

An Analysis of Utilization of Educational Research Findings for Qualitative Decision Making for Undergraduate Business Education Degree Programme in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

The study was poised to investigate into the utilization of research findings for qualitative decision making for business education undergraduate programmers. The study consists of 62 respondents drawn from 3 tertiary institutions that offer business education programmes in rivers state. One research question as well as one hypothesis was generated to guide the study. a 4 point Likert scale ranging from categories of strongly Agree (SA – 4 points), Agree (A – 3 points), Disagree (D – 2 Points) and strongly Disagree (SD – 1 point) were used for the items on the questionnaire. Simple percentage was used for the item analysis. A mean score of 2.5 was determined as the cut-off point for the items. The t-test statistic was used to test the only generated hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. It was discovered that research findings as well as the recommendations were not used for qualitative decision making for business education undergraduate programmes in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The implications of the study were highlighted.

Key Words: Research Findings, Educational Research, Body of Knowledge, Decision Making

1. Introduction

There is a myriad of problems confronting individuals, groups or institutions. Every such problem should be properly identified and defined so that appropriate solutions could be proposed and implemented. Research is an integral requirement and component of the university system. It is a requirement for the completion of a programme in the educational system. Universities are considered as centres of excellence; places through which technological and otherwise development could be attained globally and therefore, the one very way of universities teachers help to promote development or advancement is through research of which academic staff are expected to contribute to the work bank of knowledge.

The layman ordinarily defines research as the search for something that is of interest to the researcher. But research means more than searching for something. Any significant definitions of research must border on a lot of things namely problem identification, solution and the defined process of arriving at all these. Then it must be seen as a discipline and the process as an activity that must be both systematic and objective (Ubulom & Enyekit, 2001).

Asika (2006) stated that research involves critical thinking comprising definition and redefinition of problems, information, organizing and evaluating them in order to discover truth that can lead to the solution of problems and theory. According to Ubulom & Enyekit (2001), research is a formal systematic and robust process of carrying organized body of knowledge. This process leads to generalizations and predications of certain events or phenomenon. The explosion of knowledge today is due to research. In research, there is controlled observation, description, objective and analysis, which lead to formulation of principles and theories. Principles and theories help serve in forecasting what may occur later in life and how such future occurrences can be controlled. Research is the process of finding the solution to a problem (Nwana, 2007).

The acceptable method brings research into forms as a part of science. Science is an activity involving gathering and use of information. However, all process of information gathering and analysis may be described as scientific. According to Asika (2006), a process can be scientific if it follows the steps of scientific inquiry such as;

- i. Identification of problems
- ii. Problem definition and delimitation
- iii. Analysis of the problem
- iv. Deductions based on the analysis including recommendation of solution to the problem and
- v. Implementation of recommended solution.

This again is explained to mean that research is an intellectual endeavour to discover, develop and verify knowledge. The definitions reviewed so far reveal that a meaningful interpretation of research involves the

specification of the elements of intellectuality, purposefulness, objectivity and systematic process of doing things. Research is not just an activity but an intellectual activity whose aim is to solve a well-defined problem. The purpose beyond solving problems is to generate knowledge or to add to the existing body of knowledge and to confirm or disconfirm previous findings on particular issues. The elements of objectivity and its systematic nature imply that the outcome of research is not influenced by chance factor but that it is carried out in a manner conformable to scientific approach. According to Osuala (2005), educational research is defined as a systematic and scholarly application of the scientific method, interpreted in its broadest sense, to the solution of educational problems, in fact, any systematic study designed to promote the development of education as a science can be considered as a way in which one acquires dependable and useful information about the educative process. Educational research therefore aims at solving educational problems as well as expanding knowledge in the area. The goal of educational research is to discover general principle, on which interpretations, predictions, explanations and control of behaviour can be based. Educational research is a systematic scientific investigation involving identifying ways and means of teaching and learning efficiently and effectively so that the goals of education can be attained, at any given time and place (Ali, 2006). This implies that what constitutes educational research, according to Nwana (2007) can be referred either to those research activities from which the investigator derives or hopes to derive educational benefit, or to those research activities, which are focused on the solution of an educational problem.

