



UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE PROVISION OF LEARNERS SUPPORT RESOURCES IN BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA, NIGERIA

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Abstract

In order to execute this study, three research questions were answered and three null hypotheses were tested. Descriptive survey design was adopted. The entire population of 234 business education students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka were studied without sampling. A four point rating scale questionnaire containing 20 items was used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which yielded coefficients of 0.91, 0.76 and 0.84 for the different clusters with an overall coefficient of 0.84. The researchers administered the instrument with the help of four research assistants to the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance using SPSS 23.0. Findings of the study revealed that undergraduate students perceived that guidance and counselling and feedback support resources were not provided but library support resources were provided in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The study also discovered that respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the provision of guidance and counselling as well as library support resources but differ significantly on feedback support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka based on their gender. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that guidance and counselling as well as feedback support resources are needed in business education programme in order to equip students with good decision-making and life-long learning skills to overcome unexpected barriers on their academic and career aspirations in the university. It was recommended among others that, Business Education Department and university counsellors should work together towards ensuring that undergraduate business education students are weekly scheduled for counselling sessions in order to identified and provide solutions to their needs and challenges in the university **Keywords:** *Business education, educational resources and learners support resources*



Introduction

A comprehensive university education programme prepares students' for the challenges of their future professional careers and endeavours in the labour market. The educational programmes offered in universities are advanced and tailored to the requirements of the corporate world. Globally, there is a clarion call for the movement of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programmes to Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) in universities for students to become active innovators through creative ideas from hands-on teaching and learning experiences. One then wonder, why Education, which is the mother of all disciplines is relegated to the background among mainstream courses in tertiary institutions. Perhaps, this ugly reality may be responsible for the lukewarm attitude of past and present Nigerian governments towards effective funding of faculty-based education programmes in her tertiary institutions.

One of such faculty-based education programmes in Nigerian tertiary institutions is business education. Remarkably, business education programmes which is not one of the glamorous courses of study in Nigeria is built on making its recipients become job creators, wealth providers, workplace ICT consultants, entrepreneurs of small and medium enterprises and executive managers of business entities (Nwazor & Onokpaunu, 2016). As depicted by Ugwoke (2011), business education is a work-focused, skill-based, result-oriented and technology-based programme. Business education programme is expensive and demands the use of modern educational resources to keep students in tune with current developments of the business world. One of the theories of vocational and technical education, which business education is a part of, posited that the tools, equipment and facilities with which the learner is trained must be a replica of machinery used in the workplace (Akpan, 2010). Similarly, Bongotons and Onyenwe (2010) stated that one of the implementation pillars of a successful business education programme is laid on the availability and adequacy of educational resources.

Conceptually, resources are inputs and outputs materials used for achieving stated goals and objectives. In the context of education, Abayomi (2009) stated that resources are pieces of information or evidence, an activity or idea or a combination of human and instructional materials that enables a learner to learn, think, feel and create. Educational or instructional resources according to Ugwuanyi and Eze (2008), are those basic requirements that aid and facilitate effective school teaching



and learning. In business education programme, educational resources include business educators, support staff, instructors, technologists, typing laboratories, shorthand studios, model offices, classroom and library as well as equipment (Onyesom, 2013). However, one important aspect of instructional resources that enable students to adjust to the psychological, physical and educational demands of tertiary education is learners support resources.

Learners support resources are human and non-human materials that provides scaffolding incentives for the cognitive, affective and psychomotor development of students in educational institutions. Learners support resources are part and parcel of educational institutional systems that controls the pre-admission, admission, instructional activities and graduation stages of a student's years of academic journey in any tertiary institution. According to Michubu, Nyerere and Kyalo (2017), learners support services are those resources that make the learner's academic life more effective and comfortable. These support resources are put in place to ensure that students have a sense of direction and purpose in their educational endeavours in tertiary institutions. Ipaye in Patrick and Iherjirika (2012) opined that, the main reason for the establishment of learners support resources in educational institutions is to provide a warm, and supportive atmosphere for learners so as to enable them develop self-confidence in order to achieve tangible success in their individual academic and life-longengagements.

