



## **STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING SKILL ACQUISITION AMONG BUSINESS STUDIES STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL IN DELTA STATE**

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### **Abstract**

The study determined strategies for enhancing the enhancing skill acquisition among business studies students in secondary school in Delta State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 914 business studies teachers from the 466 public secondary schools in Delta State. Through simple random sampling technique the researcher sampled 30% of the total population of the study. This amounted to 276 business studies teachers. A researcher developed structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts in business education. The Cronbach Alpha technique was used to test the reliability which yielded a co-efficient value of 0.80 and 0.84 for section B1 and B2 respectively with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.82. Data was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The mean value was used to provide answers to the research question while standard deviation was used to determine the harmony in opinions of the respondents. The t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Finding on revealed that business studies teachers agree that teachers inability to use appropriate teaching strategies, non coverage of the curriculum content of business studies, lack of physical facilities like computer laboratories and workshops for practical training and lack of instructional facilities for exposing students to real life situations were some of the challenges militating against skills acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools in Delta State. Findings also revealed that the respondents agreed that organizing professional training programs for business studies teachers on techniques for practical skills training, making available state of the art instructional materials for teaching of business studies students, encouraging school industry partnership in the curriculum planning, implementation and teaching of business studies students and encouraging school industry partnership in the funding of business studies, among others are strategies for enhancing acquisition of business skills among secondary school students in Delta State. The gender of the respondents did not significantly affect their opinion. Based on these findings it was recommended that business studies teachers should improve on their abilities for teaching practical business skills by attending workshops, seminars and conferences.

**Keywords: Strategies, Skills Acquisition, Business Studies, Teachers, Students**



## **Introduction**

Education is a critical tool for ensuring national development. This is because it is a means through which individual learn ideas, skills, attitudes and knowledge that carry them through life. Akpan (2015) opined that education facilitates the acquisition of intelligence, technical abilities and character. Education is a tool through which a person is taught by means of a set of instructions (formal and informal) to bring about beneficial changes in the learner's actions and allow him / her to lead a useful and appropriate life in society (Ferdinand & Ndem, 2012). Thus education serves as a tool that allows people to solve their problems and fulfill their needs.

In Nigeria, formal education is carried at three levels; primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Secondary education which is the focus of this paper is the level of education that is offered to students after primary school. Secondary education is of six-year duration and given in two stages, junior and senior levels of three years each. Secondary education completes the provision of basic education that began at the primary level, and aims at laying the foundations for lifelong learning and human development, by offering more subject- or skill-oriented instruction (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2013). The objectives of secondary education according to the FRN (2013) include providing the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship and educational advancement; developing patriotic young people equipped to contribute to social development and performance of their civic responsibilities. Various subjects are taught at this level of education to equip student with the necessary skills and competences needed to excel. Business studies is one of such subjects.

Business studies is an integral part of prevocational subjects in secondary schools in Delta state in particular and Nigeria in general. Business studies is a subject that enable students acquire the skills and competences for successful entrepreneurial and business practice. Emeasoba (2018) defined business studies as the subject structured to facilitate the acquisition of business knowledge and practical skills that help students to fit into post-school working environments. In agreement Odike and Menkiti (2019) highlighted the objectives of business studies to include to provide the orientation and basic skills with which to start an occupation for those who may not have the opportunity for further training; to provide basic business skills for personal use now and in the future; to provide students for further training in business studies and to develop basic skills in office occupation. This means that business studies is expected to equip its students with basic business skills and knowledge to enable them to assess their potentialities in the area of business. Through the skills and competences acquired in business studies classes, graduating students can decide to go into entrepreneurship and venture creation, in cases where they find it difficult furthering their education.

Sadly, the attainment of the noble objective of business studies have become an illusion among secondary school graduates in Delta state. It appears that students have been unable to acquire practical business skills and thus has reduced their chances of entrepreneurial venturing. Scholars like Odike and Menkiti (2019) aver that business studies students have not been properly exposed to the acquisition of reasonable business skills that will improve their abilities for setting up their own businesses. This thus means that the skill acquisition techniques and processes have not been properly utilized to facilitate the transfer of business skills.



