

Multifaceted Skills in Business Education and Increased Productivity among Business Educators in Colleges of Education in Delta State

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ABSTRACT

The study examined to which extent multifaceted skills possessed increase productivity among business educators in Colleges of Education in Delta State. The identified multifaceted skills in business education include financial skills, managerial skills and office technology skills. The study employed the descriptive survey design. Three research questions were raised and one null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. A population and sample comprised all the seventy-two (72) Business Educators in the four Colleges of Education in Delta State. Data were collected through a fifteen-item structured questionnaire for each research question with a five point Likert-type rating scale. The questionnaire was duly validated and reliability coefficient was established at 0.83 using Cronbach Alpha test. The analysis of data collected was done using mean to answer the research questions and analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used at 0.05 level of significance for testing the null hypothesis. The study found out that the extent of multifaceted skills possessed by business educators, contributed to increased productivity among business educators in Colleges of Education in Delta State. Hence, the study recommended that there is need for quality training of skills in business education for business educators to acquire relevant multifaceted skills for the benefit of rewarding outcome.

Keywords: Multifaceted Skills, Business Education, Increased Productivity

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that there is a great relationship between the industry and educational institutions. While the educational institutions train and certify, the industry consume or employ their product (Onoyovwi and Okoduwa, 2008). To be gainfully employed means that graduating students must possess necessary skills required by employers. Graduating from school is one thing and securing a job is another thing. If the goal of any young graduate is to be gainfully employed, then there is need to prepare them with necessary skills for productivity and services from school to the workplace.

In the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004), an emphasis is laid on a united, strong and self-reliant nation. The policy goes further to stress on the acquisition of appropriate knowledge and skills necessary for one to secure paid employment in office or be self-employed. The value objectives aptly align with the general goal of business education which is to give training and impart necessary skills leading to increased productivity and services and self-reliance. According to the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004), business education is considered as a veritable tool for preparing students for the enterprise as employees, employers and entrepreneurs. Business education is an aspect of educational programme offered at the Colleges of Education in Delta State, which prepares students for careers in businesses and organizations.

Education has a significant role in the development of the citizenry and the nation through skills acquisition and increased productivity for improved economy. Education can be seen as a process of learning that has future benefits in building the capacity of citizens for a meaningful engagement of the forces that shape socio-economic development (Abdulkadir, 2011). Therefore, education is a medium through which the society transmits skills, attitude and behaviour to its younger ones, in order to provide a better life for the society and its members. Business education is categorized among this education in the tertiary institutions. Business education is an education for vocation. Osuala (2004) opines that it is a training system that encourages the beneficiary to acquire multifaceted skills that will make them fit into the world of work. Business education is an educational programme that prepares the individual for the world of work as a teacher, office employee or to be self-employed.

Anao in Ekpenyong and Ojo (2008), states the major goals of business education, amongst others, to include: i) Adapting the various business concepts acquired in class to real life situation, ii) Acquiring necessary skills and competencies required for the performance of basic business jobs which includes; taking simple administrative decisions and dealing with correspondence, iii) Keeping simple records of financial and other transactions in the office and, iv) Playing productive roles in a free enterprise economy.

Business education prepares its graduates for employment in the workplace, typical existing business enterprises as well as the acquisition of knowledge relevant to employment. The business education programme basically equips the individual with necessary skills and abilities with practical acquisition and application of these necessary basic skills for real life situations for increased productivity. Business education is offered in all the Colleges of Education in Delta State, and the courses offered are Financial, Management, Marketing, Office Technology and Management, Entrepreneurship, Information and Communication Technology, among others. Business education serves as a very significant means through which an organization or enterprise can achieve her ultimate goals of increased productivity especially if it is supported with the multifaceted skills acquired by business educators, nurtured and articulated to provide initiatives and geared towards increased productivity.

Business education emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge relevant to employment and demonstrable job specific skills or competencies. Skills are abilities of power and authority of knowledge, attitudes and facts necessary for accomplishing tasks (Achilike and Okwuanaso, 2001). Skills, therefore, are the knowledge and behaviours that enable an employee to meet established performance criteria. Ente, Musa and Eze (2009) view skills as essential knowledge obtainable in a profession and those which the professionals in the field must possess and be able to demonstrate at optimal level of acquisition and functioning. Increased productivity can only be rendered when one has the skills, knowledge, competencies and attitude required in the profession.

Increasing productivity is a major goal for many business people and organization, as the more productive their workforce is, the more money they can bring into businesses. Simply put by Schreiner (2008), increased productivity means that your workers are putting out products more quickly or completing services at a rapid rate than before. In most businesses, the more products that workers produce or services they complete, the more money comes in to the business, making increased productivity a high priority for many business owners and organizations. Business educators are expected to be knowledgeable in the multifaceted skills in business education to rendered good services in any workplace they find themselves for increased productivity.

