



INFLUENCE OF PROFESSIONALIZATION IN BUSINESS EDUCATION TOWARDS DEVELOPING STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL ABILITIES IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper empirically investigated the influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students' professional abilities in public universities in South East Nigeria. Two research questions were answered and two null hypotheses were formulated for the study. The researchers adopted a descriptive survey research design for the study. The population of the study comprised of 64 business educators in public universities in South East Nigeria. The entire population were studied and sampled since they were manageable for the study. Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire by the researcher's captioned "influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students' professional abilities (IPBETDSPA). Mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis while z-test was used for testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that professionalization in Business Education influence the development of teaching abilities in students in areas of managing discipline, imparting knowledge, mastering knowledge among others. On the other hand, professionalization influences the development of management abilities in students in line with the ability to interact, work and relate with people among others. It was recommended that business educators should adequately prepare and equip her students with sound professional abilities as it concerns teaching and management abilities to enable them expertly and professionally impart knowledge and as well competently manage human and material resources in organizations and any business outfit under their care.

Keywords: Professionalization, teaching abilities and management abilities.



Introduction

Business Education is a programme of study in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It is aimed at preparing students for teaching and engaging in business activities either as employee or employer. It is a kind of Education that equips students with relevant skills or abilities to fit in the job world. Business Education is an integral programme that gives one opportunity to take up job in different areas of occupation. A business educator can take up a teaching job at any level of education depending on qualifications. Business Education is a branch of Education that involves teaching and learning viable skills and operations or management of the business organizations or industry. This field of education occurs at different levels; secondary and higher institutions. Business Education is a wide array of courses that are meant to teach students of various ages about the fundamental principles of business. This includes lessons on business management, business law, entrepreneurship, economics, marketing, accounting, office technology management, as well as computer courses, web design and many others (Falae, 2017). According to Schell (2018) Business Education programme involves training students in topics relevant to the business world such as accounting and marketing. The author further emphasized that in the 21st century, Business Education involves training students in the softer skills such as leadership. This indicates that Business Education is no longer hinged on just the major options of accounting, marketing and office technology and management. The globalization in education has made Business more professionalized as many business organizations now face competition from around the world and not just from other ventures or enterprises with their locality.

This necessitated that Business Education students ought to be prepared or rather equipped with adequate professional abilities or skills to enable them function in the business world and compete globally. This goes to buttress the importance of inculcating these softer skills, in Business Education programme, leadership, business ethics, and understanding of cultural differences, currency values, different understanding, information technology, personal finance, business law, international business skills, and many others. This is where professionalization plays a very vital role, since Business Education lecturers and students should be professional Business Educators in all ramifications. In other words they are not meant to be found wanting in any skills either major or softer skill as it concerns Business Education.

Profession is simply a job or vocation at which someone works and for which they have under gone training. It is what individuals do to earn a living after a period of training particularly in a formal education level. A profession is an occupation founded upon specialized educational training in a recognized tertiary institution. It is a type of job that requires and obtained through advanced educational training. Profession is a vocation, occupation, job practice that requires mastery of a complex set of knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes, values, and ethics through formal education and practical experience. Similarly Profession an occupation that is dependent upon specialized intellectual study and training for the provision of skilled service to other member of society; government, non-governmental agencies for a definite fee or salary (Dada & Fadokun, 2010). Oyeakan in Adeoye, Oluwole and Oyewumi (2014) stated that a profession is an occupation whose basic



responsibility, public status and expertise are continually strengthened by specialized education and training within a specific period of time. It is a body of experts that provides a special service and exemplary leadership of harmonious survival of their community based on their accumulated knowledge, skills and wisdom. Profession in taxonomic approach was seen as possessing of a diverse range of characteristics differentiating them from other occupations. These characteristics centrally encompassed knowledge and expertise as well as others such as playing a positive part in the society. The emphasis is that taxonomic contributor gave to knowledge and expertise was based on the fact that professions typically had a stronger formal knowledge and higher educational base on training than other occupations (Freidson in Saks, 2012).

