

Essential Competencies for Business Educators: The Demands of Today's Professional Landscape

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ABSTRACT: *Business Education, a specialized branch within the education sector, focuses on imparting practical business skills and knowledge at both secondary and tertiary levels. It combines theoretical instruction with hands-on experience to prepare students for real-world business challenges. Recognized as a vital tool for fostering entrepreneurial skills and job creation, Business Education is crucial for individual self-sufficiency and global economic development. However, challenges such as insufficient instructor preparation and an overemphasis on procedures over practical skills hinder its effectiveness. A competent business educator must possess both academic and professional qualifications, and be adept in teaching methodologies, administration, and human relations. Key competencies for business educators include professional competency (effective teaching and curriculum management), administrative competency (departmental management and organizational skills), and human skill competency (interpersonal and teamwork skills). Various factors affect the ability of educators to exhibit these competencies, including unqualified teachers, inadequate resources, poor remuneration, and lack of ongoing professional development. To address these issues, it is recommended that governments employ specialized business education teachers, provide updated textbooks and resources, improve teacher salaries, and offer regular professional development opportunities. Enhancing practical teaching periods and ensuring adequate teaching practice and industrial experience are also crucial. By implementing these recommendations, Business Education can better equip students with the necessary skills to contribute to national and global economic progress.*

KEYWORDS: competency, business educators, professional, administrative, human skill

INTRODUCTION

Business Education is a division of Education that focuses on instructing individuals in the practical skills and procedures of the business realm. This domain of Education encompasses several levels, including secondary and tertiary education. The source of this information is Wikipedia, and the year of publication is 2024. Business education is an educational path that equips students with the necessary abilities to thrive in the business world. It offers a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical experiences, allowing students to apply what they learn in the classroom to real-life job scenarios. According to Ikpe (2014), Business Education is widely recognised as a very effective tool for fostering entrepreneurial abilities, generating job opportunities, and enabling individuals to become self-sufficient in contemporary society. It is used in establishing the groundwork for worldwide commercial expansion and progress.

Business education, in contrast to liberal education, is complex. It necessitates the acquisition of skills that must be imparted in a proper manner, and it must progress in order to effectively contribute to the development of the country. An issue that exists now is the insufficient preparation of certain instructors. The business educator has valuable and marketable skills, but lacks the practical skills necessary for creating self-employment opportunities. Trainers sometimes prioritise procedures above the actual content (skill/knowledge). A programme that yields valuable experience and exceptional accomplishments need instruction from a trained and proficient educator. This is because it demands the expertise of a professional who has not only academic knowledge but also the necessary pedagogical skills. Teachers must possess both academic and professional qualifications.

Competence refers to the state of being legally qualified or competent. Vocational readiness pertains to the sufficient groundwork required to embark on a professional vocation. It places great importance on establishing a basic standard and prioritising values. Competence refers to the capacity or proficiency in possessing the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively carry out tasks or fulfil one's responsibilities, meeting the required standards. According to Merriam Webster (2024), competency is defined as the presence of enough knowledge or ability. In his work published in 2024, Darwin defined competencies as a collection of observable qualities and abilities that enhance the effectiveness and productivity of a task or occupation. Competent refers to have the necessary skills or knowledge to do a task adequately and satisfy a minimum level of proficiency.

A proficient business educator must stay updated on societal advancements in order to recognise the society's requirements. This awareness will empower him to tailor his instruction to meet their requirements. The business educators should possess a high level of expertise and be considered a final product, rather than being seen as an intermediary stage in the hands of others. The educator should possess the ability to reinvest their own human capital, which refers to their abilities and expertise. The required training should empower him to not only seek employment but also become an entrepreneur, capable of generating employment opportunities.

Competencies Required

Competence is the ability to do something successfully or efficiently, it is how an individual behavior brings about the desired results in their role. The business education teacher needs competencies in the three areas that make up the teaching profession, they are;

Professional Competency

Professional competence refers to the combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities that enable individuals to achieve success in their careers and throughout their lives. Professional competence refers to a teacher's aptitude in effectively overseeing the process of teaching and learning. The classroom manager's expertise in the subject area, strategic teaching, and use of instructional media enhance their capacity to facilitate learning. Professional competence refers to the combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities that individuals possess in order to effectively perform in the workplace and manage their careers throughout their lives. Teachers have a distinctive role in society as they bear the primary task of guiding young people in developing their talents. Their role is to assist students in acquiring fundamental skills and information necessary for their first work in the teaching field. Both academic and professional credentials are necessary. Professional accomplishment in business education for teachers includes a minimum requirement of an N.C.E. qualification for teachers and a degree in business education from a higher institution. During the teacher education programme, business educators are required to have gained exposure to the actual course material in Business Education, as well as methodological courses, teaching practice and the Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES). Upon completing the course of study, the individual, now working as a business education teacher, will use the knowledge and skills acquired. The instructor must possess exceptional proficiency in handling topics pertaining to business education. The teacher must possess the ability to instruct in accordance with the prescribed curriculum and use an efficient teaching methodology to effectively impart information to the pupils. Given the variations in individuals' abilities, it is necessary to use certain methods to inspire those who study at a slower pace. The quick learners exhibit high levels of motivation and actively engage in classroom activities with enthusiasm and self-assurance. The slow learner resists new learning activities, hence a professional teacher in the field will know the best way to motivate and develop self confidence in them. Other professional competencies needed are;

1. Preparing course of study.
2. Preparing scheme of work, lesson plans and instruction of materials.
3. Maintenance of typing pool business, business education library and model office.
4. Improving professional competency like attending adhoc courses, workshop, seminars, lectures that concerns professional improvement.
5. Developing professional relationship such as attending staff meetings.
6. Developing and maintaining school community relations.
7. Guiding and counselling the students.

