



## ASSESSMENT OF THE RELEVANCE OF WORK BASED LEARNING IN SKILL ACQUISITION IN BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION, LAGOS STATE.

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### **Abstract**

*The study mirrors the relevance of work based learning in skill acquisition in business education programme. Descriptive survey design was adopted to get the opinions of the students from colleges of education in Lagos state. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study showed that SIWES as an aspect of work based learning has enhanced skill acquisition in business education programme. Secondly, as an aspect of work based learning entrepreneurship education has enhanced skill acquisition in business education programme and finally information and communication technology as an aspect of work based learning has also enhanced skill acquisition in business education. Based on the conclusion that work based learning enhances skill acquisition in business education, it was recommended that government, policy makers and other stakeholders should endeavor to strengthen and improve the different types of work based learning in order to ensure that students and respective institutions derive full and maximum benefits from the programme.*

**Keywords:** *Work based learning, SIWES, Entrepreneurship Education, Information and Communication Technology.*

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### **Introduction**

It has been a long standing desire for modern industrialized nations to streamline education and training programmes in order to provide well-educated, trained, competent and skilled workforce. A well-educated, trained, competent and skilled workforce can only be achieved through business education among other education programmes. In Nigeria, business education is one of the major aspects of vocational education that is meant to prepare the learners with the right skills and values needed to be self-employed or employable in the world of work Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013). Business education is aimed at equipping the recipients with requisite knowledge and skills that will make them relevant, functional and self-reliant



economically, hence they should be able to combine technical knowledge and business acumen, creativity and innovations for effective job performance.

However, business education at all levels of education enables the recipients to: Develop basic skills for personal use in the future, Acquire the basic knowledge and skills of business education, Relate the knowledge and skills acquired to national development, Develop basic skills in office occupation, Provides orientation and basic skills with which to start a life of work for those who may not undergo further training (Igboke, 2005). The above goals reveal that Nigerian successive governments recognize the importance and role of business education in the acquisitions of appropriate skills, ability and competencies that will enable the individuals involved be self-employed or paid-employed. Despite these benefits, it is doubtful if knowledge, values, skills and attitudes required in the world of work are really achieved in schools because the study on graduates turnout, skills and graduate unemployment in Nigeria carried out by Akinyemi, Ofem, Igot, and Ikuenomore (2010) shows that Nigerian graduates largely, lack basic employability skills that are needed in the modern workplace. This means that many of the graduates which include business education graduates are without the necessary knowledge and skills required in the world of work. Therefore, to improve business education graduates knowledge and skills which is urgently needed in the workplace, Work Based Learning (WBL) are embedded in the curriculum of business education.

Work-Based Learning is a process outside the school that effectively integrates classroom curriculum and training with workplace experiences to enhance learning and to develop strong academic and workplace knowledge utilizing the work experience as a source of learning. WBL enhances a students' understanding of classroom theory through participation in its application in the work Environment. Alfeld, Charner, Johnson, and Watts (2013) defined WBL as an educational strategy that provides students with the opportunity to put theory into practice with real work experiences. According to them this can range from internship to job shadowing, simulations or mentorship programmes. WBL gives students the prospect to explore what they have learned in the classroom within a real-world situation. Not only is this very helpful for hands-on learners, but it also gives learners some much-needed path, and it gives them the opportunity for them to know what to do after graduation. It therefore, extends the boundaries of the classroom to the work-world (National Centre on Secondary Education and Training (NCSET), 2011). WBL affords learners ample opportunities to learn a variety of skills that guarantee synergistic relationship between the school and the world-of-work. It is an attempt to narrow the



gap existing between theory and practice thereby, making meaningful learning possible.

It can enrich student learning, create a well-qualified workforce and open up new markets for higher education. The curriculum meets the needs of both schools and employer and jointly planned, delivered and assessed. It uses the immediacy of the work context to provoke practice and to encourage reflection on real issues leading to meaningful applicable learning. Workplace learning is concerned not only with immediate work competencies, but will future competencies. WBL is gaining serious pull in an international scale. In 2015 the Organisation for Economy Co-operation Development (OECD) launched a study on work based learning in vocational education and training (VET) to consider how countries have been able to offer these experiences and what can be done to enhance future WBL opportunities. Products of office technology and management programme despite their involvement in SIWES before graduation appears not display requisite skills in their field of study. Okebukola 2006 and Yahaya 2007).

