



COLLABORATIVE LEARNING APPROACHES AS INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES REQUIRED FOR EQUIPPING BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL OUTLOOK

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Abstract

The study identified the collaborative learning approaches as innovative strategies required for equipping business education students for global outlook in Imo State. Three research questions guided the study and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study consisted of 54 business educators in tertiary institutions that offer business education courses in Imo state, namely: Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri, Imo State Polytechnic Umuagwo and Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri. There was no sampling. A structured 27-item questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was ensured using pilot test which was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha formula and it yielded reliability index of 0.85. Data related to the research questions were analyzed using mean while independent samples t-test was used to test the three null hypotheses. Findings of the study revealed that business educators agreed on the collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State. Also business educators agreed on the classroom management control and challenges that may arise in collaborative learning approaches. The study indicated that there was no significant difference among the two groups in terms of their mean ratings on the collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State and classroom management control but there was a significant difference among the two groups in terms of their mean ratings on challenges that may arise in collaborative learning approaches in Imo State based on years of teaching experience. It was concluded that collaborative learning approaches are strategies which will develop students' social skills and improve their relationships with others in the class and the industry. The study recommended among others that an appropriate support should be provided by concerned bodies (deans, departmental heads, administrators, ministry of education) to train students on the concept of collaborative learning approaches and how to convert those concepts into practice. This will empower and equip the students to face the world of work.

Keywords: *collaborative learning approaches, cooperative teaching, peer teaching problem-centred instruction, business education students.*



Introduction

Educational statistics have shown that graduates of various disciplines including business education leave school without acquiring the basic skills that can empower the individuals to be productive and sustain the economy through the gross domestic product (GDP) earnings, either by securing a job in a corporate organization or self-employed as the case may be (Ibrahim and Dandago, 2013). This has been of concern to many authors and researchers especially in business education as the researchers related it to the quality of education received that lacks appropriate skills required to meet up with the demands of the business world, (Obiete, Nwazor, & Vin-Mbah 2015).

Chukwurah (2013) stated that Education is a life-long process through which individuals acquire relevant knowledge and value which enables them to become useful to themselves and the society in which they live. Education is a basic necessity of life and an important factor which brings about changes to the individual and nation. This means that Education is a process through which individuals acquire necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that will enable them to be productive and contribute to the sustainable development goals.

Edokpolor and Owenvbiugie (2017) asserted that Business Education refers to a programme of instruction that offers various skills in accounting, marketing and Office Technology and Management (OTM). According to Edokpolor and Owenvbiugie, the actual goals of Business Education is to prepare students for specific career in office occupations; equip students with the requisite skills for job creation and entrepreneurship; and expose students with knowledge about business, including a good blend of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). In addition, Osuala (2009) defined Business Education as a programme for and about business, showing that the programme is aimed at offering training to its recipients to enable them acquire adequate attitudes, concepts, knowledge, understanding and skills. In view of the above, the professional gains of Business Education products are numerous as it produces competent and dynamic business teachers, office administrators, managers, businessmen and women and SME/s entrepreneurs. However, graduates of the programme are meant to be gainfully employed or self-employed having been exposed to skills and competencies in the course of the programme.



Unfortunately, some graduates roam about the cities in search of white collar job that is not available as a result of the remote challenges bedeviling the educational sector such as lack of instructional materials and sometimes, teaching methods that may not be adequate to produce functional individuals. This, was revealed by Gbenedio (2012) that many academic programmes tend to exist in isolation, with few connections between learning institutions and industries, even between those in the same geographical province. Nwazor (2012) and Esia (2012) also decried the failure of education offered in tertiary institutions especially in the Business Education programmes to prepare students and graduates for real life situations. These views are accentuated by the number of graduates in Nigeria, especially those from the Business Education programmes who have failed to gain employment in the business sector of the country. Thus, Business Education students must be equipped with collaborative learning skills to face the 21st century challenges in the labour market as most employers today do not want to settle with mediocre for manpower development. To this effect, Yinusa (2014) opined that the most appropriate teaching methods to adopt in teaching skill acquisition should be that which could motivate the students and sustain their interest in the course of instruction. The author suggested that, in terms of practical skills acquisition, it is very appropriate to adopt a teaching method that can bring out the manufacturing process and exploration of materials into the classroom situation. This would ensure smooth transition from classroom to workplace.

