

## **ROLE OF SOCIETY AS DETERMINANT OF STUDENTS INTEREST AND STUDENTS ENROLLMENT IN BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*This study focused on the society as a determinant of student interest and student enrollment in business education programme in universities in Southeastern, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 449 business education students in public universities in South-East, Nigeria. A census survey sampling was used for the study. A structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Data collected for the study were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and z-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that the society determines the student interest and student enrolment in business education. The study showed that Male and female business education students in universities in South-East, Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent society determines their interest. Also Male and female business education students in universities in South-East, Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent society determines their enrolment. Based on the findings, it was concluded that business education society determines the students' interest and students' enrolment in business education. Consequently, it was recommended among others that there should be a sensitization exercises for both the society and students on the benefit associated with business education programme.*

**Keywords:** Business education, student interest, student enrolment and society

### **Introduction**

Education is regarded as an engine house of every society powered by technology, fueled by information and driven by knowledge. Education is regarded as a social institution that plays an important role in every society. Momoh, Abudu, Ukachi and Luqman (2020) education is a veritable tool to bring about the much-desired economic, scientific, social, political, entrepreneurial, and technological progress of any country. Igberaharha and Onyesom (2021) averred that education as a transformational process is recognized as one of the significant instruments for mitigating poverty and balancing social and economic inequality, as well as the foundation for maintaining sustained growth of the economy. To achieve the goals of education, Federal government from time to time initiates various policies and programme. These policies and programmes are achieved through the establishments of schools of various levels of which university is one of them. University is a higher learning institution that produces

men and women with intellectual ability for the development of the society and economy. According to Olunkwa and Obunadike (2020) university is essentially an organization set up to produce quality workers for national development by training. A university is an environment where a systematically coordinated, scientifically conformed education service is provided (Akessa and Dhufera in Raj, Chand & Azam, 2019). Universities in the South-East, Nigeria run different programmes of which business education is one of them.

Business education is a specialized form of education that impart in a learner the abilities and skills to become a better person upon graduation and society in general. Egbunefu and Nwosu (2021) business education is a specialized phase of vocational education that prepares students to enter teaching and office occupation as capable and intelligent members of the labour force. The purpose of business education is to produce competent, knowledgeable, skilful and efficient graduates who can compete with the changes of work environment and also become self-reliant. Ore (2023) averred that business education graduates are not well recognised by the society because of the negative perception such as less prestigious course of study and low public interest that the society have towards the programme. Igberaharhal & Onyesom (2021) business education is a vocational programme that is skill-oriented and equips its graduates with saleable skills for productive engagements and service delivery. According to Olayinka (2019) business education is that aspect of vocational education that focuses on the development of the students with the acquisition of skills needed to satisfy human wants. According to Ore (2023) business Education is a course of study in higher institution of learning that provides specific business-related skills and education which are crucial to graduates of this programme to succeeding in the corporate world. Osadebe and Osadebe (2020) business Education is a subject area in the University that requires the use of ICT in teaching and learning. In this vain, Owenvbiugie and Ediagbonya (2021) opined that Nigeria continues to turn out graduates from various institutions that are hardly self reliant but solely dependent on white collar jobs for sustenance because they lack adequate skills that will make them function effectively and efficiently towards the development of the economy. In this note, business education is all about skill acquisition and being a skill-oriented programme, university is meant to equip the students with more practical and less theoretical knowledge on income generating skills. In the opinion of Edokpolor and Owenvbiugie (2017), business education is still generally perceived as a form of education for the ungifted and under-privileged child. This assertion hinges on lack of students interest and students enrollment in business education.

