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Research Article

Business Educators' Rating of Innovation and Knowledge Transfer as Collaboration Tools for Achieving Quality Business Education Programme in Colleges of Education

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Abstract: The study aimed at business educators' ratings of innovation and knowledge transfer as collaboration tools for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 162 business educators in seven colleges of education in South-East Nigeria. The entire population was studied without sampling because the size was not too large. The instrument for data collection was four-point rating scale questionnaire which contained14-items in two clusters. The instrument was validated by three experts. Internal consistency method with Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and obtained an overall co-efficient value of 0.89. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that respondents' agreed that innovation and knowledge transfer collaboration tools for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria. Gender significantly influenced the respondents' mean ratings of innovation and knowledge transfer as collaboration tools. Based on the findings, it was concluded that, Business education in college of education collaboration created real learning experience for student while they were working on industrial problems to provide solutions innovatively. It was, therefore recommended among others that, interdisciplinary research programmes that include industry collaboration should be encouraged in colleges of education to increase research productivity.

Keywords: Business educators, rating, innovation and knowledge transfer collaboration, colleges of education.

Introduction

Business education is one of the occupational areas in vocational and technical education in Nigeria. It is a programme of instruction that covers accounting, marketing and office technology and management (OTM) among others. In the context of this study, business education refers to education for business or training skills which are required in business offices, clerical occupation and business policy analysis. Business education aspires to produce skilled graduates who will meet the demands of the fast growing society. Notably, Business education enables citizens acquire skills, knowledge and competent towards being job creator instead of job seeker. This could be achieving through training from colleges of education.

College of education is referred as the third stage, third level and post-secondary education in the educational level following the completion of a school providing secondary education. College of

education is one of the apex of teaching, learning and research engagements in the education sectors of a nation. The regulator of Nigerian colleges of education is the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). It role is to formulates National Policy framework for the full development of teacher education and training of teachers. NCCE defines minimum standards for all programmes of teacher education, accredit their certificates and other academic awards. The certificates obtained by graduates of college of education are Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) and Bachelor of Science in Education (B.Sc. Ed) in some colleges. Thus, reason for choose college of education is that students are adequately taught by competent, committed and well qualified teachers to enable them to teach various components of business education subjects at junior secondary school level and able them pursue degree programmes in business education. Thus, for effective running of business education, school-to-work which involves transition of students from schools to industry and business institutions was adopted.

As school-to-work programmes ensure smooth transition of students from schools to industry and business institutions, its activities has been less impactful due to inadequate student placement, lack of supervision and rejection of student-trainees in some cases by public institutions, local and multi-national organizations (Essia, 2012). As a result, linkage between schools and industries in the area that concerns poor infrastructural facilities have become ineffective in achieving the objectives of transferrable skill development, improving work experience, providing practical and industrial orientation that leads to better career choice in business education. Schools need to partner with industries for research assistance and collaboration, curriculum planning, infrastructural provision, scholarships, seminars and field trips among others (Okojie, 2013). Furthermore, Gbenedio (2012) noted that many academic programmes tend to exist in isolation, with few connections between learning institutions and industries, even between those in the same geographical area.

In recent time, graduates from the nation's colleges of education most especially the business education graduates have been plagued by the inability to get jobs in corporate organization and companies in Nigeria (Igberaharha, 2018). The industries mostly complain of inadequate skills required especially in the current cutting edge technology, low practical know-how and lack of confidence. Many authors and researchers like Essia (2012); Nwazor (2014) related this problem to the quality of training received by these graduates while in school which is devoid of skills required to meet with the demands of the business world. Okojie (2013) observed that some of the courses available in Nigerian higher institutions nowadays are far removed from the needs of the society and this is partly responsible for the mass unemployment of Nigerian graduates. This is in line with the thoughts of Udegbunam, Igomu, Enenchukwu and Igbinoghodua (2019) that Nigeria is bedeviled with severe problem of graduate unemployment brought about by mismatch between graduate training and the world of work. These could be done through effective college-industry collaboration to ensure smooth transition of students from schools to industry and business institutions for the courses offered in Nigerian colleges of education. The essence of collaboration among other things is to identify the higher order of quality needed by the students for success in school and in the work place after graduation so as to inculcate same in the students. With regard to the need and relevance of the Nigerian tertiary educational institutions to foster collaboration with industries, Ojimba cited in Udegbunam, Igomu, Enenchukwu and Igbinoghodua (2019) posited that given the right and conducive atmosphere, schools, industry, government and society linkages can be developed into strong and solid collaboration. Udegbunam, Igomu, Enenchukwu and Igbinoghodua further noted that the benefits of collaboration are enormous because it would enable students acquire industrial skills, develop work habits and instill positive attitude towards industries and business education in particular.