Collaborative learning is an educational approach to teaching and learning that involves groups of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product. It is an instructional approach in which students work together in small groups to accomplish a common goal. Laal, Laal, and Kermanshahi (2012) opined that collaborative learning represents a significant shift from the typical teacher-centred or lecture centred domain in college classrooms. In collaborative classrooms, the lecturing/listening/note-taking process may not disappear entirely, but it lives alongside other processes that are based on students' discussion and active work with the course materials. Teachers who use collaborative learning approaches tend to think of themselves less as expert transmitters of knowledge to students, and more as expert designers of intellectual experiences for students as coaches or midwives of a more emergent learning process as affirmed by Smith and MacGregor (1992). Also, collaborative learning has many characteristics such as co-operative



behaviour, acquisition of knowledge, delegating decisions, among others to develop student trust and retention, which add value to both student and classroom situation. (Al-kaabi, 2016).

In the educational curriculum, collaborative learning approaches have the potency to generate knowledge which is required for continuing development of any profession. In addition, collaborative learning is important not just because it is a better way to learn but because it penetrates every institution and all lives. Thus, learning to collaborate is part of equipping oneself for effectiveness, problem solving, innovation and life-long learning in the global economy (Nakagawa, Takata, Kato, Matsuyuki and Matsushahi, 2017). However, Tumuiti, Wanderi and Thoruwa (2013) revealed that school and industry should strive to harness graduate skills and ensure a smooth and effective transition from the tertiary institutions and the business environment through collaborations and learning communities. This will make business education students to have opportunities to acquire hands on experiences and skills that will come in handy when they finally join the global market.

Arguably, collaborative learning aims to support the most effective teaching that is possible for the greatest number of students. Laal and Laal (2012) pointed out that there are five basic elements in a collaborative learning environment, namely: Positive interdependence; Considerable interaction; Individual accountability; Social skills and Group processing.

In collaborative learning, students make more decisions concerning course policies and procedures, assignments, evaluation and content. Anyanwu & Iwuamadi (2015) opined that observations of practices in Nigerian higher education classrooms indicate a gap in power balance as it is the teacher who makes decisions concerning the course to be taken by the students, issues concerning the course outline, for instance, with regards to the content, schedule for learning, and class attendance policy. Operationally, collaborative learning gives the students environment where they have an active role in the learning process and make them excited about the lesson.

Social learning theory anchored by Vygotsky (1997) explained how people learn in social contexts (learn from each other) and also gave information on how teachers construct active learning communities in collaborative learning. Vygotsky, a Russian



teacher and psychologist, first stated that learning takes place through interactions and communications with others. He examined how the social environments influence the learning processes and suggested that learning takes place through the interactions students have with their peers, teachers, and other experts. Consequently, teachers can create a learning environment that maximizes the learner's ability to interact with each other through discussion, collaboration, and feedback. Moreover, Vygotsky argued that culture is the primary determining factor for knowledge construction. According to him, interacting with others and following the rules, skills, and abilities are shaped by culture. The importance of this theory to the study is that students learn through interacting with their peers, observing what they do and then imitate them to enhance learning.

According to Smith and Gregor (1992), some approaches to collaborative learning include: cooperative learning, problem centred instructions, writing groups, peer teaching, and learning communities

Cooperative learning is designed to improve and develop competences. Students need to learn together in a group work that is interconnected with fellow students. Learning activities that condition students to learn together is known as cooperative learning. Syarifuddin as cited in Jalinus and Nabawa (2019) described cooperative learning as learning that conditioned some students in a study group to support each other in improving and developing their competence. According to them, there is persuasive evidence that cooperative teams achieve at higher levels of thought can retain information longer than students who work quietly as individuals. Furthermore, the development of interpersonal skills is as important as the learning itself in cooperative learning. The development of social skills in group work-learning to cooperate is key to high quality group work. Al-kaabi (2016) affirmed that Cooperative learning is a component of a team of education/learning methods, whereas learners co-operate with each other in order to gain objectives and to address mutual learning objectives. The essential advantage of cooperative learning is its ability to deal with different circumstances in an orderly manner and that makes it easier for learners to move from one phase to another. However, academic achievement is not the only positive outcome as the social development of students is also fostered by means of cooperative learning. Thus, business education students develop extraordinary skills and competences when they are involved in cooperative learning.



