

**BUSINESS EDUCATION LECTURERS' PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT: AN
INGREDIENT FOR QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY TOWARDS
STUDENTS' ACQUISITION OF EMPLOYABLE SKILLS**

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Abstract

The need to reduce unemployment among business education graduates in Nigeria necessitated this study. The study ascertained professional code of conduct as an ingredient for quality instructional delivery towards students' acquisition of employable skills. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted correlational research design using 83 business education lecturers from two colleges of education in Anambra State. There was no sampling technique. A-19 item structured questionnaire tagged "Business Education Lecturers' Professional Code of Conduct and Students' Acquisition of Employable Skills (BEPCC-SAES)" was used as instrument for data collection. Face validity of the instrument was determined using three experts in the field of Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation while the reliability of the instrument was established using pilot-testing and data collected were calculated using Cronbach Alpha formula which yielded co-efficient values.79 and .84 obtained for section A and B respectively with an overall index of.82. Data were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation. Findings showed that there were strong positive relationships existing between business education lecturers' regularity to work, innovativeness in instructional delivery and students' acquisition of employable skills. It was also found that the relationships between the two independent variables covered and students' acquisition of employable skills were significant. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that adherence to professional code of conduct such as regularity to work and innovativeness in instructional delivery by business education lecturers can enhance students' acquisition of employable skills. It was recommended

among others that; business education lecturers should embrace more innovation in their instructional delivery so as to enhance students' acquisition of employable skills for self-reliance.

Keywords: *Business Education Programme, Professional Code of Conduct, Instructional Delivery, Employable Skills*

Introduction

Business education programme is widely regarded as a valuable tool for Nigeria's growth and development. It is crucial for the growth of Nigeria's human capital and aids in overcoming the country's unemployment and poverty challenges. Business education is a component of vocational education programme that provides students with the skills, knowledge, and mindset necessary for successful employment or self-employment. It is a vital phase in training the youths for independence and is skill-based in nature. Inegbedion, Njoku, Ekpenyong and Mamman (2020) defined business education as a course of study that prepares students for entry into and advancement in professional careers. Its' value stems from the fact that it equips students with the skills they need to manage their own business affairs, make informed decisions as consumers, and participate responsibly in a market economy. Hence, it prepares young people for life and living.

Naturally, lecturers are one of the essential resources that enable business education programme to accomplish its educational goals. Instructional delivery is the most significant component of a business education lecturer's employment. The efforts of business education lecturers in quality teaching can lead to proper development of skills that assist students to live successfully as responsible citizens and contribute to societal growth (Emengini, Omenyi and Nwankwo, 2020). Given the importance of business education lecturers to the society, how well they perform their teaching tasks and how they view their roles in the classroom have a direct impact on how well the students learn and acquire 21st century skills. For business education programme to preserve high standards, and offer the general public superior educational services, it needs qualified and skillful lecturers with a high level of professional code of conduct. According to UNECO (2022), a code of conduct is a set of written guidelines, produced by public authorities or professional organizations, which details the set of recognized ethical norms (or values) and professional standards of conduct to which all members of a profession must adhere. It outlines business

education lecturers' main responsibilities to their students and defines their role in students' lives. Above all, business education lecturers must demonstrate integrity, impartiality and ethical behaviour in the classroom and in their conduct with co-workers.

Since business education lecturers not only help students with their academic fundamentals but also, teach them valuable life skills, they must set good example as role models. Upholding a code of professional conduct ensures that students receive an education that is unwaveringly honest, fair, and impartial. Obviously, codes of conduct exist in all professions, including teaching, for at least two interrelated goals, namely to uphold public confidence in the teaching profession and direct professional behaviour of teachers (Maxwell, 2017). By outlining openly and explicitly the ethical norms that people can anticipate a group of professionals to uphold in their interactions with them, code of conduct help to strengthen public trust. In this regard, a code of professional conduct serves as a sort of agreement between a group of professionals who, by their very nature, offer a particularly significant public service, such as education, or legal counsel (Maxwell, 2017). The concept is that a business educator must conduct themselves professionally in all of their actions. They must uphold high standards of practice and promote active lifelong learning and skill transfer to students as part of their professional conduct. Business educators' adherence to the Code of Conduct can help to improve their professional standing and instructional performance.

