



STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR BETTER EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined strategies for improving the quality of business education programme for better education service delivery in Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 109 business educators from five tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument was subjected to a pilot test on 20 business educators in Enugu metropolis. The application of the Cronbach Alpha reliability test on the returned data yielded coefficient values of 0.84 and 0.88 for clusters B1 and B2 respectively with an overall reliability co-efficient value of 0.86 for internal consistency. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean, standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test for the hypotheses testing. Findings reveal that the challenges impeding the realization of quality in business education programme for better education service delivery include non-availability of contemporary equipment and tools for teaching and learning, inadequate funding, poor collaboration between business education and private sector, poor government attitude towards the management of business education, poor standards for enrolment of students into the business education programme and lack of professionalization of the business education programme among others. Findings also reveal that improving synergy and collaboration with private sector, reviewing the business education curriculum, providing funds for the business education programme, providing effective students mentoring services, encouraging and funding research activities and recruiting quality business educators among others are strategies for improving the quality of business education programme for better education service delivery. Other findings showed that business educators in colleges of education and universities did not differ in their opinion. Based on these findings, the researchers recommend among others, that the federal government should as a matter of urgency be committed towards ensuring that business education programme is properly supported by making funds available, provision of teaching and learning equipments and sponsoring research activities.



Keywords: Strategies, Quality, Business Education Programme, Education Service Delivery

Introduction

Education provides a platform for the development of human capital and national development. This is because education ensures the production of knowledge and expertise that allow individuals to increase their competitiveness and improve their quality of life. According to Oduma (2013), education facilitates the development of human potentials, the human talents, the human intellect, the human attitude and the human skills. In Nigeria, the tertiary education system is at the core of the development of human capital. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) opined that the tertiary institutions are the cradle of national growth. This is because the tertiary level of education equips students with the requisite expertise and skills to work successfully in the real world. According to Obiete, Nwazor and Vin-Mbah (2015), the tertiary level of education is that level of education that develops students physically, mentally, spiritually and technologically, to make it possible for them to function effectively in the world of work and as self-employers. The business education programme is an academic programme that prioritizes the development of students with skills needed to be successful in the modern office and in business.

Business education, which is part of the general education curriculum, comes under the framework of vocational education. Business education according to Edokpolor and Owenvbiugie (2017) is an educational program that provides a range of expertise in accounting, marketing and Office Technology and Management (OTM). Jimoh-Kadiri and Bupo (2011) defined business education as the transmission of educational and business skills required to teach business attitudes, ideas, skills and knowledge. Rotua (2017) stated that business education encompasses office education, business teaching, business management and economic awareness. The business education programme at the tertiary level is offered in tertiary institutions like colleges of education, polytechnics and universities. Edokpolor and Owenvbiugie (2017) noted that business education has two primary objectives which are education for business and education about business. According to Edokpolor and Owenvbiugie (2017), education for business is concerned with equipping students with the requisite attributes (knowledge, skills, competencies, and attitudes) to become gainfully employed in the world of work, while education about business, focuses on providing a sound basis for further studies at the graduate and post-graduate levels. Ajisafe, Bolarinwa and Edeh (2015) highlighted the objectives of business education to include 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, provide the needed background for teaching in business subjects, prepare students for further training in business studies and provide orientation and basic skills with which to start a life of work for those who may not undergo further training.



Okoye and Achibogwu (2018) opined that business education is a feasible element of education that introduces students to the development of demonstrable skills that could be further applied to economic and productive livelihoods. The realization of the objectives of business education is hugely dependent on the institution the quality and standard of its practices. Oduma (2013) stated that ensuring quality in business education entails the process of monitoring, assessing and evaluating all aspects of the education activities and communicating the outcome to all concerned with a view of improving the products of the education system.

