

INFRASTRUCTURAL AND HUMAN CHALLENGES TO TEACHING BUSINESS STUDIES IN RURAL SCHOOLS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

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Abstract

Amidst the need to improve the standard of education in Nigeria, the study investigated the human and infrastructural factors that militate against teaching Business Studies in rural secondary schools in Enugu State. Results showed that lack of facilities for teaching and learning pose problems to teaching of Business Studies, as well as human factors. It was recommended that all the stakeholders - the parents, school administration, old students associations and the Ministry of Education - should be involved in solving the problems by providing needed facilities, and building the capacity of the teachers. It was also recommended that school counselors should attend the meetings of all stakeholders to enlighten them on the need to provide needed teaching and learning facilities. Students' interest should be aroused through giving guidance to alleviate the teacher's problems.

Introduction

Human beings are adjudged the fastest in reasoning, co-ordination and learning, besides being the only organisms that can control and manage their environment through their reasoning and learning processes. Learning, according to Hockenbury and Hockenbury (2000), is a relatively enduring change in behaviour or knowledge as a result of experience. There are simple forms of learning, such as sensitization and habituation, which occur at the levels of stimulus and response learning. The complex forms require satisfaction of academic, social, political or economic needs. Learning is important to human beings because knowledge is acquired through it and there is also the possibility of civilization of humankind (Nnachi, 2007).

Learning opportunities are offered both at home and in school. At home, parents teach their children many types of skills or habits, besides the norms and mores of the society. In the school, learning opportunities are those additional programmes that are provided by teachers during the regular school days. These learning opportunities provide students with intellectual enrichment and academic support or both.

Teaching can be conceptualized as a means of instruction which involves teachers guiding students to learn, it also helps people acquire knowledge (through discovery, probing and examining activities) which they need to earn a living and lead a useful and rewarding life. Teaching provides a veritable environment for people to relate and pass knowledge from one generation to another.

Teaching can also be conceptualized as a profession. In this case, certification is needed which requires going through the processes of formal education or training, acquiring specialized knowledge in particular subject areas and maintaining standards of performance that are constantly redefined and expanded by the profession. This is the concept of teaching used in this study.

Professional responsibilities of teachers vary from country to country and according to the age and level taught. The general responsibility includes active and sometimes conflicting roles in the school and community. Teachers act as parent substitute, confidant, disciplinarian, community leader and exhibit acceptable behaviour model. Approximately two thirds of the world's teachers are women, the great majority being employed at the elementary level (Goetz, 2005).

Teacher's skills and attitudes influence everything that happens in their classrooms. Good teachers, who know their subjects and understand the topics they are teaching, present lessons in creative ways that help students of different ability levels and learning styles master the topics, thus enhancing students' interest in the various subjects. Teachers equally help students as much by personal examples as they do by offering instructions. Students, who see their teachers demonstrate patience, trustworthiness, attention to work and love of learning, may be encouraged to develop similar qualities in themselves and may also accept assistance more readily from a teacher whom they respect and admire.

Teaching opportunities exist in both urban and rural areas. Urban or central cities, according to the Bureau of the Census Standard Metropolitan Statistic (2005), is an area of a population greater or equal to 400,000 or a population density greater than or equal to 6,000 per square mile. A rural area, on the other hand, is a place with a population of less than 2,500. In a research by National Education Association (NEA) in 2008, it was found that about half of the nation's public schools and approximately 40 percent of public school students are in rural areas and small towns. In terms of student population, the ratio is 17:5 in central city schools or urban areas and 16:1 in rural schools. In effect, the population in rural schools is lower than urban schools.

For most teachers (in urban or rural areas), practical day-to-day aspects of their jobs include preparing to teach the students and guiding and assisting student learning. To enhance this work, infrastructural facilities (both physical

and administrative) have to be made available. The physical infrastructural facilities include a comfortable classroom with seats to enable students write effectively, laboratories for science, technical and business studies, among others. Textbooks and other teaching materials, such as computers and typewriters, are equally necessary, especially for business studies. There is also the need for electric power supply, and access roads to and from the school.