It has become obvious that one of the skills required of graduates by industry is problem-solving skill. Kamdi (2011) posited that the best learning in terms of good vocational education is creating a learning environment based on activities that provide an opportunity for students to apply their knowledge to solve practical problems; and to better understand; and utilize technology. Business Education provides an opportunity for students to learn how to solve problems. Mike (2012) stated that pedagogical value in problem-centred instruction includes: exposing students to real world challenges, higher thinking skills, interdisciplinary learning, independent learning, information mining skills, team work and communication. Through problem based learning, students learn how to solve problems that are ill-structured, open ended and ambiguous. It also engages students in intriguing real and relevant intellectual inquiry and allows them to learn from life situations. Thus, business education students develop their business skills such as creativity and awareness from the experience of solving educational problems and otherwise.

The writing group approach, (known variously as peer response groups, class criticism, or helping circles) has transformed thousands of college writing classes. Through the spread of writing-across-the-curriculum initiatives, writing groups increasingly are appearing in other courses as well. Peer writing involves students working in small groups at every stage of the writing process. Many writing groups begin as composing groups: they formulate ideas, clarify their positions, test an argument or focus a thesis statement before committing it to paper. Writing groups also serve as peer response groups. Students exchange their written drafts of papers and get feedback on them either orally or in writing. Writing group is a very challenging process of collaborative learning because it requires students to read and listen to fellow students' writing with insight, and to make useful suggestions for improvement. Word processors have helped peer writing enormously; in many writing labs, students share their drafts and revise them right on the screens.

Peer teaching is one of the best ways to master a particular subject. It is a method of teaching where a student instructs another student wherein the former becomes an expert and the latter a novice. This makes the learner-student to learn without depending on the teacher and the teacher-student to revise the topic again on the belief that “to teach is to learn twice”, Vaughan & Park (2016).The authors further reviewed that peer teaching occurs when students, by design, teach other students” and buttressed the fact that students who work in groups perform better on tests, particularly on reasoning and critical thinking skills. Having students work with each



other is an effective methodology because it forces students to be active learners and to talk through course concepts in their own words. Briggs (2013) explained the main benefits of peer teaching to include the following:

Students receive more time for individualised learning.

Through direct interaction between students, peer teaching promotes active learning as well as participation within the students.

Peer teachers, that is, student teachers enhance their own depth of knowledge by instructing others.

Students feel more comfortable and open when interacting with their peers.

Peer teaching enhances the student's level of creativity in expressing ideas as well as in grabbing new concepts.

Peer teaching also encourages the students to improve on their critical thinking ability as students tend to appreciate their mistakes/doubts on a lesson and strive to improve on them.

Collaborative learning practitioners would say that all collaborative learning is about building learning communities. Collaboration and learning happen within the context of *community*. Learning community is therefore people who share common academic goals, and attitudes and meet semi-regularly to collaborate on classwork, Wikipedia (2020). Such communities have become the template for a cohort-based interdisciplinary approach to higher education which may be based on an advanced kind of educational or pedagogical design. Collaborative learning communities thus help students learn the attitudes, knowledge and skills that benefit all in the community by facilitating and expanding the learning processes. Furthermore, the adage, “two good heads are better than one” embodies the beneficial nature of knowledge when socially distributed, instead of being solely the property of an individual intellect, (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989). In learning communities, it is also important that the teacher discusses the overall goal of his/her class and foster a collaborative learning among the students in order to give every student a space where their voice is respected. For instance, business educators should define the key topics the students will be learning, the teacher's expectations on what the students should get out of the class and how they should work together to get there. If the teacher succeeds in creating a good learning environment that gives the students comfort to internalize learning, they tend to perform optimally which translates to productivity in the global world of work.



Currently, ICT is the hub of every activity in all works of life. ICT allows significant changes in instruction, helping schools to become more student-centred and enable more individualised learning (Muir-Herzig 2004). ICT tools were produced to foster students' knowledge building by supporting and scaffolding students' higher level thinking and collaborative activities. It performs a host of functions in teaching and learning and more so in supporting collaborative activities of students' shared knowledge building. Platforms such as Moodle, Blackboard, Blogger, Wikispace among others can be used to support collaborative activities within the classrooms or online courses. Valtonen, Pontinen, Kukkonen, & Dillon (2011) further stated that “new” development with ICT and education is the possibility to capture, bring up and share students' knowledge, knowledge gaps, unique interpretations, and opinions among others as resources for further reading. In addition, Onwuachu (2013) upheld that the need for ICT skills include using of computer and internet access in schools for all the individuals to have equal and ready access of effectively using this technology. The Internet and online tutorials also offer a more expansive world to explore compared to traditional lectures. This gives students the freedom and flexibility to learn at their own pace.

