

Perception of Business Educators on Learning Strategies for Improving Skills Acquisition of Business in Colleges of Education in Delta State

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Abstract

This study examined the perception of Business Educators on learning strategies for improving skills acquisition of business students in Colleges of Education in Delta State. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The area of the study was all the government own colleges of education in Delta State. All the 101 business educators of the colleges of education were used as the population of the study. There was no sample due to the manageable size of the entire population. Method of data collection was researcher structured questionnaire of 28 items. The statistical tool used for the analysis was mean statistics. Result of the study revealed that action learning strategy, cooperative learning strategy and practical learning strategy are learning strategy that instill required skills into business education students. Recommendation were made among others that there should be continuous research and development of Business Educators in the best practices of inculcating the required skills to the learners.

Introduction

Business education is a program designed to grip necessary skills, knowledge, attitude, ability and competencies needed in order to be productive in an employed job or self employed and reliant. Thus, contributing to the economy, the objectives of business education include; to produce competent graduates for self-employment and self-reliant, stimulate industrial and economic growth produce graduates with the training and support necessary to help them establish career in small and medium size businesses, produce graduates that can meet the manpower need of the society among others (Okeke and Oviri, in Amoor 2014).

The trainers of the above set of graduates are known as Business Educators and are vested with the huge responsibilities of training and turning business education students with the required skills that will better self, works of life and the society at large.

Global trends in business education have shown that business students leave school without acquiring the prerequisites skills that foster individual, community or national development (Cheritavian 2014). According to Irukaku (2018) learning strategies are the most prominent among several reasons which impact on students acquisition of effective skills needed to be professionals and active participants in creative building.

Mariani (2012) cited that learning strategies play a cognitive role in learning due to its facilitating and optimizing processes, especially in new tasks where one cannot rely on

routine, automated behaviours in task which require conscious thinking and accuracy. Thus, learning strategies are complex educational behaviour of a learner in using methods techniques, tools, discipline and communication in order to achieve goals.

There are different types of learning strategies which include institutional strategies, students centered discussion learning strategy, cooperative learning strategy, games learning strategy, discovery learning strategy, simulation learning strategy, problem-based learning strategy, tutorial learning strategy, drill/practical learning strategy, demonstration learning strategy. Juni and Aziz (2014) opined that specific learning strategies are met for specific purpose or what the trainer wants the students to achieve. Also Agua (2017) state that for learning strategies to be impactful the teacher needs to be mindful of the students needs. Thus, for the objectives of business education at instilling the required skill in its recipients to be achieved. Business educators need to select the right learning strategies and be mindful of what the students needs and the purpose of the teaching.

Skills refer to the ability individuals posses that enable the possessed to perform a job well. In other words, skills is the ability to do something expertly well. Osinem (2015) state that skill means the expertness and proficiency displayed in the performance of a task. Skills involves the acquisition of performance capability through repetitive performance of an operation. It can be developed through work experience, schools and laboratories where repeated experiences can be changed into expertness. Ogwuin Boyles (2016) opined that skills exhibited by an individual shows the extent the individual acquired it. Hence, skill acquisition is a specific and prolonged form of learning about a task or event. According to Tyarkoni (2011) acquisition of skills occurs at three stages in learning, firstly, at cognitive level when learners received instructions and develops performance strategies. Secondly, at the associative level, the previous learned strategies that are appropriate strengthened the new situation on the basis of feedbacks, and thirdly, the autonomous strategy slowly become more autonomous and less subjective to cognitive control or external interference.

Business education students need skills in order to be self-reliant and effective in work endeavours. Thus, Business educators should lay more emphasis on learning strategies that are met to instill skills acquisition during teaching and learning of business courses at these aforementioned stages. With the right learning strategies the required skills and attitudes are inculcated to the students making lasting changes in the selected experience.

Yinusa (2014) opined that the most appropriate learning strategies to adopt to improve skills acquisition should be that which can motivate the learner and sustain learners interest in the course of interaction.