The purpose of Work-Based Learning according to Keavy and Chakron (2015) is to: provide career awareness, career exploration opportunities, career planning activities and help students attain competencies such as positive work attitudes and other employable skills, develop interdisciplinary learning experiences for problem-solving, critical- thinking and communication skills for learners to link their classroom learning with the challenges they will face in the workplace of the future, provide a win-win situation where the learner's needs and the industry requirement for skilled and talented employees are both met, create a key driver that give will be the need for active policies so as to secure learning that meets the need of the workplace, turn entry-level work experiences into career opportunities, thereby increasing learning and improving student retention and academic progress. Some of the WBL embedded in business education curriculum are Student industrial work experience scheme SIWES, entrepreneurship education, information and communications technology (ICT). These WBL need to be re-assessed to ascertain it functionality. Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) was established by Industrial Training Fund (ITF) in 1973 to solve the problem of lack of adequate practical skills preparatory for employment in industries by Nigerian graduates of higher institutions (ITF, 2007). In order to bridge the varieties of gaps involving practical skills acquisition and classroom learning experiences with industrial skills, the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) was mandated with the Students' Industrial



Training Scheme (SIWES) to enhance practical skills acquisition of Technical/Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students and others in allied area of study (Ekpenyong, 2011). SIWES can also be called industrial placement, work placement, industrial training, and Work Based learning (WBL). The Scheme is thus meant to expose students to the industry based skills necessary for a smooth transition from the classroom to the world of work. According to Ojo and Akhademe (2018), this scheme is necessary because it gives students the opportunity to be equipped with the skills needed for employment in industries after graduation. SIWES can be seen as instructional activities that bridge the gap between classroom theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge for the purpose of developing the total educational programme of students. According to Ukwueze,(2011), SIWES has a positive impact on students career success.Chukwuedo (2011), opined that SIWES enhances competency of students in the workshop/laboratory, improves student's classroom learning creates employment opportunities. Azubuike, 2013 asserted that about 60 percent of IT students go to their place of attachment to fulfill all righteousness, 30 percent according to him, attach themselves to organisations where their educational/course of study has no relation, while the remaining 10 percent only get a better place for their industrial attachment. All these have a great negative effect on the student intellectual/occupational development after graduation and as well impede the realization of the objectives of SIWES in making business education students competent business and office managers.

An entrepreneur is one who always searches for change, responds to it and exploits it for opportunity. Entrepreneurship education is an avenue for discovering knowledge, acquiring human and social skills that are relevant for participatory, development and change. The aim of entrepreneurship education in student is to stimulating an entrepreneurial attitude. Oduma (2007) affirmed that entrepreneurship education is a programme that prepares individual to undertake the information and acquisition of small- scale businesses. Entrepreneurship education produces self-sufficient enterprising individuals and enhances a graduate's ability to create wealth. Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. It helps to prepare business education students ahead of what is expected in the world of work. Ayatse (2013) opines that a functional education system takes cognizance of the dynamics of the labour market, equips its graduates through entrepreneurship education with occupational skills and competencies in order for them to be self-reliant. Entrepreneurship education training according to Martin,



McNally and Kay (2013) if well-structured can have a positive impact on the interest and attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students who attend such courses. Maalu, J., Nzuve, S. &Magutu, P. (2010) believe that, having a positive perception and attitude towards entrepreneurship increases the chances of becoming successful entrepreneurs. Ajufo (2013), states that entrepreneurship education is an effective mechanism which helps to prevent rate of youth unemployment, and according to him when business education students are given proper training during entrepreneurship education, they will become self-reliant and job creators instead of job seekers.

Information and communication technology refers to all the technology used to handle telecommunications, broadcast media, intelligent building management systems, audiovisual processing and transmission systems, and network-based control and monitoring functions. It also means the use of these tools and resources for instructional purposes to deliver instructional usages. ICT effectively prepare business education students ahead of the technological trend because the world is becoming global in terms of the use of technology. UNESCO, 2012 specifies that, information and communication technology has great potential for knowledge transmission, effective teaching and the development of a well-organized education service, especially in developing countries of the world. Taylor (2002) added that Oas a source of knowledge, access to and spread of information ICT plays an important role in the promotion of cultural, legal, social, political and technological.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Work-based learning is an instructional strategy that is essential in preparing business education students for success and careers and is a core component of the Linked Learning approach. The primary purposes of work-based learning are to expose students to future options and provide opportunities for skill development and mastery over time. All work-based learning experiences involve interactions with industry or community professionals that are linked to school-based instruction. These learning experiences are intentionally designed to help students extend and deepen classroom work and to make progress toward learning outcomes that are difficult to achieve through classroom learning alone.

