



INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR QUALITY BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN ENUGU STATE THROUGH SCHOOL - INDUSTRY COLLABORATION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This study sought to assess the innovative strategies for quality business education programme in tertiary institutions in Enugu State through school – industry collaboration for economic development. It adopted the descriptive survey design. Two research questions and two hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance were used. Population consisted of 84 business education lecturers from universities and colleges of education in Enugu State. A validated questionnaire with reliability coefficients of 0.82 was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The study concluded that the innovative strategies for establishing and sustaining school-industry collaboration in business education programme for economic development include formulation of government policies, involving industries in planning business education curriculum, research and training on how to establish school industry collaboration, adequate funding, effective communication of stakeholders, provision of infrastructures among others. There were no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the strategies for establishing and sustaining school-industry collaboration for economic development. The study strongly recommended, among others, that government should formulate and implement strong policies that will encourage school-industry collaboration, government should provide tertiary institutions with enough funding for research and development and creation of a strong link with industries.

Keywords: Innovative strategies, Tertiary institutions, Industries, Business Education, Economic Development.

Introduction

Education is an engine for the growth and progress of any society. It not only imparts knowledge, skills and inculcates values, but it is also responsible for building human capital which sets technological innovations and economic development. Innovation is the utilization of new ideas which stem from the bedrock of ideas and is in essence characterized by change. Atakpa (2011) explained that innovation is viewed as the application of better solutions that meet new requirements, unarticulated needs, or existing market needs. This is accomplished through more effective products, processes, services, technologies, or business models that are readily available to markets, government and society.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2005) noted that innovation is the coming up of ideas and bringing them to life. Change that speed up and



improve the way we conceive, develop, produce and access new products, industrial processes and services. OECD came up with the following benefits of innovation as: effective use of human resources that is of importance to the successful utilization of ideas; bringing about major changes in product design and/or packaging, placement and promotion; addresses global challenges, such as climate change and sustainable development; helps to attain high and sustained economic growth and raises standard of living. It is a pattern of growth and structural transformation that leads to rapid and sustained technological change and productivity growth, the generation of more and better jobs, more sophisticated occupational structures, and employment patterns that result in rising incomes and in poverty reduction (Nubler, 2014).

Strategies are tactics or ways for achieving an objective. Ugwuanyi (2012) noted that strategy is a broad basic plan of action which individual(s) or organization(s) intend to reach its/their goals. Innovative strategies in business education involve transforming the teaching and learning process into an active dynamic innovative and enriching experience that will benefit its recipients with quality education. Quality in education is the relevance and appropriateness of the education programme to the needs of the community for which it is provided. Oladipo, Adeosun and Oni (2009) opined that quality is the ability or degree to which an educational programme conforms to established standard and appropriateness. Oladipo *et al* believed that quality of educational programme could be measured in terms of quality of inputs, quality of contents, quality of process, quality of context and quality of output. Okute and Chukwurah (2011) explained that quality means meeting the expected standard. Quality in education is judged by both its ability to enable the students perform well in standard examinations and relevance to the needs of the students, community and the society. Therefore, ensuring quality in business education programme in the area of school-industry collaboration requires innovative strategies in the input and the output of teaching-learning process which will bring about economic development.

Development is seen as a purposeful change in a society that contributes to social and economic well being and advancement of its people without creating any disharmony (UNESCO, 2009). It is a dynamic process that empowers people and promotes important changes in their lives. From purely economic perspective, development brings about improvement in human welfare, quality in life and social well being. It is about satisfying the population's needs and wants. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) expressed the need for functional education that has to be relevant, practical for acquisition of appropriate skills and development of competencies as equipment for the individuals to live in and contribute to the development of the country. This calls for the shift from general to vocational education which business education is a part of. Business Education is a vocational education that is directed towards developing the learner to become productive in teaching, paid employment and self-employment. It prepares beneficiaries for gainful employment and sustainable livelihood. It is a statutory duty of



the Nigerian higher education to groom the required human capital through relevant manpower training, abilities, attitudes, skills and knowledge.

Business education according to Onyesom and Godwin (2013) is that aspect of educational training which an individual receives with the primary aim / motive of enabling him to acquire adequate attitudes, concepts, knowledge, understanding and skills in business activities for vocational usage in careers as an administration, manager or teacher wherever he may find himself in the business world. A quality business education programme needs to partner with industries in order to bridge the gap between theory and practical and to reduce the deficiencies that may exist in the course of training.

Rossi in Emeasoba (2016) explained that school and industry collaboration is an extensive range of interaction or communication at diverse levels and connecting different activities for the exchange of knowledge and technology, between school and industries. This consists of establishing of start-up firms occupied in the marketable utilization of school inventions and innovations, the presentation of shared research between industries and academic institutions, contract research and academic consulting commissioned by industry collaboration in graduate education, higher education for enterprise personnel, exchange of researches between industries and schools.