8. Supervising the students on SIWES and teaching practice instead of sending someone to represent you.
9. Demonstrating approved practices in business education n.
10. Providing experiences in working and cooperating with others
11. Providing an opportunity to coordinate classroom theory and practice.
12. Earning money for the school, by setting a business center on behalf of the department os school.

Administrative Competency

Business educators must have a good knowledge about the different department in an organization and the type that exists among departments. He must have good relationship with the head of department or school depending on where he is teaching. He must be honest, faithful, and trustworthy, dedicated, have integrity and must be punctual and regular to his place of work. Whenever he is given some other responsibilities to do, he must do it with all his mind and cheerfully. Other administrative competencies required are;

1. Establishing a department especially if the subject is new in school.
2. Preparing annual budget in consultation with the principal, head of department, advisory committee and other relevant personnel.
3. Keeping up to date records in the office.
4. Preparing annual reports of the workings of the department.
5. Recruiting personnel for the department, whenever he is called upon to conduct an interview or giving advice on the staff to be employed in the department.
6. Writing of memorandum and replying to correspondences.
7. Having sense of judgment, initiative and integrity.
8. Good human relationship with the public.
9. Cooperation with colleagues.
10. Ability to preserve office records
11. Good communication ability in English.
12. Concentration on the job.
13. Ability to keep official secrets.
14. Self-comportment and control.
15. Drive and determination.
16. Acceptance of responsibilities.
17. Punctuality and regularity to duty.
18. Capacity to work under pressure.
19. Obedient to superiors.

Human skill Competency

This is interpersonal skills needed to work successfully with people in one to one or group settings. Olalekan (2023), stated that human skills are the ability to think, learn and work effectively in a

team. Human skills are the skill use to relate to one another in communicating, empathy and self-awareness (indeed, 2024). It is a skill that allows one to interact effectively with others, learn from others and work together. Business education teachers must have good human relation because he deals with people and students at all levels. Students must see him as a helper rather than an enemy. He must be the type that advices, direct, recognizes, encourages and develop talents in students and in other staff.

Factors Affecting Teachers in Exhibiting their Competency

Inhibition to demonstrate competencies in schools through business educators may pose problems. They require professional and administrative competencies. There are some factors that can affect this performance. These include.

- Teachers that are not qualified to teach business education are employed, consequently, rendering those that are qualified redundant.
- No relevant or up to date text book in all subjects' area in the library.
- Low take home package, a teacher in secondary school cannot be compared to his counterparts working in the industries.
- Lack of regular service training, seminar or workshop
- Lack of adequate period of teaching.
- Inadequate equipment and facilities in schools.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria needs highly educators to equip trainees with qualitative knowledge in order to move the nation forward. Business Education will undoubtedly, equip students with the necessary skills. a business educator thus possesses the required competencies in order to be able to e able to produce his like for the development of himself, as well as the nation.

Recommendations

The above observation can affect a teacher in exhibiting his competency. As a result, the following recommendations are given:

- The government must employ teachers that specialize in business education because they have the skills and knowledge. This will enable the right knowledge to be imparted to trainees. Areas of specialization suggested are Accounting/ Data processing, secretarial/ office management education, entrepreneurship education and marketing/distributive Education and the levels of teacher attainment in these areas should be NCE plus B.sc/ B.Ed (Business Education) and post graduates degrees in business education (Masters and Ph.d).
- Relevant or up to date text book in all business education subjects must be provided in the library because students from poor homes that are not able to buy will have opportunity to read in the library. Business Educators too can read in order to update their knowledge.

- To encourage the teacher effectively, the government should see to improved salaries, an increment should be given that equate with their counterparts in industries and it must be regular.
- Re-training, in- service –training, seminar and workshops should be organized regularly in order to update the knowledge of existing business educators. This is because of everyday changes. As the knowledge of the teacher is updated, it will be transferred to the students and at the end, there will be effective teaching and learning.
- Allocating more periods for teaching some of the practical subjects in business education like shorthand, typing, accounting, and so on, must be appreciated by the staff assigned to design a time table because such practical subjects need more hours than the non-practical subjects.
- The government should Endeavour to supply or provide funds to purchase the relevant equipment. In fact without necessary equipment, skill cannot be acquired effectively.
- NCE graduates who go for higher degrees should take courses both skill and other areas.
- Adequate period should be given for Teaching Practice and SIWES to enable trainees gain practical knowledge, both in teaching and administration.

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