

**DIVERSIFICATION IN BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME TO ENHANCE
ENTREPRENEURIAL READINESS OF STUDENTS FOR JOB CREATION
IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The need to equip business education students with skills for self-reliance necessitated this study. The study determined the extent of diversification of business education programme for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of students for job creation in Anambra State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted survey research design. A population of 111 business education lecturers in tertiary institutions in Anambra State was studied without sampling. A structured questionnaire containing 19 items in two sections, which was face validated by three experts in the field of business education, was used to collect data for the study. The reliability of the instrument was established using trial-testing method and data collected were calculated using Cronbach Alpha formula which yielded correlation co-efficients values of .89 and .81 were obtained for clusters B1 to B2 respectively with an overall value of .85. Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The findings of the study showed that diversified teaching methods and funding strategies are lowly adopted for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of business education students for job creation. Ownership of Institution was not a significant factor on respondents' mean ratings on the extent of adoption of diversified teaching methods and funding strategies in business education. The researcher concluded that business education departments in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State are not highly diversifying their programme for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of students for job creation. It was recommended that Management of business education programmes in tertiary institutions in Anambra State should adopt and effectively implement well-articulated business education-industry partnership strategy to ensure that the actual funding needs of the programme are addressed. This will facilitate the provision of modern teaching resources needed for adoption of diversified teaching methods to effectively train students in skill acquisition and capacity building.

Key Words: *Diversification, Business Education, Entrepreneurial Readiness, Job Creation*

INTRODUCTION

Most countries in the world are currently experiencing a severe economic downturn exacerbated by the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. The most severely affected nations are grappling with high level of youth unemployment. Industrialized countries recognize the potential of functional education system in curbing youth unemployment and have continued to re-model their education system to ensure responsiveness to societal demands. In Nigeria, one of the biggest socio-economic issues is youth/graduate unemployment, which impedes national development, and poses a threat to its security, and economic progress (Olugbola, 2016). Sixty percent of Nigeria's population (or around 80 million people) is young (National Population Commission (NPC) in Ekezie & Owo, 2019). Furthermore, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2022) noted that Nigeria has one of the largest youth populations in the world with over 65 million young people between the ages of 10 and 24 years. However, majority of the Nigerian youths enter the labour force each year without any possibility of finding jobs to meet their basic needs (Olugbola, 2016). The Nigerian government incorporated business education programme in its tertiary institutions as a means of preparing youths for entrepreneurial readiness to reduce the level of youth/graduate unemployment.

Business education is a part of the vocational education programme that equips students with skills, knowledge, and attitude for paid or self-employment. Olumese and Ediagbonya (2016) submitted that business education is entirely vocational in the sense that the recipients are prepared for manifold business ventures so that the products of business education can become job creators. This is why, business education is currently and universally seen as a game changer in tackling graduate and youth employment. According to Hassi (2016), education about business needs to be provided to students to open up opportunities for new entrepreneurs and create employment opportunities in nations. Tawil, Hassan, Ramlee and K-Batcha (2015) submitted that business education courses stimulate students' interest to venture into small scale businesses. The exposure provided through business model, industrial visitations, field trips and case studies give students confidence in their ability to innovate and succeed in small business ventures (Boldureanu et al., 2020). Hence, students become entrepreneurial-ready regardless of their family history in entrepreneurship.

The mental preparation for starting a business or becoming an entrepreneur is known as entrepreneurial readiness. Entrepreneurial readiness, according to Ademiluyi and Salami (2020), is the enthusiasm of the individual to function as a creator of satisfaction through the creation of products that satisfy people's needs and wants within a specific time frame. Olugbola (2017) posited that the ability of young people to detect possibilities, motivate themselves, utilize available resources, and develop entrepreneurial skills is a key indicator of their entrepreneurial readiness. Entrepreneurial-readiness enhances students' ability to create jobs upon graduation. Job creation simply means establishing new jobs to increase the number of jobs in the society for the numerous job seekers most of whom are youths and graduates so as to reduce unemployment. Job creation is the process of providing new job opportunities especially for persons who are unemployed. In the context of this study, job creation entails a condition where a business education student is able to establish small scale businesses and successfully manage them upon graduation. In order to respond effectively to the key task of preparing students for entrepreneurship, business education must diversify in a sustainable manner in line with the current trend. Diversification is the use of numerous, acceptable methods of operation. Tizhe (2016) defined diversification as the process by which a system adopts different or diverse methods in its operations. Diversification in business education programme entails a shift away from a uniform and rigid delivery system toward a flexible one that can meet shifting societal demands.

