

**CHALLENGES OF STANDARDIZATION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION
PROGRAMME IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN ANAMBRA STATE**

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Abstract

The need to improve the standard of business education programme necessitated this study. The study ascertained standardization challenges facing business education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted survey research design, and 111 business educators from four public tertiary institutions offering business education programme in Anambra State were studied without sampling. A-14 items structured questionnaire validated by three experts in the field of Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation Unit was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established using trial-test while Cronbach alpha formula was used to calculate the correlation coefficient which yielded coefficient values of 0.79 and 0.84 for section A and B respectively with an overall value of 0.82 obtained. Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings showed that respondents agree that business education programme in tertiary institutions in Anambra State are facing curriculum, and accreditation/supervision standardization challenges. Type of institution was not a significant factor on business educators' responses in this regard. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that business education programme despite its immense progress still faces challenges of standardization in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It was recommended among others that; business education administrators should get business organizations more involved in reviewing the curriculum of the programme to improve its relevance to the labour market.

Key Words: Business Education, Standardization, Tertiary Institutions

Introduction

Business education programme is viewed as a key component of Nigerian governments' initiatives to create jobs for youths. Chima-Uduma and Igwe (2020) affirmed that in order to provide the youths with skills to launch new businesses, the business education training programme should combine general education with entrepreneurship courses. Business education emphasizes practical skills and equips students with knowledge and abilities to find work anywhere in the world or to create new business upon graduation (Ogben and Amahi, 2018). It is taught at tertiary institutions in Nigeria

Tertiary institution also refers to third level, third stage or post-secondary schools. It is the educational level following the completion of secondary education (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014). It includes universities, colleges of education, polytechnics and monotechnics. According to Umezulike and Anozie (2021), graduates of colleges of education are awarded NCE, polytechnics are awarded HND while universities are awarded B.Ed./B.Sc. which is the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession in Nigeria. Nwaukwa, Iloeje, Obianuju and Nwagu (2018) asserted that by assisting students to develop their talents, work habits, and appreciation, business education primarily transmits skills essential to enter and advance in employment on a meaningful basis. Similar to this, Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) confirmed that the true objectives of business education are to expose students to knowledge about business, including a good blend of computer technology, which incorporates Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). It also prepares students for specific careers in office occupations through developing in them core skills such as interpersonal, digital, financial, self-management, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills.

Business education programme in tertiary institutions is plagued by a number of challenges that hinder quality and effective delivery to the Nigerian public. According to Edokpolor and Owenvbiugie (2017), the Nigeria has been treating business education with levity. Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) pointed out that business education faces challenges of inadequate provision of funding, lack of qualified staff, lack of modern teaching facilities, low quality curriculum, and improper attention for business education. In agreement, Njoku (2019) on the other hand noted obvious challenges facing business education programme in Nigeria such as shortage of funds, inadequate and obsolete teaching equipment, shortage of skilled and qualified staff, in effective implementation of the curriculum, and lack of standardization of business education programme.

According to Ogbudinkpa, Oluwalola and Olusanya (2021), the rise in the number of unemployed business education graduates in Nigeria countenanced calls by stakeholders to re-assess the standard of business education programme. Standardization is the process of creating, advocating for, and conceivably requiring programmes or procedures that are compliant with standards within a certain field of study. Osadebe (2014) defined standardization as the process of creating and putting into practice academic and technological standards. Nworgu (2015) saw standardization as the consistency of process used to administer an educational programme. It is a set of agreements to which all relevant stakeholders in business education programme must comply in order to ensure that all its operations are carried out within defined parameters. Amesi (2018) put forward that standardization of business education programme should be discussed under supervision, curriculum, methods of instructional delivery, equipment, and quality of lecturers.

Amesi(2018)affirmed thatto maintain high standards of business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, effort must be made to identify and address key challenges such as poor accreditation processes, poor supervision, lack of uniform assessment system, and non-uniformity of curriculum contents.

The curriculum is a planned course of study for a targeted set of students over a predetermined amount of time with the intention of achieving specific predetermined educational goals (Shabi, 2016). The curriculum of business education programme includes topics and guidelines such as objectives, skills, knowledge, and attitudes, as well as learning experiences the students should have; concepts that should be introduced in what order, teaching materials, and assessment techniques. The standard of any educational programme (business education programme inclusive)can be severely hampered by the disparity (non-uniformity) in course curriculum contents.

