

CHAPTER TEN

MENTORING OF BUSINESS EDUCATION UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS THROUGH THE UTILIZATION OF FUNCTIONAL FACILITIES FOR SKILL ACQUISITION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF UYO.

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Abstract

Mentoring of Business Education Undergraduate students through Utilization of Functional Facilities for Skill Acquisition in the University of Uyo, was the central discussion in this work. The concept of Business Education was discussed as an aspect of education which prepares individuals/undergraduate students for skills acquisition in three different broad areas such as Accounting Education, Office Management Education and Marketing Education. Equally, the concept of Mentoring was explained as a process which experienced person guides, directs and encourages an inexperienced person in a friendly manner for skill acquisition. Skill was seen as the ability to do something well or perform any activity with dexterity and competence. While, skills acquisition was explained as the attainment of different skills by Business Education undergraduate students at graduation. Suggestions among others was that the management of the University of Uyo should provide functional facilities to enhance proper lecturing and learning for skills acquisition. The conclusion was that business education lecturers as mentors are to guide, supervise, encourage and lead students towards skills acquisition at graduation.

Keywords: Mentoring, Business Education, Utilization, Functional Facility and Skill Acquisition.

Introduction

Business Education is an educational programme which involves skills acquisition, knowledge and competences which help the individual to become proficient at graduation. Mentoring of Business Education undergraduate Students is important

in order to help them to acquire the needed skills. According to Azih and Nwosu (2012), business education at all levels is aimed at providing education which equips the recipients with business skills needed to function effectively in a working environment as well as contribute to inclusive societal development. Thus, this programme prepares undergraduate students with such skills like Accounting skills, Management skills, Secretariat/computer skills, Marketing skills among others. In the University of Uyo, broad options under Business Education include; Accounting education, Office Management education and Marketing education. These three options will be the focus of this work. For effective running of this programme, there is need for availability of functional facilities and maintenance of such facilities, for teaching and skill acquisition among undergraduate students.

The Concept of Business Education

Business Education as asserted by Usen, Okon and Ukpong (2019) is a type of education that prepares students for skill acquisition in different business areas. In the view of Ebina (2014), business education is a programme of study which offers students who wish to pursue a career in business an opportunity to develop those skills, abilities and understanding that will enable them to enter, perform and progress in business occupation after graduating from high school or university. Usen and Udukeke (2019) noted that Business Education is that aspect of education which prepares students for office occupations such as secretary, bookkeeping, accounting work, teaching and e-commerce. The authors believed that, it is the education about business which provides knowledge and understanding of economic, finance, marketing, accounting, management and other related business courses. It prepares students to function intelligently as job- creators, consumers and citizens in a society. Business Education as perceived by Usoro (2016) can be seen as education that prepares students for job-entry into the world of work and, also as

a business teacher. In addition, Usen, Jimmy and Udokang (2018) added that business education is a type of education that can provide students with different marketing skills, such skills are; advertising skill, sales promotion skill and sales forecast skill. The acquisition of these skills could lead to self-reliance at graduation. In the view of Usen, Okon and Ukpong (2019), business education is expected to furnish undergraduate students with creative, innovative right skills, knowledge, attitude and competences required to identify new profitable business opportunities. Business education programme is meant to prepare students for skill acquisition and development, to be effective for self, industry and the society. In order to promote this programme, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013) in the National policy on Education (NPE) stated the following objectives of business education which include;

- (a) The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity.
- (b) The inculcation of the right type of values and attributes for the survival of the individual and the Nigeria society.
- (c) The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around him.
- (d) The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences with the mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. Hence, there is need for mentoring of business education undergraduate students.

