

RESPONSIVENESS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

This study investigated the responsiveness of the private sector to the development of Business Education programme in Nigeria. Three purposes, three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted of all the 71 Business Education lecturers in the seven universities in South-South Nigeria offering Business Education programme. The entire population was studied because of its size and manageability. An instrument tagged "Responsiveness of Private Sector to Development of Business Education programme Questionnaire" (RPSDBEPQ) with a four-point rating scale was used for data collection; an internal consistency reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha reliability technique. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, t-test to test null hypotheses 1 and 3, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test null hypothesis 2 at .05 level of significance. The result revealed that private sectors' responsiveness towards the development of Business Education programme in Nigeria is low. It is recommended, among others, that the government should encourage Public Private Partnership through provision of incentives and reliefs to the private sector to encourage their participation in the development of Business Education programme in Nigeria

Introduction

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is described by Okwelle and Wordu (2105) cited from African Union as a sub-sector in the education system recognized as a vital key to national development whose primary objective is the acquisition of relevant knowledge, practical skills and attitudes for gainful employment in a particular trade. Business Education is one of the academic programmes of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), offered in Universities in Nigeria. Azuka, Nwosu, Kanu and Agomuo (2006) defined Business Education as a programme of study, which is aimed at creating awareness in business occupations, preparing youths for work in business occupation; preparing people to become better citizens and consumers of goods services and business lecturers. Like many other manpower training programmes, Business Education is designed with the

primary purpose of upgrading skills or providing individuals with the necessary skills required to obtain gainful employment. Business Education programme is thus geared towards entry into particular jobs and the administration of the programme towards the achievement of the goals. Business Education covers education for office occupations, distribution and marketing occupations, entrepreneurship, business administration and economic understanding. The broad and major areas of Business Education include Office Technology and Management Education, Accounting Education, and Marketing Education.

Private sectors' response to support public service such as university education has the potential for improving the quality of such a service. This is predicated on the fact that such partnership recognizes that both the public sector and the private sector have certain

responsibilities relative to each other in the performance of specific tasks. Subramoney (2003) observed that the structure of the African economies lends itself to strong public-private partnership and, if properly managed, could prove a welcome boost to these economies.

Public Private Partnership (PPP) is viewed as a generic term for the relationships formed between the private sector and public bodies with the aim of introducing private sector resources and/or expertise in order to help provide and deliver public sector services. Drennan and Stree (2011) stated that in the context of TVET, partnership describes coordination and cooperation among stakeholders including schools and enterprises. According to Egbewole(2011), Public Private Partnership (PPP) is a contractual arrangement which is formed between public and private sector companies involving the private sector in the development, financing, ownership, and or operation of a public facility or service. In such a partnership, public and private resources are pooled and responsibilities divided so that the partners' efforts are complementary. The governments at all levels in Nigeria seem not to meet public needs and expectations in terms of both infrastructure and service delivery. For instance, Ogundu and Ejim (2010) reported that it has been observed that due to the nation's poor fiscal resources and other competing social demands, government cannot alone finance TVET. Having also realized the huge burden of funding TVET, the Federal Government through its National Policy on Education (2013) encouraged the participation of private sector, individuals and organizations to jointly fund education. Business Education programme just like any other is competing for the limited resources in the universities. Private sectors' responsiveness towards Business Education could be an alternative option for providing additional educational facilities and services besides those provided

by government. The responsiveness of the private sector towards Business Education programme could therefore be in the form of providing instructional facilities, instituting scholarship, making inputs in curriculum, maintaining social relationship as well as employment.

Ayonmike, Igberadja, Igberaharha and Okeke (2014) observed that in Nigeria and other developing countries, sustainable access to technology development and product are best achieved through Public Private Partnership with Technical Vocational Education and Training. If Technical Vocational Education and Training is to be meaningful and successful in Nigeria, then relationships are needed between public and private sectors to partner effectively for the skill acquisition programmes.

Ayonmike *et al.* (2014) further reported that it was in attempt to promote cooperation between industries and universities that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in February 1994 launched the University-Industry Science Partnership (UNISPAR) Programme in Africa. The main objective of the programme was to facilitate indigenous technology development through transfer of research results from university to Industry. Since the inception of the UNISPAR-Africa programme, UNESCO has financed many activities aimed at promoting partnership between universities and industry. These activities include conferences, dissemination of information, publications and award of grants for university-industry joint projects. Ayonmike *et al.* (2014) also noted that there have been calls by researchers and international organizations such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training(UNESCO-UNEVOC) for partnership between TVET institutions and industries to foster the production of productive, competent, and employable

graduates of TVET institutions across the globe and Africa in particular. In Nigeria, it appears that the private sector seems to be isolated from the responsibility of education. Little or no effort is made by the private sector to provide conducive learning environment in our institutions.

