STRATEGIES CONSIDERED EFFECTIVE FOR TEACHING JOB SKILLS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS BY BUSINESS EDUCATORS IN ADAMAWA AND TARABA STATES, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Exposing business education students to the practical requirements of the dynamic business world motivated this study, which sought to determine instructional strategies considered effective by business educators for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States. Two research questions guided the study and four null hypotheses were tested. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The entire population of 68 business educators in the area was studied without sampling. A structured questionnaire validated by experts was used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used to establish the internal consistency of the items which yielded coefficients of 0.69 and 0.76 for the two clusters with an overall coefficient of 0.73. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that the business educators rated reflective practice and scaffolding instructional strategies as highly effective for the teaching of job skills and their opinions were not significantly influenced by type of institution and experience. It was concluded that the adoption of these instructional strategies will facilitate the acquisition of job skills among business education students in order to be efficient in meeting workplace needs. The study recommended among others that, the Ministry of Education in partnership with National Universities Commission, Tertiary Education Trust Fund, and the National Commission for Colleges of Education should provide consistent training and re-training programmes for capacity building for business educators to enable them keep abreast with trends in the changing demands of the society.

Keywords: Instructional strategies, job skills, business educators

Introduction

Education is an essential tool for sustainability. Education is a key and vital element in the broad development of a nation. This is the reason why developing nations like Nigeria cannot afford to toy with the education of its citizens as this could result in a snail speed development (Azikiwe, 2010). In this current era, technological

advances are changing the way individuals and organizations operate as well as the teaching and learning process in educational institutions.

Educational institutions prepare students for real life by equipping them with up-to-date information and necessary skills. Tertiary educational institutions play important roles in supporting the country‘s economic objectives by developing indigenous labour force (Duoc & Mertzger, 2006) and quality teaching is the key factor in improving learners achievement in any academic set up. Aliyu (2013) opined that teaching is a process of imparting knowledge in the classroom. However, effective teaching and learning depends on the ability of the teacher to stimulate and sustains learners interest through different instructional strategies. Udoetuk (2006) posited that the aim of teaching is to effect changes in learners which can only occur through the adoption of suitable teaching strategies for teaching and learning effectiveness.

Teaching strategies are suggested ways or procedures used to teach students to achieve the goals of education. Adopting effective instructional strategies in business education enhances students academic performance through active participation in the process. Onyesom and Okolocha (2013) defined business education as the intellectual and vocational preparation of students for earning a living in the contemporary industrial and business environments. Onokpaunu (2016) posited that business education is that aspect of general education that prepares students‘ for employment and advancement in a broad range of office occupations, accounting professions, marketing occupations, teaching profession and entrepreneurship. Recipients of business education are capable of being gainfully employed in various offices or self-employed. In line with the above, the teaching of business education requires the use of instructional strategies that will encourage learning by doing thereby leading toproper developments of job skills (Borrington, 2004).

Job skills are those skills that are necessary for getting, keeping, and doing well on jobs. They consist of both academic and practical intelligence of an individual that enable the individual to secure employment (Yorke, 2006). Job skills cut across all jobs from entry level to chief executive officer and are necessary for both personal and career success in the workplace. In business education, job skills are best learnt when the classroom replicates key features of real work conditions and instructional activities are similar to those performed by workers in the workplace. The teaching of job skills will equip students to cope with the wide range of demands and experiences they will meet in the workplace. This makes business education more important now than ever because it is an educational programme centred on the acquisition of skills for the workplace.

This approach requires a shift from the conventional instructional strategies to active instructional strategies that would enable students acquire practical job skills. It is with this understanding that Pittway and Cope (2007) posited that it is not possible to convey the challenges and complexities surrounding the workplace with conventional pedagogies such as lectures and seminars. Onokpaunu (2016)

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maintained that conventional instructional strategies emphasize more on theoretical knowledge rather than practical skills acquisition that would have made recipients succeed in the business world. Correspondingly, Ezenwafor and Ndinechi (2004) pointed out that business educators need to adopt different teaching strategies according to the situation; instructional objectives and subject matter taught for the inculcation of knowledge; skills and attitude to enable students meet global workplace standards.

The bottom line is that employers are looking for graduates who not only have knowledge of the work place but who also can communicate effectively with good interpersonal skills; possess problems solving skills; good information and communication technology skills and are flexible in their approach to work. Therefore, teaching job skills in business education is supposed to be dynamic, practical-oriented and activity-based through the application of different active or students - centred instructional strategies. Therefore, instructional strategies like reflective practice and scaffolding instructional strategies among others could be effective for teaching job skills among business education students. Consequently, instructional strategies like reflective practice and scaffolding among others could be effective for teaching job skills to business education students. The use of these two instructional strategies by business educators could be regarded as a path towards attaining effective instructional delivery because they allow students to be active participants in the teaching/learning process.

