



## **IMPROVING BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMMES THROUGH EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP FOR SDTUDENTS' CAPACITY BUILDING IN RIVERS STATE**

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### **Abstract**

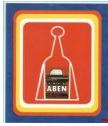
*Vocational education programmes are programmes geared toward facilitating graduate employment. Business education programmes being an aspect of vocational education are relevant for human growth, development and sustainability. Effective school – industry partnership in education would ensure qualitative and affordable education that is founded on deep skill and competency acquisition for national transformation. This study is aimed at improving business education programmes through effective school-industry partnership for students' capacity building in Rivers State. The researcher adopted descriptive survey research design. The study was carried in Rivers State. The population of the study comprised 113 lecturers of business education in universities and college of education in Rivers State. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Mean with standard derivation was used to analyze data related to the research questions and z-test to test null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the experiences students acquired from SIWES and TP were not adequate to their needs. Schools need to partner with industries effectively to enhance students capacity building.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Business education, effective, capacity building, programmes, partnership and school-industry*

### **Introduction**

The most visible values of cooperative vocational education is the opportunity for better application of classroom learning to a real-life test. This value is particularly important in the development of the capabilities needed for good occupational adjustment. Simulated occupational environments rarely provide a laboratory of real life employers and employees and seldom one with real-life customers or clients (Osuala, 2009). Occupations vary widely in their reliance on job experiences for learning in cooperative vocational education.

Vocational education programmes are programmes geared toward facilitating graduate employment. Business education programme, being an aspect of vocational education programmes are relevant for human growth, development and sustainability. It is very important for a country's human resources development and utilization as well as a vital tool for capacity building (Odu, 2010). Capacity building as about the future, a right step towards identifying more efficient use of technology and engaging in



collaboration leading to sustainable development. Successful capacity building strengthens an organization's ability to fulfill its mission over time and enhances its ability to have positive impact on the lives of its members. Kaplan (2000) opined that self-reflectiveness and critical analysis are the two qualities that promote effective capacity building. This is important in solving unemployment and other social vices now ravaging our country Nigeria.

Describing the unemployment situation in Nigeria, Denga (2010) affirmed that looking for a job in Nigeria is fast becoming a job itself. This clearly portrays the mobility of graduates from different educational levels in the country to engage in creative ability that will lead to self-reliance. There is urgent need to arrest the situation and allow sustainable development to take place. The best solution is to promote capacity building through the different educational programmes offered at the various educational levels in the country. Prominent among them are the school-industry collaboration that enhance the ability of the learner to view an environment and come up with suitable competences needed in the world of work and opportunities available in the area.

Considering some elements and nature of business education, one may be tempted to ask whether business education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions is actually achieving its goals. The answer may not be in the affirmative because the features of educational system in Nigeria today suggest that there are dysfunctions either/or in the policy, implementation and outcome of the educational system. According to Odu (2010), there is a sharp rise of complaint among parents and industries that graduates of our tertiary Institutions are half-groomed, lacking manipulative skills and not employable, have their retraining on being employed. Considering this poor state of education generally in Nigeria, it is clear that government alone may not be able to promote functional, hands-on and skill-oriented education successfully. To make an inroad into the desired transformations, Public Private Partnership (PPP) in education needs to be encouraged. Effective school-industry partnership in education would ensure qualitative and affordable education that is founded on deep skills and competency acquisition for national transformation. It will lead to increased and more reliable research findings, and the utilization of such findings in commerce and industry. Education will be relevant to the needs of the people and employer. However, the issue of making skills training and acquisition meaningful and relevant to the need of the society will remain a mirage without effective school-industry collaboration.

School-industry collaboration is the partnership between formal education and industrial sector to create an enabling environment for students to acquire hands-on experience, knowledge skills and appropriate attitude to work. Within communities are industries that have highly skilled human agents of production, functional facilities and raw materials that could be very useful in the practical training of business education



students. Biose (1998) stated that industries through collaboration with schools could be made to meaningfully contribute to the training of students in appropriate skills that relate to their interest.

