



## **EVALUATION: A CATALYST FOR SKILL ACQUISITION IN BUSINESS EDUCATION**

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### **Abstract**

Evaluation is an integral part of human life whose outcome could lead to effective teaching and learning that would result into effective acquisition of skills. This paper looked at the concepts of business education, skills acquisition as well as evaluation and established that evaluation is a catalyst for skill acquisition in Business education due to the fact that it could lead to development of a viable business education curriculum, deployment of quality human and material resources, qualitative and effective teaching, admission of quality students and helps in determining the number of students to be admitted in a given a period for effective skill acquisition in business education. It is also a stimulant to learning because the students could use its feedback to remedy poor performance, improve on an average performance or maintain a good performance. The paper concluded that effective evaluation of business education is a potent tool for skill acquisition in business education and would make the products to be well equipped with skills that will lead to effective and efficient discharge of tasks before them in the world of work, and be able to compete with their contemporaries anywhere in the world. Finally, the paper among others suggests that business education programme should be adequately evaluated, facilities required for evaluation should be adequately provided and window dressing for purpose of deceiving the accreditation team as well as school inspectors and supervisors should be avoided by administrators of business education. This is because; it is detrimental to skill acquisition

**Keywords:** *Evaluation, Catalyst, Skills, Acquisition, Business education*

### **Introduction**

Skills acquisition in Business education is among the potent tools for repositioning the already battered Nigerian economy which has been worsened by the Corona virus disease (COVID 19) pandemic which caused devastating effects on economies of different countries of the world. This is because Umoru (2013) is of the view that business education is a discipline whose components are designed to inculcate the spirit of resourcefulness, endurance and innovativeness unto the students. Umoru (2015) also sees business education as an academic programme which has the aim of equipping the learners with an understanding of value, knowledge, business and technical skills which are required in the world of work and teaching students business related subjects. These imply that the products of business education are made to become efficient users of available resources; persevere in seeing that goals are attained and have the ability of developing new and better ways of doing things that could make them to be



efficient and productive in their places of work and become successful as self-employed individuals. It is worthy of note that business education covers skill areas that are essential in bringing about economic progress both nationally and globally. Notable among these skills are managerial, communication, leadership, accounting, marketing, record keeping, office, information and communication technology and entrepreneurial skills which are expected to turn around the economy and ensure that things are changed for better. Business education is therefore, one of the surest disciplines that are required for repositioning the Nigerian economy and take it the promise land.

A deduction from Amesi (2017) shows that skill acquisition is a deliberate, systematic and sustained effort which leads to capability that makes a person to effectively and efficiently carry out complex activities or job functions involving cognitive, technical and interpersonal dispositions. This implies that skills are cognitive, psychomotor and affective. They are acquired through learning and lead to competence which would enhance better performance of tasks and enable a person to contribute to societal growth and development. Chundusu and Jwanpe (2017) also see skill acquisition is a gradual process of change from less effective behaviour to a highly proficient state of expertise leading to the process of making superlative output a general characteristic of the behaviour. This shows that skill acquisition transforms the recipient from the state of low productivity to that of higher productivity which could be seen through their ability to perform better than when they were not exposed to the training.

To determine the extent to which a skill has been acquired, evaluation which is an integral part of human life is essential. This is because there is need to subject whatever one does to assessment so as to know how well they are faring in order to know their strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of building on the strengths and proffering corrective measures to the weaknesses. Evaluation is used to determine whether or not the goal of education (skills acquisition) has been achieved. In line with this, Umoru and Oluwalola (2015) state that evaluation is an integral part of educational process, in the sense that it collects and use data for decision on an educational process or programme for the purpose of knowing the extent to which it conforms with expected standard. According to Nwachukwu (2015), programme, student, teacher, instructional materials, school authority, finance, parent/guardian and outside agencies should be evaluated. This implies that input, process and output of the educational system are supposed to be subjected to evaluation. Based on these, Shaibu, Ameh and Barinem (2015) point out that students' learning outcome, physical facilities and teaching equipment, efficiency of the programme, publication and professional literature, library, availability and effectiveness of instructional aids, quantity, quality and effectiveness of teachers and behaviours and attitudes of learners should be evaluated. Furthermore, to be specific, Ubulom (2012) is of the view that whether conceptualized in broad or narrow scope, business education programme requires adequate evaluation in order to ensure the effectiveness of the programme and or ascertain the discrepancies in the programme and accordingly make decision(s). He also suggests that evaluation should be built into business education programme development processes, right from the beginning and be clearly designed, made simple, flexible, and realistic.

