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PERFORMANCE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES IN ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS IN REGISTERED BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to assess the performance of university business education graduates working in registered business establishments in Anambra State. The population consisted of 268 managers of 55 registered establishments that have business education graduates in their employment. One research question and one hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance were used. The instrument employed for data collection was fifteen item questionnaire. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were employed in analyzing data relative to the research question while t-test inferential statistics was employed in testing the hypothesis. The findings revealed that university business education graduates performed efficiently in 15 specified administrative functions and significant difference was not found in respondents' mean ratings as a result of their establishments. It was concluded that the graduates studied performed efficiently in administrative functions articulated in the study. It was recommended that the planners and implementers of university business education programme should maintain their standards of nurturing their students to ensure continued efficient performance of the graduates in employment.

Introduction

Business education programme has dual aims of training teachers of business subjects and office workers for different types of establishments. There is no automatic employment for business education graduates in the schools hence they scout for and get employed in different positions in business establishments. While some reports such as Iwuoha (1999), Ile and Okolocha (2005), Agomuo (2005) and Onah and Okolo (2010) expressed fears that the graduates would not fit properly into modern offices due to technological changes, business education programme has been undergoing revisions (VOCED, 2005, NCCE, 2008 and 2012) leading to the inculcation of new skills and competences into the graduates. The interest of the researchers, therefore, was to assess the performance of business education graduates in administrative functions in the establishments where they are employed in order to ascertain their status in this area.

In the degree programme of business education, courses like the "Organization and administration of vocational education" and "Management of business education" are taught.

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These courses would have exposed the graduates to philosophical foundations of administration to enable then perform administrative functions effectively and efficiently.

Administration, according to Amadi, Orikpe and Osinem (1998), could be defined as the guidance, leadership and control of efforts of individuals in an organization towards a common goal. Administration could refer to people who plan, organize and run a business, an institution and other establishments. Okoye (2010) stated that administration can be defined as the activities of groups co-operating to accomplish common goals. According to Okoye, it is the organization and use of men and materials to accomplish a purpose. Every administrative organization has identifiable purposes, goals and planned system of co-operation. While administration of small organizations may be relatively easy, the administration of complex organizations (giant manufacturing and distribution firms) is extremely difficult because the goals and objectives of the vast and complex organizations are complex and their attainment requires recruitments, training, development and management of personnel from almost every profession and skill. A lot of administrative functions are exposed in Okoye (2010) such as co-operating with other people (co-executives and sub-ordinates) to establish and sustain administrative activities to achieve set goals, co-operating in the context of organizations (planned system of co-operative effort), ensuring that well defined goals and objectives are being pursued and ensuring the recruitment, training, deploying and well managed personnel.

Performance has to do with how well or badly one does something and how well or badly something works. The view of Ibigbami (2004) posited that business teachers should demonstrate specific skills, apply knowledge and possess professional qualities that will enable them to prepare students who can meet social demand for high performance. Onwuchekwa (1993) affirms that the nature of a business organization will determine the behaviour of its employees and that the way the manager of a business organization directs the affairs of the workers will determine the workers' behaviour. By implication, this will equally affect the performance of workers.

An establishment is an organization, a large institution or a hotel, an educational, a research, a medical, a military or a political institution. Ezeagu and Ibe (1987) have pointed out that establishments could be manufacturing or service in nature based on the objectives and product(s) of the organizations. Manufacturing establishments create goods while service establishments employ such goods and people to serve people. This study focused on registered business establishments because their registration particulars gave the researcher information of where to locate them, name of their managers and nature of their businesses.

Research Question

How efficient are graduates of university business education programme in performing administrative functions in business establishments' offices?

Hypothesis

Managers in manufacturing establishments do not differ significantly from those in service establishments in their mean ratings of business education graduates' performance in administrative functions.

Method

The study was carried out in Anambra State of Nigeria, using business establishments which are registered with the state Chambers of Commerce located at Awka, Nnewi and Onitsha. Fifty five registered business establishments, which were functional, accessible and had the business education graduates in their employment, were studied. A total of 268 managers were found in the fifty five establishments. There was no sampling: the population was studied in entirety. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. A fifteen item questionnaire validated by experts in the field was used. The instrument was pilot tested and Crombach Alpha measure of internal consistency indicating a high degree of consistency was used to analyze data collected from the pilot test. A reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained indicating a high degree of reliability. The researchers collected data by personal contact. Out of 268 copies of the instrument distributed, 209 copies (78%) were completed and returned. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to analyze data to answer the research question while the inferential statistic of t- test was employed in testing the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Where the probability (p) value is equal to or greater than the stated level of significance (0.05), the difference is significant and the null hypothesis is rejected. If the probability value is less than the stated level of significance (0.05), the difference is not significant and the hypothesis is accepted.

Results

Research Question

How efficient are graduates of university business education programme in performing administrative functions in business establishment offices?

