

BUSINESS EDUCATORS' KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE LEVEL IN PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: *The study assessed business educators' knowledge and competence level in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusivity in the programs in Nigeria. Two research questions and six null hypotheses were used. Mixed research design with quantitative and qualitative approaches was adopted. The sample was 24 subjects from colleges of education in two states. A four-point rating scale questionnaire containing 11 pedagogical strategies, validated by three experts and an interview schedule were used for data collection. Reliability coefficient value of the questionnaire was 0.83. Research questions were answered with mean while hypotheses were tested with t-test and ANOVA at 0,05 level of significance. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically under ignorance and incompetence. The subjects' knowledge and competence level in the pedagogical strategies was very low, gender influence was not significant but that of location was. It was concluded that business educators are not yet ready for inclusivity and should be retrained by government.*

Keywords: *Business educators; knowledge and competence; pedagogical strategies; inclusive business education;*

Introduction

Many academic programs including business education are offered across different faculties in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Business education is one of the occupational areas in vocational education which equips students with skills for accounting, marketing, office technology and management (secretarial) services and entrepreneurship (Ajisafe, Bolarinwa & Edeh 2015). Nwazor and Onokpaunu (2016) posited that business education is designed to create awareness among students of the necessary skills with which to cope with the intricacies and dynamics of the unpredictable challenges of the current business environment. Consequently, Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) summarized the goals of business education as (1) To prepare students for specific career in office occupations (2) To equip students with the requisite skills for job creation and entrepreneurship and (3) To enrich students with knowledge about happenings in the current business environment, information and communication technology and other resources that facilitate business growth and success.

The above components and goals of business education give it an inclusive outlook as the graduates not only become responsible producers and prudent consumers but also fit into different career placements and advancement in the world of work. This justifies the increasing enrolment of students with disabilities in the program across all levels of tertiary education in Nigeria. Therefore, for the program to serve the needs of different student types and remain relevant among other contemporary educational programmes globally, there is need for business educators to integrate the principles of inclusivity in instructional delivery.

Inclusive education refers to the practice of accommodating and embracing learners' diversity in normal educational settings for the purpose of eliminating the thoughts of impaired, handicapped or gifted among students in the classroom. The essence of inclusivity is that all students, irrespective of physical, psychological and mental circumstances, have equal opportunity to learn together with the same learning experiences in a normal school environment. Kusuma and Ramadevi (2013) stated that inclusive education means full inclusion of children with diverse abilities in all aspects of schooling that other children are able to access and enjoy. This implies that business educators should adopt pedagogical strategies and consider qualitative attributes of their students in order to make each and every student enjoy and benefit maximally in the teaching and learning process for inclusivity to have its course. Pedagogical strategies refer to the instructional acumen, classroom behaviour or management practices and teacher-student interpersonal principles applied by teachers to enable students understand the objectives of a subject matter.

In the conventional teaching methods widely used in Nigerian schools, the teacher stands by the chalkboard and delivers lesson through verbal instructions while students remain passive listeners with little or no active participation. These methods cannot satisfy the learning needs of students in an inclusive setting as it does not appreciate each student's peculiarity. Therefore, business educators need adequate knowledge and competence to adopt collaborative and individualized instructional strategies since they cannot practice what they do not know. Although there are numerous research works on inclusive education in developed countries of the world, there seems to be paucity of empirical studies on business educators' knowledge and competence level in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusivity in the programs in Nigeria, hence this study.

The theoretical framework of the study was hinged on the constructivist theory of learning propounded by Piaget in 1972. The theory holds that learners construct knowledge and meaning from interactions between their experiences and ideas and maintains that through accommodation and assimilation, learners construct new knowledge from their experiences. Piaget holds that a classroom must provide a variety of activities to accommodate individual differences among students, challenge them, increase their readiness to learn, discover new ideas and construct their own knowledge through many channels such as reading, listening, exploring and experiencing the environment. This theory is relevant to this study in the sense that it supports the need for business educators to use pedagogical strategies that promote collaboration and active participation to allow students learn together, think and draw knowledge from each other without any form of competition and/or intimidation. In addition, pedagogical strategies like self-regulated learning, cooperative learning, activity-based and assistive instructional technologies among others are the key drivers of inclusive education.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

What is the level of business educators' knowledge of pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria?