Quality is defined as not only a function of the final products of the educational system but also relies on internal processes and delivery of education which includes the elimination of waste and the enhancement of efficiency (Adegbesan, 2011). Okoye and Achibogwu (2018) defined quality as the degree to which an educational system conforms to established standard and appropriateness. Thus, the quality of educational programme could be measured in terms of quality of input, quality of process, quality of context and quality of output. Okoye and Achibogwu further stated that quality in education means the relevance and appropriateness of the education programme to the needs of the community for which it is provided. Sadly, judging from the definitions of quality in education it appears that the business education programme is lagging behind. Some authors noted that the increased rate of unemployment in the country shows that graduates of business education products have failed to demonstrate skills learnt from their learning experiences in business education. Vin-Mbah and Obiete (2015) averred that the increased rate of unemployment among business education graduates from tertiary institutions in Nigeria shows the poor quality of the programme. Audu, Abdulkadir and Abdul (2013) averred that lack of synergy between the business education programme and the private sector has resulted in a wide skills gap. This means that what is learnt in school is not what is expected at work. In another vein, Edokpolor and Owenvbiogie (2017) noted that business education programme is suffering from huge financial inadequacies which have resulted in the inability of the programme to achieve stated goals. Edokpolor and Owenvbiogie (2017) opined that business education is a capital intensive programme so needs adequate funding for the purchase of tools, ICT gadgets and machines among others. These challenges are saddening given the fact that business education is an integral tool for national development. It is against this backdrop that scholars have called for coming up with measures that will help to improve the quality of business education programme (Obiete, Nwazor & Vin-Mbah, 2015).

Some strategies like improving synergy and collaboration with private sector, review of the business education curriculum, provision of quality equipment for training, providing effective students mentoring services and equitable distribution of funds among others have been suggested as effective in improving the quality of business education (Oduma, 2013). According to Okoye and Achibogwu (2018), the strategies that could improve quality of educational programmes like business education include moderation of examination, in-service education of teachers, proper funding of education, supervision and inspection, mentoring and monitoring, as well as regular evaluation of the system. However, these strategies have not been proven to improve the quality of business education for better education service delivery. This study intends to fill that gap.



Statement of the Problem

Business education programme is a programme that equips its recipients with occupational and entrepreneurial skills. The programme is a veritable tool for national development because of the role it plays in the development of human capital in all sectors of the country. Sadly, the commitment towards ensuring that business education meets its set objectives have been hampered by issues relating to poor funding and poor instructional resource provision.

Business education programme is grossly underfunded and this has affected the ability of the programme to meet up with the changing times. The advancement in technology resulting in changes in business practices and equipment necessitates that the instructional and administrative facilities in business education programmes are updated to meet with the current trends. However, making this a reality has become an illusion. This situation seems to manifest itself in poor administration of the programme and poor quality of instruction witnessed in some tertiary institutions. It is against this backdrop that it becomes imperative to seek strategies for correcting the anomalies affecting the quality of business education programmes.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the challenges impeding the realization of quality in business education programme for better education service delivery?
2. What are the strategies for improving the quality of business education programme for better education service delivery in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the challenges impeding the realization of quality in business education programme for better education service delivery.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the strategies for improving the quality of business education programme for better education service delivery in Nigeria.

Method

Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 109 business educators from the tertiary institutions offering business education in Anambra State. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Strategies for Improving the Quality of Business Education Programme for Better Education Service Delivery (QBEPBESD)". The instrument was structured on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The instrument was validated by three experts, two in business education and one in measurement and evaluation in the faculty of education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The instrument was further subjected to reliability testing through a pilot test on 20 business educators in Enugu State who were not included in the



population of the study. The application of Cronbach Alpha reliability method on the obtained data yielded coefficient values of 0.84 and 0.88 for the two clusters with an overall reliability co-efficient of 0.86. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed with mean, standard deviation and t-test. Out of the 109 copies of questionnaire administered, 88 were returned and used for data analysis.

The mean value was used to answer the research questions while standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' ratings. The item by item analysis was based on the real limits of numbers of Strongly Agree (3.50-4.00), Agree (2.50-3.49), Disagree (1.50-2.49) and Strongly Disagree (1.00- 1.49). For the hypotheses, t-test was used to test all the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Where the calculated t value is less than the critical value of t, it meant that the variable did not significantly affect respondents' mean ratings and the hypothesis was not rejected. Conversely, where the calculated t value was equal to or greater than the critical t value, it meant that the variable has a significant effect on the respondents' mean ratings and the hypothesis was rejected.