Uniformity in curriculum contents can enable business educators to follow a sequence in accordance with their teaching programme. Amahi and Ogben (2014) noted that curricular uniformity in business education programme is crucial, as lack of it presents a stumbling block to students who may want to transfer to another institution to continue and finish their studies; negatively impact on the allocation of course credits, and quality of lecturers in the courses; and negatively impact on job prospects and short listing of it graduates for job interviews. However, George, Udoetuk, and Ufot (2017) regretted that Nigerian universities and colleges that provide business education programmes do not have a standardized curriculum. Similarly, Njoku (2019) believed that because the business education curriculum is not uniform, some graduates end up being more competent in the theoretical than the practical, while others end up being more competent in the theoretical than the practical which undermines the programme's credibility.

Additionally, the curriculum for business education must adapt to societal, technological advances, particularly in the context of the modern classroom. To participate in the labor market, business education graduates required to be well prepared. According to Atsu, Ateb, and Atah (2021), the curriculum content for business education should be extensive and diversified in nature and breadth to give students a better grasp of the business world and the chance to pick up the necessary information and skills. No matter how comprehensive, current, and innovative an academic programme's curriculum may be, Ajuluchukwu (2015) argued that if the course material is insufficient or irrelevant, significant improvements will not be made. This, according to Ajuluchukwu, it is the situation with the business education programme because its curriculum content is not up-to-date and does not include many digital skills that are crucial and high in demand. Ajisafe et al. (2015) observed that the majority of courses taught in business education programme do not provide the range of knowledge and abilities necessary for today's students to be prepared effectively for global competition.

Furthermore, the National University Commission (NUC) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) play a significant role in the inspection of business education programmes at the level of universities and colleges of education. It is important to efficiently oversee, monitor, and raise the bar of a business education curriculum to be uniformly standardized (Olatunde, 2021). The accreditation is one tool NCCE and NUC use. Business education department can better manage their programme thanks to accreditation, which is also beneficial for enhancing their "brand" and helping

them get more students. An institution and its programme are examined as part of the accreditation process as a quality assurance measure. It indicates if a higher education institution has met or exceeded the requirements set forth and whether it should be permitted to function and be supported. Olatunde (2021) claimed that some business education departments in higher education institutions gain complete accreditation fraudulently, much like the majority of everything done in Nigeria. Olatunde regretted that several business education departments at tertiary institutions borrow resources they do not have in order to achieve accreditation requirements, only to return to their pre-accreditation condition of deficiency after accreditation.

The challenges of standardization in business education programme could differ between universities and colleges of education. It could be that universities in Nigeria may have a uniform business education curriculum when compared to those in colleges of education. Additionally the NUC may be conducting effective and detailed accreditation of business education programme in universities compared to the NCCE in colleges of education. In view of these assumptions, the opinions of business educators in universities and colleges of education as regards the standardization challenges in business education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions could differ. It is against this background that this study was carried out to ascertain the challenges of standardization facing business education programme in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria lack the financial resources to maintain educational quality due to poor budgetary allocation to education over the years. Based on this, tertiary institutions in Nigeria has faced a lot of challenges including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, outdated curriculum, decreasing quality and poor motivation of lecturers among others due to poor allocation of funds to education by the Federal and State government. From available statistics, there was no time the allocation came close to the 26% recommended by UNESCO, which has led to decay in the educational sector. Besides, education in Nigeria, (business education inclusive) has gone below its standard. The system has derailed from its original intentions because the standard of teaching and learning are deteriorating, classrooms are overcrowded, and laboratories lack the modern equipment. All these have contributed to a precipitous fall in the standard and quality of business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. At present, the caliber of students that graduate from business education programme mainly are not performing up to expectation in labour markets, which leads to doubts of the standard of the programme. The researchers are therefore worried that the lack of standardization of business education programme could worsen the skill gap already existing between business education graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria and the labour markets. This study hopes to identify the standardization challenges facing business education programme in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Specifically, this study examined (1) curriculum standardization challenges facing business education programme in tertiary institutions in Anambra State, (2) accreditation/supervision standardization challenges facing business education programme in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