The Professional Code of Conduct is a strong ground for the teaching profession due to its positive impact on the whole instructional delivery processes. Due to the focus and activation of the Code of Conduct, and through researcher observations and notes, business education lecturers could differ in their degree of commitment which may negatively affect the whole processes of teaching and skill acquisition. As stated by the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) (2009), teacher's Professional Codes of Conduct indicate that teachers should remain; Unbiased, Discipline Fairly, Non-Discriminatory, Role Model, and Regular at Work. This code is to checkmate the activities of the professional teachers (business education lecturers inclusive). Other Professional Code of Conduct for lecturers includes: upholding the reputation and standing of business education programme, take all reasonable steps in relation to the care of students under their supervision, so as to ensure their safety and welfare; work within the framework of relevant legislation and regulatory bodies such as TRCN and Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN); and be collaborative, innovative and supportive to students in their quest to acquire employable skills. Additionally, Professional Codes of Conduct aim to enhance the commitments, dedications, and efficiency of instructional delivery by business education lecturers.

Regularity to work means going to work all the times, and not absenting oneself. It can also mean the quality of being at work as at when demanded. Regularity of business education lecturers to work can increase their productivity and help students learn required skills. Similarly, by being regular at work, business education lecturers cultivate a habit to rise early each morning and attend classes, avoid tardiness and lethargy, keep and observe regular course time schedule, complete time-bound teaching assignments, and become faithful to all appointments with students, co-lecturers and other non-academic staff. However, it has been observed by researchers that the regularity of lecturers in the classroom is very poor in Nigerian public tertiary institutions when compared to private institutions due to poor monitoring system institutions (UKEssays, 2021). Regularity of lecturers in classes could affect the achievement level of the students positively or negatively.

An important goal for business education programme is to deliver course contents that are of interest to the industry and prepare students for the future labour market. However, graduates of business education often experience a 'gap' between the content they learnt at school and the skills that industries demand. Lecturers need to support students in developing the employable skills necessary to enhance their future employability, by being innovative in their instructional delivery (Education and Training Foundation, 2022). Innovativeness in instructional delivery involves business educators adopting hybrid teaching schedules, using synchronous and asynchronous classes, experimenting with blended learning strategies, and individualizing using digital resources to increase students' engagement and acquisition of higher-order thinking skills (Pollock, Tololne and Nunnally, 2021).

Employable skills refer to personal characteristics that make a business education student employable upon graduation. Because employable skills are distinct from technical knowledge and abilities, and may be used in practically any position in any occupation, they are also referred to as "soft skills or transferable skills" (Suarta and Suwintana, 2021). In light of this, Suarta and Suwintana defined employable skills as those abilities that are necessary both to obtain employment and to advance within an organization in order to realize one's potential and successfully contribute to the strategic goals of the latter. Pitan (2015) stated that while the need for non-employable skills is dropping, the demand for employable skills is rising globally. This is due to the fact that employable skills prepare students to use skills in different scenarios and conditions upon graduation. Students of business education programme can also succeed in fresh workplace settings, manage and adapt to occupational changes, and be able to face adversity with the support of their acquired skills (Singh and Gera, 2015). Furthermore, employable skills are

crucial now to any student since both work and life are changing, are becoming increasingly complex, necessitating adaptability, initiative, inventiveness, emotional control, and the capacity to handle a variety of duties.

As reported by Mothemane (2014), the issue of professional conduct problems among lecturers (business education lecturers inclusive) is very alarming not just in Nigeria, but in other African and European countries. Mothemane noted that the rate of professional misconduct is increasing at an alarming rate and this includes: Truancy, Examination Malpractices, Sexual Abuse, Drug Abuse, Plagiarism, Bribery in the form of sorting and Financial Mismanagement. In colleges of education where there is preponderance of lecturers' truancy, plagiarism, bribery in the form of sorting, hiking-up prices of text books or handouts, making text books compulsory to students, and kickback, the desired educational service delivery will remain a mirage, while there will remain a reduction in business educators' and school productivity; which in return simultaneously affect the quality of students' learning and acquisition of employable skills. Ohia (2013) regretted that lack of commitment of Nigerian lecturers to the Profession Code of Conduct negatively affect their Professional performance, which reflects negatively on the image of colleges of education. Additionally, Ile and Mekuri-Ndimele (2021) noted that in tertiary institutions, business education lecturers have developed the habit of improperly supervising students' work and displaying a lackadaisical attitude toward academic work. Ile and Mekuri-Ndimele posited that these lecturers are alleged to lack zest for work, briskness, and momentum, as well as general commitment, honesty, competency, and resolve, which affects the the quality of instructional delivery and students' acquisition of employable skills. The researcher's cursory observation of business education lecturers in colleges of education in Nigeria, found that some business educators do not seem to be doing a good job or even caring about whether the educational objectives of the institutions that employ them are met as long as they are receiving their pay regularly. As noted by Oyewobi, Adeniyi, Nwachukwu, and Vu Minh (2021), the rising unemployment rate among recent graduates, including those with business education is a result of inadequate preparedness during their time in school. It is against this backdrop that the study examined business education lecturers' professional code of conduct and instructional delivery towards' students' acquisition of employable skills in colleges of education in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

