

Office Education Pedagogical Practices and the development of Students' Managerial Competencies in Rivers State Tertiary Institutions

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between office education pedagogical practices and the development of students' managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions. Two research questions and corresponding hypotheses were posed to guide the study. Correlation research design was adopted having a population of 515 final year business education students from four tertiary institutions offering the programme in Rivers State during the 2022/2023 academic session. Structured questionnaires validated were subject to reliability to determine the internal consistency. To test for reliability the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient using SPSS version 23 and 0.86 index was obtained. The bivariate data collected were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) for analyses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings thus revealed positively significant relationship between mentoring pedagogical practices and team based pedagogical practices as proviso for the development of managerial competencies. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Business educators should use intermittently team -based learning pedagogical practices and design learning activities that would inspire students to develop and apply core management competencies -interpersonal relationship, tactfulness, communication in the workplace.

Keywords: Office Education, Pedagogical Practices, Mentoring, Team- based approach

Introduction

Business education is structured into interdisciplinary components. Amongst the various academic components is office education. Office education presently is popularly referred to as office Technology and Management Education (OTME)' and 'Office Management Education (OME) in some institutions. Notwithstanding, the new nomenclatures are interchangeably used but within the context of this study more preference will be given to the use of 'office education' to mean all. Office education as an important aspect of business education is designed for the purpose of acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitude and experiences capable of empowering students to fit into office related careers. According to Vin-Mbah (2012), office education is an efficient, effective, productive and functional education, which leads to self-employment, self-reliance, wage employment and consequently self-

actualization. Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN, 2014) had noted that business education is intended to expose the students to the knowledge related to technological development and its application in office functions; knowledge of different office equipment and their functions; and knowledge of office functions' automation, and the attendant effects as well as associated challenges with automation in developing countries. Koko (2016) explained that office education as a skill-oriented programme is designed to give participating students an opportunity to acquire competencies for office information management and education. Consequently, office plays important role in achieving efficient communication in organization. Office in every organization provides unique support services both to management and employees, customers, business partners and investors, shareholders. The various contributions office rendered hold major influence on its continuity and being successful. Business organization uses available information to determine how tasks are executed by employees to attain organizational goals. Office manager uses available information to plan, control and improve welfare services to employees and other integral units. Thus, exposing students to managerial competencies for the 21st century office before graduation to a large extent relies on the pedagogical practices of the lecturers.

Pedagogical practices, as noted by Marshall (2022) have to do with educators' teaching practices and how they influence students to learn what is expected to be learnt. Power School (2022) opined that the pedagogical practices of educators are at the heart of accelerating students' learning gains. Pedagogy practices in office education for promoting students' development of managerial competencies are many and the choice depends on lecturer's decision on how effective they are. Damodharan and Rengarajan (2012) opined that for the purpose of assisting students to develop the core competencies for office operations innovative pedagogical practices should be use by educators. Chekwube (2016) opined that innovative pedagogy in office education provides students with the opportunity to create, apply knowledge and develop skills and attitude require of the modern business environment. Abdulkarim (2019) noted that innovative pedagogy practices put the students at the centre of the learning process and their primary source of knowledge is their own and team members' experiences. Some of the innovative pedagogical models are: mentorship, experiential pedagogy, blended learning pedagogy, inquiry pedagogy, and team learning pedagogy. However, within the context of this study, two innovative pedagogical practices of office education lecturers namely mentoring approach and team approach would be assessed in terms of how they relate to students' managerial competencies development.

Mentoring approach requires that educators either become their own students' mentors or invite a more experienced person to mentor the students to achieve their learning goal. Using this strategy, learners can work together, reflect, and share ideas developed through the expertise of the mentor(s) to accomplish learning tasks (Power School, 2022). In mentorship a more experienced person - that is the mentor; create a learning relationship with a less experienced individual - that is the protégé. According to Crappell (2019), after the activities guided by the mentor, students can be allowed to evaluate their knowledge and abilities with peers. Some students sometimes demonstrate high preference for mentorship which invariably makes them more comfortable trying to collaborate to learn new skills with their course mates rather than independently or with their instructor. This approach also sometimes can be used to encourage student to practice with a partner before attempting to test their knowledge or skills independently. Team based pedagogical approaches are new and normally use to stimulate students' learning through shared experiences. According to Abdulkarim and Ubong (2017), team learning pedagogy is based on the philosophy that human experiences, knowledge and