Similarly, Webb and Webb in Tapper and (Millet, 2015) considered that a profession is a vocation founded upon specialized educational training, the purpose of which is to supply objectives counsel and counsel and service to others, for a direct and definite compensation, wholly apart from expectation of other business gain. Fareo (2015) asserted that profession is a job that requires special skills or knowledge through special training with high level of education and it utilizes functional education and mental ability rather than manual or physical labour. This further connotes that a profession is a calling that implies acquisition of a full type of knowledge, range of skills, and their applications in service to humanity. The services rendered by professionals may be direct or indirect. Some of the characteristics features of a profession are; it requires extensive training of an intellectual character; its services are vital to society's well being; its practioners usually have a high degree of autonomy in deciding how to carry out their job; practioners usually undergo a process of certification or licensing by the state in order to be eligible to carry out certain tasks or provide certain services. Licensing gives practioners an exclusive legal right to provide those services; and professionals are usually organized in societies for example (ABEN, NAPSON, Agbo & Ekoh-Nweke, 2021). Besnson in Aukett (2017) outlined four distinguishing characteristics which separate a profession from just another job. These includes rules and standards over and above norms required by law; a membership which is independent in thought and outlook but which subordinates its private interest in favour of support for the governing body, disciplinary action if standards are not practiced and leadership. Similarly Oyeneyin in Adeoye et al (2014) highlighted size conditions which an occupation must fulfill to qualify as a profession. Those conditions includes; training, expertise, commitment, responsibility, autonomy and corporations. All the aforementioned goes to buttress the fact that profession is not just mere studying on undergoing training in a particular area but possessing the essential features of the occupational that will significantly distinguish an individual from other professions which marks one as professional in that area of study.

A professional Business Educator is an individual who has or obtained the professional qualification which enables him or her to be employed to lecture or teach in any recognized tertiary institution in Nigeria that offer Business Education programme at different levels and who is physically fit, of sound mind and mentally alert. Being a professional Business Educator simply entails conducting yourself according to the highest standards; giving your best effort in all ramifications as it concerns your profession.



Professional Business Educator means being knowledgeable and enthusiastic about one's job or occupation, creating a supportive and respectful classroom environment, building authentic relationships with and advocating for students, being organized and planning ahead, remaining focused and open to new or innovative ideas and continuing to learn, appreciating diversity and globalization, and making complicated subject matter engaging and understandable for students. According to Jalianne- Hansen (2019), professional teachers maintain the confidence of their students and parents; professional authority and composure in all educational settings, they know their students well enough to be able to modify content when needed, they know their content well, they build authentic relationships with their students and students parents and professional teachers are discerning toward the pedagogy that comes their way. Supporting this, Bedley (2018) highlighted the following on what is a professional Educator;

- Professional educators are value- driven, guided by principles, passion, and a purpose bigger than themselves,
- Professional educators are need analysts; competent to diagnose and prescribe options for educational success and significance,
- They believe their work a vocation and calling rather than an occupation where one merely occupies space,
- They recognized that change is the norm, they are growth –oriented and consider themselves life-long learners and contributors,
- They are climate creators, recognizing that the conditions that surround learning contribute to learning,
- They are catalysts in promoting calculated risks that advance their profession and enable everyone access to success,
- They promote cohesiveness, collaboration, and team-building. They promote a “we are better together” philosophy.
- They create a climate of ownership by ensuring that everyone involved in the educational process is invited to participate,
- They are accountable to their clients, community, parents and students, providing quality educational programme for all children,
- Professional educators belong to an organization that promotes their profession above personal gain.

The aforementioned are what a professional educators and business educators ought to display in performing their professional duties in their various institutions of learning but it was observed that very few of us are performing up to these expectation.

Professionalization simply connotes action or process of giving an occupation, job, or career appropriate training required qualifications both in theory and practice. It is a social process by which any trade, occupation, career, job or discipline transforms itself into a true profession of the highest integrity, competence and standard ethical values through adequate training. In other words, professionalization is a sociological process by which an occupation gains professional status, privileges and ethical principles. Professionalization also entails building into teaching career ethical principles, norms and control device to ensure that the practioners are worthy members of the profession with highest level of integrity. Professionalization describes education training and other training activities obtained in various programmes that transform its recipients' into professionals and as well a social process by which an occupation becomes a e characteristics of high status occupations, which include certifications and accreditations and the existence of professional associations.



