

AN ANALYSIS OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES NEEDED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL BUSINESS STUDIES TEACHERS

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Abstract

This study was designed to find out the professional competencies needed by both the pre-service and in-service business studies teachers in Edo state secondary schools. The instrument used to collect data for this study was the questionnaire. Mean and standard deviation were the statistical tools used for the analysis of data. The result revealed that all the thirty (30) competency statements were perceived to be required by the business studies teachers. However, it was discovered that not all the needed competencies were adequately possessed by the business studies teachers. Arising from the findings amongst others, it was recommended that the thirty (30) competency items be included in the pre-service and in-service training curriculum for the business studies teacher education programme.

Background and Problem

An assessment of the junior secondary school (JSS) Business Studies curriculum revealed its wide acceptance as relevant curriculum package for imparting desirable skills, aptitudes and abilities to students of Business Studies. This finding did not come as a surprise because of its far-reaching and meaningful innovations since its inclusion as one of the curriculum offering of the 6-3-3-4 system over two decades ago. For example, it is the first attempt at providing an integrated curriculum enabling the school leavers with the ability to adapt to changing business realities and the problem solving skills required for tackling economic and business related problems. The "Business Studies" now comprises all the following subjects Book-keeping, Commerce, Office Practice, Typewriting and Shorthand as units or components of Business Studies (Ekpenyong, 2001). In other words, even (though each of the JSS Business Studies 'subjects' continues to retain its autonomy and identity, they are to be perceived as units of business studies, and teachers are expected to teach them as a single Business Studies subject. At the senior secondary school level, the subject maintains its autonomy where the learner is led to appreciate knowledge in compartments of subjects (Iheagwu, 1989). Given this new trend in the junior secondary school Business Studies curriculum, this study was designed to find out how properly equipped the JSS Business Studies teachers are in handling the curriculum innovations.

The study is aware that in the teaching and learning of any subject, teachers and learners are significant factors. This is more so with a new programme/curriculum expected to have wide implications for the consumer (learner) and the curriculum implementer (the teacher). The JSS Business Studies curriculum is no exception and for it to achieve its stated goals (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology: 1985, 2: 64, and the National Board for Educational Measurement, JSS Syllabus), certain steps and precautions must be taken. The nature and scope of the junior secondary school Business Studies require additional/new sets of skills or competencies by both the current and prospective Business Studies teachers. It is in the search for answers to the steps and precaution taken to meet the challenges posed by the Business Studies curriculum on the classroom experiences of its teachers that the researcher proceeded to carry out the investigation of the problem.

The need for an understanding of the basis for organizing the professional aspects of Business Studies teacher preparation curriculum is essential in the light of recent trends in education. Teachers are held responsible for what they teach and are required to know what exactly to teach and how to teach it. They, therefore, need more skills than ever before.

Many studies have been done outside Nigeria to identify tasks and competencies in a number of occupations. Thomas (1952), identified clusters of common clerical operations performed by office personnel. Crawford (1970), used a variation of Q-techniques to determine the basic beliefs concerning all phases of distributive education. Halfin and Courtney (1970), conducted their study in

the area of trade and industrial education, and business and distributive education. Walsh (1960), evaluated 107 competencies that the skilled trade and industrial education teacher should bring to the job. The results led to the determination of four major curriculum content areas. These studies have provided information on a list of professional education competencies required of Business Studies teachers in the performances of their job. Toby (1987) opines that access to such information can have direct implications in the development of curriculum for the training of vocational business studies teachers in Nigeria. Such competency variables would be meaningful in the development of competency-based curriculum for the preparation of the pre-service as well as in-service Business Studies teachers in Nigeria.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004) in her *National Policy on Education* has clearly spelt out the aims and objectives of vocational technical education at the various levels of the educational system. These aims cannot be achieved without well prepared teachers and in particular BS teachers. It is in realization of the above, that many experts have directed their efforts at finding out how Business Studies is taught particularly at the secondary school levels. Some of the studies directed at finding out problems of teaching Business Studies at this level were the works of Osho, 1994; Ekpenyong, 1997; Ojo, 2005; and many others. The problems focused on the exploration of the classroom experiences that the Business Studies teachers need, their teaching competencies (perceived and observed), the problems in their teaching habits as well as lack of effective means of monitoring Business Studies teacher education in Nigerian schools. These observations call for adequate preparation of Business Studies teachers. This is because if poorly prepared teachers are left to implement even the best educational reforms, it may turn out to be a negation of the very ideals they were to perpetuate (Udoh, 1995).

Purpose of the Study

This is to determine the critical professional education competencies of secondary school Business Studies-teachers-as a first step to providing relevant and useful information for the development of competency-based Business Studies teacher education curriculum. Specifically, the study sought to provide answers to the following question:

- 1 What are the professional competencies needed by the secondary school Business Studies teacher?

