

Facility utilization and employability skills acquisition among undergraduates business education students in Kwara State public universities, Nigeria

Uso de instalaciones y adquisición de habilidades de empleabilidad entre estudiantes universitarios de educación empresarial en universidades públicas del estado de Kwara, Nigeria

Research article

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Abstract

The study aims to ascertain how facility utilization affects the acquisition of employable skills by business education enrolled in two public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. A population of 315 final-year business education students was the subject of a descriptive research design. A survey known as the Facility Utilization and Students' Employability Skill Acquisition Questionnaire was used to gather the information. The results show that undergraduate students of business education did not acquire employability skills at a considerably higher rate, as well as using infrastructure facilities had a major overall effect on students' learning of employability skills. Norms for facilities utilization should be established by regulating authorities such as the Nigerian University Commission, in order to improve employability skills, which are essential for attainment in a competitive labor market. It is also suggested to develop monitoring and assessment systems to guarantee that lecturers and students use library and laboratory facilities effectively.

Keywords: facilities utilization, employability skills, professional growth, Nigeria universities.

Resumen

El estudio tiene como objetivo determinar cómo la utilización de las instalaciones afecta la adquisición de las habilidades de empleabilidad por parte de los estudiantes de educación empresarial matriculados en dos universidades públicas en el estado de Kwara, Nigeria. Se realizó un diseño de investigación descriptivo sobre una población de 315 estudiantes de último año de educación empresarial. Para recopilar la información, se utilizó una encuesta conocida como Cuestionario de Adquisición de Habilidades de Empleabilidad de los Estudiantes y Utilización de Instalaciones. Los resultados muestran que los estudiantes universitarios de educación empresarial no adquirieron las habilidades de empleabilidad a un ritmo adecuado, y que el uso de la infraestructura tuvo un efecto general importante en el aprendizaje de habilidades de empleabilidad de los estudiantes. Las autoridades reguladoras, como la Comisión Universitaria de Nigeria, deberían establecer normas para la utilización de las instalaciones que permitan mejorar las habilidades de empleabilidad, que son esenciales para lograr resultados en un mercado laboral competitivo. También se sugiere desarrollar sistemas de seguimiento y evaluación para garantizar que profesores y estudiantes utilicen eficazmente las instalaciones de la biblioteca y los laboratorios.

Palabras clave: utilización de instalaciones, habilidades de empleabilidad, crecimiento profesional, universidades de Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Nigeria has just realized how critical general skill development is to the country's economic growth. Nevertheless, the ratio of productive, autonomous inhabitants to dependent, unproductive citizens has a major impact on the nation's economic advancement. Higher economic development, higher citizen living standards, and a growth in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are all correlated with higher employment rates, and vice versa (Silva-Lima et al., 2021). A nation's peace and stability are seriously threatened by a growing unemployment rate. According to Eita and Ashipala (2010), unemployment has a major role in causing a number of societal problems, including crime, violence, drunkenness, prostitution, and homelessness as well as difficulties like poverty, misery, and family dissolution.

According to Alamana, who was mentioned by O'Nwachukwu (2016), unemployment is particularly concerning since it sends unsettling signals throughout Nigerian society. The country currently has a 33% unemployment rate, and many of recent university graduates are struggling to secure a job.

ICT development is changing the nature of work and necessitating swift adjustments to meet shifting market demands. As a result, governments everywhere are concentrating on preparing their workforce to handle these difficulties through education and training (Dania, Bakar & Mohamed, 2014). It is thought that providing young people with relevant skills will increase their employability because businesses look for applicants who can function both intellectually and practically in the workplace.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), seeks to develop its youth into highly qualified and globally competitive people, as stated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013). By giving young people the fundamental information and skills they need, Vocational and Technical Education and Training (VTET), which includes Business Education, is viewed as a key tool for easing this transition.

The major goal of business education programme is to enhanced students the abilities, know-how, attitudes, and competences needed for self-sufficiency, professional growth, and employment. Instead of becoming a burden, the acquired talents increase a person's capability to contribute constructively to community development and become a valued member of society.

