

PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGES BESETTING BUSINESS STUDIES TEACHERS AND SOLUTIONS FOR QUALITY TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined pedagogical challenges besetting Business Studies teachers in Technical schools in Nigeria. The challenges ranged from teacher related to student related challenges, policy challenges among others. Related literatures were consulted to get information that guided the study. From the literatures reviewed, the following recommendations among others were made: On teachers' related challenges, government in collaboration with the technical school administrator should endeavor to employ qualified business studies in technical schools, assist Business Studies teachers financially to undergo training on how to use modern technologies needed for effective teaching and learning of business studies through 'train the trainers' workshops and seminar to enable them acquire the necessary skills and attitudes required to implement students-centered methods of teaching business in technical schools and keep abreast with the new trend in business studies curriculum. School administrators should ensure that adequate number of infrastructure, instructional materials and modern technologies required for practical oriented teaching and learning of business studies are provided by the government in compliance with the minimum standard for proper implementation of Business Studies curriculum For students' related challenges, school administrator should motivate the best behaved and best graduating students so that others can emulate them, curriculum planners should ensure that computer applications for office productivity are made part of business studies curriculum in order to have graduate who can fit into the modern world of ICT and teachers must prepare pre-school lesson plan in order to cope with some classroom challenges and endeavor to understand what their students are interested in and help them to achieve their objectives. For policy related challenges, Business studies curriculum developers should constantly review the business studies curriculum in order to incorporate the new trends of the ever-changing world and increase the number of periods allocated to Business Studies for effective teaching and learning of business studies in technical schools.

Keywords: pedagogy, pedagogical challenges, Business Studies teachers and Technical schools.

INTRODUCTION

Business studies is one of the vocational subjects which inculcates business competencies and skills in the youths which they need to progress effectively in the business world. Any nation that wishes to possess the ability of bringing about behavioral changes in the individual and witness rapid development must give the right value and education that is capable of developing the youths into a sound and effective citizens that will make them fit and responsible to themselves and the nation at large (Obi 2013). A critical challenge that faces business studies teachers in technical schools is pedagogy

Pedagogy is defined as theory and practice of education, particularly as it relates to teaching and instructional methods, (Ohiwerei 2015). The author further explained that it encompasses the strategies, techniques and approaches that educators use to facilitate learning and promote students' intellectual, social and emotional development. It includes the

strategies of instruction and also refers to the function or work of a teacher. Effective pedagogy takes into account the needs, interests and abilities of the learner as well as goals and objectives of the educational process. It thus concerns the study and practice of how best to teach. It refers to the interactive process between teacher and learner.

The pedagogy adopted by teachers shape their actions, judgments and other teaching strategies by taking into consideration theories of learning, understandings of students and their needs, and the backgrounds and interests of individual students. Mohammed and Hassan (2022) recommended that the use of pedagogy in teaching Business Studies Nigeria will improve the Business Studies students' performance in the national examinations. This should be in form of mini enterprise, simulation (learning by doing) and experiential pedagogical approaches. They asserted that more time needs to be allocated in the

school time table. Such teaching strategies assimilations, debates, case studies, surveys, cooperative and individual research projects can be used by the teachers in teaching global business concepts among others. The use of such teaching strategies has increased the student performance by over 60% (Burma 2012). Meanwhile, the use of pedagogy is not devoid of challenges. There are challenges attributed to the effective teaching and learning which relate to teachers, students and government policy.

A challenge is a new and difficult situation which requires great mental or physical effort and determination in order to be successful. It tests a person's ability. Pedagogical challenges according to Ohiwerei (2015) referred to difficulties or obstacles faced by educators or teachers in the process of teaching and learning. They are hindrances that deter the achievement of learning objectives in the course of teaching, learning, assessment and associated requirements for professional development. These challenges can arise from various factors including the teaching methods employed by the teachers, the characteristics of students and the learning environment. The teaching methods employed by teachers should be effective to enable students understand a practical subject like business studies.

Business Studies syllabus incorporate the acquisition of both academic and practical skills that might help the students to fit into post school working environment and that is why business studies is classified as a practical subject, Adeleke (2017). In Nigeria, the important role of business studies as a pre-vocational subject is documented in the National Policy on Education (2014), which aims at equipping recipients with the practical skills for useful living within the society and lifelong education. The NPE stipulated that the preparatory aspect of pre-vocational subjects offered at the Junior Secondary School (JSS) level shall be:

- ❖ to introduce students into world of technology and appreciation of technology towards interest arousal and choice of vocation at the end of JSS level of education and professionalism later in life;
- ❖ to equip students with technical skills;
- ❖ to expose students to career awareness by exploring usable options in the world of work; and
- ❖ to enable youths to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology (FRN, 2014).