What is the level of business educators' competence of pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on knowledge of pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria based on gender, location (urban and rural) and experience (0-5 years, 6-10 years and above 10 years).

There is no significant difference in respondents' mean ratings on their competence in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria based on gender, location (urban and rural) and experience (0-5 years, 6-10 years and above 10 years).

Method

Mixed research design with quantitative and qualitative approaches was used for the study. The sample was 24 business educators purposively drawn from two colleges of education in Anambra and Delta States. A 4-point rating scale questionnaire containing 11 pedagogical strategies in two clusters (sections) for knowledge and competence respectively and an interview schedule on what the subjects know about them and if they think they can use them with ignorance and incompetence as themes were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data for the study. The instruments were validated by three experts from universities. Internal consistency method was used to establish the reliability of the questionnaire with a pilot study involving 10 business educators drawn from Edo State and application of Cronbach alpha yielded reliability coefficient values of 0.80 and 0.86 for the two clusters (sections) with an overall value of 0.83. Quantitative data were analysed with mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity of the respondents' views. Decision was based on the mean of each section (cluster mean) relative to the real limits of numbers on a 4-point scale. Qualitative data were analysed under two themes – ignorance and incompetence. Inferential statistics of t-test and ANOVA were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1

Respondents' mean ratings on level of knowledge of pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria

S/N	Pedagogical strategies for inclusive education	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Self-regulated learning strategy	1.36	0.88	VLL
2.	Meta-cognitive instructional strategy	1.10	0.54	VLL
3.	Cooperative learning strategy	2.17	0.62	LL
4.	Parallel teaching strategy	1.04	0.81	VLL
5.	Social-skills instructional strategy	1.09	0.73	VLL
6.	Co-teaching strategy	1.11	0.59	VLL
7.	Individualized learning strategy	1.28	0.50	VLL
8.	Feedback and consultation learning strategy	1.31	0.66	VLL
9.	Multi-level instructional strategy	0.99	0.80	VLL
10.	Activity-based learning strategy	1.22	0.51	VLL
11.	Assistive instructional technologies	2.34	0.77	LL
	Cluster mean	1.36		VLL

Table 1 shows that the cluster mean of 1.36 indicates that respondents' level of knowledge of pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria is very low. Standard deviation for all the strategies are within the same range showing that the respondents were homogeneous in their views.

Table 2

Respondents' mean ratings on level of competence in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria

S/N	Pedagogical strategies for inclusive education	Mean	SD	Remarks
	Ability to			

1.	Implement self-regulated learning strategy	1.06	0.58	VLL
2.	Apply met-cognitive instructional strategy	0.76	0.61	VLL
3.	Utilize cooperative learning strategy	1.22	0.31	VLL
4.	Apply parallel teaching strategy	0.64	0.42	VLL
5.	Use social-skills instructional strategy	0.89	0.67	VLL
6.	Implement co-teaching strategy	1.01	0.76	VLL
7.	Apply individualized learning strategy	0.58	0.39	VLL
8.	Use feedback and consultation learning strategy	0.54	0.48	VLL
9.	Implement multi-level instructional strategy	0.52	0.55	VLL
10.	Apply activity-based learning strategy	1.11	0.30	VLL
11.	Utilize assistive instructional technologies	1.27	0.64	VLL
	Cluster mean	0.87		VLL

Table 2 shows that the cluster mean of 0.87 indicates that the business educators' competence level in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria is very low. Standard deviation for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents were not wide apart in their views.

Table 3

t-Test summary of male and female respondents' mean ratings on knowledge level in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria.

Gender	N	MeanSD	α	df	P-value	Decision__
Male	10	1.27	0.63	0.05	23	0.21
Female	14	1.39	0.44			

Table 3 shows that the p-value of 0.21 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05 ($p\text{-value} < \alpha$) which means that the respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on level of knowledge in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria as a result of gender. The hypothesis was accepted.

Table 4

t-Test summary of urban and rural-based respondents' mean ratings on knowledge level in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria.

Location	N	MeanSD	α	df	P-value	Decision__
Urban	16	2.24	0.93	0.05	23	0.03
Rural	8	1.76	0.74			

Table 4 shows that the p-value of 0.03 is less than the alpha level of 0.05 ($p\text{-value} > \alpha$) which means that urban and rural -based respondents differed significantly in their mean ratings on level of knowledge in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria. The hypothesis was rejected.