The Concept of Mentoring

The history of mentoring is traced to the Greek story where odysseus entrusted the care and education of his child to a friend named mentor while the father was away on his adventure (Dankwa & Dankwa, 2013). In the words of Effiong (2018) mentoring is a situation in which an experienced or skilled person acts as a role model by teaching, directing and advising a novice or in-experienced person to bring

out the best in his/her behavior and performance. Mentoring involves giving good guidance, encouragement and inspiration to the mentee. It builds up a person's interest in a particular profession, and good relationship. Further, mentoring has to do with teaching, supervising, coaching, counseling or advising the mentee. In this regards, business education lecturers are mentors to business education undergraduate students by teaching with functional facilities, supervising their projects, counseling them and advising the inactive ones and encourage students in case of difficulties in the academics. In all, the aim is to prepare the mentee for skill acquisition.

Skill is the ability to do something well or perform any activity with dexterity and competence. Skills are typically acquired or developed through direct experiences and training, and they can require sustained effort. Okon (2019) stated that skills can be divided into soft skill and hard skill. Soft skills are more general, intangible qualities or attributes that people (students) possess which enhance their interactions with others for instance, attitude, personality, emotions, communication styles and social manners. On the other hand, hard skills are more specific and are often associated with a task or activity, mostly job related. This shows that skill is an ability, capacity and proficiency to smoothly and adaptively perform a job function. Therefore, in a changing environment, skill is an essential part of being able to meet the challenges of everyday life. Notably, business education provides undergraduate students with hard skills related to specific business occupational areas. In order to facilitate students' skill acquisition, the lecturers as mentors need to utilize functional facilities for lecturing.

The Concept of Skill Acquisition

Skill acquisition entails the ability to master activity and give quality performance at particular task. Skill acquisition means that the student at graduation is able to perform a particular task skillfully and independently. As reasoned by Ewubare and Ohwovoriole (2012) skill acquisition can sustain the individual to become self-employed and experience better standard of living. With this, Okon (2019) wrote that training to the extent of acquiring skill requires a good teaching strategy capable of facilitating development in thinking ability especially in business. Therefore, business education programme is a type of education that can facilitate horizontal and vertical articulation in business education undergraduate students and prepare them for skill acquisition to be proficient in the world of work. It has been noted that in advanced countries like USA, Germany, Japan and others, have made huge investment in education hence, training the youths to acquire skills in different areas of human endeavors including business. In support of this, Nnennna, and Nwialu (2019) asserted that the attainment of an industrialized nation requires to a great extent on the training of youths in various trades and professions which include skills acquisition in business occupations. Business Education here has three broad areas such as Accounting Education, Marketing Education and Office Management Education. Skill acquisition in Accounting Education will enhance the undergraduate students the ability to teach or post items correctly in different books of account such as; Cash book, Journals, Ledgers, Trading/profit and loss account, Balance sheet and others. Marketing Education is another area in Business Education; here skill acquisition can enable the individual to become a competent Sales Representative, a Marketing Forecast Personnel and Sales Promotion Personnel among others while skill acquisition in Office Management Education can assist the undergraduate students at graduation to acquire the skill in Office

Management, Secretariat/Computer skill and skill in business management. This can only be possible if the available facilities are functional (facilities in good condition).

The Need for Functional Facilities

Functional facilities refer to school facilities that are useful for teaching, learning and for work or serve the purpose for which they were designed for effectively.

Facilities are material resources that enhance effective teaching and learning, thereby making the process meaningful and purposeful. As defined by Ayodele (2004), school facilities are permanent and semi-permanent structures as well as the machines, Laboratory equipment, the blackboards and teacher's tools: school plant which include the space within the school premises, which houses the basic systems and structures such as vehicles, sports grounds, buildings furniture and fittings, electrical infrastructures, books, water supply and accessories. These facilities if functional, could assist business education Lecturers (mentors) to teach, supervise, advise and guide the undergraduate students for skill acquisition.