Providing students in business education various courses or programmes that are pertinent to the demands of the present and the future to ensure its continued relevance in the contemporary society is another aspect of diversification. Organization, curriculum, teaching methods, student types serviced, funding sources, and the teaching and learning environment in the programme can all be According to Nwaji (2016), diversification is a solution to graduate unemployment. The goal of business education is to offer a competitive curriculum, foster the development of transferable skills and career-related learning, and produce graduates who are adaptable and devoted to reducing society's unemployment challenges. The African Union (2017) noted indicators of diversification in Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (Business Education inclusive) are school-private sector cooperation, sustainable alternative funding strategies, staff training and development, effective monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the and Competency Based Training (CBT) programmes.

Business education lecturers need to vary their teaching methods to enhance students' active participation in instructional processes, and acquisition of skills for self-reliance. Business educators need to incorporate innovative teaching methods such as modeling, case studies, business games, observation, and interactive learning into their instructional delivery. Other innovative teaching methods are team-based learning, project-based teaching method, experiential learning, problem-based learning, small group discussion, team teaching, brainstorming, seminar/workshop, think-pair-share, scaffolding, and independent learning and among others (Ezenwanne and Nwagu, 2020). Skill-based courses such as business education should not be taught using teaching methods that do not give students opportunity to actively participate in the instructional processes (DaCosta, 2019). However, Ogwunte and Okolocha (2016) observed that most business educators were not adequately diversifying their teaching methods to improve students' employability skills.

Similarly, business education is a capital intensive programme. A sufficient funding must be made available for its execution in order for students and the country to enjoy the benefits. This aims to cover the costs of facilities/equipment, studios, libraries, texts, and the staff development as well as retention of competent lecturers. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2022) stated that the Nigerian economy has been in recession for consecutive five year period with attendant high inflation, and rising unemployment. Government revenue is declining, and many state governors are unable to pay their workers' salaries for months or even years. Many state governors frequently remind everyone that there are not enough funds to pay the salaries of the employees. The Nigeria's educational system is most affected by this economic downturn (Oyekunle, 2016). The Nigeria's spending on education reveals is always between three and five percent, which is significantly less than the 15 to 26 percent recommended for every nation to budget each year for education. The implication of this for business education is diversification of source of funding.

According to the National Universities' Commission (NUC, 2019), in view of the poor funding of education by the Nigerian government, tertiary institutions must diversify their source of funding. Fund diversification strategies for tertiary institutions can be through alumni association, award nights, alumni home coming, endowment income, capital campaigns, fundraising, intellectual property development and marketing through research. Business education-industry partnership was listed by Ezenwafor (2015) as a means of funding diversification for the programme. Additionally, business education departments can also diversify

funding through business enterprises such as opening of cybercafés, photocopying and printing businesses, opening of bookshops, car wash business, food canteen (eatery), chair and canopy renting services. Others are research consultancy services, transportation services, built up shops for rent, fee-for-service parking lots, launderettes, renting of halls in idle time and ventures creating avenue for student-work programmes.

The extent of diversification of business education to enhance entrepreneurial-readiness of students for job creation could be influenced by institutional ownership (federal government-owned and state-owned tertiary institutions) offering business education. There could be differences in the diversification of teaching methods and source of funding business education between federal and state institutions due to differences in budgetary allocations, quality and competency of business educators in these institutions. Business education in federal institutions in Nigeria may be receiving more funds from the federal government which could influence their diversification motivation for other sources of funding compared to the state owned institutions that face limited funding. Also, business educators in federal owned tertiary institutions may be more academically qualified and competent than those in state institutions which may lead to differences in the diversification of methods of instructional delivery. Given the need to prepare students to create jobs upon graduation, this study was carried out to determine the extent of diversification of business education programme for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of students for job creation in Anambra State.