However, a significant issue for business education graduates is their lack of employability skills, which restricts their options for employment in a market for skilled workers. Many recent grads find it difficult to get and keep a job since they can't work well under pressure. Their deficiency in core skills not only makes it difficult for them to execute their jobs, but it also keeps them from making a positive impact on the country's economy. As a result, these graduates frequently become reliant on their family and the community, which raises unemployment, poverty, and social problems like crime and violence and eventually lowers living standards overall.

Gaining entry into the labor market, obtaining employment, and progressing in a career all require employability skills. These essential abilities —which are regarded as occupational intelligence —, allow workers to carry out their tasks successfully and productively. Interpersonal, communica-

tion, problem-solving, customer relations, office practice, and competency abilities are among the fundamental building blocks of a job. Employers anticipate that students will have saleable skills that will enable them contribute right away in the workplace (Ezenwafor, & Achugamonye, 2019). These abilities are divided into three primary categories by them: topic knowledge, fundamental talents, and personal attributes.

The skills for employment can be categorized into four main groups: technical skills, interpersonal skills, workplace management skills, and personal skills. According to Uchendu (2016), university students who possess a variety of skills—including employability skills—become independent, relevant, and useful members of society, regardless of whether they work for the government or for themselves. According to Shafie and Nayan (2010), contemporary businesses are looking for employees who possess both higher-order thinking abilities like learning, reasoning, creative thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving, in addition to fundamental academic skills like reading, writing, and math. Individual attributes like self-control, flexibility, honesty, and teamwork are also highly prized.

According to Ezeji and Okorie, referenced in Nwanaka and Amaefule (2011), proper vocational training in skills, raw materials, machinery, and equipment is necessary to address Nigeria's social and economic difficulties. The ability to harness, manipulate, and convert materials into products is essential for skilled workers. Additionally, they stated that effective skill-building initiatives have assisted nations like the US, UK, Germany, and Japan in the rehabilitation of drug users, dropouts, and impoverished people, allowing them to make substantial economic contributions and boost productivity.

Regrettably, a large number of Nigerian business school graduates lack necessary job-related abilities. Any country hoping to thrive and develop must prioritize the acquisition of skills since they increase employment prospects, encourage self-employment, create jobs, lower rates of crime and poverty, and raise living standards overall through increased economic activity. Accounting, management, marketing, office operations, technical skills, computer proficiency, interpersonal skills, leadership, decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking, innovation, and ICT skills are among the essential competencies. According to Ramlee, as mentioned in Audu, Kamin, and Saud (2013), graduates of Technical Vocational Education (TVE) usually excel in their technical skills, employers frequently express unhappiness with their employability skills. This is. These workers usually lack entrepreneurship, critical thinking, communication, interpersonal skills, motivation, and problem-solving ability. The worldwide education community is still struggling to address graduates' lack of employment skills.

Several scholars have investigated the causes of this problem. Munishi (2016), for instance, ascribed deficient employability skills to a variety of factors, including an unsuitable curriculum, incompetent instructors, an emphasis on the acquisition of general knowledge rather than laying more emphasis on skill acquisition, lack of facilities for instruction, lack of career assistance in higher education, and inadequate industrial attachments. Dania et al. (2014), found that involvement in industrial training, career development activities, and self-concept all had an impact on the learning of employable skills. Poor employability skills continue to be a problem, despite attempts by the federal and state governments to improve curriculum content, hire skilled instructors,

and provide sufficient resources. Thus, the researcher presumed that this miserable employability skill acquisition could be as a result of poor facility utilization for teaching Business Education.

Availability of facilities is one thing and proper utilization of these facilities is another thing. Institutional facilities refer to the resources essential for the effective implementation of any educational program, including Business Education. These resources encompass teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and staff development, along with physical facilities such as laboratories, clinics, or studios, which should meet appropriate space requirements per student. Additionally, this includes classroom facilities and equipment, laboratory size and equipment, safety materials, and the overall financing of the program. Facility utilization refers to the use of school buildings, school compound, equipment, furniture, tools, machines and basic amenities for teaching and learning to facilitate the acquisition of skills, knowledge, attitude and competencies.