The main thrust of research is to build upon a body of knowledge and to improve on how man manages and enjoys his environment (Best & Kahn, 2006; Herbert, 1990; Kerlinger, 1976 and Osuala, 2005). Research is vital to taking decisions concerning education in terms of educational assessment and evaluation. Education, as a discipline is within the behavioural

sciences, which deals with the modification of human behaviour and management of teaching-learning situation with the classroom setting. Thus, educational research findings provide solutions to educational problems through the application of scientific procedures (Ebenuwa-Okoh, 2008). Research findings, according to Okwilagwe (1899), are the central energy sources necessary for generating the current that ensures the existence and development of a nation. If well utilized, it brings about self-realization, better human relationship and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness.

In recent time there seems to be extensive and growing literature in the area of educational research and evaluation. Ebenuwa-Okoh (2008), noted that understanding and new products from research practice usually take time. A number of factors are responsible for delay in the utilization of research findings in our educational setting. Despite the overwhelming value of educational research findings, it seems that they are not effectively utilized (Ebenuwa-Okoh, 2008). This has led to the gaps in the harmonious utilization of the findings (Osakwe, 2007). There are major crisis in the processing of information about new research based on innovation and its application to routine daily activities. A research question guided the study, which is: What are the causes of non-utilization of research findings for qualitative and decision making for business education programmes in tertiary institutions?

2. Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean response scores of deans of faculties and lecturers in their opinions about the non-utilization of educational research findings for qualitative decisions making for business education programmes in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

3. Method

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consists of 62 respondents made deans and lecturers from the faculties of education of the University of Port Harcourt, Choba, Port Harcourt, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt and Rivers State University of Education, Rmuolumeni, Port Harcourt all in Rivers State of Nigeria. A four-point type of Likert scale with response options of Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points) and Strongly Disagree (1 point) was used to gather data for this study. The mean cut-off point was peg on 2.5. The above implies that, any mean cut-off point on 2.5 and above were determined as acceptance, while means less than 2.5 were determined as rejection. The t-test statistics was used to analyze the only formulated hypothesis in the study.

4. Results

(a) Research Question

What are the causes of non-utilization of research findings for qualitative decision making for undergraduate business education programme?

Table 1 presents the respondents' responses on the different items on the research instrument. In the table, the respondents were of the opinion that the causes of non-utilization of research findings for qualitative decision

making for undergraduate business education programme are lack of information and data bank for research finding for qualitative ($X = 3.69$), wrong placement of non-experts as executive for qualitative ($X = 3.77$), selfish interest of administrators in the use of existing policy statement for quall decision making ($X = 3.80$) and lack of advocacy of current research findings to the public for reference purpose and qualitative decision making ($X = 3.80$) since the computed mean scores are greater than the average point of 2.5. Also discovered in this study as the causes of non-utilization of research findings for qualitative decision making for undergraduate business education programme are Differences in political and administrative afflation and theories ($X = 3.96$), Educational qualification of the administrators/executives ($X = 3.96$), Ethnicity and religion affiliation distorts the use of research findings for qualitative policy formulation and decision making ($X = 3.72$) and Area of specialization of administrators ($X = 3.66$) since the computed mean scores are greater than the average point of 2.5.

(b) Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean response scores of deans of faculties and lecturers on the non-utilization of educational research findings for qualitative decision making for business reduction programmes in tertiary institution in Rivers State

Table 2 indicates that the calculated t-value was 2.04 as is greater than the critical value at 0.05 level of significant. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the acceptance of the alternative with the mean score of 3.00 and 2.23 for deans and lecturers of the different tertiary institutions respectively. It then implies that the non-utilization of research findings influences and affects policy formulation and decision making process of deans and lecturers in the different tertiary institutions in Rivers State of Nigeria.

5. Discussion

Educational research findings are a yardstick for educational assessment and evaluation as well as basic printers to taking valuable decisions and effective judgment aimed at promoting educational standards for national development. Enyekit, Ubulom & Okere (2009), noted that educational managers to plan curriculum and teaching to meet the needs of student through flexibility and innovativeness. These further lead to the growth and development of any nation. The findings agree with that of Ebenuwa-Okoh (2007) in which she disagreed that ignorance to the value of research, and poorly done research are contributing factors. However, the probable reason for the nonchalant attitude of policy formulators is that Nigerians seem to be always very interested in making white elephant proposals without being interested in the outcome.

