

Teachers' Teaching Experience: A Sine Qua Non in the Implementation of Secretarial Education Curriculum In South-South Zone of Nigeria

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Abstract

This research paper specifically investigated the influence of teachers' teaching experience on the implementation of secretarial education curriculum in south-south zone of Nigeria. One research question and a corresponding hypothesis were formulated to be tested. The survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 74 secretarial education teachers and they were used as the sample for the study. The instrument used was the structured questionnaire and it was validated by experts in the field. The test re-test method of reliability was used in ascertaining the reliability of the instrument and it yielded a co-efficient of 0.82. The mean, standard deviation and t-test were used in analyzing the data collated and some of the findings include: teachers teaching experience did not significantly influence the curriculum implementation in secretarial education in colleges of education. One of the major recommendations advanced in this paper was that stakeholders should de-emphasize the idea of experience and consider other variables.

Keywords: Secretarial Education, Experience and Curriculum

Introduction

Business education is an integral aspect of education whose usefulness has attracted stakeholders both in academics and outside academics. Anunike (2010) asserted that the concept of business education has been explained in diverse ways. While some scholars refer to it as commercial education, others see it as both office education and general education. In whatever way we approach it, business education is the subfield of vocational and technical education which prepare the recipient for gainful employment (whether paid or self employed) through the acquisition of skills, values, competence and knowledge needed to operate in a business world. The process of imparting and acquiring these necessary skills take place in an organized environment. According to Imeokparia and Ediagbonya (2014), Business education is simply described as an aspect of education that is geared at equipping the learners (students) with business and education competencies (that is skills, knowledge and attitude) needed to effectively and efficiently function in the world of work either as an employee or an employer (job/wealth creator). The authors further stressed that Business education is an 'umbrella word' which covers both Accounting education and Secretarial education.

Blockhus (1999) claimed that Business education is a sub-set in education which harbours three main disciplines viz: office (secretarial), accounting and distributive (marketing) education. Business Education is defined as education for business which prepares the recipients for vocational education for the business majors; for instance, job competency, career preparation, work adjustment, etcetera and education about business for those who want to acquire general education in the areas of economic efficiency, career exploration, and social adjustment.

Since the invention of the Typewriter in 1868, the business education/secretarial education curriculum has gone through tremendous changes. However, these changes did not occur over night. For example, during the period from 1868 to 1971 – over 100 years the traditional equipment and goals remained the same for most business education curriculum, secretarial education inclusive. Not until the early 1980s, when the personal computer and telecommunications dominated office automation has business education been challenged in such drastic changes in its curriculum (Akpotohwo, 2004). The progression of technology in the secretarial education programme has swept through the country in less than 30 years; as the microchip has completely revolutionized the world. According to Akpotohwo (2004), courses such as typewriting and shorthand are being replaced with electronic mail, desktop publishing, and telecommunication classes. Esene, (2010) noted that the inability of secretarial education in Nigeria to cope with the current technological changes taking place in the world of secretarial education does not make for meaningful secretarial education. According to him, technology changes are responsible for new machines and equipment being constantly introduced in our society. To excel in their business operations, industries also constantly introduce these new machines and equipment in

their organizations. The result is that gap is often created between what the schools teach and what the employers want; and this often informed the new to review the curriculum.

A new secretarial education curriculum for Colleges of Education was developed by the NCCE (National Commission for Colleges of Education) in 1989 and adopted for use in Colleges of Education Country-Wide. The Colleges of Education that offer business education (secretarial option), do face some challenges in attempt to provide the desired knowledge, skills and competencies to Secretarial Education students as it relates to degree of implementation. This is so because to date, many of the Colleges of Education that offer secretarial education do not have adequate, qualified and experienced secretarial education teachers, adequate instructional materials, equipments and facilities needed in secretarial education for the purpose of increased productivity, efficient and effective service delivery. The objectives of the Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) based (Secretarial option) are:

- i. To produce well-qualified and competent NCE graduates in business subjects who will be able to teach business subjects in the secondary schools and other related education institutions.
- ii. To produce NCE secretarial teachers who will be able to inculcate the vocational aspects of business education into the society.
- iii. To produce NCE teachers who will be involved in the much desired revolution of vocational development right from the primary and secondary schools.
- iv. To equip students with necessary competency so as to qualify them for a post-NCE degree programme in secretarial education or office technology.
- v. To equip graduates with the right skills that will enable them to engage in a life of work in the office as well as for self-employment (NCCE, 1989).