Acknowledging the importance of learning facilities for skill development, the FRN (2013) emphasized in its educational goals that acquiring relevant skills and fostering mental, physical, and social abilities are essential for individuals to contribute to society. Achieving this goal relies on the effective use of learning facilities and other factors. Utilizing resources such as instructional tools, infrastructure, libraries, and ICT not only makes lessons more engaging and meaningful but also enhances retention, saves time, breaks down classroom barriers, and improves students' employability skills in Business Education.

Despite the importance of learning facilities in enhancing undergraduate students'

employability skills in Business Education, there appears to be a lack of systematic research in colleges of education in Kwara State regarding their impact on these skills. This study aims to investigate the extent to which the use of learning facilities influences the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria.

2. Methodology

2.1 Theoretical framework

Oliver (1980), as cited by Zhao, Huang & Wang (2022), proposed the concept of consumer satisfaction theory, which centers on the conscious comparison of a pre-event cognitive state with a post-event cognitive state. According to this paradigm, consumers establish pre-purchase expectations about the expected performance of products and services, which act as a standard against which to measure them. Following their use of a good or service, customers assess how well the results met their expectations. When results meet expectations, confirmation takes place.

According to Yuksel and Yuksel (2008), cited by Nurmalasari and Wijaya (2022), disconfirmation occurs when expectations and results don't match up. Whether this difference is favorable or negative determines whether a consumer is satisfied or dissatisfied. More specifically, positive disconfirmation and satisfaction follow when service performance surpasses initial expectations. Confirmation happens when service performance lives up to expectations, which also leads to satisfaction (Eslava-Zapata, Cárdenas & Chacón-Guerrero, 2023). On the other hand, negative disconfirmation causes discontent if service

delivery is below expectations (Morelos-Gómez, Cardona-Arbeláez & Lora-Guzmán, 2024).

Also, Cadotte et al. (1987), cited by Méndez-Aparicio, Izquierdo-Yusta & Jiménez-Zarco (2017), explained that consumers have some expected standards of satisfaction in their minds before going for shopping. This pre-purchase satisfaction standards guide the consumers during shopping. After buying a product/service, consumers assess the level of satisfaction derived from such product/service over their mindset about it. If the satisfaction is lower than the mindset, then the consumer feels dissatisfaction. Therefore, degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction a user has over a goods is measured with the size of product performance.

This theory is applicable to the Business Education facilities utilization which are regarded as product while students/lecturers are the consumers that have the pre-purchasing expectation. If the facilities available for teaching and learning of Business Education are not properly utilized, the students/lecturers will be dissatisfied but when these facilities are effectively and efficiently utilized compared to the facilities utilization need expectation, the students/lecturers will be satisfied. Business Education facilities are effectively utilized when such facilities are adequately provided by the relevant authorities to facilitate skill development (satisfaction) by the

students. This theory can also be applied to the dependent variable (skill acquisition). An employer has a target he expects the employee to meet even before employing him. If the employee does not possess the requisite skills needed to meet the target, the employer will be dissatisfied and can fire such employee.

2.2 Business employability skills acquisition

Students should be given priority in educational activities so they can develop the skills necessary for both success in the job market and self-development (Uchendu, 2016). According to Udo and Bakor (2014), acquiring new skills include being able to carry out tasks with ease and competence.

Students that pursue vocational business education are prepared with the abilities, know-how, and mindset needed to succeed in particular business-related fields. The six skill groups that make up Vocational Business Education —Accounting, Economics, Distributive, Office Technology and Management (OTME), and Entrepreneurship—, were determined by the researchers (see figure 1). They contend that acquiring a wide range of skills improves students' efficiency as workers or entrepreneurs and also lowers the dropout rate among young Nigerians, raises earning potential, and contributes to a decrease in crime.