Business education with industry collaboration is critical for skills development (education and training), the generation, acquisition and adoption of knowledge (innovation and technology transfer), and the promotion of entrepreneurship (start-ups and spin-offs). Business education is basically occupational education which makes individuals self-sufficient and reliant (Islam, Mohajan

& Datta, 2012). The linkage between tertiary educational institutions and industry is very weak in Africa including Nigeria and do not produce the skills assets needed for industrial productivity. This leads to low absorption level of graduates by available industries.

In Nigeria, there seems to be lack of linkage between industry and academics and this is really a serious problem hampering the performance of business education programme. The students should learn practical techniques and should build skills related to commerce, trade and industry for which they have to practically visit the business sites and locations. Rotua (2017) reported that if there are fewer linkages between industry and academics, then the school will not be able to get practical exposure.

The interaction between institutions of higher learning and employers in industries and related business organizations represent a means of ensuring quality education training programmes. The challenge to business and industry to succeed in an increasingly competitive world market is contingent upon skilled personnel, who learn, grow and adapt to the changing markets and technologies (Okoro, 2015). Through such ventures, students have opportunities to acquire hands on experiences and skills that will come in handy when they finally join the job market. With this, colleges of education should also explore avenues to facilitate business matching, networking, knowledge transfer programmes, and community network among others with industries to bring significant changes to the country's economic development. It is through these programmes that relevant skill development by business education would be realized in order to meet business needs.

School-industry collaboration is achieved in several ways-through mentorships, research and development, technology transfer and internship work placement (Jackson, 2015). *Collaboration is important not just because it is a better way to learn but because it penetrates every institution and all lives. Thus, learning to collaborate is part of equipping oneself for effectiveness, problem solving, innovation and life-long learning in an ever-changing networked economy (*Islam, Mohajan & Datta, 2012). *Thus,* Udegbunam, Igomu, Enenchukwu and Igbinoghodua (2019) and Oviawe, Uwameiye and Uddin (2017) noted the collaboration tools for achieving quality business education programme to include funding by government, industry, philanthropists; research, innovation, knowledge transfer, employability, in-service education among others. However, the study focused on innovation and knowledge transfer as collaboration tools for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education.

Innovation is defined as the application of basic knowledge acquired through science and technology research and investment to achieve physical production of goods and services (Roggers, cited in Ibeme, 2020). It must be noted that this knowledge might be acquired through learning, research or experience. Innovation has a central role to play in supporting industrial strategy and colleges of education institutions should be seen as key partners in its development and delivery. Ibeme (2020) reported that innovation brings together generators and developers of knowledge in institutions and for economic development in industry. Okiridu and Bupo (2018) noted that innovation through business education knowledge and skills got employed and established one business or the other after graduation. Government has an opportunity to use industrial sectors and key technologies as levers to encourage greater business investment in innovation, research and development and to involve companies of all sizes through the supply chain. Thus, adequate interaction with industry is valuable, and enables knowledge transfer, speed-up inventions and increased research productivity. The benefits of school-industry linkages are wide-reaching. They can help coordinate research and development agenda and avoid duplications, stimulate additional private research and development investment, and exploit synergies and complementarities of scientific and technological capabilities.

Knowledge is a key driver of growth and development in any country. Countries with higher skilled levels are better equipped to face new challenges and master technological discoveries. Highly technologically developed countries in the world invest so much in technological innovation through

partnership of industry with academics. Transferring knowledge is one of the primary drivers of innovation in inter-organizational collaboration (Kunttu, 2017) in which both partners have to share their previous knowledge and information that can often be tacit or experimental in nature. Oyedele and Oladeji (2016) opined that social media knowledge transfer in relation require engagement and commitment to the collaboration from both parties in tertiary institutions. Similarly, the finding disagrees with that of Akhuemonkhan and Raimi (2013) who reported that knowledge transfer on TVET has not been impressive because of ineffective knowledge transfer collaboration tool at all levels. In collaboration with finish industry, according to Siyanbola (2016), the International Design Business Management partnership made actual world learning practices for the students. Industrial problems were solved innovatively by students' groups with different disciplines of education. This outcome produced direct recruitment platforms for students. Seven percent of the services and products arose from collaborated projects, which had created value for industrial partners. This collaboration resulted in good knowledge transfer activities between industry and institutions.

Collaboration provides better corporate image and recognition in technical industries (Oviawe, Uwameiye & Uddin, 2017). Therefore, knowledge sharing and transfer in school-industry relationships require engagement and commitment from both parties (Ankrah, Burgess, Grimshaw & Shaw, 2013). To build a knowledge-based economy, Nigeria needs to integrate business elements into her education system, with the plan being to drive innovation by strengthening links between higher education, research and business practices.

