ASSESSMENT OF SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCIES DEMONSTRATED BY BUSINESS STUDIES TEACHERS IN ANAMBRA STATE

Ile, C. M.
Department of Technology and Vocational Education, Faculty of Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Nwosu, N. A.
Anambra State Polytechnic, Mgbakwu

Abstract

This study assessed the subject knowledge pedagogical competencies demonstrated by business studies teachers in Anambra State. One purpose and corresponding research question guided the study and one null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. Related literature were reviewed which exposed the need for the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted using a population of 512 vice principals and heads of business studies. The study adopted a stratified random sampling technique with a sample size of 154 (77 vice principals academics and 77 heads of business studies department). A validated five point rating scale questionnaire containing six items was used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The reliability index obtained was r= 0.68. Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. The result showed that business studies teachers demonstrated subject knowledge pedagogical competencies to a high extent. The result also showed that vice principal (academics) and heads of business studies department did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent business studies teachers demonstrated subject knowledge competencies. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the use of student centered pedagogical competence is a powerful innovation in the teaching and learning of business studies which are best suited to imparting business understanding and skills. The researcher recommended, among others, that principals should monitor the implementation of teachers' instructional roles to ensure that they prepare their lesson notes in line with the curriculum objectives and deliver them in conformity with the allotted time range.

Keywords: Pedagogy, subject knowledge pedagogical competency, business studies teachers and secondary school.

Introduction

Education has been defined as all conscious and direct, incidental and indirect efforts made by a given society to accomplish certain objectives that are considered desirable in terms of an individual's own needs as well as the needs of the society where that education is based. The relationship between education and development is

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well established such that education is a key index of development. Kpolovie (2012) affirmed that education constitutes the core of human development as it is the most crucial institution for empowering young people with knowledge and skills, which in turn provide them access to productive employment and meaningful contribution to national development.

In most countries like Nigeria, educational curriculum is developed to meet the national goals and objectives in the various fields and stages of manpower needs and development. Okolocha and Onyeneke (2013) observed that the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system currently referred to as the 9-3-4, that is, 9 years of Basic Education- Primary 1 to Junior Secondary 3; 3 years of senior secondary education and 4 years of tertiary education educational system in Nigeria based on the national education goals as highlighted in the educational goals include the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014).

In order to fully realize the potential contributions of education to the achievement of the national educational goals, emphasis is placed on the broad goals of secondary education. The goals of secondary education at the junior level are to offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles; to provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades, and to provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development (FRN, 2014). At this level, business subjects are offered in integrated form as business studies.

According to Ehimetalor, Osu-Nwufo, Makeri-Yahaya and Oladunjoye (2009), business studies consist of learning activities covering shorthand, commerce, keyboarding, office practice, book keeping and computer education. In order to achieve the objectives of business studies, the teacher plays a pivotal role since the central point of any educational system is teaching. This is partly so because teachers are the key-players in classroom instructional activities that affect the success of students. Mahmood, Ahmed and Iqbal (2013) posited that teachers should be professionals as they deal with the system approach of instruction including working with the outcome-based curriculum, diagnosis of cognitive-affective readiness style and interest, classroom management, instruction and learning as well as evaluation and feedback.

Many teachers fail to fulfil their pedagogical potentials, not because they do not know the subject matter, but because they do not understand the students or classrooms (Djamarah, 2008). Similarly, Hamilton-Ekeke (2013) observed that most teachers lacked pedagogical competencies needed to transfer knowledge to students. In this regard, Hamilton-Ekeke defined teachers‘ pedagogical competence as the right way of conveying units of knowledge, application and skills to students. Teachers‘

pedagogical competence refers to the ability of a teacher to help guide and counsel students to learn and achieve high performance in their studies.

Experienced teachers routinize much of their practices, making them habitual and automatic, built on tacit and situated knowledge (Ehimetalor, Osu-Nwufo, Makeri-Yahaya & Oladunjoye, 2009). Inexperienced teachers, on the other hand, approach their practice consciously while avoiding cognitive overload. These practices have resulted in poor knowledge delivery which is considered a major contributory factor to poor performance of junior secondary school students in internal and external examinations in business studies. This study focused on pedagogical competencies expected of business studies teachers such as subject knowledge.

The knowledge of the subject being taught by the teacher is an important competence that is expected of business studies teachers (Liakopoulou, 2011). It is in line with the above that Akhyak, Idrus and Bakar (2013) saw teachers‘ professional competence as the ability of the teacher to master the subject matter broadly and deeply. Akhyak et al further noted that the teacher professional competence included mastery of the materials to be taught along with the method, a sense of responsibility and sense of duty to the other teachers. This knowledge of the subject defines the way it is presented to the students, and the questions that would pass on the knowledge in a better way. A business studies teacher should be in a position to approach the subject being taught with specific questions, such as which social norms are connected to the subject, what is its relationship to social issues and its value in everyday life. In affirming the need for teachers to have adequate subject knowledge of the subject or course they teach, Udiyono (2011) noted that a teacher should be in a position to approach the subject being taught with specific questions, such as what social norms are connected to the subject, what is its relation to real life issues and its value in everyday life. The teacher should also be in a position to diagnose misinterpretations of the knowledge offered by the students and fully comprehend the procedures required for the acquisition of the knowledge and skills connected to the subject being taught (Darling–Hammond & Baratz- Snowden, 2005).