From the foregoing, it could be seen that evaluation could lead to acquisition of skills in business education through its assessment of input, process and output. This is because, evaluation would all things being equal ensure that the right teachers and facilities are employed for teaching the discipline and only qualified students are admitted to study the programme. It also gives room for periodic assessment of the human and material resources deployed for the programme as well as assessing the students that were admitted for the programme, so as to know the extent to which they have acquired the desired skills as well as knowing whether they are ripe enough for public consumption. It is therefore, based on these, that this paper looks at evaluation as a catalyst for acquisition of skills in business education.



### **Concepts Clarification**

Business education is a skill-based course which is seen differently by different people. According to Okon and Okon (2013), it fuses general education and business components together and it is an academic programme offered in tertiary institutions, designed to provide learning situations for skills acquisition among students who are expected to use the skills in their occupations, managing personal business, personal living in the society and nation building. To Osuala in Gidado and Akaeze (2014), it is broad area of knowledge which focuses on a nation's economic system, identification and explanation of the rate of business contentment and experience that prepare people for effective participation as citizens, workers and consumers. In line with this, Umezulike (2015) points out that business education is made up of entrepreneurship, basic education, business environment and vocational practices which are required for adjustment and development of potentials of individuals, groups and nations. These imply that business education skills are applicable in personal life and business world. They also open arrays of job opportunities to the recipients, enable them to be prepared for global competitiveness and make them to be useful for societal growth and development. It should however be noted that contrary to view expressed by Okon and Okon, it is not only studied in tertiary institutions, its elements are learnt at the secondary school level of education.

Pulife (2012), reports that skill could be seen as an established habit of doing something. To Anikweze (2013), it could be conceptually seen as the capability of doing something well and acquired through training and experience. Furthermore, Kwajafa (2016) is of the view that skill deals with the ability of using knowledge, idea, thinking and decision readily and effectively in carrying out a given task. As for skill acquisition, Akpan in Iwele and Ogoegbunam (2014) is of the conviction that skill acquisition is an education whose target is to inculcate unto a person, skills that would enable him/her to get something doing as a means of livelihood and functionality in the society. In the same vein, Chikwuo and Oguegbulu (2016) state that skill acquisition focuses on learning and development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies which would enable a person to live in and contribute to the development of his or her society. These imply that skill acquisition makes a person to develop cognitive, psychomotor and affective skills that would make them to become a functional member of their society and contribute towards its development. On a final note, Oluwalola and Ogundele (2017) are of the view that skill acquisition is a practical process through which knowledge, ability and skills are developed in learners in order to make them to contribute to the growth and development of the society.

Evaluation determines the extent to which a given skill has been acquired. It begins with formulation of objectives and makes it possible for educators, teachers, administrators, policy makers, community and regulatory bodies in education to determine what is available and missing. Its goals include the determination of what students have known; provision of feedback to all the stakeholders, identification of students with special needs, curriculum development, determination of teacher's effectiveness and provision of vocational guidance and counseling. According to Olowodun (2010), evaluation is a process which is designed for generating data that could be used for the purpose of taking decision in relation to whether something should be accepted, retained or changed. This shows that evaluation could be used in determining whether skills have been effectively acquired in business education or there is need for modification in order to ensure that the desired skills are acquired. To Dabbari and Ibe (2012), evaluation is a continuous and systematic way through which contents, learning experience and instructional objectives could be assessed. This implies that evaluation is a continuous process and it forms a basis for valid judgement which will be objective and not subjective. In line with this, Aliyu (2013) is of the notion that evaluation is perceived as a frequent judgement and decision with which individuals, groups, institutions and the government, based on a reliance on experience, information, evidence



and data come to conclusion on what affect them. Furthermore, Aliyu highlights that evaluation involves value judgement which is essentially the provision of information for the purpose of taking decision at the various stages of curriculum development and implementation. Finally, Wheeler in Umoru and Oluwalola (2015) states that evaluation is a more general judgement of the outcome of a programme which involves the use of observation, various tests, questionnaire, interviews and others. This implies that the essence of evaluation is to take decision on an outcome of a programme and the ingredients used for the exercise could be obtained through administering test(s) on students as well as questionnaire and interview methods and accreditation reports which documents what the accreditation team/panel saw, observed and suggested in relation to a programme.