The focal point of business education is to offer training to its recipients to acquire adequate attitude, concepts knowledge, understanding and skills for business and about business for personal usage, as administrators, managers, teachers or other work environment. In the same vein, where business education has not been able to achieved these goals, high rate unemployment, low self-esteem, weak economy and low technological development persist (Eze and Okarafor 2016).

Furthermore, Irukaku (2018) stated that Business educators persistently use learning strategies that does not equip students with effective skills. Hence, the need to adopt strategies that could foster among business students the acquisition of required skills.

Education for All Monitoring Team (EAMRT) (2012) reported that there are a lot of generation of over 20 million Nigerian youth who are leaving school without the relevant skills needed. This pose a huge challenge for Business educators to adopt the right learning strategies that will solve the over bearing issue that is currently affecting the rate of employment as well as the rate of unskilled graduates who do not quality for jobs in Nigeria or outside Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

This is the 21st century where every sector of the economy is clamouring for sustainability, quality service delivery and development. Research has proven that there are skills and competencies gap as perceived among business students and this gap need to be closed. Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2016) state that education in Nigeria tertiary institution has not realized its vision of equipping graduates with employable skills as indicated in the level of rising un-employment.

Quarterly Unemployment Rate from 2016-2000 in Nigeria

Years	2016	2017	2018	2019	2000
Quarterly					
Q1	7.45%	12.09%	14.44%	21.83%	30.19%
Q2	8.19%	13.32%	16.18%	22.73%	27.10%
Q3	9.90%	13.88%	18.80%	23.13%	30.20%
Q4	10.44%	14.28%	20.42%	22.56%	33.28%
Average per year	8.10%	13.40%	17.40%	22.56%	30.19%

Source: Dakua (2022)

The average yearly single digit of unemployment rate of 8.10% in 2015 change to an alarming rate of 30.19% in 2020. The high incidence of skills mismatch and the consequential declining employability has become a key challenge to government educational institutions and employers of labour at large.

Furthermore, World Bank Report (WBR) of 2018/19 state that the poverty rate in Nigeria was 39.10%, that is millions of Nigerians are living below the international poverty line of \$1.90 per person per day in 2020. WBK still stated that the poverty rate in Nigeria has increase to 47.3%, that is about 98 million Nigerians live in poverty. The report attributed the high rate of poverty in Nigeria to unemployment, limited jobs creation, covid-19, rapid population growth, insecurity among others.

Nigeria is also faced with an unprecedented wave of different security crises ranging from kidnapping to extremist insurgencies. Almost every corner of the country has been hit by violence and crime (Tank 2021).

Why the surge in criminality and crime among the Nigerian youth/graduates. Is it because these graduates are idle? To uphold the adage “An idle mind is the devils work shop”, not minding that there is a discipline like Business education whose core objectives are job creation and being self-reliant what then is the missing link in the Nigerian case? Could it also be that the right learning strategies are not employed? Thus, it is based on all these problems noted above that this study perception of Business educators on learning strategies

for improving skills acquisition of business students in Colleges of Education in Delta State has become necessary.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study borders on examining the perception of Business educators on learning strategies for improving skills acquisition of business students in Colleges of the Education in Delta State. Specifically this study sought to determine:

1. The extent to which action learning strategy improve skills acquisition among business students in Colleges of Education in Delta State.
2. The extent to which co-operative learning strategy improve skills acquisition among business students in Colleges of Education in Delta State.
3. The extent to which practical learning strategy improve skills acquisition among business students in Colleges of Education in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do action learning strategy improve skills acquisition among business students in Colleges of Education in Delta State?
2. To what extent do co-operative learning strategy improve skills acquisition among business students in Colleges of Education in Delta State?
3. To what extent do practical learning strategy improve skills acquisition among business students in Colleges of Education in Delta State?

