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Extent of utilization of In-service education and funding measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study determined the extent of utilization of in-service education and funding measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 254 business educators in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria. Data were collected using 18-item structured questionnaire validated by two experts in business education. The instrument had an overall reliability coefficient of 0.84, established using Cronbach's alpha. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while t-test was employed to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that in-service education measures were utilized to a high extent, while funding measures were utilized to a low extent. The findings of the study revealed among others that there was no significant difference between universities and colleges of education in the utilization of in-service education measures. The study concluded that inadequate funding could constrain effective practical instruction and skill acquisition. It recommended sustained professional development, increased funding and diversification of funding sources to enhance skill acquisition in business education.

Keywords: *In-service education, funding measures, skill acquisition, business education, tertiary institutions.*

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Introduction

Education is an important instrument for national development because it equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies required for productive engagement in society. In Nigeria, tertiary education is expected to prepare individuals for employment, self-reliance, entrepreneurship and economic development. Achieving these objectives requires educational programmes that emphasize practical competencies, professional development and adequate instructional resources in response to technological advancement and changing workplace demands (Udegbunam, Ukuhor, Mbanugo and Anigbogu, 2020). Consequently, business education programmes are expected to equip learners with relevant knowledge and practical skills for effective participation in the world of work.

Business education is a vocational programme designed to equip learners with the knowledge and competencies required for business operations, office administration, commerce and entrepreneurship. It encompasses accounting, office technology and management, marketing, business communication and information and communication technology (ICT). Okolocha, Udegbunam and Ukwuoma (2023) described business education as an important component of education that emphasizes the acquisition of skills for application in offices and business-related occupations. However, achieving these objectives depends on lecturers' professional competence, the availability of instructional resources, and students' opportunities to acquire practical skills. Skill acquisition in business education involves developing the abilities required for activities such as financial record-keeping, data processing, records management, business software operation and entrepreneurial practice. Ohadiugha (2023) emphasized the importance of competent lecturers, appropriate instructional methods, functional ICT facilities and practical learning opportunities in promoting skill acquisition.

One measure for improving instructional quality and promoting skill acquisition is in-service education. This refers to organized professional development activities undertaken by serving employees to improve their knowledge, skills and job performance. In tertiary institutions, it enables business education lecturers to update their subject knowledge, develop pedagogical competencies and adapt to changes in business practices and educational technologies. Such activities include workshops, seminars, conferences, refresher courses, professional certification, industrial attachment and further academic studies. Adibe-Ogoegbunam, Attamah and Udegbunam (2025) identified content knowledge and pedagogical skills as important areas of teachers' professional training. Similarly, Akpotohwo and Ogeibiri (2018) observed that initial teacher education cannot completely prepare teachers for all classroom responsibilities. These findings underscore the importance of continuous professional development.

The utilization of in-service education measures concerns the extent to which tertiary institutions provide and implement professional development opportunities for lecturers. Participation in relevant training activities can improve lecturers' ability to teach emerging business technologies, demonstrate practical procedures and guide students in developing workplace competencies. However, inadequate funding, irregular training opportunities, heavy workloads and insufficient institutional support may limit lecturers' participation. It is therefore necessary to determine the extent to which tertiary institutions utilize in-service education measures to promote skill acquisition in business education.

Another important measure is funding, which involves mobilizing, allocating and utilizing financial resources for effective programme implementation. Business education requires funding for staff development, computers, business software, internet connectivity, instructional materials, modern office equipment and functional laboratories. Funding sources may include government allocations, institutional budgets, internally generated revenue, educational intervention funds, private-sector partnerships and school fees. In Nigeria, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) (n.d.) supports eligible public tertiary institutions in areas such as infrastructure, instructional facilities, research and academic staff development. Okeke and Omorojie (2023) highlighted the need for alternative funding strategies in response to financial uncertainty, Akpotohwo and Ogeibiri (2018) identified government funding, education tax funds, community support, private-sector contributions and school fees as funding sources for business education. Nwosu, Crossdale and Ofulue (2018) further emphasized that adequate funding facilitates the provision of well-equipped laboratories, modern model offices, updated libraries and other facilities required for effective teaching and practical learning.

