

A Study of Evaluation Techniques and the Implementation of the Curriculum Content of Secretarial Education in Colleges of Education in South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract

This research paper specifically investigated evaluation techniques and the implementation of the curriculum content of secretarial education in selected colleges of education in south-south, Nigeria. Two research questions and a corresponding one hypothesis was formulated to be tested. The survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 77 secretarial education teachers and 77 secretarial education teachers 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: evaluation techniques were moderately utilized by teachers. One of the major recommendations advanced in this paper was that NCCE should develop standardized and appropriate evaluation techniques for us.

Keywords: Secretarial Education, Evaluation techniques and Curriculum

Introduction

Secretarial education is a sub-field of Business education that is taught in higher institutions and especially colleges of education in Nigeria. Anunike (2010) confirmed 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.

Business education, according to Osuala (1981), cited in Ibe (2009), is a programme of instruction which consists of two parts: (1) Office Education, a Vocational Education programme for office careers through initial, refresher, and upgrading education; and (2) General business education, a programme that provides students with information and competencies which are needed in managing personal business affairs in using the service of business. General education is an identified group of educational experiences selected in order to develop in individuals, those competencies that are characteristic of a responsible citizen. General business subjects consist of skill and non-skill subjects. The non-skill general business subjects include economics, consumer economics, business mathematics, business organization, business communication, and retailing. Skill subjects include book-keeping, accounting, shorthand, office practice, computer education and typewriting.

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.

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 which is integral in any curriculum implementation. Curriculum

assessment/evaluation emphasizes merit, efficiency, adequacy, acceptability, goodness and implementation, such emphasis does not pertain only to observable behavioural change in a learner, rather, it cuts across the entire elements. The curriculum still requires constant monitoring, assessing, or evaluating so as to attain a more realistic and clearly stated blueprint that will guide the secretarial education teacher to effectively implement the minimum standards for NCE business education. This view is in line with Ukor (2002) citing Apantaku (1996) and NOSVE (1984). According to them; “Evaluation is a very important component of any progressive vocational programmes as it enables the government or policy makers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a programme and use the outcome to amend the programme for better performance”.

Ekpenyong (2008) citing Thorndike and Havan (1995) defined evaluation ‘as a complete process of identifying the objectives of an aspect of education and appraising the extent to which the objectives have been achieved’. They also pointed out further that the process is likely to involve the use of tests as tools and other types of evidence which would be used to make decisions. Lohness in Ekpenyong (2008) adds that evaluation is a means by which relevant data are collected and transformed into information for decision making. In other word, evaluation is successful in so far as the information it generates assists in making decisions about educational programmes and in this case secretarial education curriculum in Nigerian colleges of education.

The method of examination to a great extent determines the method of teaching (Onuoha & Nwafor, 2005). It was stated that the aspects on which emphasis is laid in examination only get importance in teaching, so much so that the aspects of curriculum which are not subjected to examination are usually neglected in teaching. However, evaluation as carried out today is quite restricted in scope, purpose and utility (Onuoha & Nwafor, 2005; Ekpenyong, 2008). The educational objectives are formulated, keeping in view the all round development of the learners covering both scholastic and non-scholastic aspects. The curriculum provides for guidelines with regard to the systematic organization of experiences which may lead to physical and socio-emotional growth and development along with cognitive development of the learners. Non-scholastic (non-cognitive) aspects of the learners growth are not given due emphasis in schools as these are not considered as evaluative entity (Onuoha & Nwafor, 2005).

Ekpenyong (2008) submitted that vocational education programme which secretarial education belongs, could be evaluated by also identifying unplanned and undesirable effects of a programme; determine the impact of external or extraneous uncontrolled variables on the programme with a view to recommending its alterations, replacement or discontinuance and setting up a system of regular review of the programme results, and in turn assessing value or social benefits of the exercise as a whole. He is demanding that non-cognitive measures contribute so much to an individual personality and as such should be integrated into our evaluation system instead of being ignored. Otherwise the aims and objectives of evaluation would be incomplete and goals of continuous assessment cannot be fully realized. In secretarial education, all domains of learning namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains are highly valued and desirable. The NCCE minimum standards for NCE stipulated that to graduate with NCE business, a student must earn a total of 138 Credit Unit as follows:

a.	Business Education Courses including SIWES ...	78 Credits Units
b.	Education (Including Project)	36 Credits Units
c.	Teaching Practice	6 Credits Units
d.	General Studies	18 Credits Units
	Total	138 Credits Units

This is certainly stressed by the NCCE to ensure effectiveness and quality of students’ participation in lectures and activities of the institution.

Statement of the Problem

The teachings of secretarial education in Nigerian Colleges of Education stimulate curiosity regarding the effectiveness of the curriculum implementation. Tijani (2000) and 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. 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 use the appropriate evaluation techniques in teaching secretarial education courses and this is the basis upon which this study is carried out.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine if Secretarial Education teachers use appropriate evaluation techniques.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised for this study:

1. What techniques do teachers use to evaluate Secretarial Education courses in the classroom?
2. Do Secretarial education teachers use evaluation techniques to acceptable level?

Hypothesis

1. The Secretarial Education teachers with acceptable score on the use of evaluation techniques, is not significantly less than 50%.