Classroom management is a process that allows teachers to control the learning and direction of their classroom in collaborative learning. Kauchak and Eggen (2011) conceived classroom management as a comprehensive action teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning. This is where the teacher takes decision on what he/she has to do in the class to minimize misbehaviour and maximize learning. Classroom management is very important in the teaching-learning processes. Effective classroom management provides an environment for effective teaching and learning. Ukpebi, Aglazor, and Odey (2016) citing Kagan (2016) maintained that, many teachers have been taught and trained to always be in charge of classrooms and students remain permanently mere recipients of knowledge. Holmwood (2017) stated that “Collaboration is becoming a measurable skill that teachers are seeking to nurture and provide feedback on.” In classroom, the ability to work well with others to collaborate on ideas and solve problems is an important skill for students to develop. He further added that Collaborative learning doesn't just benefit students, teachers benefit as well. For instance, collaborative learning makes classroom management easier. When teachers assign tasks to students in groups, they can monitor progress by



checking in on five or six different groups instead of 25 individual students. “This gives teachers more time to be available to all of the students in their classroom.

Ferdous and Karim (2019) citing Sansivero (2016) noted that there are challenges associated with collaborative learning environments, specifically with creating and embracing a new environment and the methodology for learning/instruction. Collaborative learning has proven to encourage the improvement and maturation of a variety of skills necessary for future success in the workplace. Supporting this progress helps to ensure that today's students will be productive, effective and influential members of the future workforce. Certain individuals do not feel comfortable participating in a group setting, even at a distance. This awkwardness may keep some individuals from benefiting from the instruction. Since collaborative learning generally grants the students more control over the flow of information, there is the possibility that the focus of the instruction may veer from its intended course. According to Pang, Lau, Seah, Cheong and Low (2018) educators often take for granted that effective collaborative learning will occur naturally once students are assigned to work in groups. In examining students' dissatisfaction when working in groups, the importance of surfacing some hidden assumptions of learners should be subjected for careful scrutiny. As with any group activity, some members may contribute while others do not. At a distance, this may pose even a greater problem than when all the students were in the same room. This can prove to be a huge problem if the group project is to be at the group level. Aitken (2019) lamented that the challenges for teachers using a collaborative learning approach include lack of time to collaborate with colleagues; lack of access to technology; lack of resources; students lacking maturity to fully take part in collaborative learning; and, lack of time for proper implementation. This if addressed, will improve on the resource capacity of the individuals during class work. The problem of this study is poor performance of students during lessons which in turn affects productivity and even creates unemployment among graduates in the industry. This may be that the method of instruction used do not encourage enough practice or that the students are passive because they do not follow the instruction. In order to bridge the gap, Uchendu, Okeke-Okonkwo and Ifi (2019) affirmed that collaboration is helpful for students to gain practical experience and learn to work through group task and thus, creates real world learning for industrial and global outlook. The purpose of the study therefore is to identify collaborative learning approaches as innovative strategies required to effectively equip business education students for global outlook.



Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

What are the collaborative learning innovative approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State?

What are the classroom management control in collaborative learning innovative approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State?

What are the challenges that may arise in collaborative learning approaches for equipping business education students in Imo State?

Hypotheses

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

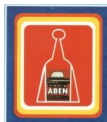
There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State.

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the classroom management control in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State.

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the challenges that may arise in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State.

Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. According to Nworgu (2015), a survey research design is the one that is aimed at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. The population of this study comprised 54 business educators in Imo State. There was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was a researcher designed questionnaire. All copies of the questionnaire distributed were returned and used for data analysis. The questionnaire was structured based on the purpose and research questions guiding the study. The instrument was constructed based on four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire developed for this study was subjected to face validation by three experts in business education. Cronbach Alpha was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. This yielded coefficient index of 0.85 which



was deemed reliable for the study. The researchers administered 54 copies of the instrument with the help of two research assistants. All the copies of the questionnaire were retrieved representing 100% return. Data collected in the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean to answer the research questions and standard deviation to determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' views. Mean ratings greater than 2.5 is regarded as agreed and mean ratings less than 2.5 is regarded as disagree. Independent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used in the analysis of data.