Across institutions in Niger Delta region where Business Education is offered, no impact is being felt of any meaningful contribution of the private sector in the development of the programme in terms of their responsiveness to the needs of the programmes. It is against this background that this study is conducted to examine the extent of responsiveness of the private sector in developing Business Education programme in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

This study sought to examine the responsiveness of the private sector in developing Business Education programme in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the responsiveness of the private sector to the improvement of Business Education curriculum content in Nigeria;
2. examine the responsiveness of the private sector in providing instructional facilities for Business Education programme in Nigeria;
3. Examine the responsiveness of the private sector in offering employment to graduates of Business Education programme in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the extent of responsiveness of the private sector to the improvement of Business Education curriculum content in Nigeria?
2. What is the extent of responsiveness of the private sector in providing instructional facilities for Business Education programme in Nigeria?
3. What is the extent of responsiveness of the private sector in offering

employment to graduates of Business Education programme in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education lecturers based on the ownership of their institution on the responsiveness of the private sector to the improvement of Business Education curriculum contents in Nigeria
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education lecturers based on their years of experience on the responsiveness of the private sector in providing instructional facilities for Business Education programme in Nigeria
- Ho₃: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on the responsiveness of the private sector in offering employment to graduates of Business Education programme in Nigeria

Methodology

This study used the descriptive survey design by seeking the opinion of Business Education lecturers on the responsiveness of the private sector to the development of Business Education programme in Nigeria. The area of the study is the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria which is made up of six states, including Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers states. The South-South geopolitical zone is popularly known as the Niger Delta oil zone of Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of all the 71 Business Education lecturers in the seven universities in South-South Nigeria offering Business Education programme. They include University of Uyo – 16, Niger Delta University – 9, University of Calabar – 11, Delta State University – 8, University of Benin – 8, Rivers State University of Science and

Technology – 11 and Cross River State University of Technology, Calabar – 8. The entire population was studied because of its size and manageability.

An instrument tagged “Responsiveness of Private Sector to Development of Business Education programme Questionnaire” (RPSDBEPQ) with a four-point rating scales was used. The response options on the instrument were Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE), assigned numerical values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts in the Department of Vocational Education in University of Uyo and a reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained using Cronbach alpha formula on a test retest method. The

instrument was administered by the researcher with the help of three research assistants. The data obtained were analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) using the mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, t-test to test null hypotheses 1 and 3 and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test null hypothesis 2 at .05 level of significance. In answering the research questions, any item with mean value less than 2.50 was regarded as ‘Low Extent’ while any item with mean value from 2.50 and above was regarded as ‘Great Extent’. In testing the hypotheses, when the p-value is greater than the alpha level, the null hypothesis is accepted. On the hand, where the p-value is less than the alpha level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Results

The data collected were analyzed and results are presented in the various Tables below according to research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question 1

What is the extent of responsiveness of the private sector to the improvement of Business Education curriculum content in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of respondents’ opinion on the responsiveness of the private sector to the improvement of Business Education curriculum content

S/N	Item	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
1	Suggesting areas of skills to be included in curriculum	1.93	1.02	Low Extent
2	Providing resources to implement curriculum	2.49	1.13	Low Extent
3	Participating in curriculum development process	2.13	0.92	Low Extent
4	Encouraging school-industry exchange of resources to develop skills	2.72	0.03	Great Extent
5	Sponsoring research for innovations in curriculum	2.11	1.08	Low Extent
6	Creating opportunities for evaluating curriculum	2.06	1.15	Low Extent

Result in Table 1 shows that all the items have mean responses below 2.50 cut off mean, except for item 4 with a mean of 2.72, showing that industries do encourage school-industry exchange of resources to develop skills

through the students’ industrial work experience scheme. This implies that the private sector’ responsiveness to the improvement of Business Education curriculum content is low.

Research Question 2

What is the extent of responsiveness of the private sector in providing instructional facilities for Business Education programme in Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the respondents’ opinion of the responsiveness of the private sector in providing instructional facilities for Business Education programme

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
7	Providing ICT machines for practical skill training	2.04	1.06	Low Extent
8	Providing relevant textbooks to departmental library	2.10	1.11	Low Extent
9	Providing other educational resources for teaching and learning	2.13	1.03	Low Extent
10	Assisting the institution in building infrastructure	2.14	1.05	Low Extent
11	Instituting scholarship for indigent students	1.92	.98	Low Extent
12	Providing scholarship to high intelligent students	1.85	.99	Low Extent

Data in Table 2 show that all the items have mean responses below the cut off mean of 2.50. This implies that responsiveness of the private sector in providing instructional facilities for Business Education programme is low.

Research Question 3

What is the extent of responsiveness of the private sector in offering employment to graduates of Business Education programme in Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of respondents’ opinion of the responsiveness of the private sector in offering employment to graduates of Business Education programme

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. dev.	Remarks
13	Accepting graduates of Business Education in their employment	2.84	1.08	Great Extent
14	Liaising with the department to source for high intelligent graduates of Business Education for employment	2.66	1.01	Great Extent
15	Giving priority to employment of Business Education graduates	2.35	1.11	Low Extent
16	Accepting Business Education students for industrial experience as prelude to actual employment	2.72	1.00	Great Extent
17	Maintaining communication contact with departments to report performance of Business Education graduates	1.35	1.11	Low Extent
18	Providing regular training and re-training of graduates under their employment	2.80	.975	Great Extent

Result in Table 3 shows that all items have mean responses above 2.50 cut off mean except for item 15 and 17. This implies that private sector do employ graduates of Business Education programme but do not

prioritize their employment, neither do they maintain communication contact with departments to report performance of Business Education graduates.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education lecturers based on the ownership of their institution on the responsiveness of the private sector to the improvement of Business Education curriculum contents in Nigeria.

