

## **Influence of Business Education Curriculum Content on the Acquisition of Vocational Skills among Business Education Students in Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study determines the influence of Business Education Curriculum Content on the Acquisition of Vocational Skills among Business Education Students in Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. The survey research design was employed in carrying out the study. Two specific objectives, two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study consists of 223 Business Education final year students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Data were collected using the instrument tagged; "Business Education Curriculum Content and Acquisition of Vocational Skills Questionnaire (BECCA VSQ)". The instrument was validated by two business Educators and an expert in Measurement and Evaluation. A reliability estimate of .75 and .81 was achieved for the research variables using Cronbach Alpha Statistical Analysis after a trial test was conducted using 25 final year Business Education students (Ebonye State University) who did not form part of the main study sample. The questionnaire was administered to 223 final year Business Education students using stratified and accidental sampling techniques. Data analysis was done. The finding review that there was no significant influence of the theoretical component of Vocational Business Education curriculum content on the acquisition of vocational skills among Business Education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State; there was significant influence of the practical components of Business Education curriculum content and the acquisition of vocational skills among business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Based on the finding of the study it was therefore recommended among others things that; academic staff should ensure they did not only teach the practical aspect but use the theoretical aspect in helping the students to acquire communication skills needed for daily interaction and that student should be helped through the various practical sessions to acquire problem-solving skill and innovative skills which are the drive for today's economic development.*

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**Key words:** Business Education, Curriculum Content, Acquisition, and Vocational Skills

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## **Introduction**

General Business Education component are those courses that are offered by all Business Education students in Nigeria Universities and Colleges irrespective of areas of specialization. This may either be an option in Business Education Accounting, Business Education Marketing, Business Education Management, Business Education Secretarial Studies or Office Management dependent of the institutions. Business Education undergraduates students are expected to study the entire course content to gain sound foundation for further studies in their academic journey. Akpan (1999) noted that titles of curriculum should explain present aims and content. Notably, the development of curriculum and course of study should be determined by their purpose and contents. Okon (2018) opined other criteria are advisory committee of businessmen aims of content; curriculum prescription should be limited to those needed to achieve it; grade placement should be given special attention; proper sequence of subject matter is of major consequence, selection of subjects requires better guidance, selection of student is a different process; present abilities should determine contents others include: not all students should take job programmers; training for specialty jobs should be given close to the time of actual use; short intensive courses should be emphasized in preference to extended courses and changes should be made on the of evidence of need and study of outcomes.

More importantly, Business Education curriculum must be responsive to technological changes in the society especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom environment. Graduates needed to be adequately equipped to be engaged in the labour market. The provision of equipment, facilities, supplies and instructional resources must be obtained for effective implementation of business education curriculum content in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. If graduates are to be better prepared for forth coming opportunities Esene in Okon (2018) suggested that business education curriculum content should be comprehensive and varied in nature and scope; providing an understanding of the business world, ability to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills. Correction of subjects, individualization of instruction, prevention and reduction of drop-outs, constant review, provision for entry into jobs and acceleration at all levels, desirable equipment for maximum productivity. Iseniyi (2009) observed that the present situation of Business Education curriculum content is not meeting employers demand. She further observed that the present curriculum of Business Education is outdated, theoretically base, no correlation of subjects, as a result, no uniformity in the courses taught and this has given birth to vocational business education curriculum content not meeting the need of the society.

However, Association of Business Educator of Nigeria ABEN (2017) noted that Business Education is a new discipline, much younger than most traditional disciplines. It further explained that not many understand what the discipline espouses. The mandate of Business according is therefore to ensure that those students are educated for and about business. Thus, the Association emphasized that students are guide through carefully planned experience that offer them the opportunity to master the knowledge. Skills competencies and attitude needed to succeed in life. Again, the mandate of Business Education has been with us, perhaps since the advent of man, at first in the informal perspective. In the pre-literate society up to modern time, people have applied their Business skills and knowledge informally acquired in Business situations and transactions. They have always engaged themselves in production, distribution, exchange, storage and transportation and the like. However, no one can clearly and definitely state when the formal type of Business Education commenced in Nigeria (Ben, 2010).

Whatever skills are embedded in the curriculum content, these can only be transferred to the learner through learning activities. This implies that the content of any curriculum must translate to learning experiences and in the case of Business Education. The learning experience as the interaction between the learner and the external to where learning takes place through action behaviour of the students; it is what students do, they learn and not what the teacher does. The knowledge and skills

acquired have to be demonstrated theoretically or practically. Therefore, learning experience are activities planned by teachers and learners but performed by learners in classroom setting or otherwise.