Business studies is a practical-based subject that is usually taught at the junior secondary level of education in Nigeria. Odunsi, Onuka, Echetama, Oderinde, Lasisi, Osagie, Adeosun and Fasuranti, (2017) explained that it is an area of vocational study that offers specialized training to those who plan to make a living as office workers or wish to set up their own business. It is an integrated and practical course that is made up of five different subjects referred to as components of Business Studies. Those components are Office Practice, Commerce, Keyboarding, Bookkeeping and Shorthand. According to Odunsi et al Office practice is concerned with the learning of office skills. It consists of clerical work, operation of office equipment, instructions on how documents are filed in the office. Commerce means trade and aids to trade. Trade is buying and selling of goods and services while aids to trade are those activities that support trade. Bookkeeping is the system of recording of business financial transaction in different books of account in a systematic manner. Keyboarding deals with the art of using special machines called typewriters/computers to produce written letters in a mail able form. Shorthand is the art of representing spoken words with written symbols. Ohiwerei (2015) remarked that business studies are designed to equip students with the practical skills that would enable them to participate meaningfully in office and business activities in future. Ekpenyong (2019) stated that the program has since been described as an integrated curriculum. To facilitate this integrated curriculum effectively, an appropriate method of teaching and support for learners can be done by a qualified business studies teacher. Business Studies teacher according to Mohammed& Hassan (2022) is a person who holds a degree in Business Education from a recognized University or College of Education. In the same vein, Odunsi (2017) viewed Business Studies teacher as a person who has undergone a 4-year programme in a reputable University or 3 year programme through NCE and has been certified as competent for the award of the Bachelor's degree/NCE in Business Education after meeting the requirement on the institution and the department. Business studies teachers therefore are qualified and competent teachers who comfortably teach business subjects in secondary schools and technical schools. The teaching of Business studies as a practical subject can be more effective and efficient in technical schools where focus is on technical and practical skills.

Technical schools, also known as a vocational schools or trade schools refer to educational institutions that provide students with specific skills and practical

training for a particular trade or occupation. David (2014) defined technical schools also known as trade schools or vocational schools as educational institutions that offer specialized training programs, focus on practical skills and specific trades. The author went further to say that these schools provide hands-on training and knowledge that prepares students for specific careers in various industries. Inyiagu (2014) asserted that technical schools offer a wide range of programs in various fields such as; information technology, automotive technology, cosmetology, construction and carpentry, plumbing, business and accounting. Technical education can be a great option for individuals who want to acquire specific skills and quickly enter the work force. This is in line with Moses (2020) which asserted that technical schools offer a wide range of programs in various fields such as; information technology, automotive technology, cosmetology, construction and carpentry, plumbing, business and accounting. A technical school is an educational institution that provides specialized training and education in various technical and vocational fields. Technical schools offer a variety of programs that focus on technical and practical skills such as mechanics, welding, carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, automotive repair, computer programming, office technologies and other specialized fields. It is an education that strongly emphasizes on practical experience. Many technical schools offer certifications or licenses that are recognized by industry standards, which can help graduates to demonstrate their qualifications to potential employers. Technical education can be described as the ability to use theoretical and practical knowledge. The aim of technical education therefore is to help students develop certain skills and abilities so as to use those skills and abilities in the labour market. Unfortunately, most of the technical schools in Nigeria suffer certain challenges that defeat the aim of setting them up and they include; inadequate qualified teachers, poor funding, poor infrastructures, class overcrowding, poor students and teachers' attitudes, inadequate instructional materials, insufficient teaching period, among others (David 2014). Technical schools offer a variety of programs that focus on technical and practical skills such as mechanics, welding, carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, automotive repair, computer programming, office technologies and other specialized fields. Technical schools typically offer more hands-on, practical training than traditional academic institutions. It is glaring that no one can do a job satisfactorily without the expected needed materials or equipment. The use

of traditional teaching methods such as direct instruction and lecture do not develop practical business skills and can be likened "to teaching someone to swim without a swimming pool" (Obunadike, 2015). Business skills cannot be achieved by use of traditional teaching methods such as lectures and recitation in the classroom. Obunadike further stated that the applied nature of business studies requires teachers to secure an appropriate balance between theory and practice by using entrepreneurial methods of teaching that will ensure the combination of both theory and experience

Pedagogies Required for Teaching Business Studies in Technical Schools:

Experiential Learning

Fuller and Snyder (2018) emphasized learning through direct experience, reflection, and application. It often involves simulation, field trips and hands-on learning to engage students and deepen their understanding. According to the author, simulation refers to infusing real world experiences into instructions in order to make teaching moments fresh and enrich classroom learning. Relating and demonstrating through real-life situations will make the material easy to understand and learn. It will spark students' interest and get them excited and involved. Fuller and Snyder defined field trips as learning outside classrooms. Some lessons are better learnt when they taught outside the classroom. In technical schools, Business studies teachers should organize field trips that are relevant to the lessons and take students to production companies and offices equipped with office machines and equipment. Students will find this fresh and exciting and without much efforts, business studies students will learn and remember what they have been taught. Fuller and Snyder opined that hands-on learning means learning by doing. The author added that it is where instructors engage with students in direct experience and focused reflection to enhance students' knowledge, skills and values.

