INFLUENCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COLLABORATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON CAREER SUCCESS OF BUSINESS EDUCATORS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of professional development and collaboration management strategies on career success of business educators in colleges of education in Southwest Nigeria. Two purposes were raised from which two research questions were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised one hundred and thirty-eight (138) business educators in Colleges of Education offering business education programme in Southwest, Nigeria. A seventeen item self-developed questionnaire was validated by two experts and used for data collection. Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability co-efficient value of 0.89. One hundred and thirty-five (135) business educators were used for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions. The findings of the study revealed that participation in professional development influenced business educators' career success in confidence and credibility, versatile with current trends and new development. Fostering collaboration influenced new ideas and expertise, working with teams and boost productivity of business educators. It was concluded that participation in professional development and the fostering of collaboration management strategies play a significant role in shaping business educators' career success in colleges of education in south-west Nigeria. The study further recommended among others that attending conferences, seminars and workshops enable business educators to network with professional experts in their field.
*Keywords: **Business Educator, Career Success, Collaboration, Professional   Development and Strategies.***

Introduction

As soon as one engages in any career, it is expected that progress is made to enhance career success and advancement. A career may be seen as any occupation undertaken by an individual and pursued for a significant period of the person's life and with opportunities for progress. A career may be described as the sum total of decisions taken to direct one's educational, social, economic, political, and spiritual endeavours and reflecting one's unique personality, characteristics and basic life values. It can further be defined as a unit for measuring occupation or series of occupations. Meanwhile, it

must be stressed that a career is more than just a job, or work, or occupation, since it covers many things which include progress through life, growth and development in vocational and non-vocational areas of life (Geoffrey & Gidraph, 2021).

The essence of any career including business educator is to record progress from one level to another apart from earning a decent living and for the purpose of self-actualisation. Business educators are those who are professionally qualified to teach business education and allied courses in any tertiary institutions of learning running a programme in business education. It is noteworthy that those who have taken lecturing as their career at the tertiary level of education such as colleges of education are expected to manage their career in such a way that they advance from one position of higher salary, higher level of job title and higher level of job responsibilities, productivity and recognition to another. Zacher, Rudolph, Todorovic and Ammann (2019) maintained that academic staff are expected to proactively manage their career portfolio through continuous competency development such as participating in research and publications and attending conferences and paper presentations to enhance their value and marketability.

In order to manage one's career, an employee is expected to avoid stagnation in the work place and be able to adopt proper strategies. Strategy in this context is an action that employee takes to attain one or more of his/her goals. Strategy may also be seen as a direction set by an employee to achieve a desired result in the future. Hence Stobierski (2019) maintained that an employee wishing to move forward and not to be stagnated must use networking, mentorship, accept more responsibility, further education, participation in professional development and fostering collaboration. Education is a never-ending process. It doesn't stop after earning a degree and starting a career. Through studies, seminars, and conferences, professional progress can be facilitated by providing exercises, teaching new concepts, or demonstrating new abilities (Uchendu, 2015).

Professional development is a process of learning that continues throughout a person's working life (Boud & Hager, 2012; Becher, 2018). Continual training, including practical intervention, constitutes professional development (Mero-Jaffe & Altarac, 2020). Professional development refers to all training, certification and education that a worker needs to succeed in a chosen career. Professional development refers to continuing education and career training after a person has entered the workforce in order to help one develop new skills, stay up-to-date on current trends and advance in career. It is no secret that different jobs require different skills. Even if a worker currently has the necessary skills, he or she may need additional skills in the future. This may be obtainable through participation in a professional development programme. Conferences are great opportunities to learn from experts in one's field, networking with like-minded professionals, and have a good time. If an out-of-town conference is not possible, there are still many online conferences and webinars that professionals can register for. Through professional development, workers can learn these skills to become better, more efficient workers. Technologies and best practices are evolving and progressing in every industry, making it crucial for both new and experienced professionals to keep pace with current trends in development and updating their knowledge. This hands-on experience can be especially useful in learning new skills.

The Centre for Management Development (CMD) (2004) established by the Federal Government of Nigeria, maintained that employees may improve on their professional growth and success through participation in professional meetings, conferences and workshops, presenting papers at conferences, serving as officers, board members or committee members, as well as coordinating events sponsored by schools. This provides a useful analysis of the varying ways in which professional development at different stages of the teacher's life interacts with other factors to influence teacher's resilience and commitment to the profession. The Centre concluded that the provision of responsive and differentiated support to meet teachers' professional and personal learning needs at different times in their work and life can help counter declining commitment trajectories, enhancing the continuity of positive development of teachers' professional commitment. Role models for career advancement are successful and professional people who individuals want to emulate for their achievement and career success. Successful professional development, according to experts, is a critical component in bringing about significant changes in school capacity practices, lecturers' instructional strategies, and student learning (Zegwaard, 2019). According to Alfalah (2018), a workshop gathers academics, specialists, or ordinary people who come together to study, conceptualise or discuss a particular issue to discover solutions to the issues raised. The workshop is a short, well-organised programme for skill and knowledge development. Educators employ workshops as one of their professional development strategies, and it is expected that they will be able to perform robust rational analysis as a result.