The influencing factors in the context of rating of collaboration tools for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education could be gender. Gender in this study refers to male and female business educators in colleges of education. Oyedele and Oladeji (2016) revealed that there is a significant difference regarding knowledge transfer based on gender to enhance business education programme in colleges of education. Therefore, an effective relationship between schools and industries will compel industries to make expertise, equipment and expendable material available for effective teaching and learning of the business education students. Thus, it is against this background that the study ascertained business educators' ratings of innovation and knowledge transfer as collaboration tools for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Business education students are expected to be equipped with employability skills and competencies needed by employers in the world of work at this globalization era. Thus, millions of them from Nigerian educational institutions of higher learning in the labour market seem not qualified to be employed due to lack of skills and competencies. This is linked to lack of practical experience due to inadequate facilities and technology. Therefore, effective communication between colleges of education and industries should be work visits.

The problem of this study, therefore, is that Nigerian business education students seems not to apply the collaboration appropriately, lack practical experience due to inadequate facilities and technology as expected for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education. This could be due to their ignorance of the importance of collaborating with government, industries and individuals to gain access to adequate facilities and technology for teaching to achieve quality programme. If this ugly situation is not averted, its adverse effects on the socio-economic development of the colleges of education in South-East will persist to the detriment of students, citizens and the government. But if averted, business education students will have the opportunity to receive appropriate training from appropriate environment and the gap between the classroom experiences and the yearnings of employers will be reduced or if not eliminated. It is based on the above views that the study intend to ascertain business educator's ratings of innovation and knowledge transfer as collaboration tools for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain business educator's ratings of innovation and knowledge transfer as collaboration tools for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study ascertained business educators' ratings of:

1) Innovation as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria.
2) Knowledge transfer as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1) What is business educators' rating of innovation as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria?
2) What is business educators' rating of knowledge transfer as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

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

1) Male and female business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings of innovation as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria.
2) Male and female business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings of knowledge transfer as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria.

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of this study comprised of 162 business educators in seven colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria. Data collected was 14 items structured questionnaire. The instrument was structured questionnaire validated by three experts-two in business education and one in measurement and evaluation all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Their comments enhanced the content validity of the instrument. To establish the internal consistency of the instrument, a trial-test was used. Data collected in the pilot test were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha to determine the internal consistency using the application of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 and obtain reliability coefficients values of 0.88 and 0.91 for clusters B1 and B2 respectively with an overall coefficient value of 0.89. Out of the 162 copies of the questionnaire distributed to the respondents in their schools through direct approach which facilitated a response rate, 158 copies (representing 98 percent) were retrieved with an attrition rate of four copies (representing 2 percent) and used for data analysis. Data collected regarding the research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

In order to determine the ascertain business educator's ratings of innovation and knowledge transfer as collaboration tools for achieving quality business education programme, a decision rule based on mean ratings between 3.50-4.00 were regarded as strongly agree, items with mean ratings of 2.50-3.49 were considered as agree. Furthermore, items with mean ratings of 1.50-2.49 and 1.00-1.49 were considered as disagree and strongly disagree.

In testing the null hypotheses, where the calculated p-value is less than the stipulated level of significance (0.05), it meant that there was a significant difference and the hypothesis was rejected. Conversely, where the calculated p-value is equal to or greater than the stipulated level of significance (0.05), it meant that there was no significant difference and the hypothesis was not rejected.

Results

Research Question 1

What is business educators' rating of innovation as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria?

Table 1. Business educators' mean ratings of innovation as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria (N=158)

S. No	Innovation helps in	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Providing opportunity to use industrial sectors	2.60	0.56	Agree
2	Providing business education with key technologies as levers to encourage greater business investment	2.50	0.58	Agree
3	Providing companies of all sizes through the supply chain	3.70	0.41	Strongly Agree
4	Increasing the mobility of labour between public and the private sectors	3.69	0.43	Strongly Agree
5	Speed-up inventions in business education	3.54	0.46	Strongly Agree
6	Avoiding duplications	2.64	0.54	Agree
7	Exploiting synergies and complementarities of scientific/technological capabilities	3.20	0.49	Strongly Agree
Cluster Mean		3.12		**Agree**

Data in Table 1 show that out of seven items listed. Four items have the mean scores ranging from 3.20 and 3.70 indicating strongly agree and the remaining three items as agree with mean scores ranging from 2.50 to 2.64. The cluster mean scores of 3.12 shows that, on the whole, business educators in the area of the study agree on the innovation as a collaboration tool to enable business education department achieve quality programme. The standard deviations of 0.41 to 0.58 show that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

Research Question 2

What is business educators' rating of knowledge transfer as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria?