Accordingly, Inyang, Ekpo and Ekanem (2018) stated that school facilities, such as school plants/equipment and facilities are also important elements needed for the realization of educational objectives. School equipment and facilities comprise all the things that have been put in place to aid effective teaching and learning. The main equipment and facilities in school include the following, (1) Equipment: Laboratory and workshop equipment, sporting equipment, teaching aids, computer and photocopier (2) Permanent and semi- permanent structures: classroom, workshop, hostels, staff quarters, assembly/ dinning halls, administrative block, libraries, laboratories. (3) Furniture: desks, tables, chairs, beds and others. There is need for periodic maintenance through renovation, replacement, painting and repairs. As stated by Abuh and Nzimoha (2019) school/ instructional facilities play significant roles in teaching and learning process. They are needed as a necessity to

enhance effective and efficient teaching and learning. Instructional facilities refer to classrooms, seminar rooms, laboratories, computer's laboratories, chairs and tables, on- campus clinics, generating sets, sport equipment, libraries, and other spaces used for sole purpose of formal instruction delivery to students. As opined by Okposi and Umoh (2019) school plant refers to the sum total of the educational facilities provided in schools to enhance the implementation of educational programmes. These include material and physical resources such as school sites, school buildings, equipment, machines, laboratories, play grounds, mobilities, parks and so on. School plant is all embracing in the fact that it comprises every single item, starting from the gate of the school to the walls covering the school compound. They help to improve the performance of students. Functional school facilities help to sustain students interest in a particular subject area of study and promote skill acquisition due to the fact that theoretical and practical activities in school are adequately matched.

Notably, Abuh and Nzimoha (2019), wrote that instructional facilities are divided into two; (a) Primitive Instructional Facilities; These are those facilities used to aid teaching and learning during the early days of education. In those days, there were no fixed structures like classrooms, laboratories and others. Those spaces, instruments like counting sticks used to impart knowledge are referred to here as primitive. While, (b) Modern Instructional Facilities are those structures for instance, equipment, buildings facilities for teaching and learning process. Facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, catering facilities, health facilities, transport facilities, toilet facilities, safety, security and sport facilities and others are of immense guide to and support for teaching. Hence, Inyang, Ekpo and Ekanem (2018) believed that learning environment has tremendous impact on the comfort, safety and performance of students in school.

However, University of Uyo has mounted Business Education programme which has attracted many undergraduate students. Regrettably, it seems the university has failed to match this programme with the provision of functional facilities. In the Department of Business Education, students attend classes in crowded hall, with less ceiling points not to mention, air-conditioners, students could be seen lapping themselves on benches, there is lack of well-equipped library. In Business laboratory equipment such as cash register machine, card punching machine, cheque confirmation machine, POS machine, billing, inventory keeping and accounting/transaction posting machine which could have been used for teaching students acquisition skills are lacking. Other teaching aids like video machines, projectors, and loud speakers (microphones) for class lectures. The comfort, safety and convenience of both the lecturers and students seems not to be considered by the university management. Lecturers lack offices and all the accessories, fire equipment are not provided in the lecture halls. Sadly, it has been noticed that there is poor maintenance culture on the worn out facilities. Also, there is a mismatch between the institution and the industry due to lack of availability of modern machines in the institutions. At workplaces, the graduate finds it difficult to operate them due to the fact that they were not exposed to while in school. In this situation there is every tendency for the institution to produce half-baked graduates, and they go out to increase unemployment rate in the society due to lack of skills. Functional facilities are paramount for proper teaching and learning. It will be difficult for lecturers to prepare the undergraduate students for skill acquisition if the facilities are non functional, not available and couple with poor maintenance culture. In this regards, it is absolutely necessary that the available facilities are made to be functional through adoption of maintenance culture in the school.

