	SR
7.	Ability to make quick decisions to solve a problem.	65	68	8	6	3.31	0.76	MR
8.	Acquiring the necessary researching skills.	52	70	15	10	3.12	0.85	MR
9.	Ability to analyse a situation.	65	68	8	6	3.31	0.76	MR
10.	Being active for people to depend on you	8	17	72	50	1.88	0.81	SR
11.	Ability to recognise the emotions of yourself and others.	5	9	70	63	1.70	0.73	SR
Grand Mean/Standard Deviation						2.77	0.75	Required



From table 1, it is apparent that all the eleven items are the problems solving skills required of business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria for job performance with a cluster mean of 2.77. Items 1 and 2 which is being able to identify a problem and ability to understand the problem were rated highly required. Item 4, 6, 10 and 11 which is being innovative in solving problems, being able to gather resources to solve problems, being active for people to depend on you and ability to recognize the emotions of yourself and others were rated somewhat required. The rest items were rated moderately required. From the mean rating of above 2.50, the problems- solving skills moderately required of business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria for job performance are being able to identify a problem, ability to understand the problem, ability to determine the technicalities in solving a problem, being innovative in solving problems, having analytical thinking towards situations, being able to gather resources to solve problems, ability to make quick decisions to solve a problem, and ability to analyse a situation. Their standard deviation had a range from 0.68 to 0.85 which is low showed homogeneity and a little spread in the response.

Research Question Two

What are the self-management skills required of business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria for job performance?

Table 2: Mean rating on the self-management skills required of business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria for job performance.

S/N	Questions	Respondents						
		HR	MR	SR	NR	Mean	SD	Decision
12.	To manage stress.	2	10	60	75	1.59	0.68	SR
13.	Display confidence in oneself.	97	40	6	4	3.57	0.70	HR
14.	Exhibit integrity.	105	27	8	7	3.57	0.80	HR
15.	Ability to manage time.	80	40	20	7	3.31	0.88	MR
16.	To be self motivated.	70	63	9	5	3.35	0.75	MR
17.	Willingness to learn for upgrading.	5	9	70	63	1.70	0.73	SR
18.	To exhibit honesty	104	33	6	4	3.61	0.70	HR
19.	To make sound decisions.	80	40	20	7	3.31	0.88	MR
20.	Exhibit self control.	72	50	17	8	3.27	0.87	MR
21.	Working without supervision.	75	60	10	2	3.42	0.64	MR
22.	Being prepared to work at any time.	7	20	40	80	1.69	0.75	SR
Grand Mean/Standard Deviaton					2.95	0.76	Required	



From table 2 above, it is apparent that all the eleven items are the self-management skills required of business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria for job performance with a cluster mean of 2.95. Items 13, 18 and 21 which are display confidence in oneself, to exhibit honesty and workings without supervision were rated to be highly required. Items 12, 17 and 22 which are to manage stress, willingness to learn for upgrading and being prepared to work at any time were affirmed to be slightly required. The rest of the items were rated to be moderately required. From the mean rating of above 2.50, the self-management skills moderately required of business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria for job performance are to manage stress, display confidence in oneself, exhibit integrity, ability to manage time, to be self-motivated, to exhibit honesty, to make sound decisions, working without supervision, exhibit self-control and being prepared to work at any time. Their standard deviation had a range from 0.64 to 0.88 which is low showing homogeneity and a little spread in the response.

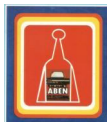
Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female respondents with respect to problem-solving skills required of business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria for job performance.

Table 3: *t*-test analysis of mean differences in the mean ratings between the mean scores of male and female respondents with respect to problem-solving skills required of business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria for job performance.

Pair	N	Mean	Sd	Df	t cal	t crit	Decision
Male	52	2.8991					
			0.49234	145	0.355	1.654	Accept Ho
Female	95	2.8464					

The data in Table 3 reveal a *t*-calculated value 0.35 which is less than *t*-critical value of 1.65. It implies that we retain the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents with respect to problem-solving skills required of business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria for job performance.



Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female respondents with respect to self-management skills required of business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria for job performance.

Table 4: *t-test analysis of mean differences in the mean ratings between the mean scores of male and female respondents with respect to self-management skills required of business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria for job performance.*

Pair	N	Mean	Sd	Df	t cal	t crit	Decision
Male	52	2.8864	0.45260	145	0.466	1.654	Accept Ho
Female	95	2.8227					

The data in table 4 reveal a t- calculated value 0.466 which is less than t-critical value of 1.654. It implies that we retain the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents with respect to self-management skills required of business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria for job performance.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that problem solving skills are required of business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria for job performance in an organization. The skills are being able to identify a problem, ability to understand the problem, ability to determine the technicalities in solving a problem, being innovative in solving problems, having analytical thinking towards situations, being able to gather resources to solve problems, ability to make quick decisions to solve a problem, ability to analyse a situation, being active for people to depend on you and ability to recognise the emotions of yourself and others. This is in line with the findings of Saygili (2017) who noted that problem solving skills as creativity, researchable skills, team work skills, emotional intelligence, risk management; decision making skills among others are required in any organization for performance standards.

Furthermore, the study indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers irrespective of gender on the problem-solving skills required of business education students in public colleges of education for job performance.



Findings of the study reveal that self-management skills are required of business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria for job performance. These skills are to manage stress, display confidence in oneself, exhibit integrity, ability to manage time, to be self motivated, to exhibit honesty, to make sound decisions, working without supervision, exhibit self control and being prepared to work at any time. The findings of the current study are consistent with the finding of Gomez (2017) which stated that self management skills help in restructuring the work/study environment, increase self motivation, facilitate behaviours that contribute to the achievement of performance standards.

The study also indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers irrespective of gender on the self-management skills required of business education students in public colleges of education for job performance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that problem solving skills and self management skills are good general indicators of a person's employability competencies required for job performance in an organisation. These skills help in structuring the work/study environment, increase self-motivation, and facilitate behaviors that contribute to the achievement of performance standards.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, it is recommended that

1. Business education lecturers should expose business education students to activities that will enable them develop problem solving and self management skills so as to perform well in any organisation they found themselves and also retain their jobs in this competitive society.
2. Curriculum planners should integrate the problem solving skills and self management skills in business education curriculum at colleges of education level so that students will learn these skills for job performance in any organisation they found themselves after graduation.
3. Only qualified business educators should be employed at all levels to teach in business education programmes.



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