Results

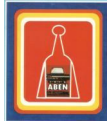
Research Question 1

What are the collaborative learning innovative approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State?

Table 1: Mean ratings of the respondents on the collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State N= 54

S/N	Collaborative Learning Approaches	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Cooperative Learning	3.61	0.49	Agree
2	Problem-Centred Instruction	3.72	0.45	Agree
3	Writing Groups	3.63	0.49	Agree
4	Peer Teaching	3.35	0.48	Agree
5	Discussion Groups and Seminars	3.50	0.50	Agree
6	Learning Communities	3.57	0.50	Agree
7	Internet Connectivity	3.67	0.48	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.58		Agree

As shown by the cluster mean of 3.58 in Table 1, business educators agreed on the collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State. The item by item analysis shows that all the items with mean ratings ranging from 3.35 to 3.72 is collaborative learning approach agreed by business educators as required for equipping business education graduates. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range indicating that respondents are homogeneous in their responses.



Research Question 2

What are the classroom management control in collaborative learning innovative approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State?

Table 2: Mean ratings of the respondents on the classroom management control in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State N= 54

S/N	Classroom Management Control	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Interact face-to-face	3.35	0.48	Agree
2	Be positively interdependent	3.50	0.50	Agree
3	Master the content being studied	3.50	0.50	Agree
4	Participate in groups to achieve group goals	3.43	0.49	Agree
5	Feel free to dialogue with their peer	3.54	0.50	Agree
6	Develop social skills such as decision making, leadership etc in the course of learning	3.48	0.50	Agree
	Know class content that are more flexible	3.46	0.50	Agree
	Have control of their own learning	3.44	0.50	Agree
	Know behavioral skills such as dependability, working effectively with others, adapting and managing stress	3.56	0.50	Agree
10	Access to easy research through internet	3.52	0.50	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.48		Agree

As revealed by the cluster mean of 3.48 in Table 2, business educators agreed on the classroom management control in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State. The item by item analysis shows that all the items with mean scores ranging from 3.35 to 3.56 are classroom management control agreed by business educators as required for equipping business education students. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range indicating that respondents are homogeneous in their mean ratings.

Research Question 3

What are the challenges that may arise in collaborative learning approaches for equipping business education students in Imo State?

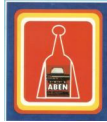


Table 3: Mean ratings of the respondents on the challenges that may arise in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State N= 54

S/N	Classroom Management Control	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Poor ICT/internet connectivity equipment	3.35	0.48	Agree
2	Insufficient qualified business educators	3.41	0.50	Agree
3	Use of outdated curriculum	3.52	0.50	Agree
4	Inadequate funding	3.48	0.50	Agree
5	Inadequate modern instructional materials such as whiteboard, flip chart etc.	3.39	0.49	Agree
6	Inadequate technical support staff	3.44	0.50	Agree
7	Inadequate time to collaborate with colleagues	3.39	0.49	Agree
8	Negative attitude of some students	3.35	0.48	Agree
9	Spoilt seats in some classrooms	3.41	0.50	Agree
10	Poor institutional linkages/ interventions to enhance collaborative learning	3.35	0.48	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.41		Agree

As indicated by the cluster mean of 3.41 in Table 3, business educators agreed on the challenges that may arise in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State. The item by item analysis shows all the items with mean scores of 3.35 to 3.52 are the challenges agreed by business educators that may arise in collaborative learning approaches for equipping business education students. There is homogeneity in items amongst business educators' responses, indicating a consensus of opinion.

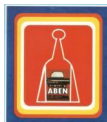
Testing the Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State.

Table 4: Analysis of independent samples t-test on mean ratings of the respondents on the collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State.

	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	df	P-value	Decision
0-5 years teaching exp	29	19.83	4.425	52			
6 yrs and above teaching exp	25	19.80	4.813	49.285	0.022	0.98	not rejected
Total	54	39.63		101.285			



As shown in Table 4, there is no significant difference among the two groups in terms of their mean ratings on the collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State based on years of teaching experience (0-5 years, 6 years and above). The t_{52} is .022 and P -value (.98) is greater than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Null Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the classroom management control in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State.