In a report by the NEA (1998), rural schools recorded lower rates of internet access and the use of telecommunications to access information and keep records. Buildings are inadequate in 3 out of 10 schools in rural areas and small towns, while approximately one half of the schools have unsatisfactory environmental conditions. Rural schools also face additional challenges related to the non-availability of high quality instructional staff, access to professional development opportunities, among others (Forbes, 2008).

Administrative infrastructure have to do with provision of school curriculum, from where teachers prepare their daily and weekly teaching plans. Also, there has to be capacity building of staff members. In terms of capacity building, when teachers in rural schools are compared with those in urban schools, rural teachers are less likely to have participated in in-service or professional development programmes in educational technology, teaching methods and students' assessment (NEA, 1998). Rural teachers, however, have participated in school or district workshops, extension, adult education or college courses with their urban counterparts.

For effectiveness and up to date information to the students, a good teacher needs to update his/her knowledge (Dean in Uya, 2004). This is confirmed by Nwagbara (2002), who posits that if teachers, as human resource developers, do not undergo periodical on-the-job training or orientation, their knowledge will become obsolete.

Business Studies is one of the integrated courses at the junior secondary level, and Business Education at the tertiary level. They contribute significantly to economic self-reliance through entrepreneurship. This self-reliance is made

possible, according to Osuala (2004), because Business Studies consists of two parts, namely:

- (a) Office Education, which includes subjects like Typewriting, Bookkeeping, Business Management, Shorthand and Office Practice, that equip students for office careers and eventual self-employment or employment with other employers of labour.
- (b) General Business Education, which is a programme that provides students with information and competencies needed in both managing personal businesses and affecting the business world.

Statement of the problem

It is generally believed that school conditions are adverse in rural schools than in urban cities. In many rural schools, therefore, provision of funds is inadequate and teachers are not offered in-service training opportunities. From the researchers' experiences as Business Studies teacher, students were not enthusiastic about Business Studies subjects. From the NEA (1998) report, three out of ten rural and small town schools have inadequate buildings and approximately one-half have unsatisfactory environmental conditions. The questions, then, are what are the conditions in the rural schools? what are the infrastructural and human challenges in teaching Business Studies in Enugu State and their implications for Guidance and Counseling.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the problems experienced by Business Studies teachers in the rural schools. The study was aimed at determining the human and infrastructural problems encountered by Business Studies teachers in rural schools and based on gender/type of school (boys/girls). The counseling implications were equally highlighted. Specific objectives were:

1. To determine the human and infrastructural problems encountered by Business Studies teachers in rural schools.
2. To determine the human and infrastructural problems encountered by Business Studies teachers based on gender.
3. To determine the human and infrastructural problems based on type of school (boys/girls)?
4. To determined the Counselor's strategies to alleviate the problems.

Research questions

The following research questions were formulated for the study:

1. What are the human and infrastructural problems encountered by Business Studies teachers in rural schools?
2. Are the human and infrastructural problems encountered by Business Studies teachers based on gender?
3. Are the human and infrastructural problems based on type of school (boys/girls)?
4. What are the Counselor's strategies to alleviate the problems?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses formulated to guide the study were:

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference between female and male teachers on human and infrastructural processes encountered by Business Studies based on gender.
- Ho₂: There are no significant differences between female and male teachers on human and infrastructural problems encountered by business studies based on school type (boys/girls).

Significance

The findings of this study will sensitize Principals to the problems of the teachers for appropriate action. The Ministry of Education and other stakeholders, like the Parents/Teachers Association (PTA), will equally be sensitized to the problems in teaching Business Studies for taking steps to address them.

The teachers themselves stand to benefit from the findings of the study if disseminated to attract interventions from the school administration, PTA, and the Ministry of Education to make their work easier. The results of the study will also sensitize curriculum planners and implementers on the need to put more emphasis on teacher competence in utilization and improvisation of instructional materials.

