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RESEARCH ARTICLE

BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME: A SYNERGY NEEDED FOR REDUCTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN PUBLIC COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN KWARA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated Business Education programme: A synergy needed for reduction of unemployment in public colleges of education in Kwara State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 265 respondents from the three colleges of education in Kwara State. A structured questionnaire containing 21 items was used to elicit responses from the respondents and generated data for the study. The instrument which was face-validated by three experts from the Department of Business Education, Faculty of Education, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin was used to collect data from the respondents. The study made use of Kuder-Richards formula (K-R 21) to determine the reliability of the instrument and a reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained. The data collected for the study were analyzed using mean to answer the research questions raised and standard deviation to determine the closeness or otherwise of the responses from the mean. Findings from the analysis revealed that Business Educations students needed knowledge and skills in accounting for economic survival. In addition, the findings revealed that marketing skills is needed by Business Education students for identification of consumer needs before starting up any business. More so, the findings revealed that office technology management skills are needed by exposing business education students to technology advancement in the world of business for reduction of unemployment. It was recommended amongst others that Students of Business Education who are currently in school should be given adequate information about the benefits of attaching a vocation to their course of study for reduction of unemployment.

KEYWORDS

Business Education, Colleges of Education, Unemployment

Introduction

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Business Education programme is an educational initiative aimed at equipping individuals with the essential skills, knowledge, entrepreneurial spirit, and acumen necessary for success in the workforce and for pursuing self-employment opportunities. According to Igboke (2015), Business Education is a progressive discipline focused on preparing both youth and adults for various aspects of business, with the goal of mitigating unemployment. Conversely, education concerning business involves preparing individuals to make informed and effective decisions regarding the consumption of economic goods and services available in a free market economy. Furthermore, Business Education is recognized as a program that readies students for both entry-level and advanced positions within the business sector, enabling them to manage their own business affairs and to engage thoughtfully as consumers and citizens in a commercial environment (Abanyam, 2016). The economic growth and development are significantly influenced by the nature of the programs that graduates from educational institutions receive, as these programs must provide the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to help reduce unemployment (Owenvbiugie & Edigbonya, 2014). One of the key institutions where such programs are intended to be delivered is college of education.

College of Education according to the Abanyam (2016) cited in Olawoyin and Adegoke (2018), is an educational programme designed to equip individuals with the skills necessary to become leaders and practitioners in the fields of education and related human services. This program aims to enhance and deepen the understanding of education as a vital human pursuit, enabling society to identify and address its educational responsibilities and challenges. Among the various programs offered at this level of education is Business Education, which prepares graduates for careers in teaching, positions within the industry, or the establishment of their own businesses that they will own, manage, and control post-graduation. In Kwara State, there are three public colleges of education. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) serves as the regulatory authority, overseeing the curriculum and ensuring the quality of faculty in both state and federal colleges of education across Nigeria. Ability to create self-venture for Business Education students specifically in Colleges of Education in Kwara State is as a

result of necessary skills and knowledge which would have been imparted in the trainees during the programme in the institutions thereby lead to drastic reduction in the rate of unemployment.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) posited unemployment as the condition of individuals who are unable to find employment, have actively sought work within the last four weeks, and are available to work. Additionally, individuals who have been temporarily laid off and are awaiting reemployment are also counted in the unemployment figures. This statistic is crucial for the government as it assesses the overall health of the economy. When unemployment rates rise significantly (approximately 6% or higher), the government typically implements measures to stimulate economic growth and generate job opportunities. Moreover, Ekanem and Emanghe (2014) describe unemployment as a scenario where individuals who are both capable and willing to work are unable to secure jobs. The situation of unemployment in Kwara State is associated with skills mismatch, technological changes, globalization, demographic changes and economic conditions which led Business Education students to be unemployed. However, the situation of unemployment can be checked, reduced or even eliminated amongst Nigerians specifically Business Education students by inculcating needful entrepreneurial skills through business education programme to alleviate unemployment in Kwara State.

Accounting programme is a field of study within Business Education that provides students with essential knowledge and attitudes necessary for managing the financial aspects of any profession. The competencies acquired through the accounting program encompass a range of skills, including record keeping, financial management, and reporting, all of which are vital for fostering effective financial management in any business organization (Eze et al., 2016). Proficiency in accounting entails the ability to analyze financial statements, prepare bank reconciliation statements, and generate daily cash reports, which are crucial skills for economic sustainability. Additionally, it includes understanding payroll systems and various deductions, as well as calculating depreciation, which serves as a means to

mitigate unemployment, particularly amongst Colleges of Education Students in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Marketing programme as an integral part of the Business Education programme, encompasses the activities involved in effectively presenting, promoting, and selling a company's products. The primary objective of marketing is to guarantee that the products or services desired by customers are accessible at competitive prices while maintaining satisfactory profit margins (Enoh, 2013). The marketing expertise essential for mitigating unemployment includes the capacity to establish market objectives, the skills to assess customer needs, the ability to select target markets, the capability to recognize competitive advantages, the proficiency in setting appropriate prices for products, and the competence to serve the maximum number of customers if possible.