One can therefore infer that, learners support resources are supportive apparatus made available for students to experience a stress-free learning environment capable of facilitating academic success. Collectively, Amini (2012) asserted that learners' support system encompasses the provision of counselling services, library services, media resources centre, feedback services, orientation, study guide or kits services, face-to-face tutoring and administrative support services. In another note, Michubu, Nyerere and Kyalo (2017) categorized learner support systems, structures or resources into student advisory services and non-academic services. Student advisory services include academic advising, guidance and counselling, financial advisory services and professional services among others. While, non-academic services are school social work services, tutorial/special education services, medical and dentistry services and accommodation service.

From the aforementioned learners support resources, the study is delimited to guidance and counselling support resources, library support resources and feedback



support resources. The word, guidance and counselling according to Nweze and Okolie (2014), have been used either individually or synonymously by various authors. Guidance and counselling according to Akpan (2010), is an educational service that seeks to provide students with the opportunity to obtain holistic educational development for more functional and productive life. Guidance and counselling support resources are provided to help business education students make the right choices that would not jeopardize their educational aspirations.

Although, the university provides solace for students to express their freedom without parental guidance, it is also a good place to acquire scholarly competencies. The only place in a university where students and educators as well as information users can obtain updated academic and non-academic information for teaching, learning, research and entertainment purposes is the library. Correspondingly, Gakuu (2013) averred that library support resources assist students from under-privileged backgrounds to cope with mainstream courses, provides a separate and safe space for addressing learning difficulties, help them acquire reading and writing skills and also helps in clarifying key concepts and elements of instructional materials.

The gathering of knowledge by undergraduate business education students from consulted library materials can improve their academic performance and retention when there is a feedback channel with business educators and other educators in tertiary institutions. Gakuu (2013) opined that feedback is the type and amount of response students receive from instructors concerning their course work. Similarly, Segoe (2013) asserted that feedback as a learner support resource helps students' to maximize their potentials at different stages of educational development as it explores their awareness of strengths and areas that need improvement. Feedback support resources are important teaching and learning devices in business education programme because they facilitate diagnostic and formative assessment between business educators and students. Hence, Chetwynd and Dobbyn (2011) opined that, effective feedback support resources play a vital role on students' academic development and facilitates the development self-regulating learners.

The life of an undergraduate in a university is full of challenges. It is a place where male and female students strive for academic excellence. Due to the fact that, undergraduate students' comes from different socio-demographic, cultural and economic backgrounds, the provision of learners support resources in universities



cannot be overemphasized. Furthermore, empirical research works on the provision of different forms of educational resources are available in literature but in the context of learners support resources, there seems to be paucity of research works on this regard. It is against this background, that this study sought to ascertain the perception of undergraduate students on the provision of learners support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

What is the perception of undergraduate students on the provision of guidance and counselling support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

What is the perception of undergraduate students on the provision of library support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

What is the perception of undergraduate students on the provision of feedback support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant difference in the mean response of undergraduate students on the provision of guidance and counselling support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka based on their gender

There is no significant difference in the mean response of undergraduate students on the provision of library support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka based on their gender

There is no significant difference in the mean response of undergraduate students on the provision of feedback support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka based on their gender

Method

A descriptive survey design was employed for the study. The study was conducted in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka located in Awka South Local Government Area.



The entire population of 234 business education students in 100 and 400 level of 2019/20 academic sessions were studied without sampling. A structured and face-validated questionnaire titled “Perception of Provision of Learners Support Resources (PPLSR) was used for data collection. The questionnaire contained 20 items on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with assigned weight of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. A pilot test was conducted to establish the internal consistency of the instrument by administering it to 30 undergraduate business education students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State who were not part of the study. The data collected were analyzed using Cronbach alpha to obtain reliability coefficients of 0.91, 0.76 and 0.84 for the different clusters with an overall coefficient of 0.84. The researchers administered the instrument to the respondents with the help of four research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' views. Decisions on the research questions were based on the grand mean in relations to the real limits of numbers. Therefore, items with mean ratings of 1.00 - 1.49 are rated Strongly Disagree, those with 1.50 - 2.49 are Disagree (D), items with mean ratings of 2.50 - 3.49 are rated Agree (A) and those with 3.50 - 4.00 are rated Strongly Agree (SA). In testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance, t-test was used. A hypothesis was accepted where the p-value is equal to or greater than the alpha level of 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), at a degree of freedom; otherwise, the null hypothesis was rejected. The analysis was carried out using SPSS version 23.0.

Results

The result of the study are presented and analyzed in the following tables.