Adekoya (2004) examined the influence of practical skills acquisition and socio-economic experiment of youth in Nigeria using random sample of 150 students. The finding revealed that youth's practical skills acquisition significantly influences their socio-economic empowerment in the larger society. This implies that joblessness of the Nigerian youth today stems from their non-acquisition of entrepreneurial skills; this have further aggravated the youth negative behaviour in the society as most of the problem such as violence, armed robbery, and ethnic-political clashes in Nigeria where youth are found in large numbers could be traced to the high rate of unemployment. Obanya (2012) pointed out that the most disturbing manifestation of the challenge is the increasing un-employability of graduates of higher education.

Ineme and Arikpo (2013) investigated the relationship between the undergraduate students' perception of the arts course contents. Behavioural outcomes and entrepreneurial skills among the undergraduate students of the two universities in the Cross River State. The results showed that there is a statistical relationship between undergraduate students' perception of arts course content curriculum, and entrepreneurial skills in arts developed the intellectual and increased visual sensitivity while enabling students solve problems more effectively.

Nte (2012) carried out a study on exposure of students of educational administration to entrepreneurial education for post-graduation job creation ability with two hundred students in the Development of Educational Administration, Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakiliki. The result of the analysis revealed that entrepreneurial education is relevant to the students with regards to equipping them with skills for post-graduation job seekers. However he advised that courses that only can improve emphasized. Furthermore he noted that youths who will succeed in employment are those who will shun irrelevant for employment. Adokiye, Dim and Chidima (2015) in European scientific journal in a description survey study carried out to investigate the curriculum content organization and teachers' perception of entrepreneurship education on skills acquisition by basic education students in Rivers East education zone of Nigeria. Results of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between curriculum content organization and teachers' perception of entrepreneurship education on the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by students.

The Practical component on the other hand form an integral part of the Vocational Business Education curriculum content taught in Nigeria Universities. Again, every course offered in Business Education has practical component. The practical component offers the students opportunity to acquire practical skills for the real work situation while the theoretical component of Business Education covers the concept that students must be exposed to. These exposures may be in industrial work experience scheme or field work. Industrial work experience scheme is a typical learning experience in our tertiary intuitions especially for the final year students. This scheme is aimed at helping students acquire practical skills in addition to the theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom environment and Field work is an organize visit by lecturers and student teachers to place of educational interest outside the school. This is a learning experience carried out by teachers and students to places where knowledge can be acquire from community resources. However, all courses in Business Education have theoretical components. Students must have understand these concepts and be able to relate then to the contemporary business world. The practical component of Business Education aims to provide undergraduates' student with skills that will make them to be self-reliant in

the world of work Duruanmaku- Dim in Okon (2018) described skill as the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performing a task. The experience and necessary training required of a business manager or a school administrator to become efficient on the job which includes muscular coordination and dexterity. Skills are valued in making decisions. Communicating orders and instruction and motivating subordinate. Resolving interpersonal conflicts and taking effective disciplinary action. Business Education students need practical skills which could be attained through several approaches within and outside the formal school system as well as private- public sector.

Developing vocational skills practice requires experiences that are capable of instilling entrepreneurial skills. Being aware of vocational skills cannot develop, different learning outcomes from different experiences is needed for the development of the various students vocational skill capabilities therefore should be designed into curriculum delivery. Learning experience is an important part of learning as it guides student towards engagement in content and help them learn new skills. With learning experience students demonstrate a high level of understanding, retain and apply learning real world experience. It provides more efficient learning as reading or listening. Most of all, build knowledge that can be used to develop vocational skills.

Yorke in Atah, (2018) describes vocational skills as a graduate's achievements and his/her potential for obtaining, and succeeding, in graduate-level job-placement. Also, Martin (2008) noted that gaining vocational skills should be seen as a continuum of learning that supports job progression, not just entry into the workforce. Yorke and Knight (2006) defined vocational skills as a set of achievements – skills, understanding and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations. According to Toland (2011), vocational skills are non-discipline specific, economically valuable skills required to get initial employment, progress in a job, as well as securing another job when desired. Careers Centre, Loughborough University in Orji (2013) described vocational skills as the professional competency sought after by employers which their students are helped to develop alongside subject/discipline. Management internal supervisory may help the teaching staff to be effective in their job description proper utilization of instructional resources for effective delivery for the acquisition of the vocational skills among university graduates. (Ateb, Atsu. & Atah, 2021). The work effectiveness of teachers and other personnel involved in the schooling process gives birth to the acquisition of vocational skills (Atah, 2017). Opined that if the curriculum of business education will include workshops, seminars and conferences it will help the students to acquire vocational skills needed for life sustainability. By doing this, students are encouraged to achieve the aims and objectives of Business Education Curriculum content. Atah, Ogbiji, and Agbor, (2019) revealed that curriculum content will help the students to acquire managerial skills to manage their small scale businesses.