Similarly, Harvey (2012-2020) described professionalization as the process of turning an activity into the province of practitioners who regulate or otherwise control the exercise of the activity. The author further explained that professionalization usually involves specifying norms of conduct, ethical principles and qualifications for entry to profession. Oyekan in Adeoye, Oluwole and Oyewumi (2014) defined professionalization as a process involving improvement in the status and practice of the occupation as the practitioners continually upgrade the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for effective and efficient professional practice. This implies that professionalization in Business Education connotes improvement of business skills, knowledge, attitudes and ethical orientations or values which business educators need for good conduct and practice.

Influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing teaching abilities in students cannot be overemphasized since Business Education is aimed at preparing her students as future teachers. Professional business educator is expected to prepare her students with all the rudiments of teaching activities as it concerns Business Education programme. Developing teaching abilities in students is not a mere talk, it involves a business educator that has what it takes to impart effectively. This implies that he must be a professional with adequate training in Business Education that will enable him to deliver the relevant skills, knowledge, and attitudes required by the students. Teaching abilities are simply defined as a group of teaching acts or behaviours intended to facilitate students learning directly or indirectly to ensure competence in teaching and as well develop confidence in teaching. Teaching abilities offers the chance to change other people's lives permanently for the better. This implies that teaching is a responsibility and any slip up is visible. Learner's minds and motivation vary a great deal and business educators have to find many different ways to connect with their students. Teaching is an incredibly rewarding thing to do for professionals, we mean teachers that have passion in their profession. Teaching is the process of attending to people's needs, experiences and feelings, and intervening so that they learn particular things and go beyond the given (Smith, 2018). Teaching abilities simply involves the ability to manage discipline by the teacher that is classroom management; the ability to impart knowledge which is teaching skills and the knowledge to impart that is subject knowledge. For business educators to carry out teaching activities effectively, these mentioned abilities must be appropriately displayed in the classroom since the three abilities are interwoven. Without subject knowledge the business educator will not be able to get it through to the student in her classroom and without discipline or classroom management her class will not give her the attention she needs to be able to use her teaching skills (Aniete, 2021). In line with this, Okoro (2016) asserted that teaching imparts new knowledge, ideas, skills, attitudes to students to enable them become self reliant in the society. Olulube in Olusanya (2019) stated that teaching is a multi-dimensional, complex and diverse activity. In performing teaching activities by business educators, they are expected to teach effectively. This is where professionalization manifests in all aspects as effective teaching is an intelligent knowledge based activity which involves cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains and as well interpersonal elements of the education. Based on the aforementioned, business educator's needs quality training that can enhance their teaching effectiveness which enables the professionalization in Business Education programme.



Influence of professionalization towards developing student's management abilities is another area that cannot be overemphasized since Business Education programme is about business and management that happens to be the core skills in any business. Management abilities simply entail the ability to manage both human and material resources to ensure great success in an established venture. Management abilities entail understanding, developing and deploying people and their skills appropriately. It is all about identifying the skills that business or job roles require and matching it with the skills of individual employees to produce a better result. Management abilities are those attributes, or skills that a manager should possess in order to fulfill specific task in an organization towards achieving and attaining to organizational goals. It involves the ability to relate with other co employees and how to manage them and carry them along in the organization; planning, decision-making, problem solving, communication, delegation, and time management. Management abilities involve skills such as technical skills that give the managers the knowledge to use variety of techniques to achieve organizational objectives, conceptual skills which are the knowledge and ability for abstract thinking and formulating ideas analyze and diagnose a problem as well as finding creative solutions (Corporate Finance Institute Education, 2015-2020). According to Desda (2018), management abilities involve building good working relationships with people at all levels; prioritizing tasks effectively for yourself and your team; considering many factor in decision-making; knowing the key principles of good communication, understanding the needs of different stakeholders and communicating with them appropriately; developing new ideas to solve customers' problems; cultivating relationships with customers; building trust within your team and using emotional intelligence. Management abilities encompass determining what needs to be done and achieving results; practice of making rational decisions for allocating scarce resources to satisfy goals in a risky environment; ability to recognize, organize, execute and evaluate; application of planning, implementation and control concepts to the activities of production, marketing and finance (Steve & Jack, 2017). Management abilities are set of characteristics that help individuals to achieve better results and to be successful; characteristics needed to carry out the managerial processes necessary to obtain efficient results in the organization; attitudes of managers by means of which they manage to impose their own style, strategies, techniques and tools in the organization (Anica, Marioara, Daniel & Virgil, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

