

Business Studies and Employability Skills Development in Junior Secondary Schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State

Dr. Felicia Kikelomo Oluwalola
Department of Educational Management
Faculty of Education
University of Ilorin, Nigeria
doctoroluwalola@gmail.com

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Abstract

The study examined business studies and employability skills development in junior secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis Kwara State. Five research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. A survey research designed was adopted for the study. The population of this study comprises all the 4570 teachers in all the private and public junior secondary schools and the employers in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. However the target population includes all the 1305 business studies related teachers in all the junior secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. The sample of the study includes 250 teachers in all the junior secondary schools and 250 employers in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. A structured questionnaire titled “Business Studies Questionnaire” (BSQ) and “Employability Skill Development” (ESDQ) were used to obtain relevant data. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation while inferential statistics of Pearson Product-Moment correlation was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that level of knowledge acquisition in business studies was rated high by business studies teachers, employability skills level of junior secondary schools students were rated high by the employers of labour also, there was positive relationship exists between accounting, office practice, marketing and employability skills development in junior secondary school Ilorin Metropolis Kwara State. The study concluded that the students that graduated within Ilorin metropolis are possessed with basic soft skills; digital, technical and analytical skills required that could make them employable after graduation. Based on the findings it was recommended among others that there should be provisions of qualified teachers who can instill the right knowledge, innovations, skills, and attitude to the students for them to be employable in the outer world.

Keywords: *Business studies, employability, skill development*

Introduction

Education is seen as tool used in the development of countries social, political, technological and economic endeavors. Also, as the process whereby the organized knowledge of the past generation is made available for the current or newer generation. The general purpose of education is to equip an individual with the relevant skill required of the students to survive in the wider world. Several subjects had been designed by the curriculum developers to equip students with the necessary skills that will be required of them in the wider world. In labour markets the employers expect the graduates to demonstrate the knowledge gained to provide them with employability skill required for their job. The subjects that had been designed by experts to achieve these aims of developing employability skill in students of business studies include Office practice, Mathematics, Business Studies, Marketing, and Accounting among others.

Business studies have been regarded as a basic subject that is required of the students in the commercial world. In this period of economic meltdown, business studies can be considered as one of the fundamental ways for getting a success in life and to fit in the labour markets. It is also seen as a way of equipping our youth with necessary skills for them to stand on their own and not rely totally on white collar jobs. This has been the trend for decades of years which has reduced the rate of unemployment. The Collins Dictionary has defined business studies as “an academic subject that embraces areas such as accounting, marketing and economics.” Mostly, business studies are the study at an academic level of how businesses operate in the various global marketplaces, both at a practical and theoretical level. Various subjects are nested in business studies as stated above, which their purpose are different from one another, but they are all geared towards the same goals which is the inculcation of theoretical and practical aspect of business studies as a whole. Ahmed (2015) reported that business studies are an integral part of vocational education “which has encourages the use of the head and the hands in acquiring specific practical training required in business and industry at the junior secondary school level.” Business studies such as book keeping, commerce, office practice, shorthand and typewriting. While at the senior secondary school these studies are allowed to stand on their own as separate subjects whereby students move towards a career option which they are likely to pursue further professional training at the university. Oluwalola (2018) affirmed that learning of business studies in Junior Secondary schools required technical, psychomotor and critical thinking skills for effective learning to take place. If these skills are acquired it will enable the learner to have necessary skills to be self-reliant after their secondary education rather than looking for employment. Business studies as a course or program are defined as that course or aspect of study that inculcate in the students relevant skills that can be used in the business world. Therefore, the general objectives of Business Studies as stated in the Curriculum (2007), therefore are to: provide the orientation and basic skills with which to start an occupation for those who may not have opportunity for further training; provide basic business skills for personal use now and in the future; prepare students for further training in Business Studies; relate the knowledge and skills to the national economy; and develop basic skills in office occupations (Sakina, 2016). Also, Shuga (2010), explained that the main purposes for introducing Business Studies in secondary schools curriculum were to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to achieve success in the place of work, tertiary education or training, as well as our daily business life. In furtherance, Eze (2011), was in

support of this statement when he added that the goals of business studies curriculum were to enable students to:

- ❖ gain an understanding of business concepts through the study of subjects such as commerce, shorthand, office practice, book keeping and computer;
- ❖ develop the skills, including critical thinking skills, and strategies required for self-employment;
- ❖ apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired through the study of business to a variety of learning tasks and relate them to business phenomena on the local, national, and global levels; and
- ❖ develop lifelong learning skills that will help students adapt to technological advancements, the changing workplace, and the global economy (Sakina, 2016).