Methodology**Design of the study**

The study adopted a survey research method. Survey research method is used when a study centres on individuals and their opinions, beliefs, motivations and behaviour that help to explain the behavior of the entire population (Osuala, 2004).

Area of the study

The study was carried out in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. It is characterized by both urban and rural schools.

Sample size

The sample size was census population of 400 respondents made up of Business Studies teachers and school Guidance Counselors drawn from the Education Zone.

Instrument for data collection

The instrument for data collection was researcher's constructed questionnaire, titled 'Business Studies Teachers' Problems Inventory' (BSTPI) and comprising 51 items in an open ended structural format, with sections on students, teachers, school, and equipment. The instrument was subjected to face validity by three experts, two from the Department of Vocational Teacher Education and one from Educational Foundations Department, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Data collection technique

Four hundred copies of the 'Business Studies Teachers' Problems Inventory' (BSTPI) questionnaire were distributed to respondents with the help of three trained research assistants, who also helped in the collection of the completed questionnaire.

Data analysis

Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance

Results

Research question 1. What are the human and infrastructural factors militating against teaching of Business Studies in rural schools?

Table 1 shows that 10 out of 15 factors pose problems in teaching Business Studies in rural secondary schools. Items 3, 13, and 14 pose the highest problems, while items 1, 6, 12, 2 were not accepted as problematic.

Table 1: Mean responses on infrastructural and human factors militating against teaching business studies

S/N.	Items	X	SD	Remark
Human Factors – Student				
1.	Too many students in the class	2.32	1.11	Not accepted
2.	Too few students	2.48	1.05	Not accepted
3.	Students lack interest in B/S	3.10	1.16	Accepted
4.	Student lack learning materials	3.16	0.99	Accepted
Human factors – Teacher				
5.	Few teachers	2.48	1.01	Not accepted
6.	Teachers not specialists	2.30	1.07	Not accepted
7.	Truancy of teachers	3.04	1.14	Accepted
8.	Teacher computer illiteracy	2.74	1.17	Accepted
School factors				
9	Inadequate period of teaching	2.72	1.06	Accepted
10.	Lack of textbooks for teachers	3.08	0.98	Accepted
11.	Outdated teacher knowledge	2.52	1.19	Accepted
12.	Frequent teacher transfer	2.38	1.20	Not accepted
Infrastructure				
13.	Lack of typewriters	3.34	0.93	Accepted
14.	Lack of computers	3.46	0.99	Accepted
15.	No teaching laboratory	3.08	1.12	Accepted

Research question 2: Are the human and infrastructural problems encountered based on gender?

From Table 2, males see factors as militating against quality teaching of Business Studies, except items 1 and 9. On the other hand, the females see all items, except 2, 8, 9 and 14, as militating factors.

Table 2: Mean responses on the human and infrastructural factors militating against teaching business studies based on gender

		Male			Female		
Student factor							
S/N	Item	X	SD	Remark	x	SD	Remark
1.	Too many students	1.89	0.93	Not accepted	2.83	1.10	Accepted
2.	Too few students	2.52	0.97	Accepted	2.43	1.15	Not accepted
3.	Students not interested	2.96	1.18	Accepted	3.26	1.12	Accepted
4.	Student lack of materials	3.26	0.77	Accepted	3.04	1.21	Accepted
Equipment factor							
5.	Lack of typewriters	3.41	0.96	Accepted	3.52	0.89	Accepted
6.	Lack of computers	3.22	1.04	Accepted	3.48	0.89	Accepted
7.	Lack of laboratory	3.26	1.05	Accepted	2.87	1.17	Accepted
Teacher factor							
8.	Few teachers	2.56	0.93	Accepted	2.39	1.11	Not accepted
9.	Teachers not specialists	2.41	1.07	Not accepted	2.17	1.06	Not accepted
10.	Truancy of teachers	3.11	0.97	Accepted	2.96	1.32	Accepted
11.	Teacher computer illiteracy	2.78	1.11	Accepted	2.71	1.25	Accepted
School factor							
12.	Few periods for B.S.	2.70	0.98	Accepted	2.74	1.16	Accepted
13.	Lack of teacher textbooks	2.78	1.08	Accepted	3.43	0.72	Accepted
14.	Lack in-servicetraining for teachers	2.56	1.14	Accepted	2.48	1.26	Not accepted

Research question 3: Are the human and infrastructural problems encountered based on type of school - Boys/Girls.