Consequently, Mustafa opined that teachers should be able to know how students learn and understand the difficulties faced by the students. Soedijarto in Mustafa (2013) indicated that a professional teacher should have knowledge about students‘ characteristics. It is in line with the above that Loughran, Berry and Mulhall (2012) opined that competent teachers would make the effort to relate teaching content with students‘ background knowledge and provide effective learning experience through assignments, exercises and homework which are of high quality.

Considering the above views, Telu and Ekele (2013) noted that the ultimate goal of any pedagogy is to facilitate quality students learning**.** Although there are abundant research evidence on the pedagogical competencies of teachers (Telu & Ekeke, 2013; Liakopoulou, 2011; Madhavaram & Laverie, 2010), there is a shortage of literature on the strength of the pedagogical competencies applied by business

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studies teachers in Anambra State. However, the extent of demonstration of the pedagogical competencies postulated by authors and researchers abroad are either theoretical in nature or have not been empirically proven to be the case among business studies teachers in Anambra State. It is against this background that the researcher empirically assessed the pedagogical competencies demonstrated by business studies teachers in junior secondary schools in Anambra State with a view to proffer contributions to knowledge.

Statement of the Problem

Business education in this era of new technology requires competent business studies teachers who are well equipped with current skills, knowledge and attitudes required in the business world. Objectives of business studies include the provision of orientation and basic skills with which to start a life of work. In spite of these laudable objectives, present day students still perform below expectation in the Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (JSSCE) in business studies. For instance, the Examination Development Centre (EDC) of the Anambra State Ministry of Education (2017) revealed that the results in Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) for JSS3 (Upper Basic 3) in 2012, out of 46,090 students that sat for the exams 3.87% got distinction, 38.01% got credit, 53,5% passed and 4.63% failed. In 2013, out of 46,741 students that sat for the exams 1.75% got distinction, 41.22% got credit, 55.81% passed and 1.23% failed. In 2014, out of 47,312 students that sat for the exams 3.01% got distinction, 46.25% got credit, 47.11% passed and 3.63% failed. In 2015, out of 50,400 students that sat for the exams 4.46% got distinction, 42.81% got credit, 46.33% passed and 6.42% failed. In 2016, out of 52,220 students that sat for business studies examination, only 4.92% got distinction, 38.52% got credit, 50.96% got pass and 5.61% failed. These results are a cause for concern to many academics, and one wonders if it could be linked to the students or the teachers‘ level of subject knowledge pedagogical competencies? This study, therefore, assessed the subject knowledge pedagogical competencies demonstrated by business studies teachers in Anambra State in order to provide a sound basis for objective remedial actions.

Purpose of the Study

This study focused on the assessment of subject knowledge pedagogical competencies demonstrated by business studies teachers in Anambra State. Specifically, the study determined the extent business studies teachers in Anambra State demonstrate:

1. Subject knowledge pedagogical competencies in teaching.

Research Question

Only one research question guided the study:

1. To what extent do business studies teachers in Anambra State demonstrate subject knowledge pedagogical competencies in teaching?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Vice Principals (academics) and heads of business studies department do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent business studies teachers demonstrate subject knowledge pedagogical competencies in teaching.

Method

The design adopted in this study was the descriptive survey. The area of the study was Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 512 (256 vice principals (academics) and 256 business studies teachers) of public secondary schools in Anambra State. A sample size of 154 (77 vice principals (academics) and 77 heads of business studies department) were used for the study. The stratified random sampling technique was used because according to Uzoagulu (2012), when a study consists of layers or levels in a population and each layer has some unique characteristics which make it different from the other layers, the characteristics have to be recognized in the study.

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers based on the reviewed literature and research question guiding the study. Face and content validity of the instrument was determined by two experts in business education department from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. To establish the instrument‘s reliability, the questionnaire was administered on a sample of twenty (ten vice principals academic and ten heads of business studies) teachers in Asaba, Delta State who were not included in the population of the study. The application of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 using Cronbach Alpha reliability method on the obtained data yielded a score of 0.68 for internal consistency which was deemed reliable for the study. Copies of the instrument were administered on the respondents by the researchers with the assistance of six research assistants who were assigned to each of the six education zones.

The data collected from the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The mean was used to answer the research questions while the standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents‘ assessment. Decision on the questionnaire items was based on the real limits of numbers. Any pedagogical competence with mean rating between 4.50-5.00 was demonstrated by business studies teachers to a very high extent, an item with mean rating of 3.50-4.49 was demonstrated at a high extent and an item with 2.50-3.49 was demonstrated at a moderate extent. Furthermore, an item with mean ratings of 1.50-2.49 and 0.50-1.49 was demonstrated by business studies teachers to a low and very low extent respectively. t-test was employed to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Where the calculated p-value is less than the stipulated level of significance (0.05), it means that there was significant difference and the hypothesis was rejected. Conversely, where the calculated p-value is equal to or greater than the stipulated level of significance (0.05), it means that there was no significant difference and the hypothesis was not rejected.