To be a successful business education lecturer, attending conferences, seminars and workshops within or outside the college is one of the largest contributors to new information pertaining to their profession. It may be local or international conference. Actively pursuing professional development ensures that knowledge and skills stay relevant and up to date. It also allows business educator to be more aware of changing trends and directions in their profession. When collaboration is absent and employees work in isolation, little professional growth occurs.

Collaboration means working together with one or more people to complete a project or task or develop ideas or processes. In the workplace, collaboration occurs when two or more people work together towards a common goal that benefits the team or company. Workplace collaboration requires interpersonal skills, communication skills, knowledge sharing and strategy, and can also occur in a traditional office or between members of a virtual team. Working as a team not only drives greater productivity, but it also fosters healthy relationships between employees (Goman, 2019). Often, when employees work together they are more effective and efficient than those who attempt to manage the same projects alone. Successfully collaborating with co-workers can also increase workers' motivation and level of engagement at work. Additionally, sharing ideas and brainstorming is helpful for developing unique solutions to complex challenges (Conjourn & Sonsupap, 2024).

Success in life gives someone a sense of satisfaction, accomplishment, and most importantly fulfillment. Career success can be viewed as the positive personal and work-related outcomes that accrue from individuals' activities and experiences, and has typically been operationalized as either objective (extrinsic to the person) or subjective success (intrinsic to the person (Bagdadli &

Gianecchini, 2019). Career success has traditionally been defined as the accumulated positive job related and psychological outcomes resulting from one's work experiences. Career success is very important for every individual since it affects the individual in the sense of financial independence, maintain one's identity, being a role model to others and strengthen the confidence level of an individual.

Allen (2020) sees career success as a combination of achieving a reasonable level of financial stability while doing work one enjoys and then finding that one is also happy and fulfilled with one's life and career choices as well. If one loves his/her job but find that it doesn't lead to financial self-sufficiency, career success is diminished, and if one gets paid very well but lack joy or interest in one's chosen career field, career success is diminished. True career success requires that there is alignment between the two. People who experience meaningful career success recognize that money and titles aren't the whole of it. They know that they must also experience inner peace and joy for it to really matter. If one gets paid well and have a career that others dream of but the work causes one to become unhappy, unfulfilled and maybe even miserable, one certainly won't feel successful. If one is happy, fulfilled and delighted with one's chosen career but one finds that one is not able to afford the basic necessities of life, one certainly is not likely to feel successful either.

Business education programme is that aspect of vocational education programme that deals with the acquisition of practical skills by its recipients. Okeke and Nzekwe (2019) affirmed that business education is a skill drilling and acquisition course which is capable of making its students or recipients employable or self-employed on graduation in order to help facilitate economic activities in the country. According to National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE 2020), the objectives of business education are: to produce competent NCE graduates who will teach business subjects in our secondary schools and other related educational institutions, to produce competent NCE graduates will epitomize business spirit in the society. It also includes to produce competent NCE graduates who will commence the development of the desired revolution in vocational and entrepreneurial skills from the Primary through Secondary schools, to equip graduates with necessary competencies for a post-NCE degree programme in business education and to equip graduates with the right business competencies for a life of work in the office and for self-employment.

Business educators in colleges of education that are saddled with the responsibility to equip the students of the programme with functional and adequate knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that would enable them operate within their environment effectively and efficiently. They should be able to advance on the job with knowledge without being stagnated. Such workforce could engage in several career management strategies to succeed in their career in terms of participation in professional development and fostering collaboration. Hence, when business educators have specific career strategies that suit their needs, it will in turn assist them to enhance their career insight and be able to guide them towards success. Career success of business educators is usually viewed in terms of the level of seniority, promotions, salary, access to power and authority, job satisfaction and attainment of self-actualization with the college structure. Professional development and collaboration management strategies are fundamental in enhancing the skills of business educators

and contributing to their career success. Literatures have revealed that professional development and collaboration management strategies have been shown to enhance educators' effectiveness, job satisfaction, and career advancement. Educators who engage in continuous learning and collaboration often report higher levels of career satisfaction and improved teaching outcomes (Smith & Hodge, 2020).