Student interest in this context is seen as an idea or ideas, or perception that a student has on business education before enrolling in the course. According to Ubale, Nasir and Abdullah (2015) students' interest is assumed as a mental stand of commitment, skilful in the moment, and a tendency to involve constantly in specific notions, proceedings, or things over time. Zochling., Hopf, Woithe, and Schmeling, (2022) carried out a study on the students' interest in particle physics: conceptualisation, instrument development, and evaluation using Rasch theory and analysis and the result shows that knowing about these levels of interest in particle physics can help educators design their learning activities better and foster their students' interest. Okeke and Ugwuanyi (2020) conducted a study on determinants of

university students' interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education in Nigeria: A case of a structural equation modeling and the results revealed that motivation, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and task persistence are significant ( $p < .05$ ) determinants of students' interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education (STEME) courses. Purnomo and Gunaningrat (2022) conducted a study on determinants of student interest in choosing a study programme and *the results of the analysis show that internal factors have more influence on student interest when choosing a study program at the university level*. Conel (2021) conducted a study on the factors affecting students' interest in learning science and the findings of the study revealed that most of the students showed favorable perception and interest in learning science. However, no significant relationship exists between science interest and students' sex. Anigbo (2016) carried out study on the factors affecting students' interest in mathematics in secondary schools in Enugu State and the results showed that the seven factors which include students' factor, teachers' factor, mathematics anxiety, class size, government factor, infrastructural problem, and instructional strategy were effective in predicting secondary school students' interest to learn mathematics. Etodike (2022) carried out a study on the self-efficacy and self-esteem as determinants of students' interest in introductory technology in Anambra state, Nigeria. The result revealed that the observed mean difference in the students' interest in Introductory Technology among students with high and low self-esteem was significant at  $F(3, 478) = 15.9, p < .05$ . Also, the mean difference in the students' interest in Introductory Technology among students with high and low self-efficacy was significant at  $F(3, 478) = 12.0, p < .05$ . Equally findings revealed that there is interaction effect between self-esteem and self-efficacy on students' interest in Introductory Technology at  $F(3, 478) = 7.5, p < .05$ . The Findings revealed that that self-esteem and self-efficacy impacted students' interest in introductory technology subject. Students' interest determines the choice of student enrolment in any given course.

Student enrolment is the number of students enrolled in all types of educational institutions, including public, private, and other institutions offering organised educational programmes, regardless of age, race or culture. The number of students enrolled in colleges determines a society's future potential for a skilled workforce. Egbunefu and Nwosu (2021) conducted a study on the societal valuing and students' interest in enrolment into business education degree programme in Rivers State Universities, Port Harcourt, Nigeria and the findings revealed that, there is a significant relationship between societal valuing and students' enrolment into undergraduate business education degree programme in Rivers State. . Olayemi and Ojetunde (2016) conducted a study on the determinants of students' enrolment in technical and vocational education in Ondo State, Nigeria and findings of the study showed that, a positive and significant relationship exist between parents' perception and enrolment into Technical and Vocational school  $r=0.72; p<0.05$ , also students' perception was positively related to enrolment into Technical and Vocational Schools  $r=0.69; p<0.05$ . Akintola,,Abosedo and Itiola, (2021) carried out a study on students' enrolment in Nigerian private universities: The pull effect of corporate image and promotional appeal and the results show positive significant influence of university's brand image on students' enrolment at  $F= 84.714, df= 353, sig. at 0.000$ .

Business education students in South-East, Nigeria used in this study consisted of males and females. Therefore, gender is taken into consideration in determining the extent society serves as a determinant of students' interest and students' enrolment in business education in universities in South-East, Nigeria. Gender is one of the broad factors that influence the likelihood of a student becoming interested in a subject (Darlington in Morgan & Aboagy (2022). Gender is the socio-cultural definition of man and woman; the way societies distinguish men and women and assign them social roles. Nwojiewho and Deebom (2017) carried out a study on the gender disparity towards students' enrollment in technical education in rivers state: causes, effects and strategies and the study revealed amongst others that poverty, preference of male child, cultural and religious beliefs were causes of female folks low enrollment into technical education programmes in Rivers State. Momoh, et al. (2020) conducted a study on the gender analysis of students' enrollment in the Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti state: impacts on women empowerment and technopreneurship education and the study revealed that female student enrollment was lopsided in favor of the School of Business Studies (SBS) when compared to School of Engineering(SOE) the seat of technology and innovations.