What are the professional competencies possessed by the secondary school Business Studies teacher?

Methodology Research Design

The research design for this study was a survey of the professional competencies needed by secondary school Business Studies teachers

Population and Sampling for this Study

The population for this study consisted of all the 246 business studies teachers in the 162 government owned junior secondary schools in Edo state. Through the use of the balloting technique, only 119 business studies teachers were randomly selected for this study. Those in the sample group were among the teachers who have taught junior secondary school Business Studies for at least 3 years or more.

Instrumentation

The instrument for this study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher through an extensive literature review of some competencies considered desirable for secondary school Business Studies teaching (Udoh, 1995; Ekwue and Sabo, 2004; Adeosun, 2004).

The list of competencies was presented to two Business Studies teacher educators of the university of Benin for validation. Their observations and corrections were effected to ensure face validity of the instrument. The questionnaire consisted of 30 competency statements considered important and/or possessed for the teaching of Business Studies at the junior secondary school level. These competencies were clustered into five components with the following headings: (1) Instructional Planning in Business Studies (2) Business Studies Programme Management; (3)

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Professional Behavior of a Business Studies teacher; (4) Teaching/Learning Process; and (5) 1 valuation of Instruction in Business Studies.

The participants responded to the items in the questionnaire by indicating the extent to which they perceived each of the items both as a training need and actual possessed competencies. The need for training in the competency areas was indicated by responding to one of the following alternatives on a five-point rating scale: (a) Not Required (1 point) (b) Little Required (2 points); (c) Average Required (3 points); (d) Above Average Required (4 points); and (e) Very Much Required (5 points). They were also to respond to the competencies possessed by secondary school BS teachers by responding to one of the following alternatives on a five-point rating scale: Not Possessed (1 Point); Little Possessed (2 points); Average Possessed (3 points); Above Average Possessed (4 points); and Very Much possessed (5 points).

The mean was computed and any competency with a mean of less than 3.00 was dropped from the list while a mean response on/above 3 was retained.

A pilot group of business studies teachers from a neighboring local government area in Delta state within the target group was arranged for deriving the reliability of the instrument. A split-half method using the Spearman's Brown Prophecy formula was used to correlate the data generated. The reliability index of 0.84 was obtained. This shows that the instrument has a very high reliability coefficient.

Administration of the Instrument

A research assistant was used to administer the questionnaire to the subjects. He was specifically coached and instructed on the manner in which the instrument had to be administered including the handling and returning techniques of the completed questionnaire within two (2) weeks of administration. On the whole, 108 questionnaire that formed 90.76% return rate, was obtained and used to carry out the analysis.

Data Analysis

To determine the areas of training need as perceived by the teachers, the value assigned to performance level was used. The mean value of the scale was determined by summing all the responses for each competency and dividing by the total number of respondents. The statistical tool employed for analyzing data in this study was the mean and standard deviation.

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Research Question 1: What are the professional competencies needed by secondary school business studies teachers?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the competencies needed by secondary school business studies teachers.

S/N	COMPETENCY STATEMENT	X	Sd	Decision
1	Instructional Planning in Business Studies. Select and develop appropriate equipment for instructional purposes.	4.61	0.75	Needed
1	Select and develop instructional content of lessons	4.51	0.77	Needed
3	Plan and construct lesson plans	4.57	0.76	Needed
4	Locate available human and material resources needed for planning courses and conducting lessons	4.59	0.72	Needed
5	Ability to write performance objectives	4.62	0.74	Needed
6	Ability to be original, innovative and creative	4.20	109	Needed

	Business Studies Programme Management			
7	Conduct follow-up studies for purposes of determining the effectiveness of instruction	4.56	0.63	Needed
8	Interpret certification requirements for Business Studies teachers	4.35	0.92	Needed
9	Prepare requisitions for supplies, materials and equipment for Business Studies programme	4.37	1.02	Needed
10	Interpret the objectives of Business Studies to others	3.71	1.07	Needed
11	Use counseling technique to help students solve personal or social problems	3.88	1.04	Needed
12	Establish detailed rules and regulations for the use of facilities in the Business Studies department	4.30	0.94	Needed
	Professional Role Of A Business Studies Teacher			
13	Dresses appropriately and neatly'	3.51	1.24	Needed
14	Participate in in-service education programme	3.71	1.23	Needed
15	Work cooperatively with your colleagues and other people in the community	3.87	1.04	Needed
16	Show commitment and satisfaction in teaching Business Studies	4.10	1.02	Needed
17	Inform students of the nature and requirements for specific occupation or career field	⁴¹¹	0.92.	Needed
18	Ability to relate Business. Studies knowledge to societal needs	4.25	1.03	Needed
	Teaching/Learning Process			
19	Maintain student attention during classroom presentations or demonstrations	4.26	0.94	Needed
20	Use student-centered teaching method	4.10	1.01	Needed
21	Develop student learning activities to facilitate instruction	4.31	0.96	Needed
22	Relate course of study to measurable performance objectives	4.00	1.01	Needed
23	Conclude lessons with summary and class evaluation	4.14	1.03	Needed
24	Mastery of subject-matter	1 4.15	1.04	Needed
	Evaluation Of Instruction			
25	Use variety of evaluative measures to assess students progress	4.37	1.02	Needed
26	Interpret evaluation data for students	4.30	0.93	Needed
27	Have adequate knowledge of appropriate evaluation techniques in Business	4.43	0.83	Needed
28	Construct valid and reliable tests to evaluate students progress	4.31	0.92	Needed