1. What are the curriculum standardization challenges facing business education programme in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?
2. What are the accreditation/supervision standardization challenges facing business education programme in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

Null Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in universities and those in colleges of education on curriculum standardization challenges facing business education programme in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.
2. Business educators in universities and those in colleges of education do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on accreditation/supervision standardization challenges facing business education programme in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Method

The study adopted survey research design. It was carried out in Anambra State using 111 business education lecturers in public universities and colleges of education in the state. (Source: Academic Planning Unit of these institutions as at 28th February, 2023). The population was not too large to give rise to sampling. Hence, the entire population was used for this study. Structured questionnaire Titled “Business Education Programme and Standardization Challenges (BEPSC)” 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 type of institution while Section B contained 14 items in respect to the research question, and structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3 Disagree, (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. Face validity of the instrument was determined using the opinions of two experts from Business Education Department and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation Unit. The reliability of the instrument was carried out using pilot-test and data collected were calculated with Cronbach Alpha formula and correlation coefficient values of 0.79 and 0.84 for section A and B respectively with an overall value of 0.82 obtained. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity of the respondents’ opinions while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. A hypothesis was rejected where the p-value is less than the alpha value but accepted where the p-value is greater or equal to the alpha value. The analyses were done using SPSS version 23.0.

Results

Research Question 1

What are the curriculum standardization challenges facing business education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

Table 1: Respondents’ Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation on Curriculum Standardization Challenges Facing Business Education Programme

S/N	Item Description	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	The degree awarded to business education graduates differ among universities (some universities award B.Sc./Ed. While others award only B.Ed.)	3.57	.53	Strongly Agree
2	The titles and names given to business education and programme in departments in tertiary institutions reflect in the variations of curriculum	3.62	.50	Strongly Agree
3	Knowledge and skills contained in business education curriculum in my institution is not enough to prepare students for labour market	2.47	.51	Disagree
4	The curriculum of business education programme in my institution does not adapt to societal digital advances	3.16	.49	Agree
5	the curriculum of business education is not effectively implemented due to lack of qualified lecturers	4.00	.62	Strongly Agree
6	Curriculum of business education programme does not contain enough courses in digital entrepreneurship to give students a better grasp of the business world	3.54	.85	Strongly Agree
7	Certificates of some graduates of business education in universities do not indicate the area of specialization	2.59	.82	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.28	.62	Agree

Data in table 1 shows that items 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 have mean scores ranging from 3.16 to 4.00 meaning that the respondents agree that they are curriculum standardization challenges facing business education programme. Item 3 and 7 have mean scores of 2.47 and 2.59 showing that the respondents disagree that they are part of curriculum standardization challenges. The cluster mean score of 3.28 shows that on the whole, respondents agree that business education programme in tertiary institutions in Anambra State is facing curriculum standardization challenges. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

Research Question 2

What are the accreditation/supervision standardization challenges facing business education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

Table 2: Respondents’ Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation on Accreditation/Supervision Standardization Challenges Facing Business Education Programme

S/N	Item Description	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
8	Institutions do not provide business education students with industrial training (IT) and teaching practice (TP) venues to complete their training	2.57	.73	Agree
9	Most supervisors do not make visits to the students at IT	3.82	.80	Strongly Agree

10	Some officials of NUC receive bribe to pass business education programmes fit in Universities	2.97	.61	Agree
11	Standards and guidelines in Nigeria Colleges of Education do not strengthen business education programme for quality assurance	2.16	.59	Disagree
12	Accreditation of Universities/Colleges of Education is ineffective due to inadequate funding by the Nigerian government	3.50	.60	Strongly Agree
13	Poor preparation for accreditation by administrators, deans, heads of department and senate committee on accreditation is responsible for institutions failing academic programme accreditation	3.24	.72	Agree
14	Inadequate academic staff is a major problem hindering effective business education programme accreditation in public Universities/Colleges of Education	2.86	.71	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.02	.68	Agree