Table 5

ANOVA summary of respondents' mean ratings on knowledge level of pedagogical strategies for inclusive business education programs in Nigeria based on experience (0-5 years, 6-10 years, above 10 years)

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	of Df	Mean Square	Alpha level	p-value	Inference
Between Groups	19.94	2	4.22			
Within Groups	122.47	22	11.43	0.05	0.00	S
Total	142.41	24				

Table 5 shows that the p-value of 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05 ($p\text{-value} > \alpha$) which means that respondents differed significantly in their mean ratings on level of knowledge in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria based on their experience. The hypothesis was rejected.

Table 6

t-Test summary of male and female respondents' mean ratings on competence level in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria.

Gender	N	MeanSD	α	df	P-value	Decision__
Male	10	1.06	0.53			
				0.05	23	0.36
Female	14	1.10	0.37			NS

Table 6 shows that the p-value of 0.36 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05 ($p\text{-value} < \alpha$) which shows that gender did not significantly influence the respondents' mean ratings on their competence level in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria. The hypothesis accepted.

Table 7

t-Test summary of urban and rural-based respondents' mean ratings on competence level in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria.

Location	N	MeanSD	α	df	P-value	Decision_
Urban	16	2.04	0.62			
				0.05	23	0.01
Rural	8	1.22	0.79			S

Table 7 shows that the p-value of 0.01 is less than the alpha level of 0.05 ($p\text{-value} > \alpha$) which means that location had a significant influence in the respondents' mean ratings on their competence level in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria. The hypothesis was rejected.

Table 8

ANOVA summary of respondents' mean ratings on competence level in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria based on experience (0-5 years, 6-10 years, above 10 years)

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	of Df	Mean Square	Alpha level	p-value	Inference
Between Groups	11.77	2	3.57			
Within Groups	73.24	22	8.82	0.05	0.01	S
Total	85.01	24				

Table 8 shows that the p-value of 0.01 is less than the alpha level of 0.05 ($p\text{-value} > \alpha$) which means that experience significantly influenced the respondents' mean ratings on their competence level in pedagogical strategies for implementing inclusive business education programs in Nigeria. The hypothesis was rejected.

Qualitative analysis was done under two themes with excerpts from interview transcripts as follows:

Ignorance

Generally, the participants expressed lack of knowledge of the pedagogical strategies used in the study with majority asking whether they were specified for inclusive education. They were ignorant of whether they can be used for teaching business education courses in an inclusive classroom. Few participants stated that they knew about cooperative and activity-based learning strategies but did not know they are for inclusive teaching. Shockingly, one participant stated "This is the first time I am hearing of self-regulated learning, parallel teaching, meta-cognitive, multi-level and social-skills instructional strategies" while another stated "I wasn't exposed to the pedagogical strategies mentioned in this study in my teacher training days as they were not embedded in the curriculum so I doubt if any of my colleagues will know anything about them".

Incompetence

Most participants admitted that they lack the competence to use the pedagogical strategies in the study to teach or cope with the complexities of teaching students with special needs. One stated "I understand cooperative learning strategies but which of them will I use to teach in an inclusive setting because it has different versions" while some stated that they lack the competence to prepare lesson notes and plan for the pedagogical strategies. One admitted lack of knowledge of which of the strategies would be suitable for learners with disabilities or special needs because she has two of such offering her course. One exclaimed "Using these strategies will be very, very tasking, in fact, I can't see myself and colleagues being able to use them".

In summary, findings of the study show that the business educators' knowledge and competency level in pedagogical strategies for inclusive business education programs in Nigeria is very low. This shows that despite the overwhelming waves of inclusive education around the world, business educators in Nigeria are not yet equipped to apply suitable pedagogies to make it work.

Implication, Conclusion and Recommendations

The major implication of the findings of this study is that business educators in Nigeria are not adequately exposed to the pedagogical strategies for inclusive education during their teacher training days. This suggests that (1) special needs students in the program are not adequately catered for and (2) business educators are not able to adapt their instructional delivery for inclusivity. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the needs of all learner types in the programs are not being met and this will negatively affect the interest of large number of students with learning challenges to enrol in the program. Consequently, it was recommended among others that curriculum developers should integrate knowledge and competencies in pedagogical strategies for inclusive education in the program to equip the professionals to achieve the need for inclusivity for greater benefits to individuals and the nation.

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