Office Technology Management (OTM) involves the use of computers and other electronic devices to perform office function (Ibelegbu, 2013). OTM as viewed by UNESCO (2002) permeates the business environment, underpins the success of modern corporations, and provides governments with an efficient infrastructure. OTM are a set of programme that require the acquisition of knowledge in aspect of word processing packages, internet access, accessing electronic mails, print document, use scanning machines to send messages, install computer programmes and software's, create payroll for workers of different grade levels, conference calls and video conferencing for staff meetings, enter and edit data, insert rows and columns in excel to facilitate the reduction of unemployment.

Statement of the Problem

The general expectation of society regarding graduates from higher education institutions, including colleges of education, particularly those in the Business Education Programme, is that they will acquire essential business knowledge, understanding, and skills. This foundation is anticipated to provide them with numerous opportunities to remain continuously productive within the community. Graduates from Kwara State share this optimistic outlook, which aims to enhance the state's economy. However, despite the significant number of graduates produced by the colleges of education in

the state, there remains a concerning level of unemployment. This issue arises primarily because many graduates are seeking white-collar positions that are not readily available. Ekankumo and Kemebaradikumo (2011) cited in Olawoyin and Adegoke (2018) posited that the ratio of available white-collar jobs to the substantial number of graduates from universities and the National Youth Service Corps is unfavorable. It is on the basis of the foregoing that this study was aimed at investigating Business Education programme a synergy needed for reduction of unemployment in Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate Business Education programme a synergy needed for reduction of unemployment in Kwara State. Specifically, the aim of the study is to:

1. examine accounting programme needed for reduction of unemployment in public colleges of education in Kwara State.
2. find out marketing programme needed for reduction of unemployment in public colleges of education in Kwara State.
3. assess office technology management programme needed for reduction of unemployment in public colleges of education in Kwara State.

Research Questions

1. What are the accounting programme needed for reduction of unemployment in public colleges of education in Kwara State?
2. What are the marketing programme needed for reduction of unemployment in public colleges of education in Kwara State?
3. What are the office technology management programme needed for reduction of unemployment in public colleges of education in Kwara State?

Methodology

The design for this study was descriptive survey. The researcher make use of this research design because it facilitates effective sourcing of data on people's thought,

feelings, opinion and generalization of information from a population. The study was carried out in Kwara State. The population for the study consisted of 265 Business Education students in public Colleges of Education in Kwara State. Kwara State has three public Colleges of Education namely; Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin (105 NCEII Business Education Students), Kwara State College of Lafiagi (82 NCEII Business Education Students) and Kwara State College of Education Oro (78 NCEII Business Education Students) Hence, the whole population was used to elicit response from the respondents which implies census population. The instrument titled Business Education Programme for Reduction of Unemployment Questionnaire (BEPRUQ) was developed by the researcher to collect data for the study. The instrument consisted of 21 items measured on a five-point rating scale of Very Highly Needed (VHN = 5 points), Highly Needed (HN= 4 points), Rarely Needed (N = 3 points), Needed (N = 2 point) and Not Needed (NN = 1 point). The instrument was divided into two parts: A and B.

Part A of the instrument collected personal information of the respondents while part B addressed research question. The instrument was face-validated by three experts from the Department of Business Education, Faculty of Education, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin which corrections were accordingly effected. The reliability of the instrument was determined through application of Kuder Richards formula (K-R 21) and a reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained. The instrument was considered reliable based on the reliability value obtained. The instrument was administered through direct contact with the respondents with the help research assistance where by the instrument took about a week before it is completely administered and the whole 265 copies administered were retrieved and used for analysis. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation.

In answering the research questions, any mean found between 3.0 and 5.0 was interpreted as Needed (N) while mean below 3.0 was interpreted as Not Needed (NN). The standard deviation was also employed to indicate how scattered or close the opinions of respondents are around the mean. Where the Standard Deviation was high, the individual responses varied greatly, where the Standard Deviation was

low, and the respondents were taken to be close in their opinions.

Results

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondent on the Accounting Programme Needed for Reduction of Unemployment (N=265).

S/N	Items Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Preparing bank reconciliation statements	3.77	1.16	N
2.	Knowledge of accounts as a skill for economic Survival	3.40	0.93	N
3.	Skills to understand payroll and various deductions	3.02	0.26	N
4.	Calculating depreciation as an accounting skill for economic survival	3.55	0.21	N
5.	Prepare simple budget	3.15	0.18	N
6.	Skills to find sources of capital to start business	3.19	1.21	N
7.	Acknowledging of factors involved in decision to grant loan by financial houses	3.55	0.21	N
	Weighted Average	3.37	0.59	N

From Table 1, items 1-7 had mean scores above the cut-off point of 3.0, indicating Needed. Therefore, respondents needed accounting programme for reduction of unemployment. This implies that possession of accounting skills by Business Education students will have germane impact in contributing to unemployment reduction. The standard deviations of the respondents were low and not far from one another, it means that the respondents' assessment of business education programme are closely related.