Data in table 2 shows that items 9, 12 and 13 have mean scores ranging from 3.24 to 3.82 meaning that the respondents agree that they are components of accreditation/supervision standardization challenges facing business education programme. Items 8, 10, 11, 13 and 14 have mean scores ranging from 2.16 to 2.97 showing that the respondents disagree to the statement. The cluster mean score of 3.02 shows that on the whole, respondents agree that business education programme is facing accreditation/supervision standardization challenges in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in universities and those in colleges of education on curriculum standardization challenges facing business education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis of Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of Business Educators in Universities and those in Colleges of Education on Curriculum Standardization Challenges Facing Business Education Programme

Variables	N	X	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
Universities	353.96	.79			1090.47	1.01	Not Significant
Colleges of Education	76	3.80	.71				

Table 3 shows that the t-value of .47 with 109 degree of freedom has p-value of 1.01 which is greater than the alpha level of .05 ($P\text{-value} = 1.01 > .05$). This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in universities and those in colleges of education on curriculum standardization challenges facing business education programme. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis 2

Business educators in universities and those in colleges of education do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on accreditation/supervision standardization challenges facing business education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Table 4: Summary of t-test Analysis of Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of Business Educators in Universities and those in Colleges of Education on Accreditation/Supervision Standardization Challenges Facing Business Education Programme

Variables	N	X	SD	df	T-value	P-value	Decision
Universities	352.63	.58			1091.07	0.07	Not Significant
Colleges of Education	76	3.00	.51				

Table 4 shows that the t-value of 1.07 with 109 degree of freedom has p-value of .07 which is greater than the alpha level of .05 ($P\text{-value} = 0.07 > .05$). This means that business educators in universities and those in colleges of education do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on accreditation/supervision standardization challenges facing business education programme. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion of the Findings

Findings of this study revealed that business educators agree that business education programme is facing curriculum standardization challenges in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The findings of the study agree with that of Njoku (2019) which revealed that business education curriculum is not uniform. Njoku noted that lack of uniformity of business education curriculum is the reason while some graduates end up

being more competent in the theoretical than the practical, while others end up being more competent in the practical rather than the theoretical which undermines the programme's credibility. Atsu, Ateb and Atah (2021) affirmed that the curriculum content for business education are not extensive or diversified in nature and breadth to give students a better grasp of the business world. Ajuluchukwu (2015) reported that business education programme curriculum content is not up-to-date and does not include many digital skills that are crucial and are in high demand. Findings of the study also revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in universities and those in colleges of education on curriculum standardization challenges facing business education programme. This implies that type of institution was not a significant factor in the response of business educators in this regard.

Findings of the study further showed that business educators agree that accreditation/supervision standardization challenges are facing business education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The findings corroborate the findings of Ajisafe et al. (2015) that industrial training is no longer provided in the same manner as it formerly was, that universities do not provide students with SIWES facilities or venues to complete their industrial attachment. Olatunde (2021) claimed that some business education departments in higher education institutions gain complete accreditation fraudulently. Olatunde regretted that several business education departments at tertiary institutions borrow resources they do not have in order to achieve accreditation requirements, only to return to their pre-accreditation condition of deficiency after accreditation. Findings also showed that business educators in universities and those in colleges of education do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on accreditation/supervision standardization challenges facing business education programme. This finding could be due to the fact business education programme in both universities and colleges of education face many accreditation challenges in Nigeria as noted by Ogunode and Adah (2022).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that business education programme despite its immense progress still faces challenges of standardization in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Recommendations

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

1. Experts in business education should be incorporated in review of curriculum when the time comes to ensure that the contents to be recommended and taught are in line with what is obtainable in the modern day organization practices to deliver national development and standardization.
2. Business Education administrators should get business organizations more involved in reviewing the curriculum of the programme to improve its relevancy to the labour market.
3. Accreditation agencies of business education programme in tertiary institutions (NUC, NBTE and NCCE) should be unbiased when carrying out their functions. This will

ensure that only the tertiary institutions that are fit can run business education programme.

4. Universities and Colleges of education should prepare on time for academic programme accreditation. The committee on programme accreditation should carry out at least two pilots of academic programme accreditation before the actual accreditation programme exercise by the NUC and N CCE.

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