Ukah and Atah (2021) opined that if there is collaboration among vocational education lecturers and teachers it will create an opportunity for the students to learn effectively and it will bring about the acquisition of vocational skills among the students of Business Education. Curriculum content will bring the short and long term expectations of the students into fulfilment (Akeke, Ushie, and Atah, 2019). Atah and Ukah (2021) Business Education curriculum content will equip students with the opportunity to be taught appropriately in a school environment. Ukah and Atah (2021) agreed students are expected to acquire the skills competencies and this will be possible if the students are

exposed to teaching and learning processes both theoretically and practically. The effective teaching of Business Education Curriculum Content will enhance graduates skills acquisition (Otum and Atah 2021)

Atah and Ukah (2021) further opined that Curriculum is necessary and had its foundation in the bible. For the almighty God to achieve and work excellently, it is because there was an executing plan to be followed. Chukwurah and Atah (2019) agreed that the Curriculum content of business education will inculcate direction both in teachers and students in the teaching and learning process for the skills acquisition. When the management provides school facilities it will equally enable the teachers to be more effective in performing their duties in the teaching and learning process for vocational skills acquisition (Atah, 2019). Chukwurah and Atah (2018) affirmed that, the relationship among the students and the teacher job effectiveness is the major key factor to a maximum productivity and probably students' skills acquisition. Bessong, Atah and Ugbadu (2019) agreed that if the internet and intranet are embedded in business education curriculum content, students will do well acquire the skills for maximum utilization in their workplace environment. Agim, Ochui, & Atah (2020) agreed that technology keeps on advancing and it is becoming very essential in our lives, everyday people use technology to improve the way they accomplish specific tasks and business education curriculum content should be in such a way that new technologies are captured to enable the students to be exposed the nascent technology. If management in various institutions collaborates with others institutions it will go a long way to improve the teaching and learning process for the acquisition of vocational skills among business education students (Atah, Bessong, & Fidel, 2017). Software programmes like MS Excel, MS term, zoom and Peer tutoring could be used in the teaching and learning process for skills acquisitions (Atah, Ukah and Crossdale 2019). Edet and Atah (2019) equally opined that Business Education curriculum content will enhance job creation mentality among universities business education students for global relevance. Atah (2019) opined that The management should adopt the right leadership styles especially the ones that are contingent on the time that will help the students of business education to acquire the needed skills. Atah and Abeng (2019) also agreed that instructional facilities such as computers and other reprographic materials are needed for the students to acquire the right vocational skills. Atah and Bessong (2018) affirmed that, the acquisition of vocational skills may bring sustainability of small scale business operators for national economic development in Nigeria. Wonah, Egbula and Atah, (2018) says that teaching methodology and learners' attention is important towards the attainment of vocational skills for employability.

Atah (2018) asserted vocational skills refers to the set of skills, competency and attributes that increase school leaver's chances of obtaining initial worthwhile employment, maintaining and progressing in the employment, obtaining new employment if required, and being satisfied on the job. He further enumerates these skills include but not limited to analytical and problem-solving skills, numeracy, confidence, time management, team working, communication skills, information technology, and monitoring skills. Business education students in tertiary institutions are required to obtain these skills that will help them to be employable in the world work.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of Business Education Curriculum Content on the Acquisition of Vocational Skills among Business Education Students in Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State. Specifically, the study sought to find out whether:

1. Theoretical component of Business Education curriculum content influence the development of vocational skills among business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.
2. Practical component of business education curriculum content influence the acquisition of



vocational skills among business education students in tertiary institution in Cross River State.

### **Research question**

1. What is the influence of theoretical component of Business Education curriculum content on the development of vocational skills among business education students in tertiary institution in Cross River State?
2. How does the practical component of business education curriculum content influence the acquisition of vocational skills among business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State?