The utilization of funding measures refers to the extent to which available financial resources are allocated and applied to the needs of business education programmes. Effective utilization supports staff development, the acquisition and maintenance of ICT facilities and the provision of instructional materials and practical learning environments. Conversely, inadequate funding, competing institutional priorities and poor resource allocation may limit students' opportunities to acquire relevant occupational skills. In-service education and funding are therefore complementary measures: while professional development strengthens lecturers' competencies, funding provides the resources needed to organize training and facilitate practical instruction. Their effective utilization can improve teaching quality and enhance students' acquisition of employable and entrepreneurial skills.

The extent of utilization of these measures may vary according to institution type. In this study, institution type refers to colleges of education and universities offering business education programmes in South-East Nigeria. Differences in administrative arrangements, staff development policies, funding structures and access to instructional facilities may influence how these institutions implement the measures. However, Okoli, Utoware and Kaizer (2018) reported no significant difference between business education programmes in universities and colleges of education regarding in-service education and funding as measures for improving quality assurance. This provides a basis for further examining whether institution type influences the utilization of these measures for promoting skill acquisition.

The issue is particularly important in South-East Nigeria, comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. The region's commercial and entrepreneurial activities require competencies in accounting, business administration, communication, office management and digital technology. Tertiary institutions are therefore expected to produce business education graduates with the practical skills needed for employment and self-reliance. However, variations in staff development opportunities, institutional facilities and financial support may affect the quality of practical instruction and skill acquisition (Ohadiugha, 2022).

Previous studies have examined funding challenges and strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education in the region. Oko and Ile (2023) investigated the influence of poor funding on skill acquisition in business education programmes in tertiary institutions in

South-East Nigeria, while Emeasoba, Egbo and Akudolu (2023) examined funding strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programmes in South-East universities. Although these studies highlight the importance of funding, the present study considers both in-service education and funding measures as complementary strategies and examines institution type as a possible factor influencing their utilization. Consequently, the study determined the extent of utilization of in-service education and funding measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Business education in tertiary institutions aims to equip students with practical skills for employment, entrepreneurship and self-reliance. Achieving these objectives depends on lecturers' professional competence, adequate instructional facilities and effective practical learning. However, irregular in-service education opportunities may limit lecturers' ability to update their knowledge and teaching skills, while inadequate funding may restrict the provision of computers, business software, modern office equipment and functional laboratories needed for skill acquisition. In South-East Nigeria, the extent to which tertiary institutions utilize in-service education and funding measures to promote skill acquisition in business education requires empirical investigation. Although previous studies, such as Oko and Ile (2023) and Emeasoba, Egbo, and Akudolu (2023), examined funding challenges and strategies, further investigation is needed into the combined utilization of in-service education and funding measures and whether their utilization differs between universities and colleges of education. The problem of this study, therefore, is to determine the extent of utilization of in-service education and funding measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine extent of utilization of in-service education and funding measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine the business educators' extent of utilization of:

1. in-service education measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria.
2. funding measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the business educators' extent of utilization of in-service education measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria?
2. What is the business educators' extent of utilization of funding measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators from universities and colleges of education on the extent of utilization of in-service education measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in South-East, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of programme administrators from universities and colleges of education on extent of utilization of funding measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in South-East, Nigeria.

Method

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 254 business educators in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria. No sample and sampling technique was given because the population is manageable for the researchers. Data for this study was collected using a 15 items structured questionnaire. The respondents were requested to rate the items on a four-point rating scale of Very High Extent (4), High Extent (3), Low Extent (2) and Very Low Extent (1) respectively. The instrument was validated by two experts in business education. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the items reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficients values of 0.89 and 0.79 for clusters B1 and B2 respectively with an overall coefficient value of 0.84. Out of the 254 copies of questionnaire instrument was administered to the subjects in their institutions through direct approach which facilitated a response rate of 249 copies (representing 98 percent) with an attrition rate of five copies (representing 2 percent) and used for data analysis. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The application of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 was used for data analysis. For the null hypotheses, p-value was used for decision making. Where the calculated p-value was less than the stipulated level of significance 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), it implies that there was a significant difference between respondents' mean scores and the null hypothesis is rejected. On the other hand, if the p-value is greater than or equal to the alpha level of 0.05 ($p \geq 0.05$), it means that there was no significant difference in the respondents mean scores and is not rejected.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the business educators' extent of utilization of in-service education measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria?