Acquisition of skills requires a specific and extended process of learning about an activity or occurrence. There three levels to which skill acquisition can take place (Tyarkoni, 2011). At the first level, the learning of skills takes place cognitively as learners acquire guidance and improve their performance. At the second level, previously learned techniques that were previously studied are appropriately validated and reviewed based on the current scenario. The final stage is autonomous, the success plan at this level is gradually getting more independent and less subject to executive influence or external intervention (Tsado, 2012). From the preceding, it is clear that the process of skills acquisition entails that business education teachers are properly prepared and equipped with the teaching method and teaching resources necessary for ensuring successful transfer of skills and competences. Business studies teachers needed to have the necessary professional qualification and experience as well as the availability of teaching resources for ensuring quality education service delivery. However, the situation in secondary schools in Delta state has greatly impeded the successful transfer of business skills.

Some factors have been blamed as affecting the successful transfer of skills in business studies at the secondary schools in Delta state. According to Saliu and Okoro (2016), the mismatch between the expectation of industry and the content of what is taught in our schools has affected the skills acquisition process in secondary schools. In another vein, Emeasoba (2018) averred that shortage of equipment has greatly affected the quality of learning in business studies in secondary schools generally. There is also the issue of business teachers' negative attitude towards adopting appropriate instructional strategies for teaching students. Onajite and Aina (2017) noted that despite undergoing professional development programmes, some teachers tend to fall back to their traditional ways of teaching their students despite learning new innovative teaching methods. As a result business studies students fail to acquire the appropriate business skills and knowledge needed in the world of business. The gender of the teachers has also been viewed as factor that could affect the skills acquisition process. Some scholars opine that male teachers might effectively adopt strategies that could facilitate business skills acquisition than their female counterparts (Ferdinand & Ndem, 2012). However, this view has not been empirically proven to be the case among business studies teachers in Delta state. It is against this background that this study is conducted to determine strategies for enhancing skill acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools in Delta State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The rise in number of unemployment and crime rate in Delta State has been blamed on the failure of teenagers and youth to engage themselves in vocational and business ventures that will improve their income generation capacity. Sadly, among these unemployed youths and teens who engage in criminal activities are secondary school graduates who have been exposed to business studies and other pre-vocational subjects.

The above point to the failure of secondary school business studies to translate theory into practice. Given the importance of business studies to the economic development of the Delta State in particular and Nigeria, it is pertinent that the reason for this failure is known. It is against this backdrop that the researcher asks the following questions: is it that the business studies teachers do not take advantage of the various professional training programme to equip their capacity to improve students acquisition of business skills? Is it that school administrators have failed to provide the enabling environment that will facilitate the acquisition of business skills among students in secondary schools?



### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to determine strategies for enhancing skill acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools in Delta State. Specifically, the study will determine:

1. The challenges militating against skill acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools in Delta State.
2. The strategies for enhancing acquisition of business skills among secondary school students in Delta State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the challenges militating against skills acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools in Delta State?
2. What are the strategies for enhancing acquisition of business skills among secondary school students in Delta State?

### **Hypotheses**

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business studies teachers on the challenges militating against skills acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools in Delta State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business studies teachers on the strategies for enhancing acquisition of business skills among secondary school students in Delta State.

### **Method**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Delta State. The State has twenty five local governments. The population of the study comprised 914 business studies teachers from the 466 public secondary schools in Delta State. Through simple random sampling technique the researcher sampled 30% of the total population of 916 business studies teachers in the State is in line with Nworgu (2015) who stated that 30% - 80% of a given population is adequate for research work. This amounted to 276 business studies teachers in public secondary schools in Delta State. Instrument used for data collection was a validated four point rating scale questionnaire which has two Sections-A and B. Section A dealt with the respondents gender while Section B1 contained 11 items on the challenges militating against skills acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools and Section B2 contained 10 items on strategies for enhancing skill acquisition among business studies students. The instrument was validated by three experts in business education. The Cronbach Alpha technique was used to test the reliability which yielded a co-efficient value of 0.80 and 0.84 for section B1 and B2 respectively with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.82 which indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study.