Stanley in Ogonor and Badmus (2004) viewed reflective practice as an instructional strategy that orientates learners towards self-focus and self-evaluation. It makes students to know their strength and future developmental needs. It is a readiness to constantly evaluate and review one‘s practice in the light of new learning (which may arise from within the context of professional practice). Reflective practice instructional strategy is the process of evaluating and improving practice in the process of teaching and learning. Faraday, Overton and Cooper (2011) commented that teacher reflective practice instructional strategy is an important component of the framework for vocational teaching and learning. Many teachers routinely think about what should be done in teaching spaces and how it should be done. Reflective practice instructional practice enables the learners to create action plan, generate ideas, which is a result from their reflection. In the views of DeVille (2010), reflective practice instructional strategy is the one that fosters meaningful learning through questioning and investigation. DeVille further maintained that skills acquired in reflective instructional strategy include; ability to communicate, exchanging of ideas, engaging in self-assessment and teamwork. Potential job skills embedded in reflective instructional strategy include; teamwork skills, leadership skills, analytical skills, time management and presentation skills among others which students' can use in their future career development in the work place.

Scaffolding as an instructional strategy is the principle of setting a task that is currently beyond students‘ expertise and then providing support in the form of

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modelling, guidance, hints or clue among others so that the learner can achieve the goal of setting that task. Scaffolding instructional strategy brings to fore teachers and students involvement in teaching/learning in a cyclical form. The teacher‘s role is to offer support; and then gradually fade as the learner masters the task. Instructional scaffolding strategy is a strategy that an educator uses to help learners bridge a cognitive gap in the course of learning to a level they previously were unable to accomplish (Van de Pol, Janneke, Volman, Monique, & Beishuizen, 2010). In scaffolding teaching, a more knowledgeable person scaffolds or supports to facilitate the learner‘s development. The scaffolds facilitate a student‘s ability to build on prior knowledge and internalize new information. The activities provided in scaffolding teaching are just beyond the level of what the learner can do alone.

According to Firestone (2015), scaffolding instructional strategy refers to a process in which teachers demonstrate how to solve a problem, and then step back, offering support as the need arises. Scaffolding instructional strategy provides individualized support based on a learners zone of proximal development (Huang, Wu, & Chen, 2012). The zone of proximal development is the distance between what students can do by themselves and the next learning that can help them to achieve job skills (Raymond, 2000). Potential job skills embedded in scaffolding instructional strategy include problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, social skills and reasoning skills among which students can use to perform workplace duties independently.

Selecting effective strategies for teaching job skills could be influenced by years of experience of business educators as well as the type of institution (universities and colleges of education) among others. A closer look at tertiary institutions in Nigeria shows that many business educators still depend on the conventional instructional strategies of chalk and talk approach, which has not led to much improvement in students‘ academic achievement in business education (Onyesom & Utomare, 2012). Conventional instructional strategies are no longer adequate in helping business education graduates in meeting the new challenges that the innovations in this technological era pose to workers. To the researchers, this study becomes necessary, to determine instructional strategies that may be considered effective by business educators for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba states.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching of job skills in business education in the technological age requires business educators who are skilful and well equipped with effective instructional strategies. Some graduates of business education are unable to find something doing because they lack the necessary job skills required for white-collar jobs or for self-employment ventures. The absence of practical approach to the teaching of job skills in tertiary institutions is one of the major missing links responsible for Nigerian graduates‘ inability to excel in today‘s workplace. Emeasoba and Igwe (2016)

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observed that the teaching strategies adopted by most business educators are more of theory than practice and inquiry, and therefore, no longer relevant for teaching in the present information technology era. Business educators are expected to select appropriate instructional strategies that will help students acquire relevant job skills that will make them self-reliant in the competitive world of work. Different instructional strategies have been developed and are being developed to meet the rapidly changing demand in the workplace. Identifying effective instructional strategies that will help curtail the alarming rate of unemployed graduates of business education is a major focus of this research. The problem of this study, therefore, is that instructional strategies that are considered effective for teaching job skills by business educators in some parts of the world appear not to be adopted in Adamawa and Taraba States. In light of this, the study wishes to determine whether business educators in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States considered reflective practice and scaffolding instructional strategies effective for the teaching of job skills.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine instructional strategies that business educators consider effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States. Specifically, the study sought to determine whether business educators in Adamawa and Taraba States consider:

1. reflective practice instructional strategies effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States.
2. scaffolding instructional strategies effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do business educators consider reflective practice instructional strategy effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba State?
2. How do business educators consider scaffolding instructional strategy effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba State?