Facilities Maintenance

Accordingly, Okposi and Umoh (2019) opined that facilities maintenance entails the repairs of the old facilities and replacement when necessary. It involves all actions taken to retain facilities in serviceable condition to restore them to serviceability which includes inspection, testing, servicing, repair, rebuilding and reclamation. With this, Ajayi (2007) in Okposi and Umoh (2019) enumerated four types of maintenance of facilities in the school system: these are:

- (i) **Corrective Maintenance:** This is concerned with repairing faults on time. Repairs of electrical faults in the school building and mechanical faults in generating sets and vehicles are examples of corrective maintenance.
- (ii) **Predictive and Preventive maintenance:** This refers to maintenance carried out for the purpose of preventing break down or situations which can put part of the plant out of use.
- (iii) **Shut down maintenance:** This involves the shutting down of a school plant or part of it in order to carry out maintenance work.
- (iv) **Running Maintenance:** This focuses on rectifying the break down in any component of the school plant. Therefore, school facilities maintenance is necessary for the provision of satisfactory learning environment and ensure the usefulness of facilities as long as possible. It also helps to control expenditure and improves the general atmosphere of the school.

Utilization of Functional Facilities by Mentors for Skill Acquisition

Utilization in this study means the usage of different functional facilities by mentors for skill acquisition. Abuh and Nzimoha (2019) stated that utilization of instructional facilities is the process of using procured and accessible facilities, tools, components, equipment and appliances to make teaching and learning process easier, interesting

and rewarding. Here, the Business Education lecturers are the mentors. In the business laboratory, the Department of Business Education is supposed to have functional facilities such as computers, video machines and projectors, cash counting machines and other modern machines. Lecturers (mentors) would utilize these facilities for lecturing and practically demonstrate and direct the undergraduate students. In the process of carrying out lectures, the lecturers could supervise and coach the students on computer lessons to make sure they are proficient in different areas like; key board mastery, typing, website design, programming, graphic drawing and others through the manipulation of the entire computer system.

For the fact that skills are enhanced by training and development, undergraduate students can be trained to become competent and acquire different skills on computer operation and secretariat duties. **Mentoring of business education undergraduate students on the utilization of library facility:** A well equipped library is a functional facility in the university. Business Education lecturer as mentors could encourage, and build up students' interest through utilization of such facility for their assignment, project work and for knowledge expansion. Further, the undergraduate students could be guided by their mentors to decide and focus on a particular area for skill acquisition.

Video Machine and projector as facilities could be utilized by the lecturers to demonstrate different topics in the class, for example a lesson on Cash book preparation, types of Journal, Ledgers, Trading/profit and loss account. The undergraduate students, could be shown how to correctly post items of transactions in the different books and they could demonstrate repeatedly for easy understanding. This will aid the students to learn, practice and acquire the needed accounting skills for proper utilization at graduation.

Marketing Education often holds a large class hence, the lecturer has to be audible during lecture so that all the students could hear, understand and participate. The availability and utilization of a function facility like Microphone for lecture will save the lecturer's energy, sustain the students' attention and interest in the lecture. Hence, assist students to understand, discern and decide on the area to gain skill acquisition.

Suggestions

The following suggestions were made based on the literature reviewed:

1. The management University of Uyo should provide functional facilities to enhance proper lecturing and learning for skill acquisition.
2. Business Education Lecturers (mentors) should utilize the available facilities carefully and effectively so that undergraduate students' interest will be sustained in a particular course of study.
3. Business education lecturers as mentors should guide, encourage, coach/direct the mentees friendly and properly so as to lead the students to achieve a skill at graduation.
4. The management University of Uyo should provide many and spacious lecture halls for effective teaching and learning to enhance high academic performance and skill acquisition.
5. The management University of Uyo should adopt regular maintenance culture on the available facilities to ensure their longevity.

Conclusion

Business Education has three broad areas which prepare undergraduate students for skill acquisition in University of Uyo. These areas are; Accounting Education for accounting skills, Office Management Education for management skills and Marketing Education for marketing skills. In this regards, there is need to utilize

functional facilities for effective lectures. Business Education lecturers as mentors are to guide, encourage, supervise in a friendly manner and teach the mentees (students), utilizing the available facilities effectively, hence leading them to skill acquisition. Therefore, school facilities maintenance is necessary for the provision of satisfactory learning environment and ensure the usefulness of facilities as long as possible.

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