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 77 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-seven (77) Secretarial Education lecturers in Colleges of Education in the South-South zone of Nigeria to solicit responses to the questionnaire. 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

Research Question One

What techniques do teachers use to evaluate Secretarial Education courses?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the use of Evaluation Techniques in Teaching Secretarial Courses

S/N	Items	Mean	Std Dev	Decision
1.	Oral Questioning	3.96	0.20000	Often
2.	Objective Test	3.08	0.40000	Sometimes
3.	Assignment	3.92	0.27689	Often
4.	Speed and Accuracy Test	3.92	0.27689	Often
5.	Rating	2.84	0.62450	sometimes
6.	Observation	3.04	0.35119	Sometimes
7.	Penmanship	3.52	0.85320	Often
8.	Shorthand Dictations	2.80	0.70711	Sometimes
9.	Participation	3.00	0.00000	sometimes

key: Below 2.0 = Never; 2.0 – 3.0 = Sometimes; 3.1 – 4.0 = Often.

Table 1 showed the mean of the use of evaluation techniques by secretarial education teachers. The mean values ranged from 2.80 to 3.96 while the values of the standard deviation ranged from 0.00 to 0.85. The mean values revealed that the secretarial education teachers often use four of the evaluation techniques which are oral questioning, assignment, speed and accuracy and penmanship. The table also revealed that teachers only

sometimes use the other five evaluation techniques which are objective test, rating, observation, shorthand dictations and participation.

Hypothesis One

The teachers with acceptable score on the perception of the NCCE Secretarial Education curriculum are not significantly less than 50%.

Table 1: One – Sample t-test Analysis of teachers with acceptable score on the perception of the NCCE Secretarial Education Curriculum:

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev.	Df	t-cal	P-value
NCCE Secretarial Education curriculum (NCCSEEC)	77	80.48	5.97	76	37.45	0.000

Test-value= 55, $P < 0.05$

Table 1 shows a calculated t-value of 37.45 and a p-value of .000, testing at an alpha level of .05, the p-value is less than the alpha level. So the null hypothesis which states that the teachers with acceptable score on the perception of the NCCE Secretarial Education curriculum is not significantly less than 50%” is rejected. Since the mean value of 80.48 is greater than the test value of 55, the teachers who had acceptable score on the perception of the NCCE secretarial education curriculum is significantly more than 50%.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that the evaluation techniques are moderately utilized in teaching secretarial education courses in classroom. The researcher found that secretarial teachers lack competences in some areas of evaluation techniques used in teaching secretarial education. The findings revealed that the National Commission for Colleges of Education (2008) did not prescribe evaluation techniques for use by lecturers in these Colleges. Therefore, evaluation techniques such as objective test, rating, observation, shorthand dictations and participation; are not often used in assessing secretarial education courses in colleges of education. This was further confirmed by Onuoha and Nwafor (2005) and Ekpenyong (2008) who maintained that evaluation as carried out today, is quite restricted in scope, purpose and utility.

Teachers that Use Evaluation Techniques

The findings of the study revealed that the teachers who had acceptable score on the use of evaluation techniques is significantly more than 50%. This means that the finding of the research showed that the mean score of the teachers who had the acceptable scores on the use of the evaluation techniques significantly differ from what is obtainable in the use of the evaluation techniques in teaching secretarial education in colleges of education.

The findings on the mean score of teachers on the use of evaluation techniques in teaching secretarial education further bring to bear with Okwuanaso (2001) who opined that the fundamental reason for evaluating business education programme enables business educators to make more rational, data based decisions about their programme and that educators have an obligation to ensure that the educational process will deliver what is specified in the programme. This is precisely one of the goals of this study and in addition, to ensure the classification of standard operational procedures and where appropriate tools are inadvertently left out from the programme that need to be in place as a result of industrial and commercial practices that are always in a process of change usually driven by advances in technology. Evaluation/assessment is therefore a useful tool to determine acceptability, appropriateness, goodness, attainability and desirability for an effective monitoring of the secretarial education curriculum in the colleges of education as well as other higher institutions where this option is being offered. Akpotohwo (2004) citing Urevbu (1990) confirmed that through the process of evaluation any stated goal which proves unattainable may either be dropped or re-directed. This emphasizes the worth of evaluation of educational programmes and the fervent need for teachers irrespective of their area of discipline to price evaluation as a sine qua non in the delivery of their services.

The most frequently used technique for evaluating in business is the performance appraisal. It has not been used extensively in the classroom because of the element of subjectivity. Educators have long prided themselves on their objectivity in evaluating and testing. To achieve objectivity, classroom evaluation has often been void of intangible factors such as attitude, creativity, inter personal relationships, dependability, and adaptability. These are the attributes that virtually influence instruction and their measurement indicate the success of the instruction. Some of the subjectivity in business can be eliminated in the use of greater specificity in the listing of facts rather than option (Nwufu, 1999).

According to Jenkins (2005), one of the biggest problems militating against effective evaluation is the teacher lack of knowledge as well as ignorance about different evaluation techniques. He also noted some of these techniques are time consuming and energy consuming during application and evaluation process. In addition, some of the characteristics in students are not easily observable. Pierre and Oughton, (2007) claimed that although many college teachers’ outline and plan lessons with affective outcomes, they fail to indicate how this will be taught and evaluated. Establishing a comprehensive assessment practice is very important since it will enhance overall development of the student.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that evaluation techniques were moderately utilized by teachers; and that teachers had acceptable score on the use of prescribed evaluations techniques. It therefore implies that in the institutions surveyed, the teachers are doing very well as regards the utilization of prescribed evaluation techniques. It is also interesting to note that there is 'room' to always update ones evaluation techniques.

Recommendations

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

1. Secretarial education teachers need a re-training in the use of all evaluation techniques without exceptions as they are all vital tools in teaching and learning process as well as make for effective and acceptable degree of implementation.
2. In the course of this study, it was discovered that the NCCE manual did not include evaluation techniques for use by the secretarial option of the business education component. It is therefore recommended that the NCCE should develop a standardized and appropriate evaluation technique for the programme. This will guide and encourage the teachers to explore practically and willingly use them for assessment to enhance teaching and learning.

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