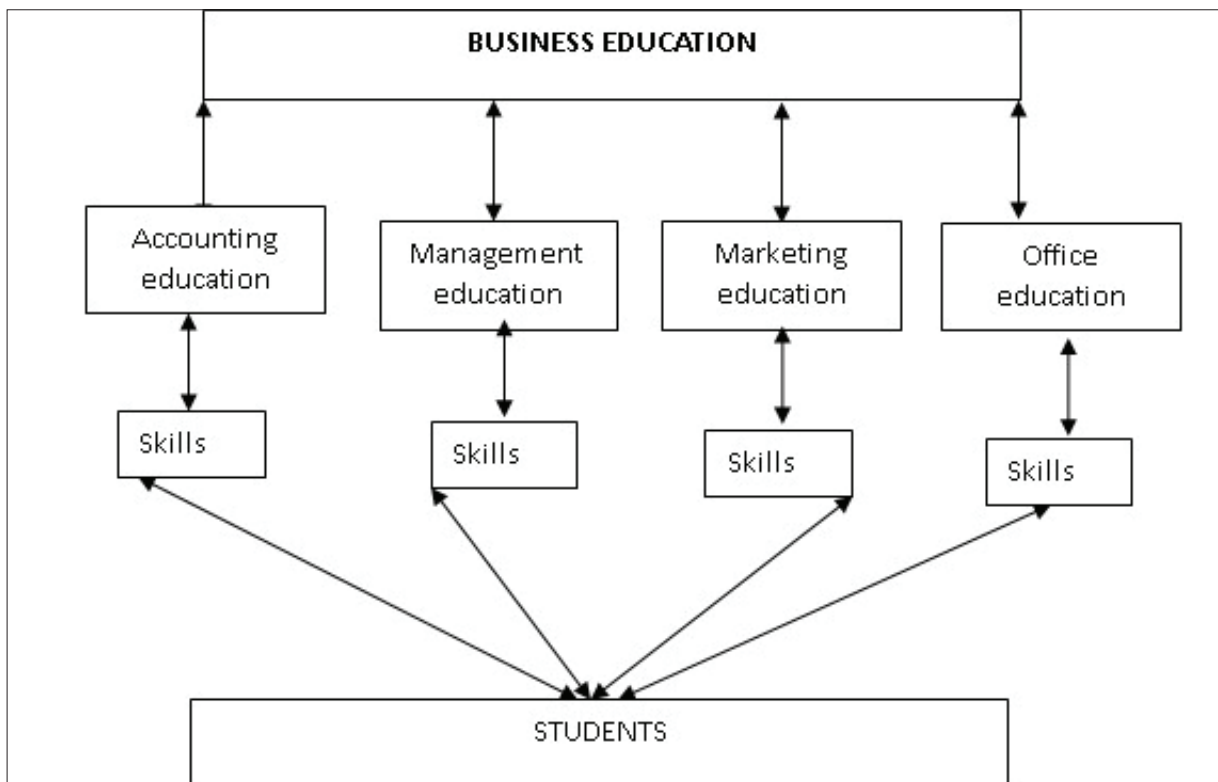


Figure 1. Options of Business Education.

Uchendu (2016), studied how university students in Kwara State acquired skills to improve their employability. Two assumptions were used to direct the investigation as it sought to assess the employability skills of these pupils. A survey approach was used, and 300 The researchers randomly choose final year students from the total population of 2,998 from the universities under study. A survey known as the "University Students' Skill Acquisition for Employability Questionnaire (USSAEQ)" was used to gather data. The findings showed that university students have acquired very few employability skills, and that there is little discernible difference in this area between regular and specialized university students.

Krahn, Lowe and Lehmann (2002), cited by Paredes and Buenaventura (2024), examined how high school students in Alberta acquired

employable skills. Their study concentrated on the employability abilities that students self-reported having acquired from official work experience programs, part-time jobs, volunteer work, and high school courses. In most settings, a lot of kids don't realize how useful analytical abilities and a foundational high school education are in the workforce. Furthermore, there appears to be a mismatch between what students are learning and the abilities that businesses are looking for.

Making Use of Infrastructure for Students' Acquisition of Employable Skills

The amount of time that resources are made available for use in teaching and learning, is referred to as the utilization of infrastructure facilities.