Problem of the Study

Business education programme was incorporated into the Nigerian tertiary institutions to equip students with knowledge and skills needed for self-reliance. However, it is very sad to observe that many business education graduates roam the streets for years looking for white collar jobs that no longer exist instead of becoming job creators, and helping to reduce youth unemployment. The high unemployment rate has contributed to the frustrations usually suffered by some business education graduates which lead social vices like insurgency, armed robbery, kidnapping, prostitution and drug abuse as means of survival. Similarly, there are concerns among stakeholders on the inability of business education programme to produce entrepreneurial-ready graduates that can create jobs for themselves and others. The inability of business education graduates to create jobs could be traceable to the quality of training received. As unemployment among business education graduates continues to escalate, the needs to equip students with

entrepreneurial-ready skills such as opportunity identification, innovativeness, social networking, self-independence, effective business planning, and team building task among others for job creation has become imperative.

To achieve the goal of preparing students for entrepreneurship, business education must diversify its teaching methods and funding sources. Additionally, the skills and competencies required to succeed in small scale business ventures are constantly changing and becoming more complex. This requires reorganization, re-modelling and diversification of business education programme to respond to these skills demands. The problem of this study is that cursory observation by the researcher revealed that most public tertiary institutions in Anambra State seem not to be diversifying teaching methods and funding to improve the quality of business education delivery. The researcher is worried that the inability of business education programme to diversify could worsen the already existing poor entrepreneurial preparation of students for job creation, hence this study to determine the extent of diversified teaching methods and funding strategies are adopted for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of students for job creation in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered

1. To what extent are diversified teaching methods adopted for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of business education students for job creation in Anambra State?
2. To what extent are diversified funding strategies adopted for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of business education students for job creation in Anambra State?

Null Hypotheses

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

- 1 There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the extent diversified teaching methods are adopted for enhancing entrepreneurial-readiness of business education students for job creation in Anambra State based on institution ownership of (federal/state).
- 2 There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the extent diversified funding strategies are adopted for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of business education students for job creation in Anambra State based on ownership of institution (federal/state).

Method

This study adopted survey research design. It was conducted in Anambra State using a population of 111 business education lecturers in the four public tertiary institutions that offer

business education in the state. These include 6 lecturers from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, 22 from Nnamdi Azikwe University, 67 from Federal College of Education (Technical) Umuze and 16 from Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe. The entire population was studied without sampling since the size was not too large and manageable for the researcher. Structured questionnaire Titled “Diversification of Business Education Programme for Enhancing Entrepreneurial Readiness of Students for Job Creation (DBEP-EERSJC)” was used for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of two sections A and B. Section A contained item on demographic information of the respondents such as ownership of institution while Section B contained 19 items in clusters B1 and B2 in respect to the two research questions. Section B was structured on five-point rating scale of very highly Adopted (VHA), highly adopted (HA), moderately adopted (MA), lowly adopted (LA) and very lowly adopted (VLA). Face validity of the instrument was ascertained using three experts, two from the field of Business Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was tested using trial-testing and data collected were calculated using Cronbach Alpha formula to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, and correlation index of .89 and .81 were obtained for clusters B1 to B2 respectively with an overall value of .85. The researcher, with the help of two research assistants who were adequately guided on the procedure to follow administered the instrument to the respondents in their offices. On the spot distribution and collection of questionnaires was deployed and those who did not fill theirs immediately were revisited on another agreed date. Out of 111 copies of questionnaire distributed, 102 were correctly filled and retrieved given .91 percent return rate. Statistical mean and standard deviation were used to answer the researcher questions and determined the homogeneity of respondents’ views while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. A hypothesis was rejected where the p-value is less than the significant value, otherwise the null hypothesis was not rejected. The data analysis was carried out using statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