Table 2. Business educators' mean ratings of knowledge transfer as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria (N=158)

S. No	Knowledge Transfer help in	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Jointly organised research projects	3.30	0.48	Agree
2	Published research findings which are codified, formulated and available	3.20	0.53	Agree
3	Engage in collaborative research	3.60	0.44	Strongly Agree
4	Free dissemination of research outputs	3.39	0.47	Agree
5	Thesis supervision	3.32	0.51	Agree
6	License technology to school partners	2.70	0.62	Agree
7	Presentations (papers, conference contributions	3.12	0.56	Agree
Cluster Mean		**3.32**		**Agree**

Data in Table 2 show that the item-by-item analysis reveals that out of seven items listed. Only one item has a mean score of 3.60 indicating strongly agree and the remaining six items as agree with mean scores of 2.70 to 3.39. The cluster mean scores of 3.32 shows that, on the whole, business

educators in the area of the study agree on the knowledge transfer as a collaboration tool to enable business education department achieve quality programme. The standard deviations of 0.44 to 0.56 show that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

Result of Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Male and female business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings of innovation as collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 3. Summary of t-test analysis of male and female business educators in their mean ratings of innovation as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria.

Gender	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	α	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Male	60	3.14	.12	0.05	156	2.43	.001	Significant
Female	98	3.12	.13					

Table 3 indicates that the calculated t-value is 2.43 at 156 degree of freedom and .001 p-value. Since the p-value of .001 was less than the alpha value (0.05). It means that male and female business educators differ significantly in their mean ratings of innovation as collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria. The null hypothesis was, therefore rejected while the alternative hypothesis was not rejected.

Hypothesis 2

Male and female business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings of knowledge transfer as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 4. Summary of t-test analysis of male and female business educators in their mean ratings of knowledge transfer as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria.

Gender	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	α	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Male	60	3.20	.19	0.05	156	-3.11	0.02	Significant
Female	98	3.17	.15					

Table 4 indicates that the calculated t-value is -3.11 at 156 degree of freedom and .002 p-value. Since the p-value of .002 was less than the alpha value (0.05). It means that male and female business educators differ significantly in their mean ratings of knowledge transfer as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria. The null hypothesis was, therefore rejected while the alternative hypothesis was not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the first research question revealed that innovation as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme were rated as strongly agree to agree by business educators. This implies that innovation as a collaboration tool enable business education programmes achieves expected quality. This finding agrees with Ibeme (2020) who revealed that innovation brings together generators and developers of knowledge in institutions and for economic development in industry. It also agrees with that of Okiridu and Bupo (2018) who reported that innovation through business education knowledge and skills got employed and established one business or the other after graduation. The result of the first hypothesis showed that gender significantly influenced respondents' mean ratings of innovation as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria.

The reason for the differences in test of hypotheses is as a result of inability to boost their courage and motivation to engage in various quality collaboration tool and ineffectiveness of the programme. The reason for the rating of the respondents is that they are in position to impact suitable programme for attainment of goal. They are one to be blame when the time comes against the inadequate performance of students in the world of work. They are one to devises appropriate measures for quality programme for their students.

The findings of the second research revealed that knowledge transfer as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme were rated as agree to strongly agree by business educators. This implies that knowledge transfer as a collaboration tool enable business education programmes achieves expected quality.

This finding agrees with Oyedele and Oladeji (2016) who revealed that social media knowledge transfer in relation require engagement and commitment to the collaboration from both parties in tertiary institutions. Similarly, the finding disagrees with that of Akhuemonkhan and Raimi (2013) who reported that knowledge transfer on TVET has not been impressive because of ineffective knowledge transfer collaboration tool at all levels.

The result of second hypothesis also showed that gender significantly influenced respondents' mean ratings of knowledge transfer as a collaboration tool for achieving quality business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria. The finding on gender difference agrees Oyedele and Oladeji (2016) who revealed that there is a significant difference regarding knowledge transfer based on gender to enhance business education programme in colleges of education.

The reason for the differences in test of hypotheses is as a result of inability to boost their courage and motivation to engage in various quality collaboration tool and ineffectiveness of the programme. The reason for the rating of the respondents is that they are in position to impact suitable programme for attainment of goal.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that Business education in college of education collaboration created real learning experience for student while they were working on industrial problems to provide solutions innovatively. Many faculties from business education were working on the contract research project to promote products of industry, the collaboration helped in developing new products for industry partners. With that, students have opportunities to find placement in industries, update new skills, and meet market needs, increases research and training among others.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1) Government should continue to provide colleges of education with enough funding for innovation development so as to create a strong link with international scholars and promote learning.
2) Interdisciplinary research programmes that include industry collaboration should be encouraged in colleges of education to increase research productivity.

Conflicts of interest

There is no conflict of interest of any kind.

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