Therefore, it has become imperative that industries should be actively involving in the skills training of business education students to complement classroom experience in order to acquaint them with skills needed for employment in the industries after graduation. Business education departments should tap the energies and synergies as well as the resources of the industries to the fullest. An effective relationship between the schools and the industries will compel the industries to make their expertise, equipment and expendable material available for the effective learning of the students. Okorie (2001) noted that as the industries participate in the training of the students, certain deficiencies that existed in the training of the students will be reduced if not completely eliminated.

A functional business education programme requires effective partnership with relevant industries which the graduates will serve. Although, business education students are exposed to Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) and Teaching Practice (TP) but Odugbasan (1999) lamented that the experiences students acquire from these schemes are not adequate to their training needs. Schools need to partner with industries for research assistance and collaboration, curriculum planning, infrastructural provision, scholarships, seminars and field trips among others. Furthermore, Gbenedio (2012) noted that many academic programmes tend to exist in isolation, with few connections between learning institutions and industries, even between those in the same geographical area.

The worry of this study therefore, is that, it appears that there are little or no effective collaborations between educational institutions and the employers of their graduates despite the inherent mutual benefits derivable from such partnerships and no-curriculum harmonization to reflect what is in the real-life situations. Hence, it becomes necessary to ascertain workable measures to enhance business education students, capacity building through effective school-industry partnership in Rivers State.

Therefore, if effective school-industry collaboration is established, business education students will have the opportunity to receive appropriate training from appropriate environment and the gap between the classroom experiences and the yearnings of employers will be reduced to the barest minimum. This study focused on improving business education programme through effective school-industry partnership for student's capacity building in Rivers State.



### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was how to improve the business education programmes through effective school-industry partnership in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the effectiveness of the available programmes in business education relating to schools and industries for students' capacity building in Rivers State.
2. Determine the constraints to effective school-industry partnership for students' capacity building in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How effective are the available programmes in business education relating to school industries partnership for students' capacity building in Rivers State.
2. What are the constraints to effective school-industry partnership in business education programmes in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

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

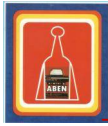
Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the opinions of university lecturers and college of education lecturers on the available programmes in business education relating to school-industry partnership students' capacity building in Rivers State.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the opinions of university lecturers and college of education lecturers regarding the constraints to effective school-industry partnership in business education programmes for students' capacity building in Rivers State.

### **Method**

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The researcher considered this design appropriate for the study since it involves exploring people's opinions by the use of questionnaire (Nworgu, 2006). This study was carried out in Rivers State of Nigeria. The population for the study comprised 113 lecturers of business education in two universities and one college of education in Rivers State. There was no sample because of the manageable size of the population.

Structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was face and content validated by three experts, two in business education and one from measurement and evaluation. Necessary corrections as suggested by the experts were effected by the researcher. Cronbach alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. Reliability coefficients of the two sections of the questionnaire



obtained are 0.83, and 0.89. giving credence to a high reliability, which can be used to obtain data for the study.

The instrument was distributed to the respondents and retrieved completely by the researcher and two research assistants. Mean with standard deviation was used to analysis the research questions and z-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A mean of 2.50 and above were considered effective or agreed while mean scores below 2.50 were considered ineffective or disagreed. The calculated z-value at 0.05 level of significance less than the table value for a given degree of freedom, the null hypothesis was not rejected and if otherwise rejected.

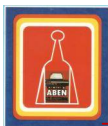
### **Results**

The data collected were analyzed and presented in following tables according to requesting and hypotheses.

**Table 1: Mean ratings of lecturers on the effectiveness of the available programs in business education relating to school industry partnership**

S/N	Items On Available Programmes	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Cooperative Work Training (CWT)	2.63	0.78	Effective
2.	Work Study	2.57	0.81	Effective
3.	SIWES	3.62	0.86	Effective
4.	Teaching Practice (TP)	3.90	0.80	Effective
5.	Research Partnership and grants	2.30	0.67	Ineffective
6.	Scholarship to business education students	2.10	0.78	Ineffective
7.	Plan of field trips and excursions	2.41	0.73	Ineffective
8.	Workshops/Seminars by industries for students	1.63	0.92	Ineffective
9.	Industrial personnel for special lectures	2.12	0.84	Ineffective
10.	Skill acquisition programmes for students	2.01	0.79	Ineffective
11.	School visits to industries for relevant information	1.80	0.62	Ineffective
12.	Special skill training/retraining for lectures	2.32	0.83	Ineffective
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.99</b>	--	Effective

The results in Table 1 show that items 1 to 4 had mean scores above 2.50. This indicated that respondents considered the items effective. While items 5 to 12 had mean values below 2:50 which indicate that majority of the respondents considered those items ineffective. This means that these programmes are not effective in business education for students, capacity building in Rivers State.