The hallmark of any occupation, career or job is professionalization. This is because one has to display a great level of expertise in her chosen career or occupation which distinguishes her significantly from others. Business educators are expected as professionals in their field to expertly display professionalization in Business Education programme in all it involves. This professionalization is expected to manifest in their students as regards to developing teaching and management abilities in them to enable perform expertly in discharging any Business Education role. Unfortunately, it was observed that Business Education students are not actually performing expertly in Business Education areas as it concerns teaching and management abilities in schools and business activities as they were trained. Thus, this study to determine the influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students professional abilities in public universities in South East Nigeria.



Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. How does professionalization in Business Education influence the development of students' teaching abilities in public universities in South East Nigeria?
2. How does professionalization in Business Education influence the development of students' management abilities in public universities in South East Nigeria?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business

educators on the influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students teaching abilities in public universities in South East Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business

educators on the influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students management abilities in public universities in South East Nigeria.

Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. This design was deemed appropriate since the study involved studying a group of people or items and as well collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or entire group (Nworgu, 2015). The area of study is South East Nigeria and public universities in this zone precisely. The population of the study consists of 65 business educators in the public universities in South East Nigeria. The entire population was studied and sampled due to the manageable size of the population. A 22 item structured questionnaire developed by the researchers was the instrument for data collection which was structured in 4-points rating scale of highly influence-4points, influence-3points, fairly influence-2points and not influence-1point. Data generated was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Any item with mean ratings of 2.50 and above was regarded as influenced while items with mean ratings of 2.49 and below was regarded as fairly influenced. The z-test analytical tool was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A null hypothesis was accepted if the z-critical value is less than the z-calculated value and the alternative is accepted.



Results

The results of the study were presented based on the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

Research Question 1: How does professionalization in Business Education influence the development of students' teaching abilities in public universities in South East Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation of business educators on the influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students teaching abilities

S/N	Teaching Abilities Decision	Mean	SD
1.	Ability to manage discipline influence	2.98	0.94
2.	Ability to impart knowledge influence	2.90	0.98
3.	Ability to have the knowledge to impart in his palms influence	2.83	0.76
4.	Ability to innovate new ideas influence	3.40	1.08
5.	Ability to organize knowledge influence	3.29	0.94
6.	Ability to effectively work in groups influence	2.85	0.89
7.	Ability to prepare for knowledge to impart influence	2.87	0.99
8.	Ability to collaborate with others influence	2.81	0.86
9.	Ability to motivate their students influence	2.75	0.92
10.	Ability to deal with conflict influence	2.95	0.76
11.	Ability to display high level of integrity in teaching influence	3.54	0.66
12.	Ability to display competence and ethical values in teaching influence	3.60	0.85
13.	Ability to upgrade the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for effective and efficient teaching practice influence	2.77	0.80
14.	Ability to acquire the characteristics of high status in teaching occupation influence	3.45	0.55
15.	Ability to uphold the specifying norms of conduct in Teaching influence	2.97	0.65



The analysis of data in Table 1 shows that the mean ratings ranging from 2.98 to 3.60 depicting influence which is above the criterion mean of 2.49. This indicated that professionalization in Business Education influenced the students teaching abilities as rated by business educators.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students teaching abilities in public universities in South East Nigeria.

Table 2: z-test analysis of the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students teaching abilities.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	DF	z-cal	z-crit	Remarks
Male	25	3.25	0.94	62	0.22	0.829	NS
Female	39	3.20	0.60				

Data in Table 2 revealed that the z-calculated value of 0.22 is less than the critical z-value of 0.829 at 0.05 level of significance of 62 degree of freedom. This indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students teaching abilities.