Employability is a multidimensional concept about individual capabilities of retaining a self-rewarding job, in employers' organizations as human resource requirements for fulfilling operational tasks to function effectively in order to meet up in the society. According to Yore and Knight (2006), employability skill is a set of achievements, skills, understanding, knowledge and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations and/or area of specialization, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the organization, the community and the economy at large. It is the college's responsibility to identify and implement the appropriate soft skills training approach to help students with this transition. An understanding of the attitudes in relation to these various skills is important because education and industry seem to work in separate systems, and employers historically have not clearly communicated their needs and expectations for the college graduates that they have sought to hire (HEA 2006). Considering the extent to which business studies contribute to the employability skill development of the students in the junior secondary schools, certain aspects and variables that contributed to this development include the course combination which include accounting, marketing, and office practice. Hence, these areas will be used in the measure of business studies in this study.

An employability skill has to do with the appropriate skills that have to be possessed by the students in order for them to function well in the world of work. Employability skills are the basic skills necessary for getting, keeping and doing well on a job and these can be divided into three categories: Basic Academic Skills, Higher-Order Thinking Skills, and Personal Qualities (Robinson, 2000). In furtherance, employability skills has been seen by Overtoom (2000) as transferable core skill groups that represent essential functional and enabling knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by the 21st century workplace. These skills are necessary for career success at all levels of employment and for all levels of education. Employers today are not looking for employees that are only capable in basic academic skills like reading, writing, science, mathematics, oral communication and listening, but they also seek and prefer students with higher order thinking skills like learning, reasoning, creative thinking, decision making and problem solving skills. They also prefer employees that have personal qualities which include responsibility, self-confidence, self-control, social skill, honesty, integrity, adaptability and flexibility, team spirit, self-direction, good attitude to work, cooperation, self-motivation and self-management (Romer, 2015). Employability skills are typically considered as essential qualifications for many job opportunities and hence have become necessary for an individual's employment success at just about any level within a business environment (Business Dictionary,

2015). Employability skills are necessary for success in the modern workplace and in the world of work.

Students' employability skills have been given so much attention where many countries of the world now devise a means by which the students are being tested whether they are equipped with the required skills or not. For instance, the Conference Board of Canada developed a checklist of employability skills that will be needed for one to enter, stay in, and progress in this present era (CBCES, 2000). Employability skills should be embedded in the curriculum; universities employ a range of initiatives to make them more explicit to students for the acquisition of the skill (Cranmer, 2006). Employability skills are the non-technical skills and knowledge necessary for effective participation in the workforce. They can include skills such as communication, self-management, problem solving and teamwork. They are also sometimes referred to as generic skills, capabilities, enabling skills or key competencies (Nishad, 2013). Lovejoy (2000), also said that in order to integrate employability standards into the curriculum, technical educators are required to use innovative teaching techniques. While designing the curriculum, planners should involve the industry partners so that they can incorporate real workplace procedures and systems in instructional strategies so they can be incorporated into the teaching and learning process by using innovative teaching methods and implementing authentic assessment so that students will be able to apply skills in real life situations (Riebe, Roepen, Santarelli, & Marchioro 2010).

From the foregoing, it is therefore necessary to determine the influence of business studies and employability skill development among junior secondary school students. It is based on this background that the study of business studies and employability skill development in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State is paramount to study.

Statement of the Problem

The outcries of parents and employers of labour have sensitized the educators about the quality of education offered to the students and the influence of such education on the students' and the society at large. What lead to the lamentation of people is the fact that the educational institutions are said to be producing half-baked graduates who are not equipped with relevant skills that will be required of them when they get to the larger society. The hope of every citizen is that the students produced should be able to fit into any job relevant to their area of study in schools. This is because the employers are finding it difficult to rely heavily on the product of the school. This is marked by their statement that the graduates are not prepared and they do not have the required skill to perform the job offer to them based on the skills the students bring to the society. Based on the observation of the researcher and interaction with some employers of labours, it was discovered that the students need to go through another set of training when they got employed as the skills received from schools cannot make them fit into the job offered to them.

Under these circumstances, it is generally believed that the study of business studies should bring about development of students with appropriate skills required of them in the business world (Sakina, 2016). The process of imparting unto the students the education that will make them competent enough to be able to fit into the system whenever they are employed is far from being realized. The knowledge acquired by students' while in schools cannot be measured with the soft skills that will make them employable after graduation. To address this, there is need to empirically study and ascertain the relationship that exist between business studies and employability skill development in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between business studies and employability skills development in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. Specifically, the study seeks to;

1. examine the level of knowledge acquisition in business studies in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State;
2. ascertain the level of employability skill of business studies students in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State;
3. examine the relationship between accounting and employability skills development in junior secondary school Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State;
4. find out the relationship between office practice and employability skills development in junior secondary school Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State;
5. ascertain the relationship between marketing and employability skills development in junior secondary school Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Research Question

The following research questions are raised to guide this study.