Despite the recognized importance of these strategies, most of the literature on the influence of professional development and collaboration management strategies on career success are based on the employees of industrial world. Even in education industries, little has been done on professional development and collaboration management strategies especially as it concern business educators career success. Therefore, this study intends to fill the gap in literature by investigating the influence of professional development and collaboration management strategies on business educators career success in colleges of education, South-west Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study
The main purpose of this study was to determine the influence of professional development and collaboration management strategies on business educators' career success in colleges of education in South-West Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined to:
1. Assess the influence of professional development management strategy on business educators career success in colleges of education in South-West Nigeria.
2. Examine how collaboration management strategy influence business educators career success in colleges of education in South-West Nigeria.

Research Questions
The following research questions were raised to guide the study:
1. How does participation in professional development strategy influence business educators' career success in colleges of education in South-West Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of fostering collaboration strategy on business educators' career success in colleges of education in South-West Nigeria?

Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework of this study is based on Social Capital Theory propounded by Coleman James (1990). Coleman (1990) defined social capital as any aspect of social structure that creates value and facilitates the actions of the individuals within that social structure. Just as the creation of physical capital involves changes in materials so as to facilitate production, and human capital involves changes in an individual's skills and capabilities, social capital is created when the relations among people change in ways that facilitate instrumental action (Coleman, 1990). By building relationships with people both inside and outside the institution, business educators can access valuable information and social resources that, in turn, lead to superior job performance, higher internal and external visibility and marketability, and higher levels of career success.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. The population of the study was 138 business educators from eight public colleges of education in South West Nigeria (Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo states) that offer business education programme. This data was made available to the researcher from the office of the Heads of Department of Business Education in the respective institutions. As a result of the manageable size of business educators, the researcher made use of the entire population as sample. Therefore, there was no need for sampling hence a census. The instrument used for data collection for the study was a questionnaire developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was titled: 'Influence of Professional Development and Collaboration Management Strategies on Career Success of Business Educators' Questionnaire (IPDCMSCSBEQ). The questionnaire was segmented into three sections (A, B and C). Section A measured the demographic variables of the respondents such as the name of the institution, gender, work experience and marital status of the respondents. Section B contained eight (8) item statement that measured professional development that measured career success of business educators. Section C contained nine (9) item statements that measured fostering collaboration. Responses on the items of the questionnaire were measured on a 4-point rating scale of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1) respectively. The instrument was validated by two experts in order to ensure proper wordings as well as to determine its adequacy and appropriateness of the study. Cronbach Alpha statistical tool was used to determine its level of reliability which yielded an alpha value of 0.89. Data were collected using personal contact approach with the help of six research assistants drawn from eight colleges of education. Out of the 138 copies of the questionnaire administered to the business educators, 135 were completely filled and returned. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering the two research questions. Based on the 4-point rating scale of the instrument, a criterion reference point of 2.50 was used as benchmark for decision making in answering the research questions. In that case, any item with mean value of 2.50 or above were interpreted as agreed while items with mean value of less than 2.50 were interpreted as disagreed as the case may be.

Results

Research Question One: How does participation in professional development management strategy influence business educators' career success in colleges of education in South-West Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the influence of participation in professional development strategy on career success of business educators'.

S/N	Item	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Participation in professional development boosts my confidence and credibility.	135	3.45	0.54	Agreed
2	Participation in professional development makes me versatile with current trends and new development.	135	3.37	0.53	Agreed
3	Participation in professional development open my door to opportunities and accelerate career changes.	135	3.43	0.57	Agreed
4	Participation in professional development enhance my expansion and acquisition of knowledge.	135	3.41	0.58	Agreed
5	Participation in professional development helps to keeping my pace with technology, system and processes.	135	3.41	0.54	Agreed
6	Participation in professional development helps me in improving existing skill and in learning new ones.	135	3.43	0.54	Agreed
7	Participation in professional development prevent potential stagnation by maintaining and improving my skills.	135	3.41	0.54	Agreed
8	Professional development exposes me to new delivery methods, evaluation styles and record-keeping strategies.	135	3.46	0.54	Agreed
	Cluster Mean		**3.42**		**Agreed**

Note: SD (Standard Deviation), N (Sample Size)

The result in Table 1 shows that the respondents rated items one to eight as agreed with mean ratings ranging from 3.37 to 3.46 while the standard deviations also ranges from 0.54 to 0.58. The cluster mean recorded a mean of 3.42 which shows business educator who participated in professional development reported higher levels of career success in open door to opportunities and accelerate career changes, improving existing skills and learning new ones.

Research Question Two

What is the influence of fostering collaboration management strategy on business educators' career success in colleges of education in South-West Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of the influence on fostering collaboration strategy on career success of business educators'.