Data collected in respect of the research question were analyzed and presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Business educators' mean ratings on the extent of utilization of in-service education measures. N=249

S/N	In-service education measures	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1.	I participate in conferences for upgrading of business education lectures' teaching method	3.30	0.50	High Extent
2.	I participate in seminars for upgrading business education lecturers on current curriculum developments in Business Education	3.50	0.42	Very High Extent
3.	I participate in workshops on current business education new teaching methods	3.52	0.41	Very High Extent
4.	I participate in conferences relevant to Business Education	2.69	0.54	High Extent
5.	I undertake training on spreadsheet and database applications used in business operations	2.54	0.60	High Extent
6.	I undertake training on entrepreneurship and small-business management	3.24	0.51	High Extent
7.	I participate on sandwich programme to educate students not in regular course	2.56	0.58	High Extent
8.	I participate in Part-time programme to educate students not in regular course like secondary school business studies teachers	3.40	0.47	High Extent
9.	I participate in professional development programmes organized by relevant professional bodies	3.38	0.48	High Extent
	Cluster Mean	**3.13**		**High Extent**

Data in Table 1 revealed that item number 2 and 3 was rated very high extent with mean ratings ranged of 3.50 to 3.52. The remaining seven items 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 were rated high extent with mean score ratings ranging from 2.54 to 3.40. The cluster mean score of 3.13 which indicates' that business educators utilized in-service education measures to high extent for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria. The standard deviation of the responses showed that respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings which indicate homogeneity.

Research Question 2

What is the business educators' extent of utilization of funding measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria?
Data collected in respect of the research question were analyzed and presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Business educators' mean ratings on the extent of utilization funding measures. N=249

S/N	Funding measures	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remarks
10.	My institution provides funds for staff participation in relevant professional development programmes	2.60	0.49	High Extent
11.	My institution provides financial support for workshops and seminars aimed at improving practical teaching skills	2.20	0.64	Low Extent
12.	My institution allocates funds for purchasing computers and other ICT facilities for Business Education	2.70	0.46	High Extent
13.	My institution provides funds for internet access and digital learning resources	1.69	0.67	Low Extent
14.	My institution provides funds for state-of-the-art model offices for the teachers and all staff	2.54	0.53	High Extent
15.	My institution provides funds for maintaining and repairing equipment used for practical skill development	2.24	0.53	Low Extent
16.	My institution provides funds for building appropriate staff offices for its human resource personnel	2.50	0.57	High Extent
17.	My institution provides funds for fixing appropriate furniture for the offices	2.30	0.60	Low Extent
18.	My institution allocates funds for establishing and equipping Business Education laboratories or practice room	2.36	0.59	Low Extent
	Cluster Mean	**2.35**		**Low Extent**

Data in Table 2 reveal that item 10, 12, 14 and 16 were rated high extent with mean ratings ranging from 2.50 to 2.70. The remaining five items 11, 13, 15, 17 and 18 were rated high extent with mean score ratings ranging from 1.69 to 2.36. The cluster mean score of 2.35 which indicates' that business educators utilized funding measures at low extent for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria. The standard deviation of the responses shows that respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings which indicate homogeneity.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators from universities and colleges of education on the extent of utilization of in-service education measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in South-East, Nigeria.
Data collected in respect of the hypothesis were analyzed and presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis on the mean ratings of business educators from universities and colleges of education on the extent of utilization of in-service education measures.