Differentiated instruction

Recognizing that learners have diverse needs and abilities, Ohiwerei, F. O. (2015) stated that differentiated instruction involves tailoring teaching methods, content, and assessments to accommodate individual learning styles, preferences, and readiness levels. The author observed that his method of teaching gives students' choice and flexibility in how they learn and helps teachers to personalize learning. Differentiated instruction is the process of directing lessons to meet each student's individual interest,

needs and strengths. In differentiating instruction, the teachers are to set baseline for individual student and identify tactics to help each student to achieve the objectives.

Technology Integration and Use of Audio-Video Materials

Any worthwhile programme has to move with time, (Joshua and Bibiano, 2015). However, business studies teachers have always accepted that change is a fact of life. From the typewriter to the computer, business studies curriculum has continually shaped itself to meet the needs of business. Mohammed and Hassan, (2022) asserted that the success and survival of business studies constantly depends on its ability to adapt and keep pace with the needs of its recipients. With the increasing availability of digital tools, pedagogy often incorporates technology to enhance teaching and learning. Since Business studies is a practical subject, business studies teachers in technical schools should incorporate to supplement textbooks during teaching sessions as well as educational software, online resources, multimedia presentations, interactive platforms and audio-visual materials such as filmstrips, movies, pictures or other mind mapping and brain mapping tools. Such tools will help their imagination thrive and grow. These are concerned with what the students can hear and see.

Collaboration

The end result of the collaborative effort is always immense. Technical school teachers should instill teamwork in Business studies students to enable them come up with interesting strategies since two good heads are better than one. Burman and Mutendwahothe in Adeleke, (2017) defined collaboration learning approach working together on activities or learning tasks in a group small enough to ensure that everyone participates. Kolber, (2022) opined that collaborative education is a pedagogical approach which is centered on students interacting and learning together. The author added that this method goes against the traditional format where information flows one way, from teacher to students. Collaboration is a form of peer learning where students work in pairs or small groups to discuss concept of find solution to a given task. In collaborative learning, students become part of the teaching process where they build knowledge with their peers. It involves working together to achieve a common goal and that common goal is always improved learning outcome.

Mini Enterprise Mode

Mohammed and Hassan (2022) defined mini enterprise as a simulated or an action-based business activity conducted within a school. Mini enterprises in technical schools are designed to replicate a specific business and assist students in acquiring work-related experience. Sithole (2012) said that mini enterprise mode focuses on the development of basic business, business management and personal entrepreneurial skills and the use of school based mini enterprise is regarded as an entrepreneurial-directed approach that can be used to teach Business Studies.

Pedagogical Challenges Bessetting Business Studies Teachers in Technical Schools

There are many challenges attributed with the effective teaching of Business Studies in technical schools which emanate from a variety of sources but the researchers want to identify the following three;

- ❖ Challenges relating to Business Studies teachers.
- ❖ Challenges relating to the students.
- ❖ Challenges relating to government policy.

Challenges Relating to Business Studies Teachers

Technical school teachers face a lot of challenges today. Findings show that the most common challenges besetting business studies teachers in relation to the teachers include the following:

- ❖ Unqualified teachers in our technical schools today teaching business studies have acted persistently as canker-worm devouring the efforts of achieving the educational objectives for this subject as one cannot give what one does not have. There is a great concern to give absolute attention to the quality and the numbers of teachers we have in the technical schools to enable us achieve and attain the goals for which these technical schools were established without any impediment on this purpose.
- ❖ Research show that learner centered methods such as students led discussion, teaching using other teachers (resource person), practice by doing, field study among other are rarely used by the business studies teachers in technical schools. Okolocha and Nwadiani (2014) opined that teachers have difficulties using learner centered methods which could have been attributed to lack of in-service training for practicing teachers.

- ❖ Business Studies is based on the need for technical school teachers to keep up abreast with developments in the business world. There are constant changes in the world of business and it is not at all easy for teachers to stay up-to-date with new developments. The effect of this is obvious as we would end up with unqualified teachers who are deficient even in their supposed areas of specialization.
- ❖ Technology has become an essential part of education and technical schools today should be equipped with modern equipment and office machines like computers, scanners, printers, fax machines, among others but some Business Studies teachers are ignorant of the use of these machines and equipment in teaching.