The high rate of unemployment among most business education graduates in Nigeria is a cause for concern for stakeholders. This exponential unemployment rate means that the graduates are unable

to contribute to the nation's growth and development. This indicates that business education lecturers' performance is still below standard. The level of inefficiency among business education lecturers at Nigerian colleges of education has increased to a point where it is extremely clear to everyone to see. The culmination of antisocial behaviours among graduates of tertiary institutions has become a serious problem to the society. These unpleasant unemployment experiences among graduates are attributed to poor instructional delivery and misconduct of lecturers in the colleges leading to inadequate acquisition of employable skills by students. Similarly, the cases of professional conduct problems among lecturers abound in Nigeria such as truancy, negligence, poor instructional delivery, examination malpractice, plagiarism, poor commitment, and dishonesty amongst others. Such a growing impression informs a compelling need to evaluate the business education lecturers' professional code of conduct and instructional delivery with a view of enhancing students' acquisition of employable skills. These and other professional misconduct have combined with poor working conditions of these lecturers to undermine quality instructional delivery in colleges of education. Specifically, the study investigated (1) the relationship between business education lecturers' regularity to work and students' acquisition of employable skills and (2) the relationship between business education lecturers' innovativeness in instructional delivery and students' acquisition of employable skills.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What is the relationship between business education lecturers' regularity to work and students' acquisition of employable skills?
2. What is the relationship between business education lecturers' innovativeness in instructional delivery and students' acquisition of employable skills?

Null Hypotheses

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

1. There is no relationship between business education lecturers' regularity to work and students' acquisition of employable skills.
2. There is no relationship between business education lecturers' innovativeness in instructional delivery and students' acquisition of employable skills.

Method

The study adopted correlational research design. It was carried out in Anambra State using 83 business education lecturers in colleges of education in the state. (Source: Academic Planning Unit of these institutions as at 10th November, 2022). The population was not too large to give rise to sampling. Hence, the entire population was used for this study. Thus, the study adopted census sampling technique. A-19 item structured questionnaire tagged “Business Education Lecturers’ Professional Code of Conduct and Students’ Acquisition of Employable Skills (BEPCC-SAES)” was used for data collection. The instrument was structured on a four point rain scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3 Disagree, (D) =1 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 2. Face validity of the instrument was determined use 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 to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and correlation coefficients of .79 and .84 obtained for section A and B respectively with an overall index of .82. The researchers with the help of two research assistants adequately briefed on the modalities for administration and collection of the questionnaires administered the instrument to the respondents in their offices. On the spot distribution and collection of questionnaires was employed and those who did not fill theirs immediately were revisited on another agreed date. Out of 83 copies of questionnaire distributed, 76 were correctly filled and returned and used for data analysis. Pearson product moment correlation was used to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. For the relationship scale interpretation, the scales by Bryman and Bell (2011) were used: $r = 0.00 - 0.19$ ‘very weak relationship’, $r = 0.20 - 0.39$ ‘weak’, $r = 0.40 - 0.59$ ‘moderate relationship’, $r = 0.60 - 0.79$ ‘strong’, and $r = 0.80 - 1.00$ ‘very strong’. In testing the null hypotheses, when p-value is less than or equal to .05 ($P < .05$), the null hypothesis was rejected otherwise, the null hypothesis was accepted. The analysis was carried out using Special package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 23.0.

Result

Research Question 1

1. What is the relationship between business education lecturers’ regularity to work and students’ acquisition of employable skills?

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Co-Efficient of business education lecturers' regularity to work and students' acquisition of employable skills

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r.	Relationship	
lecturers' regularity to work (X)		2.96	.69			
	76			.79*	Strong relationship	positive
Students' acquisition of employable skills (Y)		3.15	.83			

Table I indicates a correlation value of .78* showing a strong positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This means that business education lecturers' regularity to work was a strong factor in enhancing students' acquisition of employable skills.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between business education lecturers' innovativeness in instructional delivery and students' acquisition of employable skills?

Table 2: Pearson correlation co-efficient of business education lecturers' innovativeness in instructional delivery and students' acquisition of employable skills

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r.	Relationship	
innovativeness in instructional delivery (X)		2.61	.79			
	76			.81*	Strong relationship	positive
Students' acquisition of employable skills (Y)		2.86	.75			

Table 2 shows a correlation value of .81* showing a strong positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This means that business education lecturers' innovativeness in instructional delivery enhances students' acquisition of employable skills.