Result

Table 1: Mean Ratings on the Extent Diversified Teaching Methods are adopted for Enhancing Entrepreneurial Readiness of business education Students for Job Creation

S/N	Diversified Teaching Methods	X	SD	Remarks
1	Modeling to give students sufficient illustrations of real life events	2.17	.54	Lowly Adopted
2	Case-studies in teaching business courses	1.51	.58	Lowly Adopted

3	Problem-based learning to expose students to sufficient real life problem solving skills	2.51	.60	Moderately Adopted
4	Business game to teach students how to set up small scale business venture	2.19	.58	Lowly Adopted
5	Flipped classroom to increase students' engagement in online discussion while working carrying out research at home	2.50	.64	Moderately Adopted
6	Industry visitation to inspire students to strive and develop their job creation mentality	1.39	.73	Very Lowly Adopted
7	Think-pair-share method to give students opportunities to work themselves (alone or in pairs)	2.64	.71	Moderately Adopted
8	Work-based learning (WBL) to assist students develop transferable skills for business creation	1.57	.69	Lowly Adopted
9	Seminar/workshop method to push business education students to be creative and responsible in their learning	2.51	.91	Moderately Adopted
Cluster Mean		2.11		Lowly Adopted

Table 1 reveals that diversified teaching methods are lowly adopted for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of business education students for job creation with cluster mean of 2.11 which fell within the lowly adopted range. The item by item analysis indicates that out of nine items listed, mean rating of item 6 of 1.39 is very lowly adopted while mean ratings of items 1, 2, 4 and 8 of 1.51 to 2.19 ranges are lowly adopted. Mean ratings of 2.51 to 2.64 for the remaining items are moderately adopted. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range meaning that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

Table 2: Mean Ratings on the Extent diversified Funding Strategies are adopted for Enhancing Entrepreneurial Readiness of Students for Job Creation

S/N	Diversified Funding Strategy	X	SD	Remarks
10	Alumni association	1.47	.62	Very Lowly Adopted
11	Organizing alumni home coming	1.41	.78	Very Lowly Adopted
12	Organizing award nights to generate funds to support business education programme	1.54	.70	Lowly Adopted
13	Endowment income	1.49	.78	Very Lowly Adopted
14	Intellectual property development	1.40	.54	Very Lowly Adopted
15	Seeking financial support from private sectors	2.39	.70	Lowly Adopted
16	Establish cybercafés	1.64	.61	Lowly Adopted
17	Establish photocopying and printing businesses	2.47	.59	Lowly Adopted
18	Transportation services	2.51	.47	Moderately Adopted
19	Built up lock up shops for rent	2.12	.72	Lowly Adopted
Cluster Mean		1.84		Lowly Adopted

Data in Table 2 reveals that diversified funding strategies are lowly adopted for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of students for job creation. This is shown by the cluster mean of 1.84 which fell within the lowly adopted category. The item-by-item analysis indicates that mean ratings of 1.41 to 1.49 are very lowly adopted, mean ratings of 1.54 to 2.39 are lowly adopted while mean rating of 2.51 is moderately adopted. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range meaning that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

Table 3: Summary of t-test Comparison of the Mean Ratings of Respondents on Adoption of Diversified Teaching Methods for Enhancing Entrepreneurial Readiness of Students for Job Creation based on ownership of Institution.

Ownership of Institution	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	T-value	P-value	Decision
Federal	80	2.16	.48	100	1.02	.08	Not Significant
State	22	1.91	.63				

Data in Table 3 show that the t-value of 1.02 with 100 degree of freedom has p-value of .08 which is greater than the criterion value of .05 ($P\text{-value} = .08 > .05$). This means that there is no significance difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers on the extent diversified teaching methods are adopted for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of students for job creation in Anambra State based on ownership of institution. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 4: Summary of t-test Comparison of the Mean Ratings of Respondents on Adoption of Diversified Funding Strategies for Enhancing Entrepreneurial Readiness of Students for Job Creation based on ownership of Institution.