**Table 2: Mean rating of lectures on the constraints to effective school-industry partnership in business education programmes in Rivers State.**

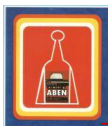
S/N	Items On Constraints to Effective Programmes	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Poor Students Performance in school	3.52	0.40	Agreed
2.	Poor attitude of students during SWES	3.76	1.08	Agreed
3.	Students poor performance in Teaching Practice (TP)	2.80	0.56	Agreed
4.	Poor Attitude of Students during (TP)	3.00	0.63	Agreed
5.	Industries poor attitude to SWES	3.61	0.68	Agreed
6.	Disruption of Academic Calendar by frequent industrial action	3.88	0.82	Agreed
7.	Poor supportive attitude to industries	3.30	0.73	Agreed
8.	Lack of school industry Liaison office	2.82	0.51	Agreed
9.	Insensitivity of schools to the benefits of effective school-industry partnership	2.63	0.70	Agreed
10.	Gap in communication between schools and industries	2.66	0.65	Agreed
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.19</b>	-	<b>Agreed</b>

Data in Table 2 reveal that all the items had mean values above 2.50 which means that all the items stated relating the programmes in business education are constraints to effective school-industry partnership for students capacity building in Rivers State.

**Table 3: z-test analysis on the effectiveness of available programmes in business education for school-industry partnership in Rivers State.**

S/N	Group	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	z-cal	z-tab	Decision
1.	University Lecturers	94	2.90	0.86	110	0.031	1.96	Not rejected
2.	College of Education lecturers	28	3.00	0.70				

Data in Table 3 reveal that the z – calculated value of 0.031 is less than z – table value of 1.96. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected, meaning that there is no significant deference as a result of the programmes in business education as considered by the respondents at 0.05 level of significance with a given degree of freedom.



**Table 4: Z – test analysis on the constraints to effective school – industry partnership in business education programmes in Rivers State.**

S/N	Group	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	z-cal	z-tab	Decision
1.	University Lecturers	94	3.20	0.80				
2.	College of Education lecturers	28	3.11	0.76	110	0.038	1.96	Not rejected

Data in Table 4 reveal that at 0.05 level of significance, the z – calculated of 0.038 is less than z – table value of 1.96. The hypothesis therefore, is not rejected. This implies that, there is no significant difference as a result of the opinions of respondents regarding to effective school – industry partnership for students, capacity building in Rivers State.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The result of the analysis of the first research question showed that there were few programmes in business education relating to school–industry partnership such as SIWES, but also not effectively in their training. This finding is in consonance with the finding of Oladipo (2011) which stated, that partnership between schools that promotes quality training of students has not received adequate attention in Nigeria. There are no serious linkages between the schools and the industrial sector. The result of the analysis of the second research question revealed that there are many constraints to effective school – industry partnership in business education for student’s capacity building in Rivers State. This finding relates to the finding of Onyesom and Godwin (2013) that highlighted myriad challenges to effective school – industry collaboration in business education. Furthermore, the two null hypotheses were not rejected. This showed that there were no significant difference in the opinions the lecturers regarding all the research questions.

### **Conclusion**

Business education students are exposed to Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) and Teaching Practice (TP) but the experiences students acquire from these schemes are not adequate to their needs. Schools need to partner with industries effectively to enhance students’ capacity building. Institutions of learning are constantly faced with challenges to produce experienced and qualified graduates that employers would find fit and appropriate to assume roles in the industries. Effective school-industry partnership would help in curbing the identified constraints, thereby enhancing students, capacity building in Rivers State.



## **Recommendations**

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

1. Schools and industries should collaborate effectively in order to increase students practical skills needed by the employers.
2. Institutions should create liaison offices for industries and helps in bridging the communication gap between schools and industries

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