School-industry collaboration is the partnership between formal education and industrial sector to create enabling environment for student to acquire hands-on experience, knowledge skills and appropriate attitude to work. Within communities are industries that have highly skilled human agents of production, functional facilities and raw materials that could be very useful in the practical training of business education students (Uwaneze, 2016). School-industry collaboration help to strengthen school in academic skills, enrich the educational process through the talents, ideas, skills, competencies of the industry managers.

Statement of the problem

Business education programme is an aspect of vocational education that equips its graduates with skills, competencies, attitudes that will be relevant for human growth, development and national sustainability. The poor standard of education in Nigeria showed that government alone cannot guarantee functional, quality business education programme where students will acquire skills for sustainable national development therefore school-industry collaboration need to be encouraged.

Research studies showed there are little or no effective collaboration between school and industry despite the benefits that is accruable to such collaborations to business education in acquiring training that will bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Therefore it becomes necessary to look at the innovative strategies for quality business education programme in tertiary institutions in Enugu state through school-industry collaboration for economic development.



Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the innovative strategies for quality business education programme in tertiary institutions in Enugu state through school-industry collaborations for economic development. Specifically the study determined

- 1) the innovative strategies for establishing quality business education programme in tertiary institutions through school-industry collaboration for economic development.
- 2) the innovative strategies for sustaining quality business education programme in tertiary institutions through school-industry collaboration for economic development.

Research questions

- 1) What are the innovative strategies for establishing quality business education programme in tertiary institutions through school-industry collaboration for economic development
- 2) What are the innovative strategies for sustaining quality business education programme in tertiary institutions through school-industry collaboration for economic development

Hypotheses

- 1) There is no significant difference between the mean responses of university lecturers and colleges of education lecturers on the innovative strategies for establishing quality business education programme through school-industry collaboration for economic development.
- 2) There is no significant difference between the mean responses of the university lecturers and college of education lecturers on the innovative strategies for sustaining quality business education programme through school-industry collaboration for economic development.

Method

The descriptive survey research was used in the study. The population of the study comprised 84 lecturers of business education in universities and colleges of education in Enugu State (both private and public). No sample was used since the population was not large. A four- point scale questionnaire with two sections and 19 items was used. The instrument was validated by experts from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. Test-re-test method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. Data were collected by the researchers and research assistant. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. When the mean value of an item was 2.50 and above it was regarded as agreed and below 2.50 was regarded as disagreed. For the hypotheses, when the P value is greater than 0.05, the hypothesis will be accepted and when the P value is less than 0.05, the hypothesis will be rejected.



Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What are the innovative strategies for establishing quality business education programme in tertiary institutions through school-industry collaboration for economic development.

Table 1: Mean Responses of Lecturers of Business Education on the innovative strategies for establishing quality business education programme through school-industry collaboration for economic development.

S/N	Item Statement	Universities			Colleges of Education		
		Mean	SD	Rmks	Mean	SD	Rmks
	The innovative strategies for establishing school-industry collaboration in business education programme for economic development could be:						
1	Formulation of government policies that will encourage school-industry collaboration in business education programme.	3.26	0.45	Agree	2.95	0.78	Agree
2	Involving business people in planning school curriculum for business education programme.	3.47	0.69	Agree	3.04	0.84	Agree
3	Research and training on how to establish school-industry collaboration in business education programme.	3.60	0.50	Agree	3.13	0.69	Agree
4	Government should establish special grant scheme for school-industry collaboration in business education programme.	2.94	0.61	Agree	2.60	0.65	Agree
5	Strong institutional capacity.	3.00	0.81	Agree	3.21	0.75	Agree
6	Schools creating enabling environment for school-industry collaboration for business education programme.	2.78	0.91	Agree	2.93	0.71	Agree
7	Identification of significant and relevant problems in school-industry collaboration for solution.	3.50	0.51	Agree	2.89	0.53	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.22	0.64	Agree	2.96	0.71	Agree

Data in Table 1 show that business education lecturers at universities and colleges of education accepted all the items as strategies for establishing quality business education programme through school-industry collaboration for economic development. The mean score of the response of the Universities lecturers ranged from



lowest of 2.78 – 3.50 and the mean responses of the Colleges of Education lecturers ranged from lowest of 2.60 – highest of 3.5. The items were accepted since their respective mean scores were above the mean cut-off of 2.50. The standard deviation scores indicated that the respondents were homogenous in their responses. In support of these findings, Emeasoba (2016) explained that the strategies for improving university-industry collaboration are as follows: adequate funding, strong institutional capacity, research and training, effective communication, government support, provision of infrastructure among others.

Research Question 2: What are the innovative strategies for sustaining quality business education programme in tertiary institutions through school-industry collaboration for economic development.

