Internship and Extracurricular Activities as Predictors of Employability Skills Needs of Business Education Students in Tertiary Institutions in Anambra State

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Abstract

This study examined internship and extracurricular activities as predictors of employability skills among business education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 237 final-year Business Education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The study adopted a census sampling technique since the population was manageable. Thus, the sample size was 237. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Internship, Extracurricular Activities and Employability Skills (IEEQ). Each of the clusters of the questionnaire had 10 items and was structured on a four-point rating scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). To determine the reliability of the instruments, the instruments were trial tested using a single administration on a representative sample of 10 students (5 male and 5 female business education students) and obtained the reliability coefficients of 0.884, 0.797, and 0.834. The study used simple and multiple linear regression for data analysis. Simple linear regression analysis was used to answer the research questions and to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The study found that internship experiences significantly enhance employability skills among male and female business education students in Anambra State by fostering practical competence and workplace adaptability. These experiences bridge academic theory and professional practice, equipping students with critical skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. The study, therefore, recommended among others that tertiary institutions in Anambra State should strengthen partnerships with industries to ensure that all business education students, irrespective of gender, are provided with structured internship opportunities that offer relevant and practical exposure. Also, curriculum planners should integrate mandatory internship components into business education programmes to facilitate the development of employability skills such as communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and time management.

Keywords: Internship, Extra-Curricular Activities, Employability Skills, Business Education

Introduction

Education functions as a foundational driver of both individual development and societal progress, enabling individuals to navigate the intricacies of life through the acquisition of knowledge, the enhancement of skills and the cultivation of critical reasoning abilities. Within the broad spectrum of academic disciplines, business education emerges as a particularly influential field due to its multidimensional contributions to intellectual advancement and vocational preparedness. Integrating areas such as economics, entrepreneurship, marketing and finance, business education establishes a robust framework for continuous professional development and adaptive learning. Empirical studies by scholars like Obiako (2024) and Asagba and Oshebor (2024) underscore its dual emphasis on theoretical frameworks and practical applications, which are essential for addressing the evolving demands of the global business landscape. Through this specialized training, students gain the analytical capacity to interpret economic trends, evaluate financial contexts and effectively coordinate organizational resources—competencies that are indispensable in the increasingly competitive and dynamic labor market.

Business education significantly contributes to the development of essential employability skills required for a successful career. Employability skills are those competencies or saleable expertise required of a professional to perform optimally in the field of work (Adewolu, 2024). These skills encompass a set of transferable and interdisciplinary skills such as adaptability, effective communication, teamwork and critical thinking. Similarly, Adewolu (2024) and Ofor-Douglas and Isaiah (2025) asserted that employability skills are not only pivotal for securing employment but also essential for maintaining career relevance in a dynamic and competitive job market. This relevance is particularly pronounced within Nigeria's saturated labour environment, where employers increasingly prioritize graduates with diverse skill sets capable of thriving in multifaceted roles. Godspower-Chike (2024) asserts that individuals who possess such broad-based competencies tend to attain greater professional success and adaptability in various occupational settings. Nonetheless, the acquisition of theoretical knowledge in business education alone is insufficient. To produce graduates who are holistically prepared for the workforce, academic instruction must be reinforced with experiential learning opportunities such as internships, mentorship programmes and active participation in extracurricular activities, all of which foster practical exposure and career readiness.

Internships serve as a vital bridge between academic instruction and professional application, offering students immersive exposure to real-world organizational environments and translating theoretical constructs into practical experience (Ajeniweni, et. al., 2024). These experiential learning platforms not only cultivate technical proficiency but also strengthen essential soft skills—such as effective communication, adaptability and strategic problem-solving—which Rao, et. al., (2024) identified as foundational to long-term career success. Similarly, structured mentorship programmes function as crucial developmental tools by linking students with experienced professionals who provide personalized guidance, career-oriented insights and constructive feedback. Such relationships, as noted by Walsh (2024) foster self-efficacy, leadership acumen and access to broader professional networks. Collectively, these experiential components significantly enhance the efficacy of business education, equipping students with the competencies necessary to transition seamlessly into the workforce and adapt to the evolving demands of contemporary employment landscapes.