Results

Research Question 1

What are the challenges impeding the realization of quality in business education programme for better education service delivery?

Table 1: Respondents' Mean Ratings on the Challenges Impeding the Realization of Quality in Business Education Programme for Better Education Service Delivery (N=88)

S/No.	Items on challenges impeding the realization of quality in business education programme for better education service delivery	X	.SD	Remarks
1.	Inadequate funding	3.44	0.81	Agree
2.	Poor collaboration between business education and private sector	3.33	0.78	Agree
3.	Non- availability of contemporary equipment and tools for teaching and learning	3.46	0.74	Agree
4.	Lack of professionalization of the business education programme	3.11	0.81	Agree
5.	Poor standards for enrolment of students into the business education programme	3.15	0.72	Agree
6.	Poor monitoring and supervisory practices	2.90	0.82	Agree
7.	Poor government attitude towards the management of business education	3.32	0.76	Agree



8.	Poor societal attitude towards the study of business education	2.75	0.75	Agree
9.	Poor quality curriculum	2.50	0.70	Agree
10.	Lack of infrastructures like computer laboratories, libraries and model offices among others	3.05	0.72	Agree
11.	Recruitment of unqualified staff	2.98	0.73	Agree
12.	Lack of investment in human resources development programmes for business educators	2.87	0.82	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.07		Agree

Data in Table 1 reveal that all the items achieved mean ratings ranging between 2.50 to 3.46. This means that they are challenges impeding the realization of quality in business education programme for better education service delivery. The cluster mean of 3.07 indicates that the challenges impeding the realization of quality in business education programme for better education service delivery include non-availability of contemporary equipment and tools for teaching and learning, inadequate funding, poor collaboration between business education and private sector, poor government attitude towards the management of business education, poor standards for enrolment of students into the business education programme and lack of professionalization of the business education programme among others. The standard deviation scores show that the respondents' opinions are related.

Research Question 2

What are the strategies for improving the quality of business education programme for better education service delivery in Nigeria?

Table 2: Respondents' Mean Ratings on the Strategies for Improving the Quality of Business Education Programme for Better Education Service Delivery (N=88)

S/No.	Items on strategies for improving the quality of business education programme for better education service delivery	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1.	Improving synergy and collaboration with private sector.	3.02	0.74	Agree
2.	Reviewing the business education curriculum	3.11	0.82	Agree
3.	Providing quality equipment for teaching and learning in the business education programme	3.05	0.77	Agree
4.	Providing funds for the business education programme	2.90	0.80	Agree



5.	Providing effective students mentoring services	3.08	0.71	Agree
6.	Moderating examination in business education	3.00	0.78	Agree
7.	Prioritizing In-service training of business educators.	3.14	0.85	Agree
8.	Regularly supervising the business education programme	2.86	0.79	Agree
9.	Ensuring record management in the business education programme	2.83	0.69	Agree
10.	Encouraging and funding research activities	3.06	0.77	Agree
11.	Ensuring quality evaluation process	3.18	0.75	Agree
12.	Recruiting quality business educators	3.22	0.83	Agree
13.	Standardizing and professionalizing academic attainments in the business education programme	2.85	0.73	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.02		Agree

Data in Table 2 reveal that all the items achieved mean ratings ranging between 2.85 to 3.22. This means that they are strategies for improving the quality of business education programme for better education service delivery. The cluster mean of 3.02 indicates that the strategies for improving the quality of business education programme for better education service delivery include improving synergy and collaboration with private sector, reviewing the business education curriculum, providing funds for the business education programme, providing effective students mentoring services, encouraging and funding research activities and recruiting quality business educators among others. The standard deviation scores show that the respondents' opinions are related.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the challenges impeding the realization of quality in business education programme for better education service delivery.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of Respondents' Mean Ratings on the Challenges Impeding the Realization of Quality in Business Education Programme for Better Education Service Delivery

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	α	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
C.O.E	72	3.02	0.77			86	0.05	0.44
Universities	16	3.07	0.73			1.96		Not Significant