### **Statement of hypotheses**

For the purpose of this study, the researchers formulated the following hypotheses to guide the study:

1. The theoretical component of Business Education curriculum does not significantly influence the development of vocational skills among business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State
2. The practical component of business education curriculum content does not significantly influence the acquisition of vocational skills among business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State

### **Methodology**

The survey research design was employed in carrying out the study. The population of the study consists of 223 business education final year students in Universities in Cross River State. Data were collected using the instrument tagged; “Business Education Curriculum Content and Acquisition of Vocational Skills Questionnaire (BECCA VSQ)” was used. The instrument was validated by two Business Educators and an expert in Measurement and Evaluation. A reliability estimate of .75 and .81 was achieved for the research variables using Cronbach Alpha Statistical Analysis after a trial test was conducted using 25 final year Business Education students (Ebonye State University) who did not form part of the main study sample. The questionnaire was administered to 223 final year Business Education students using stratified and accidental sampling techniques. Data collected was done by the researchers and analysed using one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the result is presented below.

### **Presentation of result**

Hypothesis one

*Hypothesis one stated that there is no significant influence of theoretical component of business education curriculum content on acquisition of vocational skills among business education students.*

The independent variable in this hypothesis is theoretical component of the business education curriculum content categorized into high, moderate and low while the dependent variable is acquisition of vocational skills measured in terms of communication skills, innovative skills, problem skills and organization skills. To test this hypothesis, one way analysis of variance was used and the result showed that for theoretical component of business education curriculum content and communication skills acquisition ( $F= 3.402, p<.05$ ), for theoretical component of business education curriculum content and innovative skills acquisition ( $F= 1.668, p>.05$ ), for theoretical component of business education curriculum content and problem solving skills acquisition ( $F=.179, p>.05$ ), for theoretical component of business education curriculum content and organization skills acquisition

( $F= 3.322$ ,  $p<.05$ ). A cursory look at the result showed that,  $p(.035)$  and  $p(.038)$  for theoretical component of business education curriculum content and communication and organization skills acquisition is less than  $p(.05)$ . This implies that there is a significant influence of theoretical component of business education curriculum content on acquisition of skills in terms of communication and organization skills only. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected for significant influence of theoretical component of business education curriculum content on acquisition of skills in terms of communication and organization skills and retained for problem solving and innovative skills acquisition. The result is presented in Table 1

**Table 1**

One way analysis of variance result on the influence of theoretical component of business education curriculum content on acquisition of vocational skills among business education students.

Skills acquisition	curriculum content	N	Mean	Std. Deviation			
Communication skills	Low	122	14.2869	5.16581			
	Moderate	37	12.9459	3.22271			
	High	64	15.4375	4.37117			
	Total	223	14.3946	4.72452			
Innovative skills	Low	122	12.7049	2.52488			
	Moderate	37	13.3243	2.45010			
	High	64	13.3594	2.85839			
	Total	223	12.9955	2.62094			
Problem solving skills	Low	122	11.7131	2.75585			
	Moderate	37	11.9730	3.03211			
	High	64	11.9063	2.59253			
	Total	223	11.8117	2.74772			
Organization skills	Low	122	13.0410	4.12691			
	Moderate	37	12.7568	3.13940			
	High	64	14.3750	3.14466			
	Total	223	13.3767	3.75509			
Skills acquisition	Source of variation		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Communication skills	Between Groups		148.673	2	74.336	3.402	.035
	Within Groups		4806.601	220	21.848		
	Total		4955.274	222			
Innovative skills	Between Groups		22.776	2	11.388	1.668	.191
	Within Groups		1502.220	220	6.828		
	Total		1524.996	222			
Problem solving skills	Between Groups		2.720	2	1.360	.179	.836
	Within Groups		1673.369	220	7.606		
	Total		1676.090	222			
Organization skills	Between Groups		91.753	2	45.876	3.322	.038
	Within Groups		3038.606	220	13.812		
	Total		3130.359	222			

## Hypothesis two

*Hypothesis two stated that there is no significant influence of practical component of business*

*education curriculum content on acquisition of vocational skills among business education students.*