Institution type	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	α	df	t-cal.	p-value	Decision
Universities	116	3.07	.11	0.05	247	1.633	.352	Not Significant
Coll. of Edu.	133	3.09	.14					

Table 3 indicates that the calculated t-value is 1.633 with 247 as degree of freedom and .352 p-value. Since the p-value of .352 is greater than alpha value (0.05). It implies that business educators from universities and colleges of education do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent of utilization of in-service education measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in South-East, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators from universities and colleges of education on the extent of utilization of funding measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in South-East, Nigeria.
Data collected in respect of the hypothesis were analyzed and presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis on the mean ratings of business educators from universities and colleges of education on the extent of utilization of funding measures.

Institution type	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	α	df	t-cal.	p-value	Decision
Universities	116	3.54	.14	0.05	247	1.463	.000	Significant
Coll. of Edu.	133	3.46	.09					

Table 4 indicates that the calculated t-value is 1.463 with 247 as degree of freedom and .000 p-value. Since the p-value of .000 is less the than alpha value (0.05). It implies that programme administrators from universities and colleges of education differ significantly in their mean ratings on the level of utilization of quality assurance of funding measures for promoting skill acquisition in business education in South-South, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that business educators utilized in-service education measures at high extent for promoting skill acquisition in business education in South-East, Nigeria tertiary institutions. This implies that high extent on the utilization of in-service education could adequately enhance and upgrade teachers' professional skills, knowledge and interest, subsequent to initial training. This finding agrees with Adibe-Ogoegbunam, Attamah

and Udegbunam (2025) who revealed that knowledge and pedagogical skills as important areas of teachers' professional training. The finding agrees with Akpotohwo and Ogeibiri (2018) who observed that initial teacher education cannot completely prepare teachers for all classroom responsibilities. These findings underscore the importance of continuous professional development.

The findings also showed that institutions type mean ratings of business educators' do not significantly influenced in-service education measures utilized for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria. The finding on institution type difference agrees with that of Okoli, Utoware and Kaizer (2018) who reported that no significant difference between business education programmes in universities and colleges of education regarding in-service education and funding as measures for improving quality assurance.

The findings of the study revealed that business educators utilized funding measures at low extent for promoting skill acquisition in business education in South-East, Nigeria tertiary institutions. This implies that low extent utilization of funding measures will make business education programmes have insufficient/adequate and conducive classrooms, un-equipped laboratories/studios, inappropriate staff offices, inappropriate furniture and among others. This finding agrees with Okeke and Omorojie (2023) who revealed that university administrators required training on fund securing alternative resources and to function in an environment of financial uncertainty. The finding disagrees with that of Akpotohwo and Ogeibiri (2018) who reported that government; education tax fund (ETF) community, private sector, school fees and private sector are all modes of funding business education programme for quality assurance.

The findings also showed that institutions type mean ratings of business educators' significantly influenced funding measures utilized for promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-South, Nigeria. The finding on institution type difference agrees with that of Akpotohwo and Ogeibiri (2018) who revealed that institutions type influenced the funding measures established which is capable of promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that business educators found that in-service education measures were utilized to a high extent, while funding measures were utilized to a low extent in promoting skill acquisition in business education in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria. There was no significant difference between universities and colleges of education in the utilization of in-service education measures, while the reported difference in funding utilization requires statistical verification. The study concludes that adequate funding and sustained professional development are essential for effective practical instruction and skill acquisition.

Recommendations

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

1. Tertiary institution management should sustain and strengthen in-service education programmes. Universities and colleges of education should regularly organize workshops, seminars, conferences and refresher courses for business educators,

focusing on digital literacy, entrepreneurship, business software, modern office practices and innovative teaching methods to enhance lecturers' competencies and promote students' skill acquisition.

2. Government and institutional management should increase funding for business education programmes. Adequate financial resources should be allocated to staff development, instructional materials, ICT facilities, internet connectivity and the establishment and maintenance of functional business education laboratories to provide students with adequate opportunities for practical skill acquisition.
3. Tertiary institutions should diversify their sources of funding for business education. In addition to government allocations and institutional revenue, universities and colleges of education should explore relevant educational intervention funds, including Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) support where applicable, and partnerships with private organizations, business enterprises and professional bodies to support staff training, equipment acquisition and practical learning activities.

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