Extracurricular activities, such as club involvement, community service and sports, are also crucial for holistic student development. These activities nurture social and leadership skills, promote self-discipline and build teamwork abilities, all of which are critical to employability

(Kakungulu, 2024). However, the effectiveness of these strategies often varies based on demographic factors like gender and age. For example, Mekuria, et. al., (2024) highlights that female students may benefit more from mentorship due to the barriers they face in male-dominated industries, while Adebayo (2019) notes that male students tend to leverage internships to build technical competencies.

In light of ongoing employability challenges facing graduates in Nigeria which Anambra State is not exempted, Adebayo further maintained that internships and extracurricular engagements have been increasingly recognized as vital avenues for equipping students with the practical and transferable skills required in the modern workforce. Despite their acknowledged importance, there is a limited body of empirical research examining the specific impact of these factors within Anambra State, Nigeria. This lack of scholarly attention presents an opportunity to explore the extent to which internship involvement and extracurricular participation contribute to the development of employability competencies among business education students in the region's tertiary institutions. Based on this, this study set out to determine the influence of internships and extracurricular activities as key predictors of employability skills among business education undergraduates in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Employability skills are essential for equipping individuals with the capabilities required to secure and maintain meaningful employment, especially within the increasingly competitive and unpredictable global labour market. In the Nigerian context, this need is heightened by persistent socio-economic challenges, including high unemployment and underemployment rates, infrastructural deficiencies and the volatility of an oil-dependent economy—all of which have severely constrained employment opportunities. Acknowledging the fact that graduates of business education programmes ought to be adequately prepared for the workforce or entrepreneurial ventures, a good number of them still encounter substantial barriers to employment. This prevailing unemployment crisis has, in some instances, compelled Nigerian youth to engage in delinquent behaviours such as petty crime and substance abuse as coping mechanisms for economic survival. In response to these concerns, experiential learning strategies, particularly internships and extracurricular activities have apparently gained recognition as effective avenues for inculcating the employability competencies of students.

However, there remains a noticeable dearth of empirical investigations into the applications of these strategies as well as their specific influence within tertiary institutions, especially in Anambra State. This gap highlights the urgent need for research focused on evaluating how internships and extracurricular engagements serve as predictors of employability skills among business education students. Consequently, this present study aims to critically examined the extent to which these practical exposures contribute to the development of workplace readiness and professional adaptability.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate internship and extracurricular activities as predictors of employability skills needs of business education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Specifically, this study determined:

1. The predictive value of internship on employability skills of business education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

2. The predictive value of extra-curricular activities on employability skills among business education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the predictive value of internship on employability skills of business education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?
2. What is the predictive value of extra-curricular activities on employability skills among business education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level.

1. internship experiences significantly and negatively predict employability skills among business education male and female students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.
2. extracurricular activities significantly and negatively predict employability skills among business education male and female students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Methods

The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 237 final-year Business Education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The study adopted a census sampling technique since the population was manageable. Thus, the sample size was 237. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Internship, Extracurricular Activities and Employability Skills (IEEQ). Items in the questionnaire were structured under the review of related literature, consultation with experts and the specific purpose of the study. The instrument was divided into three clusters, A, B and C. Cluster A dealt with Internship, Cluster B dealt with Extracurricular Activities and Cluster C dealt with Employability Skills. Whilst Clusters A and B of the questionnaire had 10 items respectively and were structured on a four-point rating scale: Strongly Agree (SA = 4), Agree (A =3), Disagree (D =2) and Strongly Disagree (SD =1). Cluster C had 15 items structured on a four-point rating scale as indicated in clusters A and B. The validated instrument was trial tested using a single administration on a representative sample of 10 students (5 male and 5 female business education students), which gave reliability coefficients of 0.86, 0.82 and 0.85, respectively, using Pearson Product Moment Method. The researchers, with the help of the research assistants, administered and retrieved 120 copies of the instrument with two weeks. Simple and multiple linear regression were employed for data analysis. Simple linear regression analysis was used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using multiple regression.

Results

Research Question One: What is the predictive value of internship on employability skills of business education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

Table 1: Summary of the predictive value of internship on employability skills of business education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.784[a]	0.615	0.613	0.50265

a. Predictors: (Constant), Internship

Table 1 shows the predictive value of internship on employability skills of business education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The results revealed that the r-value was 0.784 and the R Square value was 0.615. This result implies that internship predicts employability skills of business education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State at 61.5%.