Studies in different fields of learning have shown that a lot of factors have contributed in students' interest into enrolment in universities. Examples of these studies include Chuan, Liong, Yusofu, Aminuddin and Tan (2021) in additional mathematics, Ojih, Esiekpe and Okafor (2016) in physics, Ibiyengibo and Nenalebari (2022) in chemistry, Knekta, Rowland, Corwin, and Eddy (2020) in biology. However, little or no consideration has been given to the extent society determines the students interest and student enrolment in business education at public universities in the South-East, Nigeria. It is with this background that this study was considered imperative.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Business education is a professional form of education that provides learners with the skills and abilities to become better people and societies after graduation and society. Business education programme should attract large numbers of students due to their importance and skill acquisition that comes with them, but the opposite is true for universities in South-east, Nigeria. The poor perception of business education programme or total ignorance on the advantages of this type of education from the general public is worrisome as some described it as education meant for the poor, drop outs, less privileged, not clever enough for academic work, does not provide jobs seen as 'prestigious' in the society, seen to provide only 'dead-end-jobs' that cannot lead to further self-development and does not offer substantial managerial skills for higher jobs. This position was emphasized by a survey of public technical and vocational education and training (TVET) teachers carried out by Ayub (2015) in Ghana as reported in Okae-Adjei (2017) which found that none of the respondents wanted their own children to study technical and vocational education and training programmes. This same attitude applies to Nigeria where the seemed general perception is affecting students' enrolment in Vocational and Technology Education (VTE) programmes. Despite the potentials of business education towards addressing the challenges of skill gaps and reduce unemployment among graduates in Nigeria, students, parents and the larger society showed

little interest in this type of education as compared to the high enrolment of university degrees, even when some universities offer this course, the enrolment still remains low as observation has shown that majority of the students studying business Education did not make the course their first choice but failed to secure admission in their preferred choice course areas (Edokpolor & Egbiri, 2017). One of the greatest problems in Nigeria is that the students and the society seen have no interest in business education for they erroneously believed that it is meant for the less academically endowed. Against this background, this study sought to identify the role of the society as determinants of student interest and enrolment in business education in South-east, Nigeria universities.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the role of the society as determinant of students' interest and students' enrolment in business education at public universities in South-East, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent does the society determine the students' interest in business education at public universities in South-East, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does the society determine the students' enrolment in business education at public universities in South-East, Nigeria?
- 3.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Society has no significant influence on the students' interest in business education.
2. Society has no significant influence on the students' enrolment in business education.

### **Methods**

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study which was carried out in universities in South-East, Nigeria. The population of 449 business education students was used for the study through simple random sampling. Instrument for data collection was a 13 item five- point response option questionnaire ranging from Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Moderately Extent (ME), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). To establish the reliability of the two instruments the researcher administered it to 15 business education students of Tansian University, Umunya (private) which was outside of the scope of the study. Data collected were analyzed using split half method, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to correlate the scores of the two halves. The resulting responses were used to obtain the measure of temporal stability of the instruments. Pearson Product Moment Correlation co-efficient measure of temporal stability determination a temporal stability reliability co-efficient of 0.80 was obtained on students' interest and 0.77 on students' enrolment with an overall co-efficient of 0.79. The instrument was administered to the respondents in their schools personally by the researcher with the help of three research assistants, using on the spot method to facilitate a high response rate. Out of 449 questionnaires, 446 copies of the questionnaire (representing 97 percent) were retrieved and used for the data analysis.

**Results**

Research Question 1: To what extent does the society determine the students’ interest in business education in public universities in South-East, Nigeria?

**Table 1**

**Mean and Standard Deviation on Students’ Interest in Business Education**

S/N	ITEM DESCRIPTION	$\bar{X}$	SD	REMARK
1	Society likes big titles like doctors, barristers and engineer etc	3.38	.780	VHE
2	Society regarded business education as last resort	1.97	1.046	VLE
3	Society and students regards business education as education for low IQ people.	1.98	.954	VLE
4	Society and students see business education as education whose profession only ends in teaching	2.31	1.135	VLE
5	Society and students do not see business education as a saleable skills	2.19	1.124	VLE
6	Business education is not a prestigious course	2.74	1.118	ME
	<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>.869</b>	<b>VLE</b>

Table 1 reveals the mean responses on students’ interest in business education. The results show that the mean responses range from 1.97 to 3.38, while the standard deviation range from 0.780 to 1.135. The mean results indicate that the students interest in business education is at very low extent (VLE). The aggregate mean of 2.43 depicts that the society determines the students’ interest in business education.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does the society determines the students’ enrolment in business education at public universities in South-East, Nigeria?