Research Question 1

What is the perception of undergraduate students on the provision of guidance and counselling support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Data collected in respect to this research question were analyzed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: *Mean and standard deviation of respondents on provision of guidance and counselling support resources in business education programme*



S/N	Students' perception on the provision of guidance and counselling support resources	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Guidance and counselling support resources are provided for business education students on how to personally adjust to life in the university	1.10	0.83	Strongly Disagree
2	Guidance and counselling support resources are provided for business education students on how to handle course workload	1.26	0.89	Strongly Disagree
3	Guidance and counselling support resources are provided for business education students on how to prepare for examinations	2.07	0.86	Disagree
4	Guidance and counselling support resources are provided for business education students with special learning needs in the university	1.04	0.80	Strongly Disagree
5	Guidance and counselling support resources are provided for sexually abuse business education students in the university	1.06	0.84	Strongly Disagree
6	Guidance and counselling support resources are provided for students on how to select appropriate area of specialization in business education	1.58	0.89	Disagree
7	Guidance and counselling support resources are provided for business education students on the transition of one year of study to another	1.22	0.89	Strongly Disagree
Weighted Average		3.56	0.52	Strongly Agreed

Data in Table 1 shows that out of seven items listed on guidance and counselling support resources, the respondents strongly disagree that five items (item 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7) were provided with mean ratings ranging from of 1.06 to 1.26. The remaining two items (item 3 and 6) were disagree by respondents with a mean rating of 1.58 and 2.07. The cluster mean score of 1.33 means undergraduate students perceived that guidance and counselling support resources were not provided in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their ratings.

Research Question 2

What is the perception of undergraduate students on the provision of library support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka? Data collected in respect to this research question were analyzed and the results are presented in Table 2.



Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of respondents on provision of library support resources in business education programme

S/N	Students' perception on the provision of library support resources	Mean	SD	Remark
8	Students are provided with updated materials relevant to business education in the university library	3.86	0.29	Strongly Agree
9	Students are provided with online business education learning materials in the university library	3.02	0.29	Agree
10	Business education students are provided with lending services in the university library	3.96	0.72	Strongly Agree
11	Business education students with special learning needs are provided with assistive learning materials in the university library	1.15	0.55	Strongly Disagree
	Business education students are provided with 2.77 referral services in the university library	2.77	0.22	Agree
	Business education students are provided with 1.90 consultancy services in the university library	1.90	0.68	Disagree
	Business education students are provided with book reservation services in the university library	1.68	0.37	Disagree
Weighted Average		2.62		Strongly Agreed

Data in Table 2 shows that out of seven items listed on library support resources, the respondents strongly agree that two items (item 8 and 10) were provided with mean ratings of 3.86 and 3.96 and agree that two items (item 9 and 12) were provided with mean ratings of 2.77 and 3.02. The respondents strongly disagree that one item (item with a mean rating of 1.15 and disagree that two items (item 13 and 14) were provided with mean ratings of 1.68 and 1.90. The cluster mean score of 2.62 means undergraduate students perceived that library support resources were provided in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their ratings.

Research Question 3

What is the perception of undergraduate students on the provision of feedback support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Data collected in respect to this research question were analyzed and the results are presented in Table 3.



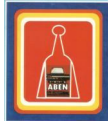
Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of respondents on provision of feedback support resources in business education programme

S/N	Students' perception on the provision of feedback support resources	Mean	SD	Remark
	Detailed feedback comments are provided on business education students' assignments in the university	1.36	1.02	Strongly Disagree
	Prompt feedback comments are provided on business education students' term papers in the university	1.18	0.56	Strongly Disagree
	Corrective feedback support resources are provided on business education students' assignments in the university	3.24	0.93	Agree
	Self-explanatory feedback support resources are provided for business education students with special learning needs	2.20	0.65	Disagree
	Two way communication channel between business educators and students are provided in the university	3.31	0.87	Agree
	Students are provided with clear criteria for assessing their academic performance in business education courses in the university	2.73	1.09	Agree
	Weighted Average	2.28		Disagree

Data in Table 3 shows that out of six items listed on feedback support resources, the respondents disagree that one item (item 18) and strongly disagree that two items (item 15 and 16) were provided with mean ratings of 2.20, 1.36 and 1.18. The respondents agree that the remaining three items (item 17, 19 and 20) were provided with mean ratings ranging from 2.73 to 3.31. The cluster mean score of 2.28 means undergraduate business education students perceived that feedback support resources were not provided in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their ratings.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean response of undergraduate students on the provision of guidance and counselling support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka based on their gender