Evaluation could be formative or summative. The former takes place at the early stage of teaching and learning and could make a teacher to modify his techniques (Shaibu, Ameh & Barinem, 2015). In the case of the latter, Pell institute (2016) reports that it occurs at the end of a programme cycle and provide a general description of its effectiveness. This is because it assesses the outcomes of a programme. Other types of evaluation are goal-based evaluation (for determining the extent to which predetermined objectives and goals are attained), process- based evaluation (for determining what is going on in an educational process or system), outcome-based (for determining effectiveness of curriculum or educational process), ultimate evaluation (for determination of trainee's productivity after completion of programme), student or instructional evaluation (which Amesi 2015, states that it is used for determining what should be taught and help in modification of lesson delivery based on peculiarity of the students) and programme evaluation, (which Amesi states that it is done by regulatory bodies and aims at improving planning in decision making, personnel and facilities, so as to make teaching and learning more meaningful)

#### **Evaluation as a Catalyst to Acquisition of Business Education Skills**

Evaluation helps toward making sure that the desired skills are acquired by enhancing effectiveness in the educational system as well as bringing what is available in terms of manpower, teaching resources and what the students are capable of doing to the fore. It also guides toward decision making. The following are some of the ways through which evaluation can promote skills acquisition in business education, thereby making it highly effective, leading to attainment of the major goals and objectives of the programme.

#### **Curriculum Development**

Curriculum development involves a lot of stakeholders (Esene, 2019). According to Tukur (2016), curriculum development in business education is a process for integrating educational content, theory and methodology together, as well as taking steps to evaluate the impact of the integration. Based on this, Shua, Mshelia and Hamidu (2019) report that curriculum development deals with all the efforts geared toward making a curriculum to be relevant to its consumers. These imply that curriculum development aims at seeing that students benefit from it by acquiring the desired skills that would make them to contribute to societal growth and development. Curriculum is an apparatus for educational attainment (Gimba&Zuru, 2019). It is also planned to guide teachers on numerous teaching and learning activities that are to be carried out in an educational programme (Garba, Apreala & Ibelegbu, 2019). In line with these, an inference from Oguejiofor (2019) shows that curriculum is the totality of experience designed for a learner under the control of the school. This shows that it maps out what students are expected to be taught and learnt in order to become highly productive. Evaluation of existing business education curriculum however revealed that it is deficient.



For example, Bello and Tambuwal (2019) posit that the business education curriculum that is presently in use at all the levels of education in Nigeria are obsolete and not in tune with the present realities. Similarly, a deduction from Shua, Mshelia and Hamidu reveals that the rate of adoption of innovation in current business education curriculum is low and the products of the discipline lack skills that are actually required in the office. To ensure that the right skills are effectively acquired, evaluation has resulted into development of functional and relevant curriculum. This because, it answers questions in relation to the goals of a given curriculum, for whom it was designed, what should be its content and how it should be included, leading to the development of curriculum that would enhance effectiveness in the acquisition of business education skills.

Evaluation of students' achievement in cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains could be used for determining what the students have achieved and give rise to data for developing curriculum that would spell out clearly, what the students should know, when and how, which would lead to effectiveness in skills acquisition. This is because it will take into cognizance, the peculiarities of the learners. Curriculum review emanates from evaluation and paves way for input that would make a discipline more robust. For instance, to facilitate the acquisition of effective skills in business education, the 2008 edition of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) Minimum Standard for Colleges of Education which replaced the 2004 edition due to the subjection of the latter to assessment, introduced Business Education Practicum (BED 215) at the NCE level which requires students to embark on industrial visits so as to get and internalize first-hand information from those putting theories into practice outside the four walls of the classroom. In addition, the 2008 edition of the Minimum Standard introduced e-marketing in BED 213 (Principles of Marketing) for the purpose of making the students to know the relevance of carrying out marketing activities electronically, over the internet. Furthermore, evaluation of the existing business education curriculum in different universities across Nigeria made the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN) to come up with "the benchmark minimum academic standard for undergraduate business education programme in Nigerian universities", aimed at ensuring that the recipients acquire relevant and effective skills, knowledge and competencies that are required in the world of work. In the same vein, assessment of skills requirement in office automation due to influx of information and communication technology into the office arena, led to change in curriculum of Secretarial Studies and its nomenclature to office technology management (OTM). The implication of these is that evaluation leads to curriculum development that would make acquisition of skills in business education to be highly effective.