Work Based learning is a built in mechanism for students of business education programme to match theory and practice that will ensure smooth transition from school to the world to work and guarantee gainful employment but the way it is



delivered seems to be too under dispensed to be effective. For instance according to Odu (2010), there is a sharp rise of complaints among parents and industries that graduates of our tertiary institutions are half- groomed, lack manipulative skills and not employable, hence their retrained on being employed. Okebukola 2006 and Yahaya 2007), Innocent, Joseph & Vin- Mbah (2015) observed that despite the involvement of students in some of the WBL, many students cannot display requisite skills in their fields of study which implies that there is a mismatch between tertiary institutions outputs and labour market demands.

Therefore, there is need to bridge the varieties of gaps involving classroom learning experiences and practical skills acquisition needed by business education students that will enable them be gainfully employed or self-employed. This therefore has been a source of concern to individuals that after graduation, many business education graduates are still without the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will make them readily employable in the world of work.

There are some challenges in the applicability and usefulness of business education skills to real-life business contexts which have affected many business education graduates. Teachers have also reported that while students seem to be learning the theoretical content offered by various courses, they seem less able to critically apply their learning to their professional contexts. Students however, frequently reported that they are unprepared to apply their theoretical understandings to their work environments, hence it is the problem of this study to assess the relevance of work based learning (WBL) in skills acquisition in business education programme.

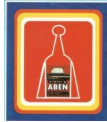
### **Research Questions**

In order to guide the study, the following research questions were raised.

To what extent has SIWES aspect of work based learning enhanced skill acquisition in business education programme in Colleges of Education in Lagos State?

To what extent has entrepreneurship education aspect of work based learning enhanced skill acquisition in business education programme in Colleges of Education in Lagos State?

To what extent has Information and Communication Technology aspect of work based learning enhanced skill acquisition in business education programme in Colleges of Education in Lagos State?



## Method

A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study consisted of all 748 business education students in the three Colleges of Education in Lagos State. Proportional sampling technique was used for the sample, structured questionnaire was used. The items of the questionnaires will be measured using a linked-type scale made up of four responses options very high extend (4) , high extend (3) ,low extend (2) and very low extend (1). Validity of the instrument was done by three lecturers from University of Benin, one from Measurement and Evaluation Department, and two from Vocational and Technical Department. Cronbach alpha technique was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items and a coefficient reliability of 0.78 was obtained. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using simple percentage, mean (x) and standard deviation (SD). Simple percentage was used to analyze data for demographic information while Mean and Standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Decision rule was based on any calculated mean (x) equal or greater than 2.50.

## Results

**Table 1:** Mean and Standard Deviation on SIWES aspect of Work Based learning for skill Acquisition.

S/N	Item Statements	0	SD	Remarks
	SIWES exposes and prepares business education students for the world of work.	3.33	.807	HE
	SIWES helps business education students to acquire the necessary skill needed in the world of work	3.23	.680	HE
	SIWES affords business education students the opportunity of familiarizing themselves with the needed experience in handling industrial equipment and machinery.	3.21	.735	HE
	SIWES prepares business education students for a successful career by merging their analytical power with self-reliant.	3.08	.773	HE
	SIWES helps business education students to develop and enhance Personal attributes such as creative skills, critical thinking, Resourcefulness leadership and interpersonal skills.	3.13	.773	HE

*Source: Field Work (2019)*

Table 1 shows that five items with serial number (1, 2, 3,4 and 5) had mean scores that range from 3.08-3.33 and standard deviation that range from 0.680 - 0.807, which indicates that SIWES to a large extent, has enhanced skill acquisition in business education programme.



### Research Question Two

To what extent has entrepreneurship education aspect of work based learning enhanced skill acquisition in business education programme in colleges of Education in Lagos States?