Table 2: Mean Responses of Lecturers of Business Education on the innovative strategies for sustaining quality business education programme through school-industry collaboration for economic development.

S/N	Item Statement	Universities			Colleges of Education		
		Mean	SD	Rmks	Mean	SD	Rmks
	The innovative strategies for sustaining school-industry collaboration in business education programme for economic development could be:						
1	Adequate funding by Government and industries.	3.18	0.61	Agree	3.06	0.71	Agree
2	Effective communication between stakeholders.	3.61	0.50	Agree	2.97	1.02	Agree
3	Good governance among industry and school managers.	3.31	0.61	Agree	2.80	0.88	Agree
4	Provision of adequate infrastructures by both government and schools.	3.26	0.72	Agree	2.86	0.88	Agree
5	Government and schools to award contract to industries collaborating with schools.	3.02	0.79	Agree	.73	0.80	Agree
6	Narrowing gap between theory and practical	2.79	0.77	Agree	2.82	0.77	Agree
7	Upgrade the curriculum to market needs	3.15	0.86	Agree	2.89	0.82	Agree
8	Employing qualified graduates, managers with adequate skills and competencies both in school and industries.	3.21	0.62	Agree	3.10	0.53	Agree



9	Students must be exposed to industrial practice and collaboration.	2.63	0.82	Agree	2.69	0.63	Agree
10	Government to provide enough funding for research and development for creating a strong link with industries	3.11	0.73	Agree	3.08	0.72	Agree
11	Reduction of multi-taxing to industries collaborating with schools.	3.16	0.75	Agree	2.78	0.60	Agree
12	Granting loans to school and industries to fund partnership projects.	3.05	0.89	Agree	3.17	0.77	Agree
Grand Mean		3.12	1.24	Agree	2.91	0.76	Agree

Data in Table 2 show that business education lecturers at universities and colleges of education accepted all the items as strategies for sustaining quality business education programme through school-industry collaboration for economic development. The mean scores of the responses of the Universities lecturers ranged from lowest of 2.63 – 3.61 and the mean responses of the Colleges of Education lecturers ranged from lowest of 2.73 to highest of 3.17. The items were accepted since their respective mean scores were above the mean cut-off of 2.50. The standard deviation scores indicated that the respondents were homogenous in their responses.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of business education lecturers in universities and colleges of education on the innovative strategies for establishing quality business education programme through school-industry collaboration for economic development.

Table 3: t-test analysis of mean differences in the mean responses of Business Education Lecturers in Universities and Colleges of Education on the innovative strategies for establishing quality business education programme through school-industry collaboration for economic development.

Respondents	No	Mean	SD	Df	T-Cal	P.value	Level of Sig.	Decision
Universities Lecturers	38	3.22	0.64	82	1.7	0.085	0.05	Not Sig.
Colleges of Education Lecturers	46	2.96	0.71					

The data in Table 3 reveal a t-calculated value of 1.7 with a P value 0.085 which is greater than 0.05 at 0.05 level of significance. It implies that we retain the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers of business education in Universities and Colleges of Education on the strategies



for establishing quality business education programme through school-industry collaboration for economic development was retained since the P value of 0.085 was greater than 0.05.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of business education lecturers in universities and colleges of education on the innovative strategies for sustaining quality business education programme through school-industry collaboration for economic development.

Table 4: t-test analysis of mean differences in the mean responses of Business Education Lecturers in Universities and Colleges of Education on the innovative strategies for sustaining business education programme through school-industry collaboration for economic development.

Respondents	No	Mean	SD	Df	T-Cal	P.value	Level of Sig.	Decision
Universities Lecturers	38	3.12	1.24	82	0.95	0.343	0.05	Not Sig.
Colleges of Education Lecturers	46	2.91	0.76					

The data in Table 4 reveal a t-calculated value of 0.95 with a P value 0.343 which is greater than 0.05 at 0.05 level of significance. It implies that we retain the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers of business education in Universities and Colleges of Education on the strategies for sustaining quality business education programme through school-industry collaboration for economic development was retained sine the P value of 0.343 was greater than 0.05.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, the strategies for establishing and sustaining quality business education programme through school-industry collaboration in tertiary institutions for economic development includes: formulation of government policies, involving industries in planning business education curriculum, research and training on how to establish school industry collaboration, adequate funding, effective communication of stakeholders, and provision of infrastructures among others. This will promote business education programme in our tertiary institutions and also enhance Nigerian economic development.



Recommendations

1. Government should formulate and implement strong policies that will encourage school-industry collaboration.
2. Government should provide tertiary institutions with enough funding for Research and Development for creating a strong link with industries.
3. Interdisciplinary research programs that include industry partners should be encouraged in tertiary institutions.

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