### **Deployment of Quality Human and Material Resources**

Business education is a skill based course which requires the presence of professionals and relevant instructional resources that would lead to effectiveness in acquisition of skills it aims at equipping the recipients with. Deployment of the human and materials resources for teaching and learning in business education are therefore enhanced by evaluation of the entire programme through accreditation. The end product of this is that the students would be able to acquire the right and functional skills for global competitiveness. Accreditation is a quality control mechanism whose goal is to ensure that right things are done at the right time.

According to Okebukolain Oluwalola, Atolagbe, Umarunand Nwabufu (2019), it examines the availability and adequacy of resources, including the curriculum, physical facilities, personnel and fund, leading to quality output. Ogunboyega and Babalola (2019) also reveal that accreditation evaluates, validates and certifies the competency, authority or credibility of what is presented by an educational institution or a programme leading to a conclusion that it meets, falls below or exceeds a given benchmark of quality. It is a known fact that any programme that fails accreditation could be withdrawn by the regulatory body. To avoid this, requisite human and material resources for teaching and learning in business education are expected to be made available in the right number and quality. To corroborate these, Dahel and Diyoshak (2017) point out that many College of Education were forced to provide essential teaching and learning materials including classrooms, laboratories, studios, equipment and reading and learning materials to their numerous departments in order to meet up with minimum academic standard and scale through the accreditation exercise. The authors also report that accreditation has made many universities to bounce back strongly



after remedying the deficiencies that deny them accreditation status. They also state that it calls for recruitment for staff. They specifically cited example with approval granted to Plateau State College of Education, Gindiri in August 2017, by the State Government to employ 50 academic staff in different departments so as to meet up with accreditation it was expecting at the time. The impacts of these would all things being equal, felt by the students and as such enhance effectiveness in acquisition of skills in business education.

### **Enhancement of Quality and Effective Teaching**

Teaching is said to be qualitative if the teacher is highly committed to attainment of standard which makes students to acquire the desired skills. Effective teaching on the other hand, is a student-centred teaching which effectively leads to skills acquisition. According to Weimer (2013), effective teaching enhances learning through developing thinking skills and arousing students' interest in the subject-matter. Quality and effective teaching could be achieved through evaluating teachers' efforts through educational supervision and performance appraisal. As Igbinedion (2014) points out, educational supervision is aimed at ensuring that teachers teach well and the students learn better through overseeing the entire teaching and learning activities in a school with emphasis on conformity to set standard. Supervision could be done directly by the head an institution (Principal, Provost, Rector or Vice Chancellor) or the quality assurance unit of a school or Ministry of Education. As for performance appraisal, it is the assessment of employee's job performance whose outcome could be positive or negative feedback and it determines salary increase, promotion, demotion or dismissal (Onwenonye, 2015). Both educational supervision and performance appraisal could therefore go a long way in enhancing effective acquisition of skills in business education. This because they could make teachers to teach qualitatively bearing in mind that their job performances are being supervised as well as longing for the benefits of appraisal and avoiding its negative consequences. This implies that they are potent tools for making them to provide quality services to their students, which would thus, make skills to be acquired in business education. Furthermore, evaluation could lead to skills acquisition in business education by making a teacher to assess their methodology and materials. This would make them to come to the level of the learners through adopting appropriate methodology and using the right material for the teaching and learning exercise.

### **Admission of Quality Students**

Manifestation of skills acquisition in any discipline is a function of quality of the students admitted to pursue it. Evaluation therefore enhances effective acquisition of skills in business education through ensuring that only the candidates that meet up with established admission criteria are admitted for the programme. The implication of this is that, it sees to fact that only those equal to the task are given admission to study the course.