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29	Analyzing feedback and evaluating the result	4.28	1.01	Needed
30	Ability to evaluate one's teaching and use the data to guide future instructional plans	4.30	0.94	Needed

In response to research question 1, table 1 shows that all the respondents agree that all the items are required by Business Studies teachers for the effective teaching and learning of the subject. In other words, all the respondents agree that the 30 items are required with mean scores ranging from 3.51 to 4.62.

Research Question 2: What are the professional competencies possessed by secondary school business studies teachers?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the competencies possessed by secondary school business studies teachers.

S/N	Competency Statement	X	Sd	Decision
1	Instructional Planning In Business Studies Select and develop appropriate equipment for instructional purposes	1.77	1.17	Not Possessed
2	Select and develop instructional content of lessons	2.00	1.01	Not Possessed
3	Plan and construct lesson plans	2.50	1.11	Not Possessed
4	Locate available human and material resources needed for planning courses and conducting lessons	2.26	1.21	Not Possessed
5	Ability to write performance objectives	2.97	0.97	Not Possessed
6	Ability to be original, innovative and creative	1.74	1.67	Not Possessed
	Bs Programme Management			
7	Conduct follow-up studies for purposes of determining the effectiveness of instruction	2.36	1.37	Not Possessed
8	Interpret certification requirements for Business Studies teachers	3.22	1.49	Possessed
9	Prepare requisitions for supplies, materials and equipment for Business Studies programme	2.12	1.39	Not Possessed
10	Interpret the objectives of Business Studies to others	3.20	1.24	Possessed
11	Use counseling technique to help students solve personal or social problems	3.13	1.49	Possessed
12	Establish detailed rules and regulations for the use of facilities in the Business Studies department	2.22	1.24	Not Possessed
	Professional Role Of A Business Studies Teacher			
13	Dresses appropriately and neatly	3.76	1.09	Possessed

14	Participate in in-service education programme	3.01	1.57	Possessed
15	Work cooperatively with your colleagues and other people in the community	3.82	1.37	Possessed
16	Show commitment and satisfaction in teaching BS	3.00	1.55	Possessed
17	Inform students of the nature and requirements for specific occupation or career field	3.92	1.28	Possessed
18	Ability to relate Business Studies knowledge to societal needs	3.77	1.02	Possessed
	Teaching/Learning Process			
19	Maintain student attention during classroom presentations or demonstrations	4.24	1.26	Possessed
20	Use student-centered teaching method	3.94	1.14	Possessed
21	Develop student learning activities to facilitate instruction	3.77	1.24	Possessed
22	Relate course of study to measurable performance objectives -----	3.22	.65	Possessed
23	Conclude lessons with summary and class evaluation	3.87	2.35	Possessed
24	Mastery of subject-matter	4.27	1.95	Possessed
	Evaluation Of Instruction			
25	Use variety of evaluative measures to assess students progress	4.28	1.00	Possessed
26	Interpret evaluation data for students	4.11	1.05	Possessed
27	Have adequate knowledge of appropriate evaluation techniques in Business Studies	4.04	1.83	Possessed
28	Construct valid and reliable tests to evaluate students progress	4.30	0.89	Possessed
29	Analyzing feedback and evaluating the result	4.03	1.57	Possessed
30	Ability to evaluate one's teaching and use the data to guide future instructional plans	4.11	1.01	Possessed

Table 2 shows that all the respondents possessed adequate competencies in 21 out of the 30 items with mean scores ranging from 3.00 to 4.30 and do not possess adequate competencies in items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 12 with mean scores ranging from 1.74 to 2.97. The respondents rated 21 out of the 30 as areas where they possess competency. The highest mean score of 4.30 was recorded in item 28. This was followed with a mean score of 4.28 recorded in item 25. The lowest mean was recorded in item 6 with a mean score of 1.74. This item deals with "ability to be original, innovative and creative".