Challenges Relating to Students

- ❖ **Students' Diversity:** Students are unique in the way they are brought up, their economic status and their mental ability among others. Sithole (2012) viewed that everything a teacher does in the classroom must center at meeting the diverse need of students' population. It is upon the teacher to gain an understanding of all children's unique academic, emotional, and cultural differences so as to help them on their academic and life journeys. To support a culturally sensitive learning community, a technical school teacher needs to design and implement lessons that address all students' academic needs, learning styles, and multiple intelligences. It is now documented that students can learn more effectively when actively involved in the learning process (Aliyu, 2016). Ottewill (2013) added that diversity of students relates to a number of characteristics which includes entry level, qualifications; prior educational experience; ability in terms of basic skills, such as numeracy and literacy; baseline knowledge of business practices and current affairs; extent and nature of work experience (if any); cultural background and prior exposure to particular pedagogic practices, such as group work and collaborative learning styles.
- ❖ **Use of cell phones in the classroom:** The toughest disturbance to teachers in classroom is the use of cell phones in the classroom by the student which causes distraction while the

lesson is on-going. Despite the fact that cell phones are strictly prohibited in classrooms, some students still bring them regardless of what could be the consequences.

- ❖ Students' attitude towards business studies is a great challenge facing teachers at technical schools. Abdulrazak and Hassan (2022) observed that some students think that business studies components most especially Shorthand, Typewriting and Bookkeeping are confusing and difficult.
- ❖ An oral interview with a technical school teachers reveals that Business Studies students are not mature enough to do the mini-enterprise. According to her, "students only show interest if the project concerns preparing food stuffs which they can eat. They dodge lessons or show low interest if they are required to do projects that do not produce or sell food items.

Challenges Relating to Government Policies

The following are challenges besetting business studies teachers in relation to government policies.

- ❖ The requirement stipulated in the syllabus that teachers should use action-oriented teaching methods such as project work, visits to commercial enterprises, simulations, case studies and class presentations.
- ❖ **Teaching environment:** Teaching environment relate to the adequacy of teaching resources. Ottewill (2013) argued that there is a problem of seeking to reconcile between declining resources and rising students expectations. Business Studies teaching requires the use of both the theoretical and the practical aspect. It involves the application of knowledge to the real world. Typewriters, photocopiers and computers are required when teaching topics such as keyboard and office skills like Office Procedures or computerized accounting (Aggarwal 2013). Unfortunately, these machines are not available in technical schools for teaching of business studies.
- ❖ Business studies is not allocated sufficient time in the schools' timetables. Obi (2013) noted that a major complaint by teachers of vocational subjects such as Business Studies, was the time allocated for theory and practical

teaching which was hardly enough for effective teaching of the subjects.

Conclusion

Teachers have the opportunity to make a huge impact on their students, but with that opportunity comes many challenges. In this study the challenges faced by Business Studies teachers in their day-to-day practices were grouped into three main categories: challenges relating to teachers, challenges relating to students, and challenges relating to policy. From the evidence, the challenges relating to teacher mainly concerned with lack of competency in teaching business studies and use of learner-centered method, the need for business studies teachers to keep abreast of developments in the business world, inefficient use of modern technologies in teaching business studies. Areas associated with teacher challenges relating to students were identified as: students' diversity, use of cell phone, students' attitude towards business studies as some students believe that accounting component of Business Studies is "difficult", which means that many students opt to do Commerce and Office Procedures rather than Commerce and Bookkeeping/ Accounting and inability of students to participate maturely in mini-enterprise. Finally, the study identified three major policy-related challenges facing Business Studies teachers. Teaching method that requires teachers to use action-oriented teaching methods is time-consuming. Related to this is the belief on the part of teachers themselves that the time allocated to Business Studies on schools' timetables is not enough and machines required to teach this practical subject are not available.

Recommendations

Based on the challenged stated in this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government in collaboration with the technical school administrator should endeavor to

employ qualified business studies in technical schools and assist Business Studies teachers financially to undergo training on how to use modern technologies needed for effective teaching and learning of business studies through 'train the trainers' workshops and seminar to enable them acquire the necessary skills and attitudes required to implement students-centered methods of teaching business in technical schools and keep abreast with the new trend in business studies curriculum.

2. School administrators should ensure that adequate number of infrastructure, instructional materials and modern technologies required for practical oriented teaching and learning of business studies are provided by the government in compliance with the minimum standard for proper implementation of Business Studies curriculum and motivate the best behaved and best graduating students so that others can emulate them.
3. Curriculum planners should ensure that computer applications for office productivity are made part of business studies curriculum in order to have graduate who can fit into the modern world of ICT
4. Teachers must prepare pre-school lesson plan in order to cope with some classroom challenges and endeavor to understand what their students are interested in and help them to achieve their objectives.
5. Business Studies curriculum developers should constantly review the business studies curriculum in order to incorporate the new trends of the ever-changing world and increase the number of periods allocated to Business Studies for effective teaching and learning of business studies in technical schools.

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