From Table 3, all the items are problematic, except sending teachers to in-service training and the population of the students offering Business Studies.

Table 3: Human and infrastructural factors by type of school (Boys/Girls).

		Male			Female		
Student factor							
S/N	Item	X	SD	Remark	x	SD	Remark
1.	Too many students	2.00	1.01	Not accepted	2.57	1.13	Accepted
2.	Too few students	2.41	1.04	Not accepted	2.54	1.06	Not accepted
3.	Students not interested	3.14	1.07	Accepted	3.07	1.23	Accepted
4.	Student lack of materials	3.41	0.90	Accepted	2.96	1.03	Accepted
Equipment factor							
5.	Lack of typewriters	3.86	0.35	Accepted	3.14	1.10	Accepted
6.	Lack of computers	3.36	0.89	Accepted	3.32	1.05	Accepted
7.	Lack of laboratory	3.26	1.24	Accepted	2.87	1.17	Accepted
Teacher factor							
8.	Few teachers	2.56	1.16	Accepted	2.39	1.11	Not accepted
9.	Teachers not specialists	2.41	1.03	Not accepted	2.17	1.06	Not accepted
10.	Truancy of teachers	3.11	1.22	Accepted	2.96	1.32	Accepted
11.	Teacher computer illiteracy	2.78	1.17	Accepted	2.71	1.25	Accepted
School factor							
12.	Few periods for B.S.	2.70	1.11	Accepted	2.74	1.16	Accepted
13.	Lack of teacher textbooks	2.78	0.99	Accepted	3.43	0.72	Accepted
14.	Lack in-servicetraining for teachers	2.56	1.28	Accepted	2.48	1.26	Not accepted

Research question 4: What are the strategies to be adopted by counselors to alleviate the problems of teaching business studies?

Table 4: Strategies to be adopted by counselors

S/N.	Items	X	SD	Remark
1.	Organise career talks for the students on various Business Studies subjects by entrepreneurs (fashion designers, accountants, confectioners, etc)	3.24	0.40	Accepted
2.	Attendance to PTA meetings in the school to educate them on career opportunities in business education	3.84	0.37	Accepted
3.	Use of cognitive restructuring	3.88	0.33	Accepted
4.	Organise group guidance activities for students on study habit and taking examinations to spur and encourage them unto good performance	3.24	0.43	Accepted
5.	Organize workshops for teachers internally accepted in the school in conjunction with the principal on teaching method, improvisation of teaching materials and student/teacher relationship.	3.72	0.60	Accepted
6.	Organise a "home coming" for old students to give them on the spot situation of their alma matter. It will spur them to provide needed teaching materials	3.92	0.27	Accepted
7.	Regular campaigns for community participation (through traditional rulers and community leaders) in the provision of needed learning facilities to alleviate the problems of teaching business studies in their schools	3.12	0.33	Accepted
8.	Gathering and giving information to students on sources of loans and grants to establish private business after school to sensitize and encourage them	3.12	0.33	Accepted

From Table 4, all the strategies are accepted by counselors with educating the PTA and other stakeholders through attending their meetings on career opportunities in business education, restructuring the student's perception of

Business Education and old students' participation in providing needed teaching materials as the highest accepted practice.

Test of hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the human and infrastructural problems militating against the teaching of business education based on gender.

Table 5: t-test statistical analysis of the significant difference between mean ratings of male and female teachers on problems militating against quality teaching of business education based on gender.