Hypotheses

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

1. Business educators in universities and colleges of education do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on reflective practice instructional strategy considered effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States.

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2. Business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on reflective practice instructional strategy considered effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States based on years of experience.
3. Business educators in universities and colleges of education do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on scaffolding instructional strategy considered effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States.
4. Business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on scaffolding instructional strategy considered effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States based on years of experience.

Method

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. According to Nworgu (2015), a survey research design is the one that is aimed at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. The study was conducted in Adamawa and Taraba States. The population of this study comprised 68 business educators (44 in Adamawa State and 24 in Taraba State). Sampling was not done. The instrument for data collection was the researcher‘s designed questionnaire. All copies of the questionnaire distributed were returned and used for data analysis. The questionnaire was structured based on the research questions guiding the study and the literature reviewed. The instrument was constructed based on five-point scale of Very Highly Effective (VHE), Highly Effective (HE), Moderately Effective (ME), Slightly Effective (SE) and Ineffective (I). The questionnaire developed for this study was subjected to face validation by three experts in Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Cronbach Alpha was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. This yielded coefficient values of 0.69 and 0.76 for clusters B1 to B2 respectively. The overall reliability on the obtained data yielded a score of 0.73 for internal consistency, which was deemed reliable for the study. The researchers administered 68 copies of the instrument with the help of three research assistants. Data collected for the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean to answer the research questions and standard deviation to determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents views. T-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used in the analysis of data.

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Results

Table 1

Respondents mean ratings on reflective practice instructional strategy considered effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions. N= 68

S/No	Reflective Practices		SD	Remarks
1.	Empowers students' with monitoring skills in handling office records management	4.31	0.47	HE
2.	Empowers students' with adaptability skills in handling office activities	4.50	0.50	VHE
3.	Empowers students' with planning skills in scheduling office activities	4.29	0.46	HE
4.	Empowers students' with observational skills in tracking movement of office files	4.09	0.54	HE
5.	Enables students' to acquire creative skills in handling inaccurate office documents	4.19	0.60	HE
6.	Provides opportunities for students' to explore and test entrepreneurial ideas	4.21	0.41	HE
7.	Enables students' to self-evaluate their official performance in the office	4.41	0.50	HE
8.	Enables students to assess behavioural pattern of workers in the office	4.21	0.61	HE
9.	Creates opportunities for learners to develop teamwork skills in getting along with other office workers	3.90	0.31	HE
10.	Creates opportunities for learners to develop decision-making skills in any given business situation	4.09	0.54	HE
	Cluster Mean	**4.22**		**HE**

Data in Table 1 shows the cluster mean of 4.22, which indicates that business educators considered reflective practice instructional strategy as highly effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range indicating that respondents are homogeneous in their mean ratings.

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Table 2
Respondents mean ratings on scaffolding instructional strategy considered effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions. N= 68

S/No	Scaffolding Strategy		SD	Remarks
11	Enables students' perform office duties with minimal supervision	4.50	0.50	VHE
12	Facilitates students' mastery of office procedures	4.31	0.63	HE
13	Helps students in breaking down complex office tasks into manageable bits	4.12	0.70	HE
14	Motivates students' to complete office duties independently	4.00	0.46	HE
15	Helpsstudents'to effectively organize office information	4.00	0.46	HE
16	Enables students' to perform multiple office duties simultaneously within a given timeframe	4.00	0.46	HE
17	Creates opportunities for learners to developreasoningskillsin supervising jobs assigned to other office workers	3.91	0.54	HE
18	Creates opportunities for learners to develop analytic skills in allocating jobs to other office workers	4.41	0.65	HE
19	Creates opportunities for learners to develop critical thinking skills in taking minutes of meetings	4.69	0.47	VHE
20	Creates opportunities for learners to develop social skills in handling criticisms in the office	4.19	0.60	HE
Cluster Mean		**4.21**		**HE**

Data in Table 2 shows the cluster mean of 4.21. This shows that business educators considered scaffolding instructional strategy as highly effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range indicating that respondents are homogeneous in their mean ratings.

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Table 3
Summary of the t-test comparison of the mean ratings of business educators on reflective practice instructional strategy considered effective for teaching of job skills based on type of institutions.

Reflective Practice Instructional Strategy	N	-	SD	df	P-value	Decision
Universities	30	4.24	0,17	66	0.69	Not significant
Colleges of Education	38	4.20	0.18			

Data in Table 3 shows that p-value of 0.69, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05 and the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was therefore, not rejected. This indicates that business educators in universities and colleges of education did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on reflective practice instructional strategy considered effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States.