Since the inception of the 2008 NCCE secretarial education curriculum, a lot has been written but no study has been done on implementation of this nature and dimension as it relates to the colleges of education. The 2002 and 2008 revised minimum standards for Nigerian Certificate in Education have been found to contain same instructional materials, same academic staff qualification requirements and same teaching methods with the exception of fieldtrip as found in 2008 (4th edition) 6 years later. The two documents were devoid of required evaluation techniques and the needed teachers' experience; hence the researcher will emphasize the latter in the study.

The experience of a teacher plays a major role in the teaching-learning process. It is sometimes expressed that the productivity of a teacher relies heavily on the teaching experience of the teacher. This idea of experience may have informed the concept of mentoring in Secretarial education. To become a qualified Secretarial Education teacher in Nigeria, it is compulsory for student teachers to go on teaching practice where they will properly be exposed to the nitty-gritty in the profession. The student teacher will be assigned to a more experienced teacher who will teach, guide and direct the student teacher that is less experienced. The more experienced teachers are better informed on classroom management, teaching strategies, test construction, students' assessment and others (Imeokparia, 2015).

Teachers are expected to adhere to the NCCE minimum standards in their teaching. It has become necessary to know whether teachers actually follow the NCCE minimum standards as planned. The success of the Nigerian Certificate of Education/secretarial education will depend to a great extent on the availability of teachers, their quantity and their quality. However, it is generally accepted that the quality of teachers is the largest single determinant of the quality of education (Clark, 2010). Researchers have continue to argue that implementation of programmes depend primarily on what teachers make of them. It is doubtful if the implementation of secretarial education meets these expectations, which are, expecting the teachers to have significant perception of the curriculum, knowledge and understanding of the use of prescribed teaching method and evaluation techniques. It is expected that teachers teaching experience should influence their implementation roles in the Colleges of Education in South – South zone of Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The proper implementation of secretarial education curriculum has remained a focal issue in the minds of stakeholders owing to the dynamism in the world today. Udoh (2003) noted a serious gap between the intended changes and actual classroom practices in Secretarial education in colleges of education despite the existence of a common minimum standard for NCE programmes. These intended changes some say could be viewed as: teaching styles/method, evaluation techniques, tasks such as field trips, role relationship, instructional materials/equipment and their availability. Commitment to goals/objectives and adherence to teacher-student ratio and class size will lead to the attainment of the objectives. A research report (Aina, 1986) confirmed that there still exists a huge gap between policy and practice in the education industry. Practice, as observed, is

almost a complete opposite of stated goals and objectives. Implementation has remained the missing element between elegant government policies and programmes (Okebukola, 2000). These observations suggest that there are problems between the curriculum as documented and the experience at the level of implementation. There is no doubt that the quality of the teacher-trainees is dependent on the professional training received from these colleges of education. The NCCE provides the curriculum upon which the colleges train their students. There is the need therefore, to determine the veracity and the implementation of the curriculum by the colleges in order to determine the quality of teachers produced.