Multifaceted skills in business education as considered by the researcher in this study are: financial skills, managerial skills and office technology skills as necessary skills needed to

possess by every business educators to contribute productively in the workplace. Financial skills are saving skills, wealth creation skills, investment skills, project appraisal skills as well as portfolio mix and management skills for multiplication of wealth. Managerial skills are the ability to make decisions and lead subordinate within an organisation which include human skills (ability to interact and motivate), technical skills (knowledge and proficiency in the trade and conceptual skills (ability to understand concept, develop ideas and implement strategies. Others are communication ability, response behaviour and negotiation tactics.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) enunciates that education is an instrument per excellence for the development of the nation towards making the nation and citizens self-reliant. Education, training and life-long learning foster a virtuous circle of increased productivity, more employment of better quality, income growth and development (ILO, 2008). Inadequate education and skills development keep economies trapped in a vicious circle of low education, low productivity and low income. Relevance of skills training and to improve access to skills acquisition can instead help organization move to a virtuous circle of increased productivity, employment and income growth and development.

In this vein, business education programme that equips business educators with the rightful multifaceted skills that enable them to engage productively in a life of work in the office as well as for self-employment after graduation, for increased productivity and income growth and development, was considered by the researcher for this study. In line with this aspiration, one may not be able to say how effective business educators have been exploring the multifaceted skills in business education possessed in their workplace to affect increased productivity and income growth and development.

Business Educators, by the nature of their programme, ought to possess relevant multifaceted skills for successful increased productivity but casual observation and empirical reports indicate that they are not doing well in this aspect. Therefore, the concern of the researcher was to establish the opinions of business educators as to what extent the multifaceted skills possessed from business education can help to increase productivity and income growth and development in their workplace, particularly those in the Colleges of Education in Delta State.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study was to examine the inter-dependency of business educators between the extent of multifaceted skills possessed from business education and increased productivity for income growth and development in Colleges of Education in Delta State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the extent to which financial skills possessed by business educators contribute to increased productivity in Colleges of Education in Delta State.
2. Examine the extent to which managerial skills possessed by business educators contribute to increased productivity in Colleges of Education in Delta State.
3. Examine the extent to which office technology skills possessed by business educators contribute to increased productivity in Colleges of Education in Delta State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For the purpose of carrying out this study, three research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent do Financial skills possessed by business educators contribute to increased productivity in Colleges of Education in Delta State?
2. To what extent do Managerial skills possessed by business educators contribute to increased productivity in Colleges of Education in Delta State?
3. To what extent do Office Technology skills possessed by business educators contribute to increased productivity in Colleges of Education in Delta State?

HYPOTHESIS

The following null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean responses among business educators in the four Colleges of Education in Delta State regarding to which extent multifaceted skills possessed increase productivity among business educators in Colleges of Education in Delta State.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population and sample for the study comprised all the seventy-two (72) business educators in the four Colleges of Education in Delta State. As gathered from the various institutions, 20 business educators in College of Education, Agbor, 20 business educators in College of Education, Warri, 20 business educators in Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba and 12 business educators in College of Education, Mosogar. The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire for each of the research questions and was analysed by using arithmetic mean while analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

A 5-point Likert-type rating scale was used to elicit the rating responses of respondents as: Very High Extent (5), High Extent (4), Moderate Extent (3), Low Extent (2) and Very Low Extent (1). The respondents were expected to check the appropriate point on the scale to register the extent of their agreement with a particular statement made in the questionnaire on how multifaceted skills possessed contribute to increased productivity among business educators in Colleges of Education in Delta State.

The questionnaire was validated by three experts, two in business education and one in measurement and evaluation department from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. Their recommendations were integrated to produce the final copy. The reliability of the questionnaire was established through a pilot testing using 15 business educators of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State and 0.83 coefficients was obtained using Crombach alpha analysis. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher with the help of three research assistants after due orientation. The decision rule for accepting or rejecting, was to reject the null hypothesis if the F-calculated value was greater than the F-critical value or otherwise accept.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This section is designed to present the data collected for ease of analysis and interpretation. Research question 1-3 were answered using arithmetic mean while the null hypothesis was tested using a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Research Question 1

To what extent do financial skills possessed by business educators contribute to increased productivity in Colleges of Education in Delta State?