Ownership of Institution	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	T-value	P-value	Decision
Federal	80	1.52	.51	100	1.28	.06	Not Significant
State	22	1.49	.73				

Data in Table 4 show that the t-value of 1.28 with 100 degree of freedom has p-value of .06 which is greater than the criterion value of .05 ($P\text{-value} = .06 > .05$). This means that there is no significance difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the extent diversified funding strategies area adopted for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of students for job creation in Anambra State based on ownership of institution. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not accepted.

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that diversified teaching methods are lowly adopted for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of business education students for job creation. This could be attributed to inadequate pedagogical competencies in application of innovative methods of instructional delivery. This agrees with Oyelekan, Igbokwe and Olorundare (2017) which revealed that the level of utilization of the diverse teaching methods in implementing business education curriculum in Nigerian was very low. Ukegbu (2017) noted that most of the teaching methods used in teaching business education courses are outdated and obsolete. Similarly, Ukala (2018) found that business educators rarely utilized diverse teaching method for their instructional delivery. At the same time, a study by Onajite (2022) found that business education teachers are unable to adopt most of the innovative teaching strategies for effective curriculum implementation. Ogwunte and Okolocha (2016) observed that the majority of teaching methods adopted by business educators in teaching are no longer effective for equipping students with skills for self-reliance. Finding of this study further disclosed that there was no significance difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers on the extent diversified teaching methods are adopted for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of students for job creation in Anambra State based on ownership of institution. In agreement, the National Universities' Commission (NUC, 2019) noted that public tertiary institutions in Nigeria depend on government for funding of their programme. It could be that business educators in both federal and state tertiary institutions have challenges of low adoption of these teaching methods in their teaching which may have led to homogeneity in their mean responses.

Findings of the study also showed that diversified funding strategies are lowly adopted for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of business education students for job creation. This finding agrees with the researcher's cursory observations that business education departments in tertiary institutions in Nigeria do not effectively collaborate with private sectors in raising funds to support the programmer, instead, depend heavily on government low education budget. This could be the reason for inadequate modern teaching facilities/equipment, poor learning environments; and in adequate competent lecturers in the programme. This findings-concurs with the assertion of the National Universities' Commission (NUC, 2019) that many public tertiary institutions in Nigeria depend on government for most of their funding. This supports the earlier findings of Famurewa (2014) which revealed that public tertiary institutions in Nigeria do not raise funds through

business enterprises despite the fact that business enterprises are among the most effective funding strategies for tertiary institutions. The findings also showed that there was no significance difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the extent diversified funding strategies are adopted for enhancing entrepreneurial readiness of students for job creation in Anambra State based on ownership of institution. The findings supports the earlier findings of Famurewa (2014) which revealed that found that federal and state tertiary institutions in Nigeria relied heavily on government funding for implementation of their academic programme

Conclusion

The need for business education programme to prepare student by equipping them with entrepreneurial skills to enable them create jobs upon graduation has been intensified due to the exponential rate of unemployment even among graduates of the programme. Based on the findings of this study that diversified teaching methods and funding strategies are lowly adopted in business education programme in tertiary institutions in Anambra State, that the major reason many of the graduates remain unemployed instead of creating jobs for themselves and others is that strategies that would enhance their entrepreneurial readiness for job creation are not adequately adopted in the course of their training.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher made the following recommendations;

1. Business education lecturers should improve their adoption of diverse and innovative teaching methods to enhance students' acquisition of entrepreneurship skills for job creation.
2. Administrators of business education should organize regular in-service programmes such as workshops and teacher-classroom demonstration on adoption of diversified teaching methods for effective instructional delivery.
3. Management of business education programmes in tertiary institutions in Anambra State should adopt and implement diversified and well-articulated funding ~~plans or~~ strategies to meet the funding needs of the programme. This will help in the acquisition of modern teaching

facilities/equipment needed for effective training of students in entrepreneurship skill for job creation upon graduation

4. Management of business education should intensify efforts to establish various small scale business ventures within and outside the school to generate regular income for provision of new and modern teaching facilities and equipment to improve students' learning and acquisition of entrepreneurship skills for job creation upon graduation.

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