Table 4
Summary of the t-test comparison of the mean ratings of business educators on reflective practice instructional strategy considered effective for teaching of job skills based on experience

Reflective Practice Instructional Strategy	N	-	SD	df	P-value	Decision
Below 5 years	25	4.22	0.18	66	0.87	Not significant
6years and above	43	4.22	0.18			

Data in Table 4 indicates that p-value of 0.87, which is greater than the significant level of 0.05. This shows that there is no significance difference in the mean responses of business educators on reflective practice instructional strategy considered effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States based on years of experience. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups is accepted.

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Table 5
Summary of the t-test comparison of the mean ratings of business educators on scaffolding instructional strategy considered effective for teaching of job skills based on type of institution.

Scaffolding Strategy	N		SD	df	P-value	Decision
Universities	30	4.22	0.14			
				66	0.63	Not significant
Colleges of Education	38	4.21	0.14			

Data in Table 5 shows that the p-value of 0.63 is greater than the level of significance of 0.05 and the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups therefore is not rejected. This indicates that business educators in universities and colleges of education did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on scaffolding instructional strategy considered effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States.

Table 6
Summary of the t-test comparison of the mean ratings of business educators on scaffolding instructional strategy considered effective for teaching of job skills based on experience.

Scaffolding Strategy	N		SD	df	P-value	Decision
Below 5 years	25	4.20	0.15			
				66	0.34	Not significant
6 years and above	43	4.22	0.13			

Table 4 shows that the p-value of 0.34 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance and the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups therefore was not rejected. This revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on scaffolding instructional strategy considered effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States based on years of experience.

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that Business educators considered reflective practice instructional strategy as highly effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States. This orientates learners towards self-focus and self-evaluation. The findings is in consonance with that of Anikweze (2012) who reported that reflective practice instructional strategy is to support, develop, and ultimately evaluate the performance of employees through a process of inquiry that encourages their understanding and articulation of the rationale for their practices. The finding also tallies with the discovery of Faraday, Overton and Cooper

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(2011) that reflective practice instructional strategy is an important component of the framework for teaching various skills in vocational education.

The t-test analysis revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in universities and colleges of education in Adamawa and Taraba States on reflective practice instructional strategy considered effective for teaching job skills. In addition, there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators below five years of experience and six and above years of experience on reflective practice instructional strategy considered effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States. The findings agree with Olisa (2009) who reported that experience educators could carefully select instructional strategies that help students to acquire practical job skills. This informed the opinion of Osuala (2009) that business education courses would be effectively taught using modern instructional strategies such as reflective instructional strategy because it provides action learning for teaching office skills.

Results of the study indicated that business educators considered scaffolding instructional strategy as highly effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States. The findings of this study is similar with the findings of Firestone (2015) who stated that scaffolding instructional strategy help teachers demonstrate how to solve a problem, and then step back, offering support as the need arises. Teachers use this instructional technique to move students progressively towards stronger understanding and greater independence in the learning process. The teacher‘s goal in employing scaffolding teaching technique is to offer assistance that guides the students towards independence and self-regulation. The findings also tally with the works of Wood, Bruner and Ross (nd) which reported that scaffolding is where the teacher helps the students to master a task or concept that the students could not grasp independently. Similarly Williams (nd) also reported that scaffolding is a dynamic process by which an expert deliberately expands a novice skills based on feedback from the novice in practice.

Findings from the test of hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference among the ratings of business educators in universities and colleges of education in Adamawa and Taraba States on scaffolding instructional strategy considered effective for teaching job skills. In addition, the test of fourth hypothesis indicated that business educators below five years of experience and six and above years of experience did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on scaffolding instructional strategy considered effective for teaching job skills in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States. This disagrees with Jimoh-Kadiri (2012) who noted that less experienced teachers (who have taught for less than six years) might not be competent enough in using some instructional strategies. This is in agreement with Ngetcha and Ndege (2011) that instructional strategies such as scaffolding instructional strategy can facilitate the attainment of set goals or objectives of teaching job skills in business education.

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Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the adoption of reflective and scaffolding instructional strategies will be effective in teaching job skills to business education students. Following the path of these instructional strategies may lead to a remarkable improvement in the teaching and learning of business education in tertiary institutions in Adamawa and Taraba States.

Recommendations

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

1. The Ministry of Education in partnership with National University Commission (NUC), the Education Thrust Fund (ETF) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should provide adequate and consistent training and retraining programmes for capacity building for business educators to enable them keep abreast with trends in the changing society.
2. Business educators should endeavour to diversify in their use of instructional strategies in order to encourage students to learn.
3. Professional organizations like the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN) and government agencies should organize in- service training programmes such as seminars, conferences and workshop on utilization of reflective practice and scaffolding instructional strategies in the teaching and learning process to update and upgrade on their uses.

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