Methods

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The area of this study was Delta State. The population of the study was drawn from the four government own Colleges of Education in the state offering Business Education. These Colleges of Education include; Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba, Delta State, Delta State College of Education Warri, Delta State Colleges of Education Mosogar, Delta State College of Education Oghara. The population comprised of 101 Business Educators from the four government own colleges (source: HOD's office of respective schools). Since the population size is manageable no sampling was done. The research instrument was a structured researcher developed questionnaire to elicit the opinion of respondents based on the research questions. The questionnaire consisted of twenty-eight (28) carefully designed items after interval review of literature. The instrument was face validated by two experts in School of Business Education. The cronbach's alpha was also used to measure the internal consistency, the reliability co-efficient of 0.73 was obtained, this was considered sufficient for the study. The questionnaire has four point response scale option of Very High Extent (VLE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The instrument was distribution by the researcher. Seventy-three (73) copies of the answered questionnaire was retrieved. The research questions were answered using mean statistic. A grand mean of 2.5 and above indicated that the respondent was in agreement with the item while a mean of 2.49 and below indicated that the respondent disagreed with the item.

Research Question 1

To what extent do active learning strategy improve skills acquisition among business students in Colleges of Education in Delta State?

Table 1

S/N	STATEMENTS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	N	Mean (\bar{X})	Decision
1.	Groups activities showcase students hidden talent.	38	25	10	-	73	3.38	HE
2.	Students engaged in learning activities improve their creative thinking	37	30	5	1	73	3.41	HE
3.	Students who participate in classroom activities has a better chance to improving their skills.	35	35	3	-	73	3.45	HE
4.	Learning activities encourage students to develop proquestioning skills	33	21	9	10	73	3.10	HE
5.	Activities in class rooms create opportunities for students to talk to each other by sharing ideas	45	20	8	-	73	3.51	HE
6.	Discussing researched experiences with other students improve skills.	48	30	-	-	73	3.81	HE
7.	Discussion, presentation, micro teaching are some of the classroom activities that improve students skills.	50	23	-	-	73	3.68	HE
8.	Extent to which you think action learning strategy can improve business student acquisition skills	60	13	-	-	73	3.52	HE
9.	Only action learning strategies alone is capable inculcating skills in business students.	-	-	20	53	73	1.27	LE
Grand Mean							2.87	High Extent

The result in table 1 shows the responses of Business educators from government owned Colleges of Education in Delta State. The table shows questionnaire items from 1-9 that answered research question 1. The result from table 1 shows mean rating from 1.27 to 3.82 with a grand mean of 2.87 which indicated that active learning strategy improve relevant skills required by business education business in Delta State. However, when questionnaire item 9 of table 1 where business educators were asked the extent to which they recommend only action learning strategy for instilling skills in business students they declined with mean rating of 1.27.

Research Question 2

To what extent do co-operative learning strategy improve skills acquisition among business students in Colleges of Education in Delta State?

Table 2

S/N	STATEMENTS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	N	Mean (\bar{X})	Decision
10.	Working together enhance activity	30	31	10	2	73	3.22	HE
11.	Group work encourage increase class participation.	35	21	15	2	73	3.22	HE

12.	Working together enhance good working relationship	35	25	12	1	73	3.29	HE
13.	Assigned group activities encourage completion of task on time.	38	23	10	2	73	3.33	HE
14.	Group task improves attitude to work.	30	25	15	3	73	3.12	HE
15.	During group task, the less skilled can learn from the most skillful ones.	39	23	7	4	73	3.27	HE
16.	Achievement of result among those student that work together is greater than that of those who work alone.	30	25	3	15	73	2.96	HE
17.	Less communicate is exhibited among participant of a group task.	15	13	15	30	73	2.18	HE
18.	I recommend the cooperative learning strategy be use by business educators to improve skills acquisition among business students.	45	15	13	-	73	3.44	HE
19.	Cooperative learning strategy alone is capable of inculcating the required skills in business students	-	3	4	66	73	1.14	LE
Grand Mean							2.91	High Extent

The result in table 2 shows that response of Business Educators from government own colleges of education in Delta State. The table shows questionnaire items rating from number 10-19 that answered research question 2. The result from table 2 shows the mean rating from 1.14 to 3.44 with a grand mean of 2.91 which indicated that cooperative learning strategy is required by business student to help them acquired the required skills. However, the questionnaire item 19 of table 2 where Business educator were asked the extent to which cooperative learning strategy alone can inculcate skills in business students, the respondents indicate a very low extent with a mean rating of 1.14.