The data relating to the research question are presented in Table 1

Table 1: **Respondents' Mean Rating of Business Education Graduates in Administrative Functions**

N = 209

S/N	Aspects of Administrative Functions	X	SD	Remarks
1	Making decisions.	4.48	0.63	Efficient
2	Allocating resources	4.18	0.96	Efficient
3	Directing the activities of others	4.35	0.70	Efficient
4	Facilitating progress	4.08	0.92	Efficient
5	Inspiring a group to accomplish organizational goals	4.26	0.61	Efficient
6	Delegating duties	4.32	0.61	Efficient

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7	Communicating effectively in English language	4.26	0.63	Efficient
8	Applying specialized knowledge (expertise) in the work	4.18	0.91	Efficient
9	Adapting to innovations promptly	3.90	0.93	Efficient
10	Developing technical skills on the job	4.23	0.83	Efficient
11	Setting annual objectives for organizational units	3.83	0.93	Efficient
12	Setting performance goals for individual workers (co-employees) i.e. colleagues and sub-ordinates	4.08	0.84	Efficient
13	Leading periodic reviews of performance (performance appraisals)	3.95	1.07	Efficient
14	Assigning priorities to objectives (i.e. ranking and weighing of objectives)	4.13	0.91	Efficient
15	Demonstrating charismatic qualities that induces loyalty, devotion and zeal of the followers	4.15	1.04	Efficient
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	**4.16**	**0.83**	**Efficient**

Data in Table 1 show that the mean ratings for the 15 items ranged between 3.83 and 4.48. This means that the graduates performed all the administrative functions efficiently. The standard deviation of 0.61 and 1.07 show that the respondents were homogeneous in their mean ratings.

Hypothesis

Managers in manufacturing establishments do not differ significantly from those in service establishments in their mean ratings of business education graduates' performance in administrative functions.

The result of the t-test conducted in respect of this hypothesis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: t- test Analysis of Respondents' Mean Rating of Business Education Graduates' Performance in Administrative Functions Based on Type of Establishment

Groups	N	Mean	S.D	t	P value	Remarks
M.E	16	3.95	0.44	-2.19	0.03	Not significance
S.E	26	4.28	4.49			

Analysis in Table 2 indicates that the probability value is 0.03 which is less than the significance value of 0.05. This means that the difference in the mean ratings is not significant. Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that managers in manufacturing establishments do not differ significantly from those in service establishments in their mean ratings of business education graduates' performance in administrative functions is accepted.

Discussion

Findings in respect of the research question as shown in Table 1 revealed that university business education graduates are efficient in making decisions, allocating resources, directing the activities of others, facilitating progress and inspiring a group to accomplish organizational goals. Business education graduates are efficient in delegating duties, communicating in English language, applying specialized knowledge in their work, adapting to innovations promptly and developing technical skills on the job they perform. It was also found that business education graduates are efficient in setting annual objectives for organizational units, setting performance goals for individual workers (colleagues and subordinates), leading periodic reviews of performance (performance appraisal), assigning priorities to objectives (ranking and weighing of objectives) and demonstrating charismatic qualities that induce loyalty, devotion and zeal of other workers.

Amadi, Orikpe and Osinem (1998) explained that a good administrator is one who helps a group of individuals to achieve the set objectives with a minimum expenditure of resources and effort. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) and Okoye (2010) indicated that administration co-operates with others to achieve goals and utilizes effective communication for efficiency. The graduates were found efficient in effective communication in agreement with FRN (2004) and Okoye (2010). Bradford (1976) claimed that administrative work involves creating a climate where an employee's responses to instructions are of voluntary compliance or co-operation. In agreement with this claim, the graduates were found efficient in demonstrating charismatic qualities that induce other workers to display loyalty, devotion and zeal in following management directives.

The graduates were efficient in making decisions, allocating resources and directing the activities of others. These findings support Ezeobi (2011) who stated that administrators make decisions, allocate resources and direct the activities of others to attain goals. The graduates studied were efficient in applying specialized knowledge (expertise) in their work. This finding reflects the opinion of Ogunfunminiyi and Adedijo (2010) who specified that expertise is needed in administrative functions.

The difference between the mean ratings of managers in manufacturing and service establishments on the performance of business education graduates in administrative functions was not significant. This implied that the graduates can perform administrative functions in both manufacturing and service establishments.

Conclusion

It was concluded that the graduates studied performed efficiently in the functions articulated in the study. It was also concluded that the graduates were measuring up to the aim of the minimum standards controlling the programme which indicate that they can work in business establishment offices in addition to teaching business subjects.

Recommendations

1. The planners and implementers of business education programme are encouraged to

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maintain their standards of nurturing their students to ensure continued efficient performance of the graduates in employment.

2. Constant revision of programme is recommended for the inculcation of new skills and competences as office demands change.

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