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INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION LABORATORY ON SKILL ACQUISITION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITIES IN KWARA STATE

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the influence of business education laboratories on skills acquisition of business education students in universities in Kwara state. The study adopted a descriptive research survey design. The population of the study consisted of 609 students of the business education department in Kwara State University, Alhikmah University, and the University of Ilorin, out of which a sample 350 respondents were selected from the total population using Taro Yamane formula for finite population. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire designed by the researcher tagged; IBELSALMQ. The validation of the instrument was done by two lecturers from the Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education of Kwara State University, Malete. Cronbach alpha method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument of 0.81. The data collected from the study were statistically analyzed using frequencies and percentages for demographic data of the respondents, research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while null hypotheses of the study were tested using Independent Samples t-test and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that Business Education laboratories influence the acquisition of accounting skills by business education students in universities to a very high extent (Grand Mean = 3.56; SD =0.62) also there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratory on financial accounting skills acquisition by business education students in universities (t_{348} = 1.798, P < 0.05).Based on the findings of the study it was concluded that business education laboratory significantly improves the acquisition of financial accounting, marketing, and office technology abilities among business education students in Nigerian institutions. It was recommended among other; that universities should equip business education laboratories with modern tools and technologies to enhance hands-on skill acquisition.

Keywords: *Business* Education, Laboratory, Skills Acquisition, Learning Motivation

Introduction

Business education prepares students for the workplace with less stress. Universities in Nigeria provide extensive vocational instruction to prepare students for diverse careers. According to Umoru (2015) Business education as an academic curriculum that teaches students values, information, business skills, and technical skills needed in the workplace and for educating other business students. Inalegwu (2016) described Business Education as a curriculum that educates students about business occupations and how to manage their business intelligently as consumers and citizens in a busiess environment. A conglomeration of courses, business education focuses on acquiring, developing, and instilling principles for individual and societal survival. Business Education benefits instructors. Business Education graduates from any institution or department assist the nation to thrive and achieve the program's goal.

Similarly, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) as quoted by Oladunjoye (2016) viewed Business Education Programmes in tertiary education curricular and its objectives, as enunciated in the handbook of various departments of Business Education include: to produce efficient and effective management, secretarial, accounting and marketing managers, to produce lecturers who will handle business and related courses in our universities and colleges, to propagate the development of the business thought and philosophy in business and management, to prepare people for self-employment in situations where there is no available paid employment, to develop in the students requisite skills and expertise in managements of both private and public enterprise and arm them with the analytical ability needed to meet the growing challenges of present and future Nigerian and International environment and to prepare and equip those who pass through the programme to be able to establish and run their own private business ventures as self-employed citizens of the society.

Modern technology necessitates modern and suitable facilities in Business Education labs, and achieving these aims depends on good laboratory facilities management to improve business educator performance, particularly in tertiary institutions. Business education labs provide resources, equipment, and machinery for testing, designing, imagining, and studying. These facilities include computer lab, typing pool, and shorthand lab with computers, projectors, typewriters, dictation machines, duplicating machines, photocopiers, shredding machines, demonstration stands, stopwatches, staple removers, perforators, file cabinets, scanning machines, and others being used for teaching by professional business educators. Business instructors require good laboratory facility abilities to work well. A decent lab must include all required electronic capabilities for business education students to learn practically. Most business education laboratories have computers, typewriters, and other electronic facilities for effective teaching and learning. They also serve as preparatory centers to improve students' skills and motivate them to use these facilities and learn necessary skills.

The Office Technology and Management program teaches information, skills, office ethics, and competencies required to equip students for specialized business and office occupations. These abilities include message handling, document management, and record management. Entrepreneurship competencies are business abilities that help entrepreneurs succeed in a volatile business climate. Human relations, time management, independence, creativity, innovativeness, persistence and perseverance, technical, business management, personal entrepreneurial, innovative, and self-motivation skills are included (Adeyemi, 2019). According to Nwabuona (2018), the OTM program solves organizational challenges by utilizing office information technological skills and applicable business knowledge. He said hybrid administrative professionals are needed for a dynamic, computerized workplace. Office Technology and Management teaches job-relevant skills. OTM aims to improve participants' skills, abilities, understanding, attitudes, work habits, and awareness of the broad knowledge and information required to begin and advance in employment. It is part of business and technical education.