Discussion

Table 1 shows that all the thirty (30) competencies have mean scores ranging from 3.51 to 4.62, an indication that the competencies were perceived as areas where training is required. The highest need for training was recorded in item 5 which indicates the "Ability to write performance objectives", while the lowest area of need for training was recorded in item 13 dealing with "dresses appropriately and neatly".

Table 2 shows that the respondents rated 21 of the 30 professional competency statements with mean scores above the computed mean score of 3.00 as areas where they possessed competency. Since table 1 shows that all the 30 competencies are required for the effective teaching and learning of

Business Studies and respondents do not possess all of them (30 competencies), what is the fate of students they teach? In other words, the respondents do not possess adequate competencies to effectively teach Business Studies. This situation will not be healthy for the nation's educational system or curriculum is largely dependent on the quality of its teachers: teachers that are occupationally qualified; competent in the subject-matter; mastery of the techniques of instruction and must have the desire to teach (Olaitan 1993; Abdusalami, 2002; Oviawe 2004). In a study conducted by Udoh (1995), it was established that "teachers are held responsible for what they teach and required to know what they teach and are required to know what exactly to teach and how to teach it. They therefore need more skills than ever before". Afe (2002), opines that even with the best of educational policy and design and expenditure of colossal sums of money for education, the ultimate realization of any set of aims for education depends on the teacher as he will ultimately be responsible for translating policy into action and principles into practice in his interactions with his students. The observed non-possession of some competencies can be assumed to mean that there is a deficiency in the Business Studies teacher education programme. According to Idika (1995), a deficiency in the vocational/technical teacher education will bring about a teacher who cannot command confidence in the classroom situation. This is because anybody saddled with the responsibility of teaching Business Studies must possess all the competencies perceived and observed as required because a deficiency in any item will affect the whole system or programme. In other words, Business Studies teachers must be adequately trained and equipped so as to effectively perform their role as teachers in the classroom situations. This is in line with Prosser and Quigley's (1949), sixteen theories of vocational education, cited in Oje (2004). The seventh theory dealt with the experience of an instructor. According to the theory, the only person who is competent to instruct in vocational education must be an individual who has personally had habit formation experiences. The theory states that "vocational education will be effective in proportion as the instructor has had successful experience in the application of skills and knowledge to the operations and processes he/she undertakes to teach". Thus, in the Business Studies teacher education programme, the trainee teacher must be adequately grounded in theory and practical. In line with this, Abdusalami (2002), posits that universities and colleges of education must equip the pre-service teachers with the adequate academic competency and understanding of the relevance of the education they require and transmit. In order to have to acquire these skills or competencies for the teaching of Business Studies, adequate instructional equipment and facilities are needed so as to provide a suitable balance between theory and practical. This is because in a situation where a Business Studies teacher does not possess skills necessary for practical work, only little or nothing is expected of the outcomes of instruction, since a teacher can only teach what he or she knows.

If Business Studies teachers have possessed adequate competency in all the items stated, for this study, they could have been able to assist government in the actualization of the Business Studies prevocational goal-object.

Recommendations

1. There is need for a revolutionary approach to the Business Teacher Education programme. The shortness of the duration of the programme does not allow the students to acquire and master enough knowledge of subject matter and competence for teaching. The period that a business teacher-trainee has to tram as a teacher in the university should be increased from the present four to six years (Imogie 1999).
2. To sustain the teachers' morale and consequently guarantee their job satisfaction, it is recommended that a separate Teachers Salary Scale (TSS) be put in place, as a teacher's salary is a crucial factor in the process of attracting and maintaining good and virile teaching workforce (Afe, 2002).
3. All the competencies identified in this study should be included in the curriculum content for Business Studies teacher preparation programme both at the colleges of education and university levels. Instructional objectives should be drawn from the competency areas and they should be stated in behavioral terms.
4. As information and communication technology (ICT) change the Business teacher-trainee environment, so must our curricula adapt to meet those challenges. Business

Educators must therefore show the willingness and given opportunity for continuous training and retraining in modern methods of managing business enterprises.

Conclusion

The success of any programme is largely dependent on the quality of its teachers: teachers who are occupationally qualified, competent in the subject being taught, mastery of the techniques of instruction and must have the desire and ability to teach. To do this, we need relevant curriculum which must continuously seek new and better ways to teaching Business Studies by identifying the significant competencies required to effectively impact Business Studies to the learners.

In conclusion, the findings of this study have some implication in Nigeria and particularly in Edo state secondary schools. There is therefore, the need to plan and organize the Business Studies teacher education programme in a way that will help the teachers to acquire the needed pedagogical and occupational competencies as professionals. This implies a need for the use of competency-based educational programme for Business Studies teachers.

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