Data in Table 3 show that the calculated t-value of 0.44 at 86 degrees of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical value of 1.96. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the challenges impeding the realization of quality in business education programme for better education service delivery. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the strategies for improving the quality of business education programme for better education service delivery in Nigeria.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of Respondents' Mean Ratings on the Strategies for Improving the Quality of Business Education Programme for Better Education Service Delivery

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	α	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
C.O.E	72	3.020.81						
				86	0.05	0.22	1.96	Not
Significant								
Universities	16	2.980.75						

Data in Table 4 show that the calculated t-value of 0.22 at 86 degrees of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical value of 1.96. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the strategies for improving the quality of business education programme for better education service delivery in Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.



Discussion

Finding on the first research question showed that the challenges impeding the realization of quality in business education programme for better education service delivery include non-availability of contemporary equipment and tools for teaching and learning, inadequate funding, poor collaboration between business education and private sector, poor government attitude towards the management of business education, poor standards for enrolment of students into the business education programme and lack of professionalization of the business education programme among others. The finding shows that lack of institutional support and provision of necessary tools and equipment are the major challenges impeding the business education programme. This is in line with Edokpolor and Owenvbiugie (2017) who found that the quality of the business education programmes has been affected by issues related to inadequate funding for the purchase of tools, ICT gadgets and machines. In the same vein, Edokpolor and Owenvbiugie also decried the lack of professionalization of the business education programme, societal attitude towards business education, lack of qualified staff and inconsistent staff development programmes as inhibiting factors affecting the quality of the business education programme. On another note, Audu, Abdulkadir and Abdul (2013) averred that lack of synergy between the business education programme and the private sector has resulted in a wide skills gap. The disparity in skills expectation of industry and what is taught in the business education programme is seen as a major problem towards ensuring quality of the programme. This means that graduates of the programme have to be retrained by employers of labour before recruitment. Thus invalidating the years spent getting educated in the business education programme.

Further findings indicated that the business educators in colleges of education and universities did not significantly differ on the challenges impeding the realization of quality in business education programme for better education service delivery. This shows that the respondents agreed that the challenges discussed above were impeding the realization of quality in the business education programme. This is in agreement with Edokpolor and Owenvbiugie (2017) who noted that poor financing, lack of professionalization, lack of quality staff and inadequate modern equipment affects the quality of educational service delivery in the business education programme.

Finding on the second research question revealed that improving synergy and collaboration with private sector, reviewing the business education curriculum, providing funds for the business education programme, providing effective students mentoring services, encouraging and funding research activities and recruiting quality business educators among others are strategies for improving the quality of business education programme for better education service delivery in Nigeria. This finding is in agreement Oduma (2013) who reported that improving synergy and collaboration with private sector, review of the business education curriculum, provision of quality equipment for training, providing effective students mentoring services and equitable distribution of funds are some of the strategies for improving the quality of business education programme for better education service delivery in Nigeria. Similarly, Okoye and Achibogwu (2018) suggested that moderation of examination, in-service education of teachers, proper funding of education, supervision and inspection, mentoring and monitoring as well as regular evaluation of the system were some strategies for ensuring quality in the business education programme.



Furthermore, findings reveal no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the strategies for improving the quality of business education programme for better education service delivery in Nigeria. This shows that business educators irrespective of their institution type agree that the strategies suggested above could improve the quality of the business education programme for better education service delivery.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers conclude that business education as a veritable programme for skills development have been hampered by issues relating to poor funding, poor curriculum, inadequacies of equipment, lack of synergy between the programme and private sector as poor government support of the programme. There is need for measures to be put in place to correct this situation if business education programme is to realize its objectives. That is why strategies like improving school-industry partnership, proper funding of the programme, professionalization of the programme, recruitment of qualified teachers and investment in development of staff among others are seen as strategies for improving the quality of the programme for better education service delivery.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers make the following recommendations:

1. The Federal government should as a matter of urgency improve on its commitment towards ensuring that business education programme is properly supported by making funds available, provision of teaching and learning equipments and sponsoring research activities.
2. The administrators of business education programme should partner with the private sectors in the areas of curriculum review, infrastructural provisions and professional support.



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