Table 4: t-test result of the significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education lecturers in public and private universities on the responsiveness of the private sector to the improvement of Business Education curriculum contents in Nigeria

University	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-cal	Sig. of t	Decision
Public	50	2.73	1.125	69	0.977	0.329	*
Private	21	2.83	1.090				

Table 4 shows the calculated t-value is 0.977. At a degree of freedom 69 and .05 alpha level, the significance of t (p-value) is 0.329. The $p \geq .05$, since the p-value is greater than the alpha level, the result is not significant and the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no

significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education lecturers based on the ownership of their institution on the responsiveness of the private sector to the improvement of Business Education curriculum contents in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education lecturers based on their years of experience on the responsiveness of the private sector in providing instructional facilities for Business Education programme in Nigeria

Table 5: Analysis of Variance of the significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education lecturers based on their years of experience on the responsiveness of the private sector in providing instructional facilities for Business Education programme in Nigeria

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-cal	Sig. of F	
Between Groups	24.188	3	6.047	6.389	.460	*
Within Groups	468.490	68	.946			
Total	492.678	71				

*=not significant

Result in Table 5 shows the calculated F-value is 6.389. At a degree of freedom (3,68) and .05 alpha level, the significance of F (p-value) is 0.46. The $p \geq .05$, since the p-value is greater than the alpha level, the result is not significant and the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus,

there is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education lecturers based on their years of experience on the responsiveness of the private sector in providing instructional facilities for Business Education programme in Nigeria

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on the responsiveness of the private sector in offering employment to graduates of Business Education programme in Nigeria

Table 6: t-test result of the significant difference in the mean Business Education lecturers on the responsiveness of the private sector in offering employment to graduates of Business Education programme in Nigeria

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Gender	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig. of t	Decision
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Male	42	2.934	1.04926	69	0.116	0.908	*
Female	29	2.9464	.89642				

*=not significant

Result in Table 6 shows the calculated t-value is 0.116. At a degree of freedom 69 and .05 alpha level, the significance of t (p-value) is 0.908. The $p \geq .05$, since the p-value is greater than the alpha level, the result is not significant and the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on the responsiveness of the private sector in offering employment to graduates of Business Education programme in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that the private sector do encourage school-industry exchange of resources to develop skills through the Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) as seen in Research Question 1, number 4 item. However, their participation in the curriculum development process and other curriculum related issues is low as seen in the other items in Research Question 1. The findings also showed no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education lecturers based on the ownership of their institution on the responsiveness of the private sector to the improvement of Business Education curriculum contents in Nigeria.

The findings of the study revealed that the responsiveness of the private sector in providing instructional facilities such as ICT machines, relevant textbooks and educational resources for Business Education programme is low. The findings indicated no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Education lecturers based on their years of experience on the responsiveness of the private sector in providing instructional facilities for Business Education programme in Nigeria

The finding is in contrast with the opinion of Egbri and Chukwuedo (2013) which stated that the reason for undertaking school-industry partnership lie on the benefits of such partnership including dynamic curriculum design and development, promoting entrepreneurial competences among students, as well as promoting resource sharing between school and the industry. This means that the private sector has not done enough to bring the benefits of partnership to bear on Business Education programme. The finding is also in line with the opinion of Okwelle and Wordu (2015) which stated that not much impact of the involvement of private sector in counterpart funding of TVET is felt in Nigeria

The findings of the study further showed that the private sector does employ graduates of Business Education programme but does not prioritize their employment, neither does it maintain communication contact with departments to report performance of Business Education graduates. The finding of the study showed no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on the responsiveness of the private sector in offering employment to graduates of Business Education programme in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The state of Business Education programme in Nigeria in terms of infrastructure and service delivery is an issue of great concern. One would have expected that the efforts of the governments in the provision of instructional facilities and development of curriculum among others should be complemented by the private sector as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility or in the form of Public Private Partnership. On the basis of the findings of this study it is observed that the private sectors' responsiveness towards the development of Business Education programme in Nigeria is low. It is therefore pertinent that private sector be well sensitized on their roles in making TVET programmes successful. This is because they are the largest beneficiary of the products of

the programmes. Failure to make their inputs in curriculum design and instructional facilities would directly or indirectly affect their operations.

Recommendations

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

1. Workshops and seminars for industries and TVET institutions on the benefits of partnership would help to sensitize the stakeholders towards collaboration.
2. Administrators of TVET institutions should create enabling environment for private sector partnership by formally inviting them to participate in TVET programmes such as doing curriculum design
3. The government could encourage Public Private Partnership through provision of incentives such as tax reliefs to private sector organizations who partner with TVET for the development of the programmes.
4. Award of recognition should be instituted to encourage private sector organizations to participate in TVET programmes.

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