The researcher distributed the instrument personally and was assisted by three research assistants who were briefed on the mode of the instrument administration and retrieval. Out of the 276 questionnaires distributed, 244 were retrieved and returned in good condition. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The mean value was used to provide answers to the research question while standard deviation was used to determine the harmony in opinions of the respondents. Any items with mean rating below 2.50 was regarded as disagreed while any item between 2.50 and above is agreed. The t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. For the hypotheses testing, where the calculated t value is less than critical value of t the hypothesis was accepted. Conversely, where the calculated t value is greater than or equal to the critical t value the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Results**

**Research Question 1**

What are the challenges militating against skills acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools in Delta State?

**Table 1: Respondents Mean Ratings on the Challenges Militating Against Skills Acquisition among Business Studies Students in Secondary Schools (N=244)**

S/No.	Items on challenges of skills acquisition	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1.	Teachers inability to use appropriate teaching strategies	2.54	0.75	Agree
2.	Poor teachers attitude towards practical skills training	2.87	0.77	Agree
3.	Non coverage of the curriculum content of business studies	3.05	0.78	Agree
4.	Poor parental attitude towards business studies.	3.25	0.76	Agree
5.	Lack of physical facilities like computer laboratories and workshops for practical training	3.44	0.70	Agree
6.	Lack of instructional facilities for exposing students to real life situations	3.25	0.83	Agree
7.	Insufficient time for teaching business studies	3.13	0.70	Agree
8.	Students' lack of interest in Business Studies	3.08	0.72	Agree
9.	Bias of secondary school principals towards business studies	3.05	0.74	Agree
10.	Poor funding of business studies	3.20	0.70	Agree
11.	Lack of involvement of private sector in students learning activities	3.15	0.83	Agree
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>3.12</b>		<b>Agree</b>

Data in Table 1 reveal that the respondents agreed that all the items (1-11) with mean ratings ranging from 2.54 to 3.44 were the challenges militating against the skills acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools in Delta State. The cluster mean of 3.12 indicate that teachers inability to use appropriate teaching strategies,



poor teachers attitude towards practical skills training, non coverage of the curriculum content of business studies, poor parental attitude towards business studies, lack of physical facilities like computer laboratories and workshops for practical training, lack of instructional facilities for exposing students to real life situations, students' lack of interest in business studies, bias of secondary school principals towards business studies, poor funding of business studies and lack of involvement of private sector in students learning activities were the challenges militating against skills acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools in Delta State. The standard deviation scores show that the respondents' opinions were related.

**Research Question 2**

What are the strategies for enhancing acquisition of business skills among secondary school students in Delta State?

**Table 2: Respondents Mean Ratings on the Strategies for Enhancing Skills Acquisition among Business Studies Students in Secondary Schools (N=244)**

S/No.	Items on strategies for enhancing skills acquisition	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
12.	Organizing professional training programs for business studies teachers on techniques for practical skills training	3.10	0.86	Agree
13.	Making available state of the art instructional materials for teaching of business studies students	3.04	0.76	Agree
14.	Encouraging school industry partnership in the curriculum planning, implementation and teaching of business studies students	2.99	0.80	Agree
15.	Encouraging school industry partnership in the funding of business studies	3.11	0.78	Agree
16.	Providing physical facilities like computer laboratories and practical workshops	3.01	0.74	Agree
17.	Recruiting qualified business studies teachers who possess the theoretical and practical knowledge of business studies	3.22	0.80	Agree
18.	Increasing the time allotted for the teaching of business studies	3.10	0.81	Agree
19.	Exposing students to practical skills learning experiences like field trips, on-the job training, apprenticeship training among others	3.30	0.86	Agree
20.	Appropriately motivating business studies teachers by paying them their salaries in due time.	2.85	0.78	Agree
21.	Integrating information and communication technology in the teaching of business studies	2.67	0.70	Agree
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>3.03</b>		<b>Agree</b>