Table 1. Respondents’ Mean Distribution to which Extent Financial Skills Possessed by Business Educators Contribute to Increased Productivity

<i>Financial Skills Possessed by Business Educators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Decision</i>
Knowledge of accounts	3.81	HE
Knowledge of costing	3.57	HE
Ability to interpret financial statements	4.21	HE
Ability to execute payroll and various deductions	3.78	HE
Ability to determine gross and net profit	4.11	HE
Ability to identify sources of funds	3.90	HE
Ability to acquire the skill of preparing financial statement	3.87	HE
Knowledge of how to obtain loans	3.14	ME
Knowledge of Federal, State and Local Government levies, taxes and regulations	3.17	ME
Awareness of the existence and utilization of professionals like bankers, accountants, lawyers, insurance agents and advertising agents	2.27	LE
Ability to use bonus to increase productivity	4.64	VHE
Ability to detect fraud	4.62	VHE
Ability to undertake simple audit	3.12	ME
Ability to be acquainted with new trends in relation to accounting concepts and conventions	3.45	ME
Ability to avoid unplanned expenditure	3.78	HE

KEY: VHE: Very High Extent; HE: High Extent; ME: Moderate Extent; LE: Low Extent

Table 1 shows that of all the listed Financial skills possessed by Business Educators for increased productivity, only awareness of the existence and utilization of professionals like bankers, accountants, lawyers, insurance agents and advertising agents contributed to a low extent increased productivity while other items listed were either very high extent, high extent and/or moderate extent contributed to increased productivity.

Research Question 2

To what extent do Managerial skills possessed by business educators contribute to increased productivity in Colleges of Education in Delta State?

Table 2 below shows that the acquisition of management and supervisory skills, ability to manage time and meet job schedules, knowledge of good human relationship and possession of innovative skills were the most managerial skills possessed by business educators that contributed to a very high extent in increased productivity, while ability to purchase goods, tools and equipment shows moderately extent. Other skills listed contributed to high extent in increased productivity.

Table 2. Respondents’ Mean Distribution to which Extent Managerial Skills Possessed by Business Educators Contributed to Increase Productivity

<i>Managerial Skills Possessed by Business Educators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Decision</i>
Ability to communicate effectively using oral and written skills	4.15	HE
Knowledge of method of conducting effective meetings	4.25	HE
Ability to make long and short term planning	4.00	HE
Ability to purchase goods, tools and equipment	3.01	ME
Knowledge of inventory control and turnover	3.76	HE
Knowledge of factors involved in overhead control	3.58	HE
Acquisition of management and supervisory skills	4.67	VHE
Ability to manage time and meet job schedules	4.67	VHE
Ability to conduct personal evaluation	4.01	HE
Knowledge of good human relationship	4.50	VHE
Possession of self-control and discipline skills	3.75	HE
Ability to take reasonable risk	3.54	HE
Possession of negotiating skills	3.68	HE
Possession of innovative skills	4.64	VHE
Ability to manage change	4.11	HE

KEY: VHE: Very High Extent; HE: High Extent; ME: Moderate Extent

Research Question 3

To what extent do Office Technology skills possessed by business educators contribute to increased productivity in Colleges of Education in Delta State?

Table 3 (Part-I). Respondents’ Mean Distribution to which Extent Office Technology Skills Possessed by Business Educators Contributed to Increase Productivity

<i>Office Technology Skills Possessed by Business Educators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Decision</i>
Ability to demonstrate knowledge of good grammar	4.44	HE
Ability to use inter-office and distant communication gadgets	3.86	HE
Ability to determine and utilize appropriate communication media	3.62	HE
Ability to organize work and present point logically and in simple language	3.91	HE
Ability to use computer to process information	4.62	VHE

Table 3(Part-II). Respondents’ Mean Distribution to which Extent Office Technology Skills Possessed by Business Educators Contributed to Increase Productivity

<i>Office Technology Skills Possessed by Business Educators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Decision</i>
Ability to use different word processing packages	3.90	HE
Ability to edit, key-in texts and spelling checks of texts	3.84	HE
Ability to format text and display it in an acceptable form	4.01	HE
Ability to proof-read documents on the screen before printing	4.62	VHE
Ability to interpret computer print out	3.78	HE
Ability to apply the principles of recording data, log in and out and maintain/update data stored	3.68	HE
Ability to demonstrate the knowledge of office automated system	4.50	VHE
Ability to store and retrieve information through effective filing system	3.98	VHE
Ability to demonstrate the knowledge of the computer operating system	3.83	HE
Ability to assemble, motivate and empower an effective team	4.62	VHE

KEY: VHE (Very High Extent), HE (High Extent),

Table 3 shows that all the listed skills of Office Technology possessed by business educators contributed to a very high extent and/or to high extent in increased productivity.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the mean responses among business educators in the four Colleges of Education in Delta State regarding to which extent multifaceted skills possessed increase productivity among business educators in Colleges of Education in Delta State.