The study reveals that there is no significant difference existing between members of the university community's perception and principal officers of government establishments about the utilization of educational research findings for qualitative decision making. The reason for this finding could be the fact that they are exposed to the same environment. This finding agrees with that of Ebenuwa-Okoh (2007) who did not find gender as a significant factor in their studies.

Educational qualification was also found to show significant difference on the perception of the respondents on the utilization of educational research findings. The holders of Ph.D. degree had higher disposal or positive perception toward the utilization of findings than the master degree holders then subsequently first degree. An explanation for this might be that the more the body of knowledge one is exposed to, the higher the understanding of the usefulness of findings and its implications as well as the innovation it brings to mankind. This findings support earlier researches conducted by Ebenuwa-Okoh (2008) who found significant difference. Also, in the study carried out by Enyekit, Ubulom & Okere (2009) supported this current study.

6. Implication of the Study

The findings of this study have implications for policy formulations decision makers and educational programmes' evaluators on programme implementation and evaluation. This includes bodies such as heads of departments, deans of faculties' chancellors, provost's rectors, and commission for colleges of education etc.

7. Conclusion

Researches are carried out in different fields of endeavour in order to proffer solutions for existing problems. In essence, where problem does not seem to exist, there can be no research being carried out. Again, researches are carried out in different field of endeavour to enable human beings acquire new knowledge and to add the said new knowledge to the existing knowledge. From the foregoing therefore, it would be deduced that research findings or results are not usually referenced for qualitative decision making by the concerned authorities in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Efforts should be intensified by government, establishments, universities and industries to ensure that research findings are adequately utilized.

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Table 1: Mean Computation on Factors responsible for non-utilization of research findings for qualitative decision-making for undergraduate business education programmes in tertiary institutions (N = 62)

S/N	Statement	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Mean	Remarks
1	Lack of information and data bank for research finding for qualitative	48 (192)	10 (30)	3 (6)	1 (1)	3.69	Cause
2	Wrong placement of non-experts as executive for qualitative	50 (200)	10 (30)	2 (4)	- -	3.77	Cause
3	Selfish interest of administrators in the use of existing policy statement for quall decision making	52 (208)	8 (240)	- -	2 (2)	3.80	Cause
4	Lack of advocacy of current research findings to the public for reference purpose and qualitative decision making	54 (216)	6 (18)	2 (2)	- -	3.80	Cause
5	Differences in political and administrative afflation and theories	60 (240)	2 (6)	- (-)	- (-)	3.96	Cause
6	Educational qualification of the administrators/executives	48 (192)	10 (30)	4 (8)	- (-)	3.96	Cause
7	Ethnicity and religion affiliation distorts the use of research findings for qualitative policy formulation and decision making	51 (204)	8 (24)	- (-)	3 (3)	3.72	Cause
8	Area of specialization of administrators	47 (188)	11 (36)	4 (8)	1 (1)	3.66	Cause

Table 2: t-test analysis of the Difference between the mean response scores of deans and lecturers on the non-utilization of research findings for qualitative decision making

S/N	Officers	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit
1	Deans	3	3.00	1.92			
2	Lecturers	59	2.23	1.01			

Significant at P = 0.05: N = 62

df = 60: Critical t=2.000

Dr. William J. Ubulom was born at Okoroboile Town in Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria on 5th March, 1961. He became a member of the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria in 2002, a member of the Nigeria Institute of Management in 2001, Institute of Management Consultants in 2001 and a member of the Nigeria Association of Educational Researchers and Evaluators in 2008. He attended the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt where he obtained his B.Sc. Degree in Business Education in 1990. He also attended the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria where he obtained his M.Ed. Degree in Educational Measurement and Evaluation in 1997. Dr. Ubulom further attended the University of Nigeria, Nsukka where he obtained his Ph.D. Degree in Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation Option) in 2006.

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