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Results

Table 1

Mean ratings on the extent business studies teachers demonstrated subject knowledge competencies in teaching.

S/No	Subject Knowledge Competencies		SD	Remarks
1.	Knowledge of the subject content	3.54	.75	High extent
2.	Knowledge of the relations, organization and structure of the contents of the subject	3.48	.89	Moderate extent
3.	Knowledge of the research methodology on the subject field	3.80	.58	High Extent
4.	Knowledge of the procedures and ways that contribute to the generalization of the truth, explored in every scientific field and now being acknowledged (syntactic knowledge)	3.45	.85	Moderate Extent
5.	Knowledge of subject goals and objectives.	3.34	.87	Moderate Extent
6.	Knowledge of the procedures required for the acquisition of the knowledge and skills connected to the subject being taught	3.73	.62	High Extent
	Mean of Means	**3.55**		**High Extent**

The analysis in Table 1 shows the grand mean of 3.55 which indicates that business studies teachers in Anambra State demonstrate subject knowledge pedagogical competencies in teaching to a high extent. The item by item analysis shows that items 1, 3 and 6 with mean scores ranging from 3.54 to 3.80 are the subject knowledge competencies demonstrated to a high extent while items 2, 4 and 5 with mean scores ranging from 3.44 to 3.48 are demonstrated to a moderate extent. The standard deviation shows that there is homogeneity amongst responses indicating a greater consensus of opinion.

Table 2

Summary of t-test comparison of the mean ratings of VP academics and heads of business studies department on the extent business studies teachers demonstrate subject knowledge competencies in teaching

Source of Variation	N		SD	Df	P-value	Decision
VP Academics	77	3.46	.50	152	.07	Not Significant
Heads of Business Studies Department	77	3.57	.48			

The analysis in Table 2 shows that vice principals academics and heads of business studies department did not differ significant in their mean ratings on the extent business studies teachers demonstrated subject knowledge competencies in teaching. This is shown by the p-value of .07 which is greater than the stipulated level of significance (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was not rejected.

Discussion

Results of the study revealed that the business studies teachers demonstrated knowledge of the subject content, knowledge of the research methodology on the subject field and knowledge of the procedures required for the acquisition of the knowledge and skills connected to the subject taught to a high extent. They also demonstrated knowledge of the relations, organization and structure of the contents of the subject; knowledge of the procedures and ways that contribute to the generalization of the truth explored in every scientific field being acknowledged and knowledge of the subject goals and objectives in teaching to a moderate extent.

The findings agree with Akhjak, Idrus and Bakar (2013), who saw teachers' professional competence as the ability of teachers to master the subject matter broadly and deeply. Akhyak et al further noted that the teachers' professional competence included mastery of the materials to be taught along with the method, a sense of responsibility and sense of duty to the other teachers. In describing the need for teachers to have adequate subject knowledge of the subject, or course they teach, Udiyono (2011) noted that a teacher should be in a position to approach the subject being taught with specific questions. Also Loughran, Berry and Mulhall (2012) opined that competent teachers would make effort to relate teaching content with students' background knowledge and provide effective learning experiences through assignments and exercises which are of high quality. The testing of the hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference among responses of VP academics and heads of business studies department on the extent business studies teachers in Anambra State demonstrated subject knowledge competencies in teaching. It follows therefore that the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Conclusion

The predominant use of teacher centered pedagogical competence in business studies instructional delivery in schools in the 21st century is unacceptable because it does not enhance the achievement for all students and does not promote meaningful learning of the subject. The use of student centered pedagogical competencies is a powerful innovation in the teaching and learning of business studies which as it is best suited for imparting business understanding and skills. The study assessed the subject knowledge pedagogical competencies demonstrated by business studies teachers in junior secondary schools in Anambra State. The findings of the study revealed that business studies teachers' demonstrated subject knowledge competencies to a high extent which means they possess knowledge to effectively teach the subject. The

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findings from the test of hypothesis also showed that there was no significant difference in the subject knowledge pedagogical competence in teaching of business studies. The study has provided salient insights on the current state of pedagogical competencies demonstrated by teachers and their use in enhancing teaching and learning progress. It is therefore concluded that such pedagogy would help to develop students' intellectual, interpersonal and communication skills and these skills form an important part of the working culture and the world of work.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Principals should monitor the implementation of teachers' instructional roles to ensure that they prepare their lesson notes in line with the curriculum objectives and deliver them in conformity with the allotted time range, since it is a known fact that when teachers perform well in the classroom, students will likely perform better academically.
2. Business studies teachers should identify the skill potentials of every child and help develop such potentials. This will improve the quality of the products from the schools and increase the quality of teachers.

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