Marketing, owing to globalization, has relieved manufacturers/producers, marketers, and consumers. Producers and consumers may meet in minutes to suit their needs. The factory can provide raw materials of various sizes, shapes, and colours to the manufacturer at any moment. Consumers may also avoid marketing and choose their own. Nowadays, marketing delivers products and services to customers' doorsteps. Marketing involves planning, pricing, promoting, and distributing ideas, commodities, and services to meet individual and organizational objectives.

According to Aina (2015), accounting skills require controlling financial flow, proving that cash is king. Cash is fundamental to many companies, particularly fledgling ones; it fuels

their engines. Balance sheets show a company's financial condition at a given period. It lets company prospects rapidly know what resources were funded. Accounting helps business students find profitability. It indicates how much money remains after costs. To build their firm ethically and effectively, entrepreneurs must be able to foresee future income, operational costs, resources needed, and profits. Bale (2019) states that learner motivation addresses aspects of learning engagement. The teacher or instructional designer might see it as either strengthening intrinsic motivation or offering extrinsic motivators to energize student participation. The learner's internal and external stimuli create motivation. Motivation is critical to learning. Motivation is so crucial that behaviorism and social learning theory describe learning as motivation. Business education labs motivate students by teaching them skills. This piqued the researcher's interest in studying how business education labs affect Nigerian students' skills development and learning motivation.

Statement of the Problem

Business Education aims to equip graduates with the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience to navigate the professional world and excel in business. This can be achieved by employing competent and experienced instructors, utilizing appropriate teaching and learning resources, implementing effective teaching strategies, establishing well-equipped practical laboratories, and designing a curriculum that emphasizes skill development. However, it has been observed that business education students often lack adequate preparation in essential skills, which may be attributed to insufficient skill development during their studies. As a result, a significant number of business education graduates are expected to contribute meaningfully to the economic development of society's struggle with unemployment. Meanwhile, those who do secure jobs are often found to be ineffective and inefficient in carrying out their responsibilities, which ultimately hinders their career growth. Many scholars have examined the root causes of this issue and have identified inadequate learning resources and low student motivation as major contributing factors. Despite efforts by the federal and state governments, as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), to address problems such as hiring skilled personnel, providing essential resources and facilities, and improving the curriculum business education graduates continue to lack these fundamental skills. However, ensuring the availability of well-equipped laboratories and fostering student motivation could have a significant impact on skill development and learning outcomes. Consequently, this study seeks to investigate the influence of business education laboratories on skill acquisition among business education students in Universities in Kwara State.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on the financial accounting skills acquisition of business education students in universities?
2. What is the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on marketing skills acquisition of business education students in universities?
3. What is the extent of the influence of business education laboratories in office technology and management skills acquisition of business education students in universities?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

$H_0$1: There is no significant difference between male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratory on financial accounting skills acquisition and learning motivation of business education students in universities

$H_0$2: There is no significant difference between male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on marketing skills acquisition and learning motivation of business education students in universities

$H_0$3: There is no significant difference between male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on office technology skills and acquisition and learning motivation of business education students in the universities