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Respondent on the Marketing Programme Needed for Reduction of Unemployment (N=265).

S/N	Items Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Knowledge to choose the markets to serve	3.57	0.76	N
2.	Knowledge to identify advantages over other competitors	3.80	0.93	N
3.	Knowledge to set market goals	3.42	0.66	N
4.	Knowledge to determine customers' needs	3.01	0.71	N
5.	Knowledge to set strategic plans to serve the identified market	3.55	0.38	N
6.	Knowledge to anticipate seasonal market fluctuations	3.67	1.61	N

7.	Knowledge to produce quality product for customers	3.76	0.21	N
	Weighted Average	3.54	0.75	N

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

From Table 2, items 8-14 had mean scores above the cut-off point of 3.0, indicating Needed. Therefore, respondents needed marketing programme for reduction of unemployment. In accordance with the above result it revealed that marketing skills play crucial on employability if Business Education students in setting up their own business venture thereby contribute to unemployment reduction. The standard deviations of the respondents were low and not far from one another, it means that the respondents' assessment of business education programme are closely related.

Table 3: Mean Ratings of Respondent on the Office Technology Management Programme Needed for Reduction of Unemployment (N=265).

S/N	Items Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Print document	3.57	0.76	N
2.	Internet access	3.80	0.93	N
3.	Accessing electronic mail	3.42	0.66	N
4.	Use scanning machines to send messages	3.01	0.71	N
5.	Enter and edit data	3.55	0.38	N
6.	Insert rows and columns in excel	3.67	0.61	N
7.	Use enterprise resource planning	3.76	0.21	N
	Weighted Average	3.54	0.55	N

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

From Table 3, items 15-21 had mean scores above the cut-off point of 3.0, indicating Needed. Therefore, respondents needed Office Technology Management programme for reduction of unemployment. Due to the result above it revealed that Colleges of Education students needed vital knowledge and competency in office and technology management by exposing them to technological changes require at work for reduction of unemployment. The standard deviations of the respondents are low and not far from one another, it means that the respondents' assessment of business education programme are closely related.

Discussion of Results

The data presented in Table 1 indicates that comprehensive knowledge of accounting programs is essential for mitigating unemployment. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Eze et al. (2016), which highlighted the necessity for Business Education graduates to possess accounting expertise for self-employment opportunities. If accounting programmes are effectively delivered in colleges of education in Kwara State and similar institutions, students will acquire the skills necessary for proficient record-keeping and the preparation and interpretation of financial statements for their businesses thereby contribute to unemployment reduction.

Table 2 illustrated the marketing knowledge deemed essential by Business Education students for addressing unemployment. This conclusion supports the earlier research by Enoh (2013), which identified that self-employed building craftsmen and block molders must develop marketing skills to establish clear market objectives. Graduates from Business Education programme in colleges of education in Kwara State and beyond will greatly benefit from the instruction in marketing skills, as it will empower them to set effective market goals, assess customer needs within their business environments, and recognize their competitive advantages which will facilitate the reduction of high rate of unemployment.

Table 3 revealed that Business Education students require knowledge in Office Technology Management (OTM) to combat unemployment. This finding is in consonance with the work of Olawoyin and Adegoke (2018), who reported that Business Education students need OTM skills for self-sufficiency. Acquiring skills in OTM will enable students from colleges of education in Kwara State to stay abreast of technological advancements in the business sector. These competencies will equip them to manage business communications online, prepare reports in word processing software, navigate the internet, conduct video calls, and engage in similar activities thereby decline the rate of unemployment amongst Business Education students of Colleges of Education in Kwara State.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the Business Education Programme as a necessary approach for mitigating unemployment in public colleges of education within Kwara State. Data were systematically collected, analyzed, and interpreted. The findings led to the conclusion that students enrolled in Business Education at these colleges require a solid understanding of accounting, marketing, and office technology management to effectively address unemployment issues specifically in Kwara State.

Recommendations

1. Business Education students currently enrolled in their programmes should receive comprehensive information regarding the advantages of integrating vocational training with their academic pursuits in acquisition of practical knowledge require at work for unemployment reduction.
2. The government should establish firms and institutions beyond traditional universities to provide instruction in Business and entrepreneurial education.
3. Business Education students ought to be trained by their lecturers in fundamental skills that will empower them to initiate their own ventures, thereby contributing to the nation's economic development and aiding in the reduction of unemployment.

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