skills depend to a larger extent on shared ideas. This assertion most importantly aligned with constructivist theory of learning that inspire collaborative learning. Team learning pedagogy is also promoted based on Structure-Process-Outcome theory by Watson and Johnson (1972) and Social Learning Theory by Vygotsky (1962). These two theories suggested the need to create situations that require learning through interaction with peers and through shared ideas. Team learning pedagogy can take the form of group discussion, collaborative learning, cooperative learning and group problem solving approach, how the team is not for the purpose of just a specific assignment. Nawaz and Gomes (2014) opined that using this pedagogy in business education courses help students to developing leadership competencies, shared vision, social skills, ability to work with others, facilitate knowledge sharing, and if technology usage is involved facilitate technology utilization abilities sharing. Managerial competency require by office education students before graduation are well documented in existing literature. According to Koko (2016), every graduate of business education (office education precisely) need the skills relating to computer application, keyboarding, taking notes and performing basic record management functions as well as information and communication management. Bruwer, Coetzee and Meiring (2018) opined that managerial competencies are the knowledge, skills, motives and attitudes necessary for effective performance of human and resources management functions. Shaikh, Bisschoff and Botha (2017) also postulated that the top six managerial competencies as has been identified through survey as priorities for office manager are oral and written communication skills, creative problem solving, results orientation, teamwork skills, and customer focus. Similarly, Bruwer, *et al.* opined that management competency include such characteristics as communication skills, problem solving, customer focus and the ability to work within a team. Consequently, it is expected that lecturer's use of mentoring or team learning pedagogical practices should assist their students to develop all these managerial competencies before graduation.

Extant studies on pedagogical practices of business education lecturer for the development of management competencies have reported varying results. Nawaz and Gomes (2014) reported that Business Education students developed management competencies required for success in the 21st century through the use of innovative team learning pedagogy. In addition, Smith (2013) reported that mentoring in degree programmes is instrumental to helping students develop managerial skills as an aspect of leadership skills. Chinwe-E, Uteh and Nkoro (2019) reported that work-based mentoring approach is one of the most appropriate for delivery office technology and management education that would produce graduates with requisite managerial competencies for global competitiveness. Akinola (2021) reported that through mentoring young graduate are assisted to acquire competencies relevant for effective management. From existing studies reviewed not much has been done on office education pedagogical practices and the development of students' managerial competencies, especially with focus on Rivers State tertiary institutions, hence, it is this gap in existing literature that inspires the present study.

Statement of the Problem

Existing literature have outlined traditional and innovative pedagogical practices as the two approaches used to build meaningful and impactful learning experiences in office education. However, preference is given more to innovative pedagogical practices such as mentoring and team approaches to teaching and learning but also demand the need for careful planning and design of meaningful learning activities; timing; the pace of learning; availability of resources

required and teacher's exposure, interest and the need for effective evaluation of learning. Consequently, in a situation where earlier studies have consistently reported lack of business education lecturer's interest, resistance to change, poor funding, insufficient time, phobia and poor payment of educators' allowances (Abdulkarim & Onwuchekwa, 2020), as hinderance to the utilization of innovative approaches, one wonders the extent these enumerated problems have affected the application of innovative pedagogical practices and the negative consequences these might have on the development of managerial competencies by students. The managerial competencies can be sufficiently developed using any of these two pedagogical practices. It is in view of the stated problem and researchers' curiosity, that the present study was conceived to investigate office education pedagogical practices and the development of students' managerial competencies in Rivers State Tertiary Institutions.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does mentoring pedagogy relate to the development of students' managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions?
2. How does team- based pedagogy relate to the development of students' managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between mentoring approach and the development of students' managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions?
2. There is no significant relationship between team- based approach and the development of students' managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions.

Methodology

Correlation research design was adopted for the study. This research design is deemed appropriate because researchers intend to gather information that is related to establishing the relationship between variables under investigation. The research design is preferable in dealing with situations that require establishing relationship. The population of the study is made up of 515 undergraduate final year business education students in Rivers State tertiary institutions during the 2022/2023 academic session. The choice of population was considered appropriate and suitable for the research because only this category of students has spent three years in their respective institutions can assess their lecturers' use of pedagogical practices as well as how they have helped them develop managerial competencies through office education. The entire population of 515 final year business education students was used as the sample of the study because it is a manageable size. Researchers' designed structured questionnaire titled "Office Education Pedagogical Practices and Development of Students' Managerial Competencies Questionnaire (OEPPDSMCQ) was used for the study. The questionnaire contained 12 items for the two clusters. The questionnaire was designed based on 4 points rating scale with response options of Strongly Agreed = 4 points, agreed = 3 points, disagreed = 2 points, and Strongly Disagreed = 1 point for the clusters on the variables under investigation. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by three experts, two experts were of Business Education and one expert of Measurement and Evaluation from Rivers State University. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient test was used to test the

instrument at 0.86. The copies of the instrument were personally administered by the researcher. However, out of the 515 copies administered, only 423 questionnaire copies which constitute 82% of the entire copies administered were completely filled and returned.

Data collected were analyzed using mean Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) to answer the research questions raised and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. All computations were done with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0.

Result Presentation

Research Question 1: How does mentoring pedagogy relate to the development of students' managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions?

Table 1: Summary of Correlation Coefficient of (r) between Mentoring Pedagogy and Students' Managerial Competencies in Rivers State Tertiary Institutions

	Bivariate Data	Mentoring Approach	Students Managerial Competencies
Mentoring Approach	Pearson Correlation	1	.56**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	423	423
Students' Managerial Competencies	Pearson Correlation	.56**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	423	423

Table 1 reveals r value of 0.56, $p < .05$ at 0.000. This means that mentoring approach practices used by office education lecturers has moderate positive relationship with the development of students' managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions. This means that as office education lecturers provide their students with opportunity to learn under the guidance of experienced mentor, the students develop vital managerial competencies.