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey approach, chosen for its effectiveness in gathering essential information such as facts, beliefs, views, demographic data, attitudes, motivations, and behaviors from respondents who provided answers to the research instrument (Osinbajo et al., 2014). The population consisted of 690 business education students from Kwara State University, Malete, the University of Ilorin, and Al-Hikmah University, specifically those in their 300 and 400 levels. These students were selected due to their extensive familiarity with the business education program, having completed three to four years of coursework, which indicates substantial exposure to the subject matter. A sample size of 350 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula for finite populations. A proportionate sampling technique was then applied to select respondents from the three universities. Data was collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Influence of Business Education Laboratory on Skills Acquisition and Learning Motivation of Business Education Students in Universities in Kwara State (QIBELSALM)." The instrument underwent face and content validation by two experts from the Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education to ensure it accurately measured its intended constructs. Constructive feedback and recommendations from the experts were incorporated to refine and enhance the final version of the instrument. To assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items, a pilot test was conducted at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, involving 30 final-year business education students. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's alpha reliability test, which yielded a coefficient of 0.75, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency. The demographic data of respondents were analyzed using frequency and percentage, while mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Similarly, the three null hypotheses were tested using an independent sample t-test at a 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for the research questions was as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 3.25–4.00, Agree (A) = 2.50–3.24, Disagree (D) = 1.75–2.49, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.00–1.74. For hypothesis testing, the null hypothesis was rejected when the observed p-value was less than the fixed significance level of 0.05. Conversely, when the observed p-value was greater than or equal to 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Results

Research Question One

What is the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on the financial skills acquisition of business education students in universities?

Table 1: Mean responses of respondents on the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on the financial accounting skills acquisition of business education students in universities

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Business education laboratory influences budgeting skills acquisition	3.51	0.56	Very High Extent
2.	Business education laboratory has an influence on financial management skills acquisition	3.57	0.65	Very High Extent
3.	Business education laboratory influences bookkeeping skills acquisition	3.65	0.67	Very High Extent
4.	Business education laboratory influences forecasting skills acquisition	3.54	0.59	Very High Extent
5.	Business education laboratory influences data analysis skills acquisition	3.58	0.55	Very High Extent
6.	Business education laboratory influences cash flow management skills acquisition	3.50	0.68	Very High Extent
	Grand Weighted Mean	3.56	0.62	Very High Extent

Source; Field survey, 2024

Table 1 reveals the mean responses of the respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on the financial skills acquisition by business education students in universities. The respondents agreed to all the item statements in Table 1 with a mean ranging from (3.50 to 3.65) The standard deviations of the items are low from 0.55 to 0.68 indicating that their responses are not too widespread. More specifically, the analysis revealed that respondents rated the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on the acquisition of accounting skills by business education students in universities to a very high extent (Grand Mean = 3.56; SD =0.62).

Question Two: What is the influence of business education laboratories on the marketing skills acquisition of business education students in universities?

Table 2: Mean responses of respondents on the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on the marketing skills acquisition of business education students in universities

S/N	Items Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
7.	Business education laboratory influences search engine optimization skills acquisition	3.52	0.65	Very High Extent
8.	Business education laboratory influences online marketing skills acquisition	3.61	0.62	Very High Extent
9.	Business education laboratory influences social media marketing skills acquisition	3.55	0.67	Very High Extent
10.	Business education laboratory has an influence on email marketing skills acquisition	3.57	0.58	Very High Extent
11.	Business education laboratory influences data marketing communication skills acquisition	3.59	0.66	Very High Extent
12.	Business education laboratory influences cash project management skills acquisition	3.61	0.61	Very High Extent
	Grand Weighted Mean	3.58	0.63	Very High Extent

Source; Field survey, 2024

Table 2 reveals the mean responses of the respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on the marketing skills acquisition by business education students in universities. The respondents agreed to all the item statements in Table 2 with mean ranging from (3.52 to 3.61) The standard deviations of the items are low from 0.58 to 0.67 indicating that their responses are not too widespread. More specifically, the analysis revealed that respondents rated the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on the acquisition of marketing skills by business education students in universities to a very high extent (Grand Mean = 3.58; SD =0.63).

Question Three: What is the extent of the influence of business education laboratories in office technology skills acquisition by business education students in universities?