Research Question 2: How does professionalization in Business Education influence the development of students' management abilities in public universities in South East Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean ratings and standard deviation of business educators on the influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students management abilities



S/N	Management Abilities	Mean	SD	Decision
16.	Ability to interact, work and relate effectively with people influence		3.60	0.49
17.	Determining what needs to be done and achieving results influence		3.40	0.66
18.	Practice of making rational decisions for allocating of scarce resources to satisfy goals in a risky environment influence		3.57	0.49
19.	Application of planning, implementation and control concepts to the activities of production, marketing and finance influence		2.69	0.92
20.	Ability to help individuals to achieve better result and to be successful influence		3.29	0.59
21.	Ability to carry out the managerial process necessary to obtain efficient results in the organization influence		2.93	0.96
22.	Developing new ideas to solve customers' problems influence		2.90	0.94
23.	Prioritizing tasks effectively for yourself and your team influence		3.20	0.75
24.	Understanding the needs of different stakeholders and communicating with them appropriately influence		2.70	1.00
25.	Ability to utilize variety of techniques to achieve organizational objectives influence		4.00	0.01
26.	Ability for abstract thinking and formulating ideas, analyze and diagnose a problem as well as finding creative solution influence		3.60	0.49
27.	Ability in problem solving, communication, delegation and time management influence		3.07	0.49
28.	Ability to apply professional ethical principles in business and organizations influence		3.25	0.54



Table 3 shows that the mean ratings of business educators range between 2.69 and 4.00 depicting influence which is above the criterion value of 2.49. This indicated that professionalization in Business Education influenced development of students' management abilities as rated by business educators.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students' management abilities in public universities in South East Nigeria.

Table 4: z-test analysis of the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students' management abilities.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	DF	z-cal	z-crit	Remarks
Male	25	3.21	0.70	62	0.21	0.47	NS
Female	39	3.31	0.57				

Results in Table 4 revealed that the z-calculated value of 0.21 is less than the critical z-value of 0.47 at 0.05 level of significance of 62 degree of freedom. This implied that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students' management abilities.

Discussion

The result of the analysis in research question 1 shows that all the teaching abilities listed in Table 1 were influenced by professionalization in Business Education towards developing students teaching abilities. The findings of the study agreed with Smith (2018) which stated that teaching is the process of attending to people's needs, experiences and feelings and intervening so that they learn particular things and go beyond the given. The findings is also in line with Okoro (2016) which maintained that teaching imparts new knowledge, ideas, skills, attitudes to students to enable them become self reliant in the society. The result of testing of null hypothesis 1 revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students teaching abilities; since the calculated z-value is less than the critical z-value at 0.05 level of significance and 62 degree of freedom. This finding is in agreement with Aniete (2021) which asserted that teaching abilities involves the ability to manage discipline, impart knowledge and know the knowledge to impart.



The findings relative to research question 2 revealed that all the management abilities listed were influenced by professionalization in Business Education towards developing students' management abilities. The findings are in agreement with Desda (2018) which asserted that management abilities involves building good working relationships with people at all levels; prioritizing task effectively for yourself and your team; considering many factors in decision making; knowing the key principles of good communication; understanding the needs of different stakeholders and communicating with them appropriately. The result of the analysis of hypothesis 2 showed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the influence of professionalization in Business Education towards developing students' management abilities; since the calculated z-value is less than the critical z-value at 0.05 level of significance and 62 degree of freedom. This is in agreement with Steve and Jack (2017) which emphasized that management abilities encompasses determining what needs to be done and achieving results; practice of making rational decisions for allocating scarce resources to satisfy goals in a risky environment and ability to recognize, execute and evaluate; application of planning, implementation and control concepts to the activities of production, marketing and finance.

Conclusion

It is concluded that professionalization in Business Education greatly influence the development of students professional abilities as it concerns teaching and management abilities since Business Education programme encompasses teaching and business activities. Professionalization in Business Education indeed has made or rather equipped the students with professional abilities in areas of teaching and managing business outfits as they were adequately prepared by professional business educators while undergoing training.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the findings and conclusion arrived at the study recommends that;

1. Business educators should adequately prepare and equip her students with sound professional abilities as it concern teaching ability to enable them expertly impart sound Business Education knowledge.
2. Business educators should adequately develop her students management abilities to enable them manage human and material resources in organizations and any other business outfits under their care.
3. Business educators should not deviate from the core abilities in Business Education programme in order to produce competent manpower both in schools as teachers and organizations as managers.
4. Management of universities should endeavour to always hire professionals of Business Education so that they will maintain and uphold Business Education core values and impart appropriately in the students.



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