The independent variable in this hypothesis is practical component of the business education curriculum content categorized into high, moderate and low while the dependent variable is acquisition of skills measured in terms of communication skills, innovative skills, problem skills and organization skills. To test this hypothesis, one way analysis of variance was used and the result showed that for practical component of business education curriculum content and communication skills acquisition ( $F= .190, p>.05$ ), for practical component of business education curriculum content and innovative skills acquisition ( $F= 3.092, p<.05$ ), for practical component of business education curriculum content and problem solving skills acquisition ( $F=3.641, p<.05$ ), for practical component of business education curriculum content and organization skills acquisition ( $F= 2.81, p>.05$ ). A cursory look at the result showed that,  $p(.047)$  and  $p(.028)$  for practical component of business education curriculum content on innovative skills and problem solving skills acquisition is less than  $p(.05)$ . This implies that there is a significant influence of practical component of business education curriculum content on acquisition of vocational skills in terms of innovative skills and problem solving skills only. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected for significant influence of practical component of business education curriculum content on acquisition of skills in terms of innovative skills and problem solving skills and retained for communication skills and organization skills acquisition. The result is presented in Table 2

Table 2

One way analysis of variance result on the influence of practical component of business education curriculum content on acquisition of vocational skills among business education students

Skills acquisition	Curriculum content	N	Mean	Std. Deviation		
Communication skills	Low	96	14.4792	4.33585		
	Moderate	39	14.6923	3.45767		
	High	88	14.1705	5.57750		
	Total	223	14.3946	4.72452		
Innovative skills	Low	96	12.6458	2.12246		
	Moderate	39	13.8718	3.22963		
	High	88	12.9886	2.75220		
	Total	223	12.9955	2.62094		
Problem solving skills	Low	96	12.3646	2.47565		
	Moderate	39	11.5897	2.27940		
	High	88	11.3068	3.11230		
	Total	223	11.8117	2.74772		
Organization skills	Low	96	13.4271	2.99032		
	Moderate	39	14.5128	3.47829		
	High	88	12.8182	4.47611		
	Total	223	13.3767	3.75509		
Skills acquisition	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Communication skills	Between Groups	8.564	2	4.282	.190	.827
	Within Groups	4946.709	220	22.485		
	Total	4955.274	222			
Innovative skills	Between Groups	41.690	2	20.845	3.092	.047
	Within Groups	1483.306	220	6.742		



	Total	1524.996	222			
Problem solving skills	Between Groups	53.698	2	26.849	3.641	.028
	Within Groups	1622.391	220	7.375		
	Total	1676.090	222			
Organization skills	Between Groups	78.035	2	39.017	2.812	.062
	Within Groups	3052.324	220	13.874		
	Total	3130.359	222			

### Discussion of findings

Hypothesis one stated that there is no significant influence of theoretical component of business education curriculum content on acquisition of vocational skills among students was rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence theoretical component of business education curriculum content on acquisition of vocational skills in terms of communication skills and organization skills. This could be due to the fact that the theoretical component of the business education curriculum has help the student to model the pattern of communication which the lecturers utilize while instruction as well as the opportunities to interact in the classroom environment. Most of the students can take this chance to improve their communication skills. The findings of the study was in line with that of Nte (2012) carried out a study on exposure of students of educational administration to entrepreneurial education for post-graduation job creation ability with two hundred students in the Development of Educational Administration. The result of the analysis revealed that entrepreneurial education is relevant to the students with regards to equipping them with skills for post-graduation job seekers. However he advised that courses that only can improve emphasized. Furthermore he noted that youths who will succeed in employment are those who will shun irrelevant for employment.

Hypothesis two that stated that there is no significant influence of practical component of business education curriculum content on acquisition of vocational skills among students was rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of practical component of business education curriculum content on acquisition of skills in terms of problem solving skills and innovative skills. This could be due to the fact that the practical aspect of the curriculum exposes students to a lot of activities that helps them to think above the box as well as help them to carry out activities that are profit oriented. The findings of the study was in in line with that Ineme and Arikpo (2013) investigated the relationship between the undergraduate students' perception of the arts course contents.. The results showed that there is a statistical relationship between undergraduate students' perception of arts course content curriculum, and entrepreneurial skills in arts developed the intellectual and increased visual sensitivity while enabling students solve problems more effectively.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is significant influence of business education curriculum content either in theoretical and practical aspects on acquisition of vocational skills among business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

### Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study it was therefore recommended among others things that:

- i. Academic staff should ensure they are not only teach the practical aspect but use the theoretical aspect in helping the students to acquire communication skills needed for daily interaction
- ii. That student should be helped through the various practical sessions to acquire problem solving skill and innovative skills which are the drive for today's business world.

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