**Table 2**

**Mean and Standard Deviation on Students' enrolment in Business Education**

S/N	ITEM DESCRIPTION	$\bar{X}$	SD	REMARK
1	I enrolled into business education to acquire requisite skills.	3.38	.830	VHE
2	Business education is a prestigious course to study.	2.36	.940	ME
3	Business education does not end with teaching profession only.	3.03	.900	VHE
4	I decided to enrol into business after sensitization exercise by the department	3.26	.752	VHE
5	Business education is not a course for low IQ people.	3.33	.716	VHE
6	I therefore enrol into business education to be self-employed.	2.55	.869	ME
7	Business education is not a last for students.	1.97	1.046	LE
<b>Aggregate</b>		<b>2.84</b>	<b>.865</b>	<b>ME</b>

Table 2 revealed the mean responses on students' enrolment in business education. The results show that the mean responses range from 1.97 to 3.38, while the standard deviation range from 0.940 to 1.046. The mean results indicate that the students enrolment in business education is at very moderate extent (ME). The aggregate mean of 2.84 depicts that the society determines the students' enrolment in business education.

**Testing of Hypotheses**

The hypotheses were tested using the Z-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance, and the results are presented as follows:

**Hypothesis 1**

Society has no significant influence on the students' interest in business education.

**Table 3**  
**The Z-test on Society and Students' Interest in Business Education**

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	z-value	p-value	Decision
Society	206	3.06	.611	351	.991	.322	Not significant
Interest	240	3.14	.874				

Table 3 showed the results of the z-test about the difference between society and students' interest in business education. The table showed the difference between society (3.06) and students' interest (3.14) is not significant ( $z = 0.991$ ,  $p = 0.322$ ). This means that the null hypothesis is not rejected. Hence, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of society and students' interest in business education.

### Hypothesis 2

Society has no significant influence on the students' enrolment in business education .

**Table 4**  
**The z-test on Gender difference about Students' Enrolment in Business Education**

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	z-value	p-value	Decision
Society	206	3.23	.658	351	.259	.796	Not significant
Enrollment	240	3.21	.771				

The results of Table 4 depicted the z-test about the difference between society and students' enrollment in business education. The table showed that the difference between society (3.23) and students' enrollment (3.21) is not significant ( $z = 0.259$ ,  $p = 0.796$ ). The results indicated that the null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of society and students' enrolment in business education.

### Discussion

The result of the data analysis in respect of research question two as presented in table 2 showed the response of students' enrolment in business education in universities in South-East, Nigeria. The findings revealed that students' enrolment in business education is at moderately extent. The aggregate mean of 2.84 depicts that the students' enrolment in universities in the South-east is at moderately extent. This findings is in line with the study of Egbunefu and Nwosu (2021) conducted a study on the societal valuing and students' interest in enrolment into business education degree programme in Rivers State Universities, Port

Harcourt, Nigeria and the findings revealed that, there is a significant relationship between societal valuing and students' enrolment into undergraduate business education degree programme in Rivers State. Similarly, Olayemi and Ojetunde (2016) conducted a study on the determinants of students' enrolment in technical and vocational education in Ondo State, Nigeria and findings of the study showed that, a positive and significant relationship exist between parents' perception and enrolment into Technical and Vocational school  $r=0.72$ ;  $p<0.05$ , also students' perception was positively related to enrolment into Technical and Vocational Schools  $r=0.69$ ;  $p<0.05$ .



### **Conclusion**

From the findings of the study, it is evident that the society and students see business education as education for low IQ students. Similarly, business education is seen as last resort when the students did not succeed in getting admission in other programmes.

### **Recommendation**

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

1. There should be a sensitization exercise for both the society and students on the benefit associated with business education programme.
2. Governments on their part should fund business education so that the equipments needed to teach the students the requisite skills will be at their disposal.

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