Table 3:Mean responses of respondents on the influence of business education laboratories in office technology skills acquisition of business education students in universities

S/N	Items Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
13.	Business education laboratory has an influence on emailing skills acquisition	3.45	0.56	Agreed
14.	Business education laboratory influences presentation skills acquisition	3.55	0.66	Strongly Agreed
15.	Business education laboratory influences office management skills acquisition	3.61	0.67	Strongly Agreed
16.	Business education laboratory influences human management skills acquisition	3.54	0.56	Strongly Agreed
17.	Business education laboratory influences the decision. Making skills acquisition	3.51	0.62	Strongly Agreed
18.	Business education laboratory influences planning skills acquisition	3.53	0.60	Strongly Agreed
19.	Business education laboratory influences resource management skills acquisition	3.54	0.59	Strongly Agreed
20.	Business education laboratory influences computing skills acquisition	3.50	0.61	Strongly Agreed
	Grand Weighted Mean	3.53	0.61	Strongly Agreed

Source; Field survey, 2024

Table 3 reveals the mean responses of the respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on office technology skills acquisition by business education students in universities. The respondents agreed with all the item statements in Table 3 with a mean ranging from (3.45 to 3.54) The standard deviations of the items are low from 0.57 to 0.67 indicating that their responses are not too widespread. More specifically, the analysis revealed that respondents rated the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on the acquisition of office technology skills by business education students in universities to a very high extent (Grand Mean = 3.53; SD =0.61).

Testing of the Null Hypotheses.

Result of the null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significant.

in Tables to 7-9

$H_0$1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratory on financial accounting skills acquisition by business education students in universities

Table 4: Independent Sample t-test analysis of the mean ratings of male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratory on financial accounting skills acquisition

Group Institution	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	DF	P-value	Decision
Male	147	3.32	0.27				
				1.798	348	0.043	**$H_0$2**
Female	203	3.35	0.25				**Rejected**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The data in Table 4 reveals that there are 147 male and 203 female business education students. The analysis of data revealed that respondents rated the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on the acquisition of accounting skills by business education students in universities to a very high extent (Grand Mean = 3.56; SD =0.62). Their responses are close to the mean as the standard deviations are very low. The Table reveals that there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratory on financial accounting skills acquisition by business education students in universities (t_{348} = 1.798, P < 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratory on financial accounting skills acquisition by business education students in universities was rejected. This implies that business education students both male and female differ in their responses regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratory on financial accounting skills acquisition by business education students in universities

$H_0$2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratory on marketing skills acquisition by business education students in universities

Table 5: Independent Sample t-test analysis of the mean ratings of male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratory on marketing skills acquisition by business education students in universities.

Group Institution	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	DF	P-value	Decision
Male	147	3.41	0.22				
				1.521	348	0.003	**$H_0$2**
Female	203	3.52	0.29				**Rejected**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The data in table 5 reveals that there are 147 male and 203 female business education students. The analysis of data revealed that respondents rated the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on the acquisition of marketing skills by business education students in universities to a very high extent (Grand Mean = 3.58; SD =0.63).

Their responses are close to the mean as the standard deviations are very low. The Table reveals that there was a significant difference between the mean response of male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratory on marketing skills acquisition by business education students in universities (t_{348} = 1.521, P <

0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on marketing skills acquisition by business education students in universities was rejected. This implies that business education students both male and female differ in their responses regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratory on marketing skills acquisition by business education students in universities.

$H_0$2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratory on office technology skills and acquisition by business education students in the universities.

Table 6: Independent Sample t-test analysis of the mean rating of male and female business education students regarding extent of the influence of business education laboratory on office technology skills

Group Institution	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	DF	P-value	Decision
Male	147	3.25	0.52				
				0.564	348	0.042	**$H_0$3**
Female	203	3.52	0.59				**Rejected**
Source: Field Survey 2024							***P < 0.005***

The data in table 6 reveals that there are 147 male and 203 female business education students. The analysis of data revealed that respondents rated the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on the acquisition of office technology skills by business education students in universities to a very high extent (Grand Mean = 3.53; SD =0.61). Their responses are close to the mean as the standard deviations are very low. The Table reveals that there was a significant difference in the mean response of male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratory on office technology and management skills and acquisition and learning motivation by business education students in the universities (t_{348} = 0.564, P < 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in in the mean ratings of male and female respondents regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratory on office technology and management skills acquisition and learning motivation by business education students in the universities was rejected. This implies that business education students both male and female differ in their responses regarding the extent of the influence of business education laboratories on office technology and management skills and acquisition by business education students in the universities.