Table 5: Analysis of independent samples t -test on mean ratings of the respondents on the classroom management control in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State

	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	df	P-value	Decision
0-5 years teaching exp	29	25.97	4.004	52			
6 yrs and above teaching exp	25	27.44	3.798	51.501			
Total	54	53.41		103.501		-1.382 0.17	not rejected

Data in Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference among the three groups in terms of their mean ratings on the classroom management control in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State based on years of teaching experience (0-5 years, 6-10 years and above 10 years). The t_{52} is -1.382 and P -value (.17) is greater than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Null Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the challenges that may arise in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State.

Table 6: Analysis of independent samples t -test on mean ratings of the respondents on the challenges that may arise in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State.

	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	df	P-value	Decision
0-5 years teaching exp	29	25.90	4.425	52			
6 yrs and above teaching exp	25	27.96	4.813	39.97			
Total	54	39.63	9.238	91.97		-2.261 0.028	Rejected



As shown in Table 6, there is a significant difference among the two groups in terms of their mean ratings on the challenges that may arise in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State based on years of teaching experience (0-5 years, 6 years and above). The t_{52} is -2.261 and P -value (.03) is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study indicated that business educators agreed on the collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State. The finding corroborates that of Pang, Lau, Seah, Cheong and Low (2018) who posited that collaborative learning creates positive social motions and support active learning. Collaborative learning approaches encourage communication, positive interdependency and team handling. Students are given chances to teach through research under the guidance of an instructor and simultaneously to develop leadership skills, interpersonal skills and communicative skills. In support of this, Al-Kaabi (2016) affirmed that collaborative learning allows the fostering of a spirit of cooperation among the students, enhances the potential of the students, and increases their ability to debate. In addition, the mission of the collaborative learning design is to provide opportunities for students to communicate effectively to encourage mutual support in order to master the purpose of the lesson. The test of the first hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference among the two groups in terms of their mean ratings on the collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State based on years of teaching experience. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Findings of the study also revealed that business educators agreed on the classroom management control in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State. This finding is similar to that of Holmwood (2017) who stated that collaborative learning makes classroom management easier. When teachers assign tasks to students in groups, they can monitor progress by checking in on five or six different groups instead of 25 individual students. This gives teachers more time to be available to all of the students in their classroom. A collaborative classroom also allows teachers to cover more ground in the curriculum, because each group might be assigned a different portion of a topic. Also, Ukpebi, Aglazor, and Odey (2016) stated that classroom management is very important in teaching and learning processes. Effective classroom management provides an environment for effective teaching and learning. Testing of the second hypothesis indicated that there was no significant difference among the two groups in terms of



their mean ratings on the classroom management control in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State based on years of teaching experience. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Findings of the study indicated that business educators agreed on the challenges that may arise in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State. This finding is in consonance with that of Aitken (2019) who stated that challenges for teachers using a collaborative learning approach include: lack of time to collaborate with colleagues; lack of access to technology; lack of resources; students lacking maturity to fully take part in collaborative learning; and lack of time to properly implement. In support of this, Pang, Lau, Seah, Cheong and Low (2018) stated that collaboration can also evoke negative emotions and create novel interaction challenges for students in group work. Furthermore, collaboration processes such as levels of teamwork, multiple cognitive perspectives, or a lack of common ground in shared conversations may also create learning obstacles. With the right amount of planning and support from school's administration and the right technology resources, any classroom can be successfully transformed to encourage collaborative learning and sharing of ideas among students. The test of the third hypothesis showed that there was a significant difference among the two groups in terms of their mean ratings on the challenges that may arise in collaborative learning approaches required for equipping business education students in Imo State based on years of teaching experience. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that collaborative learning approaches are strategies which will develop students' social skills and improve their relationship with others in the class. Business Educators should embrace collaborative learning and integrate into their teaching in order to enhance teaching and learning processes. This may lead to a remarkable improvement in the teaching and learning of business education in tertiary institutions in Imo State. Thus, students will be empowered and equipped to face the world of work.

Recommendations

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

An appropriate support should be provided by concerned bodies (deans, Departmental heads, administrators, Ministry of Education). They need to train business educators and students to create awareness on the concept of



collaborative learning approaches and how to convert those concepts into practice.

Business educators should develop an efficient and effective mechanisms to assess students' cooperation rather than competition and also embark on follow up of its progress.

The deans and departmental heads in collaboration with Ministry of Education should co-ordinate to invite experts (interventions and linkages) in the field to share their experience of using collaborative learning approaches and to suggest alternative techniques in the absence of adequate teaching strategies and supplementary materials.

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