Research Question Two: What is the predictive value of extra-curricular activities on employability skills among business education in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

Table 2: Regression summary of the predictive value of extra-curricular activities on employability skills among business education in tertiary institutions in Anambra State

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.813[a]	.662	.660	.47118

a. Predictors: (Constant), Extracurricular Activities

Table 2 shows the results of the predictive value of extra-curricular activities on employability skills among business education in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The results revealed that the r-value was 0.813 and the R Square value was 0.662. The foregoing result implies that career mentorship predicts employability skills of business education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State at 66.2%.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

Hypothesis One: Internship experiences significantly and negatively predict employability skills among business education male and female students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Table 3: Test of hypothesis one on the predictive value of internship on employability skills of business education students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Remark
	B	Std. Error	Beta			

1	(Constant)	.008	.160		.050	.960	High Positive
	Extracurricular Activities	.964	.051	.784	19.045	.000	Predictive Value

a. Dependent Variable: Employability Skills, R = 0.784, R Square = 0.615, Adjusted R Square = 0.613

Table 3 shows the test of hypothesis one where the R-value was 0.784, R Square value was 0.615 and has a p-value of 0.00. This p-value is less than 0.05 which indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was retained. Thus, internship experiences significantly and positively predict employability skills among business education male and female students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Two: Extracurricular activities significantly and negatively predict employability skills among business education male and female students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Table 4: Test of Hypothesis Two

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Remark
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.376	.128		2.935	.004	High Positive
	Extracurricular Activities	.857	.041	.813	21.074	.000	Predictive Value

a. Dependent Variable: Employability Skills, R = 0.813, R Square = 0.662, Adjusted R Square = 0.660

Table 4 shows the test of hypothesis three, where the R-value was 0.813, R Square value was 0.662, and the p-value of 0.00. This score is less than 0.05 which indicates that the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was retained. Thus, extracurricular activities significantly and positively predict employability skills among business education male and female students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Discussions of Findings

Internship experiences significantly and positively impact employability skills among business education male and female students in tertiary institutions in Anambra State as the practical exposure and industry-specific skills gained during internships are key factors contributing to this impact. By bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world

job requirements, internships offer students valuable hands-on experience in actual business settings. This enables students to sharpen critical skills such as effective communication, collaboration, problem-solving and time management, all of which are indispensable in their future professional roles. Both male and female students gain from the opportunity to apply classroom theories to real-world scenarios, thus improving their technical abilities and gaining a deeper understanding of workplace interactions. Ojide, et. al., (2025) confirm that internships provide students with practical skills, real-world knowledge and valuable exposure to the challenges of the business world, thus enhancing their technical competence, adaptability and problem-solving capabilities.

The benefits of internships are equally distributed among male and female students, as both groups gain experience in professional environments that help to develop interpersonal communication, teamwork and time management skills. Research by Umeifekwem (2025) highlights that student who took part in internships exhibited higher confidence levels and demonstrated better capabilities in managing workplace tasks compared to those who did not have such experiences. This emphasizes the critical role internships play in narrowing the divide between academic learning and employability, equipping students with the practical tools necessary for their professional journeys.

Conclusion

The study underscores that, internship experiences significantly enhance employability skills among male and female business education students in Anambra State by fostering practical competence and workplace adaptability. These experiences bridge academic theory and professional practice, equipping students with critical skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Conclusively, based on empirical evidence, internships and extracurricular activities serve as vital instruments in preparing students for career success, reinforcing their confidence and capacity (employability skills) to meet evolving job market demands.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Tertiary institutions in Anambra State should strengthen partnerships with industries to ensure that all business education students, both male and female, are provided with structured internship opportunities that offer relevant and practical exposure.
2. Curriculum planners should integrate mandatory internship components into business education programmes to facilitate the development of employability skills such as communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and time management.
3. Internship programmes should be gender-inclusive and equitable, ensuring that both male and female students have equal access to quality placements that allow them to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts.
4. Policymakers and educational administrators should monitor and evaluate internship experiences to enhance their effectiveness in bridging the gap between academic learning and workplace requirements, thereby boosting students' confidence and readiness for employment.

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