Sex of respondent	X	Sd	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Remark
Male	55.33	0.764	88	1.16	1.96	Rejected
Female	54.17	10.31				

From Table 5, the t-calculated value is less than the t-critical value. The hypothesis is hereby rejected.

Ho₂: Type of school will not significantly influence the problems militating against quality teaching of business education.

Table 6: t-test statistical analysis of the significant difference

Respondent	X	sd	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Remark
Boys	53.45	9.47	98	-1.339	1.96	Rejected
Girls	55.86	8.43				

From Table 6, the t-calculated is less than the t-critical value. The null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

Discussion

The results showed that human and infrastructural factors, such as students' lack of interest in business studies and lack of requisite textbooks for teachers' guide, pose problems in rural schools. Teacher factors, such as not being computer compliant and truancy, came into play. School factor, such as inadequate time allocation to Business Studies, lack of teaching materials and in-service training, militate against teaching of Business Studies in rural schools.

Typewriters and computers for teaching Business Studies were lacking. There are no teaching laboratories or typewriting/computer rooms. These findings tend to support the NEA (1998) report that poor funding in schools has been an issue of concern, as it hinders provision of necessary physical infrastructure needed for teaching. About 37.5 per cent and 40.3 per cent of funds from State Governments in 1995 went to urban and urban fringe schools, while 22.1 per cent went to rural and small town schools. This implies that there was low and unequal funding of secondary schools, which may have affected the provision of needed learning facilities and consequently, created problems for Business Studies teachers.

Male Business Studies teachers saw all the investigated factors, except student population and not being experts in Business Studies, as problematic, while the females saw students population, not being experts in Business Studies, truancy of Business Studies teachers, and lack of in-service training for teachers as problematic. Boys felt that students population, and the teachers not being Business Studies specialists were problems, while girls' schools saw few students, few teachers and non Business Studies specialist teachers, as problems. But, the difference was not significant.

The results were not surprising, as people's interests and values differ (especially along gender lines). What one individual may find problematic may not be so for another individual. Besides, these teachers in the field know which areas in their work pose problems to them.

If the situation is allowed to continue, the entrepreneurial vision of the Federal Government of Nigeria through education will be aborted. The counselor, whose counseling services target primarily the students, equally reaches out to the parents, school administration, teachers and other significant agencies to influence or enhance the students' welfare. So the counselor is in a better position to interact and reach out to educational stakeholders through regular attendance to their meetings in order to spur them to provide the necessary materials to alleviate the teachers' problems in the schools, and consequently, enhance the welfare of the students.

Counseling services include information sourcing and dissemination. This service comes handy in this situation, as giving information on sources of soft loans for entrepreneurial activities after school to students and even their parents will encourage them to study and do well in Business Studies. The school can also benefit from the informational aspect of counseling because, the counselor can equally provide information on sources of funds for the school that will help them to provide the needed teaching and learning materials. For instance, in schools with Home Economics, Fine and Applied Arts, and Technical and Woodwork, the counselor can source for periods and location of exhibitions, where the school's products can be displayed and sold to get funds. The counselor can equally organize one in the school in collaboration with the teachers and stakeholders.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Business Studies teachers experience problems in rural schools, which range from human, infrastructural to physical factors. Human factors are teacher truancy, lack of in-service training for teachers, among others. Infrastructural factors are lack of typewriters and computers, while physical factors are lack of text books and laboratory for teaching Business Studies.

All the lacks were attributed to inadequate funding to provide the basic materials and build the capacity of the teachers. It was revealed by school counselors that the situation could be remedied by their engaging in aggressive campaigns on parents/teachers association, old students, the principal and the Government to provide the materials. Fundraising activities in the school can also be pioneered by them.

It is, therefore, recommended that the school counselors should take up the challenges to teaching Business Education in order to alleviate the problems. Their intervention will equally enhance the study of Business Studies, thereby equipping the nation with needed entrepreneurs. The findings also highlight the importance of having guidance counselors in all secondary schools in the country.

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