It is a fact that secretarial education instruction in all Colleges of Education in Nigeria has been based on the NCCE curriculum which is being implemented by the teachers throughout the nation. What is not yet fully known is the degree of its implementation in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria. It is observed that non-specialist lecturers teach secretarial courses as against NCCE's recommendation. Are teacher-trainers interested in the implementation of the programme and have they seriously imbibed the philosophy or internalized the values of the curriculum? It is questionable whether secretarial education lecturers have the necessary experience to guarantee effective implementation of the curriculum. It is based on the above premise that the study sought to investigate the influence of teachers' teaching experience on the curriculum of secretarial education in colleges of education in south-south, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess whether teachers' teaching experience has influence on their implementation roles in Secretarial Education.

Research Question

The research question raised for this study is:

1. To what extent does teaching experience of secretarial education teachers influence their implementation roles in secretarial education?

Hypothesis

One hypothesis was formulated to be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Teachers' teaching experience does not significantly influence their implementation roles in Secretarial Education.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design that was adopted for this study is survey and observational method which involve collecting information from teachers who are in charge of the implementation of the curriculum and the observation of Secretarial Education classroom teachers.

Population of the Study

The target population of this study was 74 which were from the nine colleges of education in the South-South zone of Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The researcher used the entire seventy-four (74) Secretarial Education lecturers in Colleges of Education in the South-South zone of Nigeria to solicit responses to the questionnaire being the first instrument.

Research Instrument

The instrument used in this study was the structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was organised into two sections – A and B. Section A contains four items on lecturers' personal data. Section B contains nine items on modified evaluation techniques. In sections B, a rating scale of "often", "sometimes" and "never" was used.

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument used was subjected to content validity. The questionnaire was given to three experts in University of Benin who made useful inputs and this was eventually incorporated into the final questionnaire.

Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was carried out. The lecturers' questionnaire was administered to ten (10) Secretarial Education lecturers at colleges of education in Ondo and Ekiti States. The Cronbach Alpha technique was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.82.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher with the help of research assistants administered the instrument to the concerned respondents and collected same from them.

Data Analysis

The data collated were analysed using both the descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics used was the mean and standard deviation while the inferential statistics used was the one sample t-test. The criterion for decision was based on real limit of values of mean such that mean values ranging between 0 – 2.0 is low/never, between 2.0 – 3.0 is moderate/sometimes and 3.1 – 4.0 is high/often.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hypothesis One

Teachers' teaching experience did not significantly influence their implementation of secretarial education.

Table 1: The t-test Analysis of influence of Teachers' Teaching Experience on Implementation of Secretarial Education

Variables	N	Mean	Std Dev	Df	t-cal	P-value
Inexperienced	17	19.47	1.42	72	0.633	0.252
Experienced	57	19.19	1.63			
Total	74					

$P > 0.05$

Table 1 revealed that the mean values of inexperienced and experienced teachers on their implementation of secretarial education are 19.47 and 19.19 respectively. The t-cal of 0.633 at $df = 72$ is not significant at p-value of 0.252. Since the p-value is greater than alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that teachers' teaching experience did not significantly influence their implementation of secretarial education.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the hypothesis on teaching experience revealed that there is no significant influence of teaching experience on teachers' implementation of secretarial education. This means that experienced and inexperienced secretarial education teachers do not differ in their implementation of secretarial education curriculum. Contrary to the findings of this study, the findings of Imeokparia (2015) found that teachers with lesser teaching experience perceived their curriculum implementation differently from teachers with higher teaching experience. In other words, teaching experience has significant influence on their curriculum implementation. Her findings showed that teachers with different teaching experience perceive their curriculum implementation according to their teaching experience ability.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that experience of teachers did not influence their secretarial education implementation. This is of a great concern and poses a major challenge to all stakeholders in teacher education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions of this study:

1. Stakeholders should de-emphasize the idea of experience and consider other variables.
2. There is need for the professional teachers with experience to always distinguish themselves.
3. Perceived teachers with less experience should be encouraged and motivated in order for them to be able to discharge their duties very well.

4. The government should put mechanism in place to really ascertain the outputs of both experienced and inexperienced teachers.
5. Both experienced and inexperienced teachers should be encouraged to continuously develop themselves by attending seminars and conferences.

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