Data in Table 2 reveal that the respondents agreed that all the items (12-21) with mean ratings ranging from 2.67 to 3.30 are strategies for enhancing acquisition of business skills among secondary school students in Delta State. The cluster mean of 3.03 indicate that organizing professional training programs for business studies teachers on techniques for practical skills training, making available state of the art instructional materials for teaching of business studies students, encouraging school industry partnership in the curriculum planning, implementation and teaching of business studies students, encouraging school industry partnership in the funding of business studies, providing physical facilities like computer laboratories and practical workshops, recruiting qualified business studies teachers who possess the theoretical and practical knowledge of business studies and exposing students to practical skills learning experiences like field trips, on-the job training, apprenticeship training among others are strategies for enhancing acquisition of business skills among secondary school students in Delta State. The standard deviation scores show that the respondents' opinions were related.

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business studies teachers on the challenges militating against skills acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools in Delta State.

**Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings Of Male and Female Business Studies Teachers on the Strategies for Enhancing Skills Acquisition among Business Studies Students in Secondary Schools**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	$\alpha$	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Male Bus. Teachers	98	3.23	0.76					
Female Bus. Teachers	146	3.01	0.84	242	0.05	0.11	1.96	Not Significant

Data in Table 3 show that the calculated t-value of 0.11 at 242 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical value of 1.960. This shows that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business studies teachers on the challenges militating against skills acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools in Delta State, therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business studies teachers on the strategies for enhancing acquisition of business skills among secondary school students in Delta State.



Table 4: Summary of t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings Of Male and Female Business Studies Teachers on the Challenges Militating Against Skills Acquisition among Business Studies Students In Secondary Schools

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	$\alpha$	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Male Bus. Teachers	98	2.99	0.79	242	0.05	0.43	1.96	Not Significant
Female Bus. Teachers	146	3.42	0.75					

Data in Table 4 show that the calculated t-value of 0.43 at 242 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical value of 1.960. This shows that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business studies teachers on the strategies for enhancing acquisition of business skills among secondary school students in Delta State, therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion

Finding on the first research question indicated that business studies teachers agree that teachers inability to use appropriate teaching strategies, poor teachers attitude towards practical skills training, non coverage of the curriculum content of business studies, poor parental attitude towards business studies, lack of physical facilities like computer laboratories and workshops for practical training, lack of instructional facilities for exposing students to real life situations, students' lack of interest in business studies, bias of secondary school principals towards business studies, poor funding of business studies and lack of involvement of private sector in students learning activities were the challenges militating against skills acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools in Delta State. This is in agreement with Odike and Menkiti (2019) who revealed that the factors hindering effective teaching and learning of in secondary schools are lack of qualified business studies teachers; inadequate facilities and other instructional materials; negative societal attitudes towards business studies; students' lack of interest in business studies; absence of encouragement from parents; insufficient periods for teaching and learning; and methods of teaching business studies subjects. This finding goes to show that the task of skills acquisition is being impeded by factors that could be classified as teachers related, leadership related, societal related and government related. Teachers' attitude to teaching and their inability to apply the right teaching methodology seem to have negatively impacted on the ability of students to acquire the right business skills. According to Okoro (2013), some business teachers fail to utilize appropriate teaching methodology in the business studies classroom and this pose a great challenge to students' ability to learn. In another vein, Saliu and Okoro (2016) noted that the challenge to skills acquisition in secondary school is related to poor school leadership practices, insufficient funding, societal attitude towards business studies and poor knowledge-based economy, low spirit of competition and poor enterprising culture. Similarly, Emeasoba (2018) stated that business skills acquisition is hampered by lack of provision of equipments for administration and training which emanates from poor funding by government.