S/N	Item	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
9	Fostering collaboration expose me to new ideas and expertise.	135	3.34	0.59	Agreed
10	Fostering collaboration assist in working with teams to help me be more effective in my duty.	135	3.30	0.56	Agreed
11	Fostering collaboration boost my productivity.	135	3.41	0.57	Agreed
12	Fostering collaboration enhance my familiarity with new communication methods and approaches.	135	3.38	0.55	Agreed
13	Working with teams help me to become a better leader.	135	3.53	0.54	Agreed
14	Fostering collaboration enhances my degree of job independence.	135	3.30	0.60	Agreed
15	Fostering collaboration assist me to gain a sense of achievement from my work.	135	3.45	0.53	Agreed
16	Through fostering collaboration, I am pleased to accomplish my task.	135	3.30	0.58	Agreed
17	Fostering collaboration makes me enjoy good relationships with my co-lecturers.		3.36	0.64	Agreed
	Cluster Mean		**3.37**		**Agreed**

Note: SD (Standard Deviation), N (Sample Size)

The result in Table 2 depicts the influence of fostering collaboration strategy on business educators' career success in colleges of education in South-West Nigeria. The respondents' rated items forty-four to fifty-two as agreed with mean ratings ranging from 3.30 to 3.53 while the standard deviations also range from 0.53 to 0.64. Based on the cluster mean of 3.37, the respondents expressed a high level of agreement that fostering collaboration influence new ideas and expertise, working with teams, productivity, better leader, a sense of achievement in work, accomplishing task and good relationships with their co-lecturers.

Discussion of Findings

The reason for this finding is subject to the fact that conference participants discuss modern skills and business challenges to reach consensus on a solution for a particular topic or technique with the help of experts in the field. The main advantage of a conference is that it encourages everyone's participation. Sharing ideas with people from different organisations encourages knowledge transfer and promotes a sense of renewed hope and inspiration among participants.

It was discovered in the findings of research question one that participation in professional development influenced business educators' career success (confidence and credibility, versatile with

current trends and new development, open doors to opportunities, expansion and acquisition of knowledge, keeping pace with technology, system and processes) in colleges of education in South-West Nigeria. The finding supports the study carried out by Musa (2016) who found that attending conferences allows lecturers to better demonstrate their professionalism, their understanding of the ongoing need for professional learning which enhances their job performance. The findings also corroborated that of Okemakinde, Adewuyi and Alabi (2013) who found that conferences provide learning environment that encourages participants to exchange experiences, ideas and practices from their own schools/colleges.

The rationale for this finding is subject to the fact that collaboration strategies often lead to the establishment of professional networks, which can be beneficial for career advancement, research opportunities, and sharing best practices across different institutions. Engaging in collaboration strategies can also lead to increased job satisfaction by fostering a supportive and enriching work environment.

Research question two findings indicated that fostering collaboration influenced business educators' career success (new ideas and expertise, working with teams, boost productivity, better leader, gain a sense of achievement in work, accomplishing task and enjoy good relationships with my co-lecturers) in colleges of education in South-West Nigeria. This finding supports that of Fullan (2009) who emphasized that this indirect capacity building component of change enhances ownership and motivation as well as is the most powerful because educators are learning from their colleagues. Fullan (2009) identified the leadership capacity of knowledge building as essential for producing successful change and describes it as the leader's ability to create collaborative environments where people of diverse backgrounds can come together to share information and learn together as well as apply learning to their contexts. Furthermore, the findings imply that fostering collaboration allow practitioners to collaborate in making decisions for change as well as for devising strategies for improving teaching and learning are amongst the most effective for producing successful change. The current study's findings are also consistent with Fiore, et al (2015) who affirmed that as the focus on research teams sharpens, questions are emerging about how research teams can maximize their effectiveness and experiences. Effectiveness can be considered in the context of the overall functioning of the team and its success in its ability to achieve major research accomplishments.

Conclusion

Conclusions drawn from the findings of this study are that participation in professional development and the fostering of collaboration management strategies play a significant role in shaping business educators' career success in colleges of education in south-west Nigeria. The findings also highlight that professional development serves as a cornerstone for continuous growth, equipping educators with the latest teaching methodologies, technological tools and industry knowledge. Moreover, collaboration allows business educators in colleges of education to share ideas, resources, and best practices, fostering an environment of collective problem-solving and innovation.

Recommendations

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

1. Professional development activities such as attending conferences, seminars and workshops enable business educators to network with experts in their field, exchange ideas and gain valuable insights that can further enhance their professional career success.

2. Business educators should have the mindset to grow beyond previous limit by their willingness to learn new skills and gain knowledge that can lead to improved job performance.

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