### **Stimulation of Effective Learning (Skills Acquisition)**

Evaluation is a tool for skills acquisition in business education through enhancing effective learning. According to Taba in Olowodun (2010), evaluation is a process of ascertaining students' behaviour and appraising them against the value represented in the objective in order to find out the extent to which they have been achieved. It therefore helps in shaping the study method adopted by the students and motivates them to study hard to in order to remedy poor performance, improve on an average one or maintain or good performance.



### **Determination of Number of Students to be admitted for Business Education Programme**

For skills to be effectively acquired; there should be no population explosion in the classroom. This is because it would put much burden on the teacher and overstretch the available teaching facilities which would negatively affect skills acquisition. In line with this, a deduction from Daramola (2019) reveals that for relevant skills to be acquired in business education. The number of students to be accommodated and other aspects of the programme should be periodically evaluated. Assessment of the available human and material resources therefore helps in determining the total number of students to be engaged in a given period of time so as to ensure that the desired skills are acquired. In the same vein, the students to be accommodated in a given period could be ascertained through matching the total number of applicants with available human and material resources as well as the criteria set by the regulatory bodies. For instance, The National Commission for Colleges of Education in her 2012 edition of minimum standard, points out that for effective acquisition business education skills, there should be a teacher/student ratio of 1:20 for skill courses like Accounting, Typewriting and Shorthand and 1:30 for courses like Commerce, Economics and Office Practice.

### **Conclusion**

Evaluation is essential for human progress. This is because; it gives feedback to all stakeholders leading to determination of what has been achieved. This paper established that evaluation is a catalyst for acquisition of skill in business education programme. This owes to fact that it could lead to development of relevant and current curriculum that will stand the test of time, deployment of quality human and material resources, quality and effective teaching, admission of quality students, effective learning and admission of adequate number students that would enhance effectiveness and efficiency of available human and material resources. The implications of these is that effective evaluation in business education could lead to acquisition of skills in the discipline which would make the products to be well baked, be able to effectively discharge tasks before them in the world of work and compete favourably with their contemporaries anywhere in the world.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the foregoing and the conclusion which was drawn, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Business education programme should be adequately evaluated. This implies that input, process and output should to be thoroughly evaluated in business education so as to ensure that desired skills are acquired by the students through provision of requisite human and material resources required for the programme as stipulated in the minimum standards provided by the regulatory bodies.
2. All facilities needed for evaluation should be adequately provided. To achieve this, business education should be adequately funded leading to provision of required teaching and learning materials such as computer systems, office machines and charts which could be used in evaluating the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of the learners.
3. There should be objectivity in evaluation of business education. This shows that accreditation teams, school inspectors and supervisors should always give true pictures of whatever that is available during programme and resource accreditations as well as school supervision and inspection. The implication of this is that accreditation results are not to be doctored in order to favour a given institution. Furthermore, teachers should uphold the principles of equity, fairness and justice while evaluating students' performance. The essence of these is to bring about effectiveness in skills acquisition in business education programme.
4. Results of evaluation should be promptly communicated to stakeholders. This implies that all the key players in teaching and learning of business education are to be informed about the outcomes of evaluation exercises so as to serve as controlling mechanism that



- would make them to build more on what they can do better and provide solutions to where there are deviations.
5. Business education administrators should avoid using window dressings in order to deceive accreditors, school supervisors and inspectors in order to be granted accreditation status or be given clean bill. This because, it is detrimental to skill acquisition. The implication of this is that false information such as presentation of the office of a school's chief executive as model offices, telling staff to lend their departments books and materials as well as using certificates of people working elsewhere for the purpose of securing accreditation would lead to ineffective teaching and learning that would be counter-productive as far as skill acquisition in business education is concerned. .
  6. Administrators and students of business education programme should respond positively to evaluation reports so as to ensure that skills are well acquired. This implies that results made available after accreditation should be acted upon by administrators of business education. In same the vein, students of business education should take advantage of assessment results made available to them to improve on their areas of strengths and remedy their deficiencies so as to acquire the desired skill that would make them to be relevant and efficient in the world of work.

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