Any educational program, especially those covering business, must have instructional tools in order to be delivered effectively. These resources include department heads, staff development, and teaching and non-teaching people in addition to physical space, classroom supplies, safety and hygienic considerations, among other amenities. Zhao et al (2022), mention education facilities as typewriters, dictation machines, recorders, coin counters and other adding machines, copying machines, duplicators, and other pertinent equipment.

2.3 Statement of the problem

Business Education is designed to produce graduates who possess requisite skills and knowledge needed to be more functional in the work environment. This can be achieved through competent lecturers, appropriate teaching facilities, appropriate teaching methods, strategies and a skill-based curriculum.

It has been observed that this skillful programme produces graduates every year who are not gainfully employed. This is attributed to poor employability skill acquisition among these graduates. These skills which include workplace management skill, computer skills, technical skills, employee personal skills, creativity skills, numeracy skills and communication skills, among others, are not developed among undergraduates of business education. The effect of these is that most Business Education graduate who are expected to be employers of labour are seen around the street as job seekers (Agogbua & Mgbatogu, 2024), while few who have jobs are found to be ineffective and inefficient in discharging their duties and responsibilities, thereby unable to advance on their jobs. Researchers have investigated the cause of

this problem which they have identified to include poor teaching resources, incompetent and committed lecturers, poor funding of Business Education, poor curriculum content, and so on.

Both federal and state governments and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), have tried so many measures to salvage this ugly situation such as employment of competent staff, provision of instructional materials and facilities and also improving the curriculum, but yet Business Education undergraduate students still lack these basic skills. Nevertheless, the successful use of instructional facilities is not ensured by their appropriate provision. The researcher hypothesizes that insufficient use of the required resources to teach may be the cause of business education undergraduate students' pathetic acquisition of employability skills.

This study main purpose was to ascertain how facility utilization affected the acquisition of employable skills by business education enrolled in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. In particular, the research aimed to investigate: i) How much employability training undergraduate business education students in Kwara State public universities receive; ii) How these universities' business education undergraduates' learning of employability skills is influenced by their use of the infrastructure.

In order to address the goal of the study, the following queries were created: a. To what degree do undergraduate students studying business education at Kwara State public universities acquire employable skills?; b. How does the use of infrastructure affect the acquisition of employability skills by undergraduate students studying business education in public universities in Kwara State?

2.4 Research Hypotheses

In this study, the following null hypotheses were examined:

H1: The acquisition of employable skills by undergraduate business education students at Kwara State public universities is not significantly impacted.

H2: The use of instructional facilities had no discernible impact on the development of employability skills among undergraduate students studying business education at public universities in Kwara State.

2.5 Methodology

This study employed a survey research design as its methodology. The participant included 315 final-year undergraduate students in business education from two public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. In this case, there was no sample or sampling

methodology because the full population was considered.

The study employed the Facility Utilization and Students' Employability Skill Acquisition Questionnaire (FUSESAQ), as its research instrument (Ikutal, IhekaugwuOtum & Edet, 2023). The questionnaire was vatted by two professionals and after its validation, a pilot test was carried out at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University in Bauchi. The reliability of the research instrument was determined to be 0.89 using the Cronbach Alpha method. A t-test and basic linear regression were employed to statistically analyze the data for the first and second hypotheses, with each hypothesis assessed at a significance level of 0.05.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Hypothesis validation

H1: The acquisition of employable skills by undergraduate business education students at Kwara State public universities is not significantly impacted.

Table 1. t-test analysis of employable skills by undergraduate business education students.

Variable	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	Test value	p-level
Employability skill acquisition	449	60.46	5.71	399	1.04	75.00	.063

Result significant at $p < .05$, Crit-t=1.658

According to Table 1, the test value of 75.0 was exceeded by the mean employability skill acquisition score of 60.46. This suggests that undergraduate students studying business education have not developed employability skills to the desired extent. The calculated t-value of 1.58 is lower than the critical t-value of 1.994 at the 0.05 signifi-

cance level, with 447 degrees of freedom. In a similar vein, the p-level of .107 indicated a significance level higher than 0.05. With this outcome, the hypothesis one was strongly accepted, suggesting that undergraduate students studying business education did not acquire employability skills at a considerably higher rate.