Discussion

Business education laboratories play a crucial role in shaping the practical skills of business education students in universities. The findings of this study revealed that these laboratories significantly influence the acquisition of accounting, marketing, and office technology skills, as evidenced by the high mean ratings across all skill areas. Specifically, respondents rated the impact of business education laboratories on accounting skills acquisition to a very high extent (Grand Mean = 3.56; SD = 0.62). This is not surprising, as accounting requires hands-on experience with bookkeeping, financial reporting, and computerized accounting systems. Business education laboratories provide students with the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in a simulated business environment, making

learning more practical and effective. The study also found a significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents regarding this influence (t348 = 1.798, P < 0.05), suggesting that gender differences may exist in students' perception of laboratory effectiveness, possibly due to variations in prior exposure or learning preferences. This aligns with Okoli and Igwe (2021), who found that students who receive laboratory-based accounting training demonstrate superior proficiency in financial analysis compared to those who rely solely on theoretical instruction. Similarly, the study showed that business education laboratories significantly impact the acquisition of marketing skills, with respondents rating the influence at a very high extent (Grand Mean = 3.58; SD = 0.63). Marketing requires both conceptual understanding and practical application, and business education laboratories provide students with opportunities to engage in market simulations, analyze consumer behavior, and develop advertising strategies. The significant difference between male and female respondents' means ratings (t348 = 1.521, P < 0.05) may be attributed to differences in familiarity with digital marketing tools or variations in confidence levels in using marketing technologies. This finding is supported by Uche and Nwafor (2019), who emphasized that business education laboratories serve as effective platforms for marketing skill development, particularly in areas like brand management and promotional strategy. In addition, the study found that business education laboratories play a vital role in office technology skills acquisition, as indicated by the high mean rating (Grand Mean = 3.53; SD = 0.61). Given that office technology skills—such as word processing, spreadsheet management, and office automation—are practical in nature, it is expected that business education laboratories provide the ideal environment for students to gain proficiency. The significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students (t348 = 0.564, P < 0.05) may stem from variations in technological exposure or confidence levels in using office automation tools. Supporting this, Chukwu and Ezeugo (2020) reported that students who undergo office technology training in laboratory settings exhibit higher competency levels in administrative tasks compared to those with limited exposure. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of business education laboratories in skill acquisition, emphasizing the need for universities to ensure these facilities are well-equipped to maximize their impact. The observed gender differences suggest the need for further research into how students of different backgrounds engage with laboratory-based learning. As previous studies have confirmed, practical exposure in well-equipped business education laboratories significantly enhances students' competencies, making them better prepared for real-world business environments.

Conclusion

This study clearly shows that business education laboratory significantly improves the acquisition of financial accounting, marketing, and office technology abilities among business education students in Nigerian institutions. Moreover, the results indicate significant disparities between male and female students in their perception of the influence of these labs, indicating the need for gender-responsive strategies in educational environments.

The study concludes that the hands-on experience these laboratories offer enhances comprehension of theoretical topics and students' drive to study, successfully equipping them for the requirements of the contemporary workforce.

Recommendations

1. Universities should equip business education laboratories with modern tools and technologies to enhance hands-on skill acquisition.
2. Educators should adopt gender-inclusive teaching strategies to address differences in students' perceptions and engagement with laboratory-based learning.
3. Further research should be conducted to explore the impact of prior exposure and learning preferences on students' utilization of business education laboratories.

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