This null hypothesis was tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis of male and female undergraduate students on the provision of guidance and counselling support resources in business education programme

Gender	N	X	SD	df	p-value	Decision
Male	108	52.06	8.31	232	.226	Not Significant
Female	126	82.43	10.94			

Table 4 shows that the p-value of .226 at 232 degree of freedom is greater than the alpha value of 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). This means that the respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the perceived provision of guidance and counselling support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka as a result of gender. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2

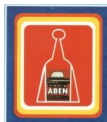
There is no significant difference in the mean response of undergraduate students on the provision of library support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka based on their gender

This null hypothesis was tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary of t-test analysis of male and female undergraduate students on the provision of library support resources in business education programme

Gender	N	X	SD	df	p-value	Decision
Male	108	70.06	11.16	232	.394	Not Significant
Female	126	93.31	15.02			

Table 5 shows that the p-value of .394 at 232 degree of freedom is greater than the alpha value of 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). This means that the respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the perceived provision of library support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka as a result of gender. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.



Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the mean response of undergraduate students on the provision of feedback support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka based on their gender

This null hypothesis was tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of t-test analysis of male and female undergraduate students on the provision of feedback support resources in business education programme

Gender	N	X	SD	df	p-value	Decision
Male	108	43.60	5.91	232	.00	Significant
Female	126	59.01	7.48			

Table 6 shows that the p-value of .00 at 232 degree of freedom is lesser than the alpha value of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). This means that the respondents differ significantly in their mean ratings on the perceived provision of feedback support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka as a result of gender. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study revealed that undergraduate students perceived that guidance and counselling support resources are not provided in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The outcome of this study also agrees with the finding of Ozioko (2014) that guidance and counselling support resources are not provided to cater for students' personal and social challenges in universities. More so, the study disclosed that respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the perceived provision of guidance and counselling support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka based on their gender. This implies that undergraduate business education students are not given comprehensive guidance and counselling supports to handle the demands of the programme as well as their personal and academic challenges in the university. The non-significant difference in the mean ratings of undergraduate students on the provision of guidance and counselling support resources in business education programme on the basis of their gender is consistent with the study of Michubu, Nyerere and Kyalo (2017) which reported that universities have guidance and counselling units that does not provide quality services to undergraduate students.



Also, the study disclosed that undergraduate students perceived that library support resources were provided in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. This finding tallies with that of Eze and Uzoigwe (2013) which reported that university libraries in Nigeria provide a variety of library support services for undergraduate students. More so, respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the perceived provision of library support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka based on their gender. This implies that undergraduate business education students have access to updated learning materials of business education in the library without any restrictions. The outcome of this study is in line with the discovery of Okeodion and Anaehobi (2014) which reported that interlibrary services, document delivery, reference services and lending services were provided for undergraduate students in Nigerian universities. The availability of library support resources will go a long in improving undergraduate students' academic performance and retention in business education.

Outcome of the study indicated that undergraduate students perceived that feedback support resources were not provided in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The finding is in line with the discovery of Nakpodia (2010) who reported that students lack effective feedback support services from their teachers. The non-provision of feedback support resources as perceived by undergraduate students in business education programme is in agreement with the study of Patrick and Ihejirika (2012) which reported that feedback on assignments are often delayed and always given during or after examination has been conducted. More so, the study disclosed that respondents differ significantly in their mean ratings on the perceived provision of feedback support resources in business education programme in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka based on their gender. This finding could be attributed to the difference in the self-esteem level of male and female undergraduate students.

Conclusion

Clearly, learners' support resources are given underrated status in educational institutions but they contribute immensely to the general effectiveness of teaching and learning activities of educators and students. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that guidance and counselling as well as feedback support resources are needed in business education programme in order to equip students with good decision-making and life-long learning skills to overcome unexpected barriers on their academic and career aspirations in the university



Recommendations

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

Business Education Department and university counsellors should work together towards ensuring that undergraduate business education students are weekly scheduled for counselling sessions in order to identify and provide solutions to their needs and challenges in the university.

Business educators should apply feedback mechanisms that are timely, participative and collaborative in order to keep their students in touch with necessary information they need to succeed in their academics.

Management of universities should ensure that their libraries are stocked with assistive learning materials that would make undergraduate business education students with special learning needs enjoy the benefits of inclusivity in the university.

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