Research Question 3

To what extent do practical learning strategy improve skills acquisition among business students in Colleges of Education in Delta State?

Table 3

S/N	STATEMENTS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	N	Mean (X)	Decision
20.	Students skills are improve by actively exploring relevant and interesting materials.	47	23	3	-	73	3.60	HE
21.	The ability of the trainer to move around groups, individual, asking question facilitates students involvement with material.	30	20	3	-	73	3.64	HE
22.	Dramatization of the trainer improve students interest.	35	30	3	3	73	3.33	HE
23.	Availability of relevant materials in laboratories, model office, workshops	30	23	-	-	73	3.68	HE

	etc arouse inquisitiveness in students.							
24.	Excursion to relevant places arouse student interest in choosing career.	30	23	-	-	73	3.68	HE
25.	Practical learning strategy enhances prompt feedback.	39	20	10	4	73	3.29	HE
26.	Physically feeling and touching relevant materials arouse student interest.	49	14	-	-	73	3.67	HE
27.	I recommend that practical learning strategy be use by Business educators to inculcate skills in business students.	60	13	-	-	73	3.82	HE
28.	Practical learning strategy along is capable of instilling the required skills in business students.	33	11	2	25	73	2.77	HE
Grand Mean							3.50	High Extent

The result in table 3 shows the response of Business educators from government owned colleges of education in Delta State. The table shows questionnaire items ranging from number 20-28 that answered research question 3. The result from table 3 shows the mean rating from 2.77 to 3.82 with grand mean of 3.50 which indicated that practical learning strategy is required by business students to help them acquire the relevant skills. Also, where questionnaire item 28 of table 3 where Business educators were asked the extent to which practical learning strategy alone can inculcate the required skills in business students, the respond indicate a high extent with a mean rating of 2.77 which shows that practical learning strategy can instill its required skills more than active learning strategy a comparative learning strategy.

Discussion of Findings

With respect to research question one the result of this study revealed that Business educators in government owned colleges of education in Delta State accepted with a high extent and a grand mean of 2.89 that active learning strategy can improve skills acquisition of business students. Thus, making them to be skillful on graduation where they can be employed or be self employed and by so doing reduce the unemployment rate in the country. This revelation is in line with Al-Odwan (2016) study stated that students that use active learning strategy through the active participation in class activities acquire new knowledge and skills which enable them to solve similar problem when faced with likely situations. Fayombo (2012) is also of the view that for effective learning to take place in the classroom the learner need to be actively engage in the lecture other than merely passively listening to an instructor lecture.

Finding with regard to research question two(2) reveals that Business educator in government owned colleges of education in Delta Delta State accepted with a high extent and a grand mean of 2.91 that cooperative learning strategy can improve skills acquisition of business student. The view is supported by Eisenhaver (2012) who opined that cooperative learning is essential to change the students perception ability to discuss and create the ability to work together as a team. The study further reveal that, when cooperative learning strategy is properly manage by the teacher it promote students confidence and develop students skills in facilitating each other training.

Also, findings in regard to research question three (3) reveals that Business educators in government owned colleges of education in Delta State accepted with a high extent and a grand mean of 3.50 that practical learning strategy can improve skill acquisition of business students. This view is in agreement with Godstime (2016) in Irukuka (2018) who stated that regularly embarking on practical learning like excursion, use of apprenticeship system, student industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) programme, use of models and computer simulation learning programmes are relevant to the skills acquisition of business students in vocational education institution in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Various literature in this study revealed that business education students leave school without acquiring the prerequisite skills that foster individual, community or national development. Thus, Business educators should be able to encourage business student to adopt the best learning strategies that are most likely to assist the learner in achieving the learning objective in this case skills.

Recommendations

1. The use of practical learning strategies should be highly utilized by Business Educators in teaching so as to equip the students with employability skills for self-reliant.
2. Educational policies that instill required skills to the learners should be implemented.
3. There should be continuous research and development by Business educators on the best practices of inculcating skills to the learners. This will go a long way in curbing unemployment and promoting self-reliance.
4. Educational philanthropists should build and donate skills acquisition centres in institutions that offer business education as a discipline.

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