Table 4. Analysis of Variance of Difference between the Mean Responses of Respondents on to which extent multifaceted skills possessed increase productivity among business educators

<i>Source of Variance</i>	<i>Sum of Square</i>	<i>Degree of Freedom</i>	<i>Mean of Square</i>	<i>F- Calculated</i>	<i>F- Critical</i>
Between Group	0.25	3	0.08		
Within Group	-27.05	69	-0.39	-0.21	2.75
<i>Total</i>	<i>-26.80</i>	<i>72</i>			

Guided by the decision rule to reject the null hypothesis if F-calculated is greater than the F-critical value or otherwise do not reject it; and considering the fact that from the analysis of variance, F-calculated of -0.21 is less than the F-critical value of 2.75, the null hypothesis was accepted. It can, therefore, be concluded that there was no significant difference in the opinion of business educators on to which extent multifaceted skills possessed increase productivity among business educators in Colleges of Education in Delta State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In Table 1, the respondents' response to which extent do Financial skills possessed by Business Educators contributed to increased productivity were indicated. The result showed that of all the listed Financial skills possessed by Business Educator for increased productivity, only awareness of the existence and utilization of professional like bankers, accountants, lawyers, insurance agents and advertising agents contributed to a low extent increased productivity among business educators while other items listed were either very high extent, high extent and/or moderately extent contributed to increased productivity among business educators in Colleges of Education in Delta State. This result has, therefore, indicated that most accounting and finance skills possessed by business educators have been of great importance to increased productivity among business educators.

The result in Table 2 shows the responses of business educators to which extent Managerial skills possessed by Business Educators contributed to increased productivity. The result revealed that the acquisition of management and supervisory skills, ability to manage time and meet job schedules, knowledge of good human relationship and possession of innovative skills were the most managerial skills possessed by business educators that contributed to a very high extent in increased productivity, while ability to purchase goods, tools and equipment showed moderately extent to increased productivity among business educators. Others managerial skills listed contributed to a high extent in increased productivity among business educators.

Table 3, shows respondents' mean distribution to which extent Office Technology skills possessed by Business Educators contributed to increased productivity. The analysis of the result revealed that, all listed skills of Office Technology possessed by business educators contributed to a very high extent and/or to a high extent in the increased productivity among business educators.

Using the analysis of variance to test the significant difference between the mean responses among business educators in the four Colleges of Education in Delta State regarding to which extent multifaceted skills possessed increase productivity among business educators in Colleges of Education in Delta State, it was found that there was no significant difference in the opinion of business educators to which extent multifaceted skills possessed increase productivity among business educators in Colleges of Education in Delta State. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

The entire findings of this study agrees with the opinion of Achilike and Okwuanaso (2001), which stated that skills possessed are abilities of power and authority of knowledge, attitudes and facts necessary for accomplishing tasks. The findings of this study are also in line with the views of Ente, et'al (2009) that stated, skills possessed are essential knowledge obtainable in a profession and those which the professionals in the field must possess and be able to demonstrate at optimal level of acquisition and functioning.

Meredith, Nelson and Neck (1991) put it that acquiring multifaceted skills means combining personal characteristics, financial resources within your environment and taking advantage of them for rewarding outcome. Also, in Azuibuike's (2006) opinion, acquisition of necessary skills means possessing the ability to find and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources, initiate appropriate action to ensure success and implement actions to take advantage of opportunities for rewarding outcome. The above studies supported this current study on the importance of possessing skills for rewarding outcome, which is increased productivity.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed the business educators' view to which extent multifaceted skills possessed increase productivity among business educators in Colleges of Education in Delta State. The identified multifaceted skills in business education include the financial skills, managerial skills and office technology skills. Arising from the findings, multifaceted skills possessed by business educators, contribute to a very high extent increased productivity among business educators in Colleges of Education in Delta State and since the use of skills in the workplace cannot be over-emphasized in Colleges of Education in Delta State, there is the need for quality training of skills in business education for business educators to acquire relevant multifaceted skills for the benefit of rewarding outcome.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Quality training of multifaceted skills should be organized on regular basis for business educators for effective acquisition to contribute to increased productivity in any workplace they find themselves.
2. Training in the acquisition of skills in business education should be paramount, because the acquisition of skills is beneficial to both business educators and the employers of business educators for increased productivity.
3. As a matter of urgency, adequate and relevant instructional equipment and facilities should be provided by the government and effectively utilized during instructional process in business education. This will facilitate mastery in the various skills area in business education by business educators.

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