H2: The use of instructional facilities had no discernible impact on the development of employability skills among undergraduate

students studying business education at public universities in Kwara State.

Table 2. Simple Linear Regression analysis of instructional facilities had no discernible impact on the development of employability skills.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.803 ^a	.791	.790	0.175

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F-ratio	p-level
Regression	231.14	2	115.570	25.34*	.022 ^b
Residual	1810.25	397	4.560		
Total	2041.39	399			

*p<.05; df 2, 397; critical F = 3.02

Table 2 reveals that correlation coefficient R was estimated at 0.803, which showed a strong positive correlation between instructional facilities utilization and employability skills acquisition among Business Education undergraduate students in Kwara State public Universities. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 79% which shows that 79% of the employability skills acquired were explained by instructional facility utilization while unexplained variation is 21%. The test proved to be significant or valid since the p value (0.022) associated with the computed F-ratio of 25.34 was less than 0.05 level of significance at 2 and 447 degrees of freedom. With these results, the null hypothesis was rejected. It implies that instructional facilities utilization influenced significantly the employability skill acquisition of Business Education undergraduate students in Kwara State public Universities.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of the analysis on Table 1 revealed that Students employability skill acquisition acquired by students were significantly low. The findings are in line with Uchendu (2016), who pointed out that university students' skill acquisition for employment is significantly low and concluded that equipping students with different skills which include employability skill in the university will help them to be self-reliant, relevant and functional members of the society whether employed by government or self-employed.

This results are in support of Ikutal et al. (2023), who revealed that the employability skills of the graduates are at a moderate level and may hinder their opportunities to employed. They opined that the tertiary institutions must make a greater effort to help students

acquire the employability skills required by many organizations and also suggested that development of employability skills should be integrated into the curriculum to ensure that students graduates with the skills needed by employers.

According to results in Table 2, undergraduate students studying business education are greatly impacted in their development of employability skills by their use of the infrastructure. Schools that make good use of these resources help pupils develop employability skills more than those that don't. It confirms the observations made by Barrett et al. (2019), who stated that sufficient structures to house professionals and students are necessary for high-quality teaching and learning. When it comes to employability, students who attend schools with excellent facilities get more knowledge and skills than those who attend ones with subpar architecture. This result also aligns with the findings of Udofia et al. (2012), who highlighted the need for properly equipped workshops and their appropriate application in skill impartation. Egunjobi's (2014), found that many lecturers lack the ICT skills necessary to operate the equipment, and there is a lack of facilities in many departments.

Munishi (2016), conducted a research on the factors that contribute to Tanzanian Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) graduates' lack of employability skills. The study identified several issues, including ineffective curricula, incompetent lecturers, a lack of emphasis on general knowledge and skills, and a lack of career guidance at higher training levels.

Finally, the use of educational facilities ignites the interest of students and encourage their involvement in the process of teach

and learning. Furthermore, absence of these facilities will limit students understanding, exposure and will hinder clear appearance of their natural abilities as required for skill acquisition. To ensure maximum employability skill acquisition, utilization of facilities for teaching and learning of Business Education is as important as their provision.

4. Conclusions

It can be concluded that students who successfully make use of business educational infrastructure are more likely to develop employability skills. Acquiring these skills is greatly aided by frequent and heavy use of the educational facilities. Students studying business education who utilize libraries well also acquire a variety of employability skills. Additionally, students' development of employability skills is improved when Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is used effectively in business education instruction.

In this sense, it can be recommended that to create a more favorable atmosphere that would enhance the acquisition of employability skills, educational institutions ought to develop more facilities and add more chairs to accommodate students. Furthermore, to ensure that students are developing employability skills and making the best use of the infrastructure that is available, curriculum planners for business education should add more time to practical activities.

Authors' Contribution

Abdulrazak Mohammed: Project administration, Formal analysis, Writing - review editing.

Sadat Gada: Investigation, Data curation.

Sakariyahu Shehu: Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology.

Abdullahi AbdulRafiu: Data curation, Writing - original draft.

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Conflicts of interest

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