1. What is the extent of business studies in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State?
2. What is the level of employability skill development of business studies students in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State?
3. Examine the relationship between accounting and employability skills development in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State?
4. Establish the relationship between office practice and employability skills development in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State?
5. What is the relationship between marketing and employability skills development in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State?

Hypotheses

Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between accounting and employability skills development in junior secondary school, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between office practice and employability skill development in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Ho₃ There is no significant relationship between marketing and employability skill development in junior secondary school, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The researcher considered this design appropriate for the study because the study examined the relationship that existed between business studies and employability skill development in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. The population of this study was comprised of all the 4570 teachers in all the private and public junior secondary schools and the employers in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. However the target population of this study included of all the 1305 business studies related teachers in all of the junior secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. The sample of the study included 250 teachers in all the junior secondary schools and 250

employers in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. Simple random sampling technique were used to sample 297 employers in Ilorin Metropolis while stratified random sampling technique was used to sample 297 teachers out of 1305 teachers in Ilorin Metropolis. A simple random sampling technique was used to sample the employers in order to give all the employers equal chance to participate in the study, while a stratified random sampling technique was used to sample the teachers to ensure there was a fair representative from each school sampled. The instruments that were used in the collection of data were two set of questionnaires titled “Business Studies Questionnaire” (BSQ) and “Employability Skill Development Questionnaire” (ESDQ) which was filled by the teachers and the employers respectively. It was validated by four experts from University of Ilorin and Kwara State University Malet. The reliability coefficient was established using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient. The instrument yielded a reliability index of 0.76 and 0.80 respectively for each of the clusters. The researcher with the assistance of field researchers administered the questionnaires to the schools and the employers were approached directly in their organization. Mean and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions raised to guide the study, while inferential statistics of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The result of the study are presented and analyzed in the following tables.

Research Question One: What is the level of knowledge acquisition in business studies in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State as rated by business studies teachers?

Table 1

Level of Knowledge Acquisition in Business Studies in Junior Secondary Schools

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	0	0
Moderate	20	8
High	230	92
Total	250	100

Key: Low = 15-29; Moderate = 30-44; High = 45-60

Table 1 indicates the level of knowledge acquisition in business studies as rated by the teachers from sampled junior schools selected in Ilorin Metropolis. The level of knowledge acquisition in business studies was rated high (92%) by business studies teachers. This implies that the subjects considered under business studies have a high level of basic business knowledge that provides students with the ability to classify data into an element of accounting, important of record keeping and exchange of goods and values with others after their graduation from basic 9 class and prepared them with knowledge that will make them employable and self-reliance.

Research Question Two: What is the level of employability skill of business studies students in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State as rated by employers of labour?

Table 2
Level of Employability Skills of Business Studies Students in Junior Secondary Schools

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	0	0
Moderate	31	12.4
High	219	87.6
Total	250	100

Key: Low = 15-29; Moderate = 30-44; High = 45-60

Table 2 shows the level of employability skills of business studies students as rated by employers of labour sampled within Ilorin Metropolis. The employability skills level of junior secondary school students were rated high (87.6%) by the employers of labour. This means that graduates of junior secondary schools (Upper Basic 9) possessed with basic soft skills, digital and technical skills and analytical skills required that could make them employable after graduation.

Hypothesis Testing

Before performing the correlation analysis, preliminary analysis was conducted to check for outliers (that is, data points that are out on their own, either very high or very low, or away from the main cluster of points). Hence, with the knowledge of serious influence outliers can have on outcome of analyses, extreme outliers were removed from the data set which reduced the sample from 250 to 229.

H_{00} There is no significant relationship between business studies and employability skills in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Table 3
Business Studies and Employability Skills Development in Junior Secondary Schools

Variables	N	R	p Value	Decision
Business Studies	229	.147	.026	Ho₁
Employability Skills Development	229			Rejected

***Significant $p < 0.05$**

Result from Table 3, the Pearson correlation analysis value, showed a low, positive correlation between the two variables, $r = 0.147$, $n = 229$, $p = 0.026 < 0.05$. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected. This implies that a positive significant relationship exists between the business studies and employability skills development of junior secondary schools' students, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State

Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between accounting and employability skills development in junior secondary school, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Table 4

Accounting and Employability Development Skills in Junior Secondary Schools

Variables	N	R	p Value	Decision
Accounting	229			
Employability Skills Development	229	.080	.231	Ho₁ Accepted

Non-Significant p > 0.05

From Table 4, the Pearson Products Moment Correlation analysis value revealed a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .080$, $n = 229$, $p = .231 > 0.05$. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. This means that a positive non-significant relationship exists between the accounting and employability skills development of junior secondary schools' students, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State

Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between office practice and employability skill development in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Table 5

Office Practice and Employability Skills Development in Junior Secondary Schools

Variables	N	R	p Value	Decision
Office Practice	229			
Employability Skills Development	229	.060	.364	Ho₂ Accepted

***Non-Significant p > 0.05**

From Table 5, the Pearson Correlation analysis value indicated a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .028$, $n = 229$, $p = .668 > 0.05$. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. This means that a positive non-significant relationship exists between the office practice and employability skills development of junior secondary schools' students, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State

Ho₃ There is no significant relationship between marketing and employability skill development in junior secondary school, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Table 6

Marketing and Employability Development Skills in Junior Secondary Schools

Variables	N	R	p Value	Decision
Marketing	229			
		.147*	.03	Ho₁

***Significant $p < 0.05$**

As shown in Table 6, the Pearson Correlation analysis value showed a low, positive correlation between the two variables, $r = 0.147$, $n = 229$, $p = 0.03 < 0.05$. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected. This implies that a positive significant relationship exists between the Marketing and employability skills development of junior secondary schools' students, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Discussion of Findings

From the study it was found that the level of knowledge acquisition in business studies was rated high by business studies teachers. This implies that the subjects considered under business studies have a high level of basic business knowledge that provides students with the ability to classify data into an element of accounting, important of record keeping and exchange of goods and values with others after their graduation from basic 9 class and prepared them with knowledge that will make them employable and self-reliance. The findings is in line with the study of Albrecht and Sack (2000) said that to meet the challenges of the changing world, the schools should provide graduate with strong technical knowledge and the essential accounting skills to gain the knowledge and the essential skills to gain employment and make an immediate contribution to a business

The finding of the study revealed that employability skills level of junior secondary schools students were rated high by the employers of labour. This means that graduates of junior secondary schools (Upper Basic 9) possessed with basic soft skills, digital and technical skills and analytical skills required that could make them employable after graduation. This is in agreement with the opinion of Romer (2015) who stated that employability skills of the students, particularly fundamental skills, teamwork skills and personal management skills, as assessed by the students themselves and their on-the-job training supervisors or employers, are above average.

The findings also revealed that there was a significant relationship between business studies and employability skills development in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. This results is in line with the view of Sakina (2016) that significant differences exist in the extent to which business studies influences students' skills acquisition of keyboarding skills for self reliance and also students acquiring of computer skills for self reliance in junior secondary schools, Kaduna State.

The study indicates that there was a positive non significant relationship between accounting and employability skill development in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. This study agreed with the result of Seedwell (2015) that employers expect more knowledge of accounting packages and spreadsheet competencies for entry level graduates.

The hypothesis tested reveals that there exists a positive non significant relationship between office practice and employability skills development in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. The findings of this study differs from that of Seedwell (2015) who stated that as far as technological skills are concerned, employers indicated that the students are

better trained in word-processing and knowledge of communications software skills. This implies that whatever the nature of the office and the way it is being operated, if the students are exposed to the adequate knowledge of office practice as a course in studying business studies, it will make them to be more productive in the operation and the management of an office

The study also revealed that a positive significant relationship exist between marketing and employability skill development in junior secondary schools, Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. The findings is in line with the study of Harrigan and Hulbert (2011) highlight how analytical skills are in short supply among marketing graduates, and they suggest integrating data analysis in marketing courses and developing new courses completely dedicated to analytical skills in the curriculum. This will enable to fit in, in the world of work and meet up with the demand of the employers in the labour market.

Conclusion

It is a general believe that the knowledge of business studies will provide the students with the required employability skills development when they got to the world of work. Based on the findings of this study, most of the subjects considered under business studies have a high level of business knowledge that provides students with the ability to classify data into an element of accounting, important of record keeping, and exchange of goods and values with others after their graduation from basic 9 and prepared them with knowledge that will make them employable and self-reliance and the students that graduated within Ilorin metropolis are possessed with basic soft skills, digital and technical skills and analytical skills required that could make them employable after graduation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the followings recommendations are made;

1. There should be provisions of qualified teacher who can instill the right knowledge, skills, and attitude to the students for them to be employable in the outer world.
2. There should also be allocations of enough time to teach the business related subject for better understanding so as to improve their intellectual and application aspect.
3. There should be provision of facilities to be used in order to enable them familiar with the techniques on the methods of operation.
4. Business Studies curriculum contents should innovative and properly taught so as to encourage acquisition of accounting, office practice and marketing skills in junior secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara state;
5. Business Studies and vocational training at the junior secondary level should be encouraged through proper funding, provision of state of the art equipment for better acquisition in order to make them employable;
6. Business Studies curriculum contents should be accurately delivered in order to achieve the desired objective of students which will be of benefit to them in the labour market for students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara state.

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