Research Question 2: How does team -based pedagogy relate the development of students' managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions.

Table 2: Summary of Correlation Coefficient of (r) between Team Based Approach and Students' Managerial Competencies in Rivers State Tertiary Institutions

	Bivariate Data	Team Based Approach	Students Managerial Competencies
Team Based Approach	Pearson Correlation	1	.14
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.061
	N	423	
Students' Managerial Competencies	Pearson Correlation	.061	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.061	
	N	423	423

Table 3 reveals PPMC r value of 0.14, $p < .05$ at 0.000. This means that team-based approach practices used by office education lecturers has very weak positive relationship with the development of students' managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions. This means that as office education lecturers provide their students with opportunity to learn certain courses using team-based practices so that students can develop essential managerial competencies.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between mentoring approach and the development of students' managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions?

Table 3: Summary of Correlation Coefficient of the Significant Relationship between Mentoring Approach and the Development of Students' Managerial Competencies in Rivers State Tertiary Institutions

		Mentoring Approach	Students Managerial Competencies
Mentoring Approach	Pearson Correlation	1	.56**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	423	423
Students' Managerial Competencies	Pearson Correlation	.56**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	423	423

Table 4 reveals PPMC r value of 0.56, $p < .05$ at 0.000. Since the p value at 0.000 is less than the p value provided at 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is significant moderate positive relationship between mentoring approach practices used by office education lecturers and the development of students' managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions. This significant relationship must be as a result of the students being able to develop managerial competencies when they learn under the guidance of experienced individual.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between team-based approach and the development of students' managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions.

Table 4: Summary of Correlation Coefficient of r on the Significant Relationship between Team Based Approach and the Development of Students' Managerial Competencies in Rivers State Tertiary Institutions

		Team Based Approach	Students Managerial Competencies
Team Based Approach	Pearson Correlation	1	.14
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.061
	N	423	423

Students’ Managerial Competencies	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.14 .061 423	1 423
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Table 5 reveals PPMC r value of 0.14, $p < .05$ at 0.061. Since the p value obtained at 0.061 is greater than p value provided at 0.05, the null hypothesis is hereby accepted. This means that there is no significant relationship between team -based approach practices used by office education lecturers and the development of students’ managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions.

Discussions of Major Findings

The above results reaffirmed the direct influence of mentoring approach practices used by office education lecturers to the development of students’ managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions. The hypothesized variable revealed that the relationship though positively significant but mentoring approach practices used by office education lecturers was found to be moderately related to the development of managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions. This finding emanated from the fact that office education lecturers provide their students with the opportunity to learn under the guidance of experienced mentor, it reinforces and motivate students to develop vital managerial competencies. The empirical finding is supported by Smith (2013) who reported that mentoring in degree programmes is instrumental to helping students develop managerial skills as an aspect of leadership skills. Furthermore, the finding was equally supported by Chinwe-E, Uteh and Nkoro (2019) who affirmed that work-based mentoring approach is one of the most appropriate for delivery office technology and management education that would produce graduates with requisite managerial competencies for global competitiveness. The study finding also agreed with Akinola (2021) assertion that mentoring young graduates assist them to acquire competencies relevant for effective management.

Furthermore, team-based approach practices used by office education lecturers have had very weak positive relationship with the development of students’ managerial competencies in Rivers State tertiary institutions. The empirical evidence though weak but it was discovered that relationship between team-based approach practices of office education lecturers and the development of students’ managerial competencies was significant. This result must have emanated from the fact that team -based learning must be properly adopted and applied during teaching to reinforce collaboration and facilitate acquisition of managerial competencies. Masood and Kajal (2016) in supporting this finding had agreed that team-based learning impacted on the management proficiency of students in business communication course. However, the earlier study did not conclusively establish the significant state of team-based learning pedagogy in terms of the development of managerial competencies among students. The finding also agreed with Nawaz and Gomes (2014) who claimed that developing management competencies is fundamental prerequisites for success in the 21st century especially when they are taught with innovative team learning pedagogy.

Conclusion

Mentorship and team-based learning pedagogical practices are relatively important to office education managerial competencies. Mentoring and team-based pedagogical practices

provided an opportunity for students to develop managerial competencies especially when they learn under the guidance of an experienced mentor. The learning environment help students to share new ideas, work -related experiences, leadership, interpersonal relationship and tactfulness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are put forward for implementation:

1. Business education lecturers especially those in office education should continue to mentor their students to acquire vital leadership qualities that will help them in their future career.
2. Business educators who intermittently use team -based learning pedagogical practices should design learning activities that would inspire students to develop and apply core management competencies such as interpersonal relationship, tactfulness and communication to solve problems in the workplace.

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