Further finding also revealed no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business studies teachers on the challenges militating against skills acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools in Delta State. This indicates that both male and female business studies teachers are in agreement that teachers inability to use appropriate teaching strategies, poor teachers attitude towards practical skills training, non coverage of the curriculum content of business studies, poor parental attitude towards business studies, lack of physical facilities like computer laboratories and workshops for practical training, lack of instructional facilities for exposing students to real life situations, students' lack of interest in business studies, bias of secondary school principals towards business studies, poor funding of business studies and lack of involvement of private sector in students learning activities were the challenges militating against skills acquisition among business studies students in secondary schools in Delta State. This finding was in disagreement with Ferdinand and Ndem (2012) who found no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female business studies teachers.

Findings on the second research question revealed that business studies teachers agree that organizing professional training programs for business studies teachers on techniques for practical skills training, making available state of the art instructional materials for teaching of business studies students, encouraging school industry partnership in the curriculum planning, implementation and teaching of business studies students, encouraging school industry partnership in the funding of business studies, providing physical facilities like computer laboratories and practical workshops, recruiting qualified business studies teachers who possess the theoretical and practical knowledge of business studies and exposing students to practical skills learning experiences like field trips, on-the job training, apprenticeship training among others are strategies for enhancing acquisition of business skills among secondary school students in Delta State. This finding is in agreement with Ferdinand and Ndem (2012) who found that skills acquisition can be greatly improved in secondary schools in Nigeria if entrepreneurial skill acquisition is adequately incorporated in the school curricula. Ferdinand and Ndem (2012) also highlighted the importance of adequately training teachers in the area of skills acquisition as this will enable them to impart such skills to the students. In agreement Onajite and Aina (2017) found that through the application school-based practices skills acquisition can be enhanced in secondary schools in Nigeria. Some of those school based practices includes learning through transaction with local and external agents, on-site training at supplies' factories, on-the-job training, organizing conferences, seminars and workshops, use of external resource persons, field trips and excursions, vacation training through collaboration with small and medium scale enterprises, apprenticeship education system, short internship training programme, establishment of entrepreneurship centres and workshops in schools, organizing technical visits and assigning projects to students during school holidays.

Furthermore, findings also showed no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business studies teachers on the strategies for enhancing acquisition of business skills among secondary school students in Delta State. This findings show that business studies teachers are in agreement on the suitability of the above listed strategies for enhancing acquisition of business skills. The finding was in disagreement with Ferdinand and Ndem (2012) who found significant difference in the mean scores of male and female business studies teachers on strategies for improving skills acquisition. The reasons for the difference in both study might have resulted because, the strategies listed in the present study appear to be directly focused at



mitigating the challenges hindering skills acquisition among business studies students in Delta State.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study the researcher concludes that skills acquisition among business studies have been hampered by factors related to teachers failure, societal attitude, school leadership failure and poor government support. This has thus reduced the quality of business studies graduate to engage in entrepreneurial and business practices. Some strategies like improved school industry partnership, application of teaching methodology that will facilitate skills acquisition and provision of facilities and equipment have been advocated as measures for enhancing skills acquisition among business studies students. It therefore becomes imperative that these strategies are considered so as to improve the quality of business studies in Delta State in particular and Nigeria in general.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Government should make funds available to secondary school principals for the purchase of equipment and materials for teaching and learning of business studies.
2. Business studies teachers should improve on their abilities for teaching practical business skills by attending workshops, seminars and conferences.
3. Administrators of the secondary schools (Government ministries, parastatals and principals) should go into partnership with private sector in the areas of curriculum review, implementation and funding of business studies.
4. Business studies should apply school based teaching practices that will expose students to practical skills learning experiences like field trips, on-the job training and apprenticeship training.

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