**Table 2:** Mean and Standard Deviation on Entrepreneurship education based learning for skill acquisition.

S/N	Item Statements	O	SD	Remarks
	Entrepreneurship education prepares business education Students for career readiness.	2.88	.859	HE
	Entrepreneurship education inculcates business education Students with the right type of value, appropriate skills and competencies to contribute maximally to the business Growth and development skill needed in the world of work	2.99	.737	HE
13.	Entrepreneurship education helps business education students to develop saleable skills to enable them become job creators instead of job seekers.	2.73	.887	HE
	Entrepreneurship education helps business education students to organize and manage human and material resources for attainment.	3.30	.730	HE
	Entrepreneurship education helps business educations students to be self-reliant and self-employed.	3.05	.749	HE

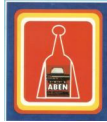
*Source: Field Work, (2019)*

Table 2 shows that five items with serial number (11, 12, 13, 14 and 15) had mean scores that range from 2.73 - 3.30 and standard deviation that range from 0.730 - 0.887, which indicates that Entrepreneurship education, to a very large extent, has enhanced skill acquisition in business education programme.

### Research Question Three

To what extent has ICT aspect of work based learning enhanced skill acquisition in business education programme in colleges of Education in Lagos States?

**Table 3:** Mean and Standard Deviation on ICT aspect of work based learning for skill acquisition.



S/N	Item Statements	O	SD	Remarks
	ICT training effectively prepares business education students ahead of the technological trend.	2.88	.759	HE
	ICT competent helps business educations students in the use of tools and resources for instructional purposes.	2.95	.846	HE
	ICT training increases business educations students efficiency and effectiveness.	2.65	.891	HE
	Business education students have unlimited access and exposure in the use of ICT.	2.55	.014	HE
	Business education students are competent in the use of ICT for research, education and communication purposes	2.51	.968	HE

Source: Field Work (2019)

Table 3 shows that 5 items with serial number (16,17,18,19 and 20) had mean scores that range from 2.51-2.95 and standard deviation that range from 1.014-0.968, which indicates that information and communication technology to a large extent, has enhanced skill acquisition in business education programme.

### Discussion of Major Findings

The findings from research question one which sought to assess the extent to which SIWES (as an aspect of work based learning) enhances skill acquisition in business education programme revealed that SIWES, to a large extent, has enhanced skill acquisition in business education programme. This means that when SIWES is utilized properly, it makes business education students competent business and office managers. This finding is in agreement with Ukwueze (2011), who stated that SIWES has a great influence on job performance of fresh business education graduates. Ojo and Akhademe (2018) maintain that SIWES gives students the opportunity to be equipped with the skills needed for employment in industries after graduation. Chukwuedo (2011), findings also showed that SIWES enhances competency of students in the workshop/laboratory, improves student's classroom learning creates employment opportunities.

Entrepreneurship education (as an aspect of work based learning) enhances skill acquisition in business education programme showed that Entrepreneurship education, to a very large extent, has enhanced skill acquisition in business education programme. This means that when Entrepreneurship education is utilized property, it provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. This finding is in line with Ajufu (2013), who state that entrepreneurship education is an effective mechanism which



helps to prevent rate of youth unemployment. Martin, McNally and Kay (2013) findings showed that entrepreneurship education training if well-structured can have a positive impact on the interest and attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students who attend such courses.

The findings from research question three which sought to assess the extent to which information and communication technology (as an aspect of work based learning) enhances skill acquisition in business education programme showed that information and communication technology, to a very high extent, has enhanced skill acquisition in business education programme. Taylor (2002) findings added that as a source of knowledge, access to and spread of information ICT plays an important role in the promotion of cultural, legal, social, political and technological. This means that when ICT is utilized properly, it equips business education students with the necessary skills and knowledge needed in the modern workplace.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of the study indicated that work based learning to a very large extent, has enhanced skill acquisition in business education programme through SIWES, Entrepreneurship education and Information and communication technology. However, the students need to develop the right attitude and participate fully during the different work based learning available in their institutions.

### **Recommendations**

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

Government, policy makers and other stakeholders should endeavour to strengthen and improve the administration of SIWES in order to ensure that students and respective institutions derive full and maximum benefits from the programme which help students attain competences such as positive work attitudes.

Student employees must participate in all company required on-boarding processes. This expectedly would develop in the students the relevant and required learners skills, abilities and competence with industrial requirement.

Schools through the coordinating of teachers and administrators should endeavour to expose students to a broad range of activities through the use of information and communication technology outside of the traditional school boundaries in order to achieve career awareness and career exploration.



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