Null Hypotheses 1

There is no relationship between business education lecturers' regularity to work and students' acquisition of employable skills.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis of the relationship between business education lecturers' regularity to work and students' acquisition of employable skills

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	rx _y	P-value	Decision
lecturers' regularity to work (X)		2.96	.69			
	76			.79*	.01	Significant
Students' acquisition of employable skills (Y)		3.15	.83			

* $p < .05$; $df = 74$; critical $r = .79$ *

Table 3 shows that at .05 level of significance and degree of freedom 74, the p-value is .01 which is less than the significant value ($p < .05$). Since the p-value is less than the significant value, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means that the relationship between business education lecturers' regularity to work and students' acquisition of employable skills is significant.

Null Hypotheses 2

There is no relationship between business education lecturers' innovativeness in instructional delivery and students' acquisition of employable skills.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis of the relationship between business education lecturers' innovativeness in instructional delivery and students' acquisition of employable skills

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	rx _y	p-value	Decision
innovativeness in instructional delivery (X)		2.61	.79			
	76			.81*	.00	Significant
Students' acquisition of employable skills (Y)		2.86	.75			

p < .05; df = 74; critical r = .81

Table 4 shows that at .05 level of significance and degree of freedom 74, the p-value of .00 is less than the significant value ($p < .05$). Since the p-value is less than the significant value, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means that the relationship between business education lecturers' innovativeness in instructional delivery and students' acquisition of employable skills is significant.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study revealed that a strong positive relationship exist between business education lecturers' regularity to work and students' acquisition of employable skills. It also showed that the relationship is significant. The fact that the findings of this study revealed that the relationship between business education lecturers' regularity to work and students' acquisition of employable skills is strong and positive could be as a result of the fact that when the lecturers are always in the school/class, they will be able to follow their scheme of work accordingly therefore helping students to learn required employable skills before their graduation. In agreement, Chileya (2016) stated that when teachers are regularly to school, it leaves students attended thereby increasing the amount of instructional time. The resultant effects or net effects is higher students output and enhanced acquisition of employable skills by students. Similarly, Jain and Shrivastav (2017) reported that lecturers' class regularity had a direct impact on performance of students in the examinations. This is because, when lecturers attend lecturers regularly, their students are

motivated to come to class to learn resulting in their acquisition of 21st century skills for gainful employment on graduation.

Findings of the study also revealed that there is strong positive relationship between business education lecturers' innovativeness in instructional delivery and students' acquisition of employable skills. It further showed that the relationship between the two variables is significant. This implies that the ability of business education lecturers to innovate in their instructional delivery enhances students' acquisition of employable skills. In agreement, Pollock, Tololne and Nunnally (2021) stated that professional educators who adopt hybrid teaching schedules, synchronous and asynchronous classes, experiment with blended learning, and individualization using digital resources are able to increase students' engagement, creativity, and higher-order thinking skills. Pollock et al. noted that teachers' innovativeness in using online resources in instructional delivery motivates students to learn requisite skills. Similarly, Schulman (2018) asserted that lecturers need to think about their students as leaders in the classroom; acting as guides rather than teaching content and asking students to spill out information on a standardized test. Schulman posited that lecturers ability to use reflective teaching that offer them critical opportunity to see what worked and work failed in their classroom, ask open-ended questions, create flexible learning environments, create a place for all learners, use problem-finding, let students take risks and fail, consider a flipped classroom model, and invite entrepreneurs and innovators into the classroom can enhance students' acquisition of employable skills.

Conclusion

The acquisition of employable skills by students is recognized as one of the solutions for reducing the high rate of unemployment and poverty among the Nigerian youths. in order to achieve this, business education lecturers need to exhibit a high level of professional code of conduct in their professional practices. The findings of this study showed that business education lecturers' regularity to work and innovativeness in instructional delivery had strong positive relationships with students' acquisition of employable skills. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that adherence and keeping of professional code of conduct such as regularity to work and innovativeness in instructional delivery by business education lecturers will enhance students' acquisition of employable skills required for self-reliance upon graduation.

Recommendations

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

1. Business education lecturers in colleges of education should attend classes regularly so as to cover their scheme of work, and adequately prepare the students by helping them to acquire employable skills. These skills will enable students upon graduation to gain employment in modern organizations or become self-employed.
2. Business education lecturers should embrace more innovation in their instructional delivery so as to enhance students' acquisition of employable skills for self-reliance.
3. The Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) and Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN) should review their professional code of conduct and ensure that business education lecturers adhere to them for better.

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