

Assessment of Selection Motives of Business Education Programmes among Business Education Students in Tertiary Institutions in Niger State

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Abstract

The research was driven by the growing need to understand the factors influencing students' choice of Business Education programmes. This paper assessed the selection motives of Business Education students in all tertiary institutions in Niger State. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with a sample of Business Education students randomly selected from tertiary institutions in Niger State. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using mean, standard deviation. The findings revealed that career and employability factors such as labour market demand, clear career opportunities, and prospects for professional certification were the strongest motives for students' selection of Business Education (cluster mean = 3.00, SD = 0.89). Entrepreneurial motives, including the desire for self-employment, independence, and acquisition of business start-up skills, also recorded high influence (cluster mean = 3.10, SD = 0.88). In contrast, family background and peer pressure exerted only a moderate influence on students' programme selection (cluster mean = 2.78, SD = 0.94). The study concludes that Business Education remains attractive to undergraduates primarily because of its potential to enhance employability and entrepreneurial capabilities. It recommends continuous curriculum updates to align with market trends, expansion of entrepreneurship training, and strengthened career counseling to guide students toward informed and self-driven programme choices.

Keywords: Business Education, Selection motives and Tertiary Institutions

Introduction

Business education is a vital component of a nation's educational system, designed to equip individuals with the requisite knowledge and skills for self-reliance and gainful employment (Okorafor & Onokpaunu, 2023). In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education emphasizes the

acquisition of practical and vocational skills to address the pervasive challenge of youth unemployment (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Consequently, business education programs are intended to produce graduates who can be job creators rather than just job seekers. However, despite this noble objective, a significant number of business education graduates in Nigeria remain unemployed or underemployed (Edokpolor & Owenvbuigie, 2017), highlighting a potential misalignment between the program's offerings and students' motivations and expectations. This study, therefore, aims to assess the selection motives of business education students in tertiary institutions in Niger State

The alarming rate of unemployment among Nigerian graduates, including those from business education points to a critical problem within the educational system. While business education is theoretically designed to foster entrepreneurial skills and provide a pathway to self-employment, many students (graduate) without the practical competencies needed to thrive in the modern business world (Al-Hikmah University, 2025; Effiom & Petters, 2019). The reasons for this disconnect are multifaceted, but a key area of concern is the students' initial motivation for selecting the program. If students are primarily driven by the prospect of acquiring skills for a formal job, while the curriculum is geared towards entrepreneurship, or vice versa, this can lead to dissatisfaction and poor post-graduation outcomes. Conversely, a poor understanding of the factors influencing students' choices hinders policymakers and educators from designing a curriculum that is relevant and effective. This study seeks to bridge this knowledge gap by assessing the specific motives behind students' choice of business education programs in Niger State. The research question is, what are the major factors influencing the selection of business education programs among undergraduate students in Niger State?

The concept of selection motives in education refers to the underlying reasons, drives, or determinants that influence an individual's decision to choose a particular course or programme of study. In the context of Business Education, selection motives are the factors that guide students' preference for the discipline over other alternatives, shaped by personal aspirations, socio-economic conditions, cultural values, and perceived opportunities in the labour market (Ahmed, Sharif & Ahmad, 2017). Motives serve as psychological forces that not only initiate but also sustain a decision-making process, thereby influencing students' academic and career paths (Deci & Ryan, 2018).

Business Education programme

Business Education is a component of vocational and technical education designed to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies required to function effectively in business environments either as entrepreneurs or as employees in private and public sectors. It integrates both theoretical and practical instruction to prepare individuals not only for gainful employment but also for self-reliance and economic independence. It refers to the teaching and learning process that imparts knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values essential for effective participation in the business world. It is designed to prepare individuals for work in business environments and also for self-employment. Business Education includes courses such as accounting, marketing, office practice, and entrepreneurship (Ezeani & Akpotu, 2018).

Business Education represents a specialized field of study designed to prepare individuals for careers in business occupations and for teaching business subjects at various educational levels effectively (Amesi & Akpomi, 2018). The discipline encompasses both vocational preparations developing knowledge and skills necessary for employment in business environments and professional teacher education preparing educators to teach business subjects effectively in secondary and tertiary institutions (Azuka, 2019). This dual focus distinguishes Business Education in Nigerian Colleges of Education from purely vocational business programs or general business administration degrees (Amesi & Akpomi, 2018).

Business Education as "education for and about business (Okoro & Ezeh, 2017), this concise definition captures the field's dual nature: education for business prepares individuals with practical skills for employment in business occupations, while education about business develops understanding of business systems, principles, and contexts enabling informed citizenship and consumer decision-making. Both dimensions are essential for comprehensive Business Education (Azuka, 2019). For Colleges of Education specifically, Business Education serves the critical function of preparing secondary school teachers who will develop students' business knowledge, skills, and competencies (Udo & Akpan, 2018). Given the importance of economic literacy, entrepreneurial capabilities, and business skills in contemporary society, quality business education at secondary level depends substantially on well-prepared teachers with strong content mastery and pedagogical expertise (Amesi & Akpomi, 2018). Colleges of Education therefore bear significant responsibility for ensuring that Business Education graduates possess both thorough business knowledge and effective teaching capabilities (Okoro & Ezeh, 2017).

Business Education programs pursue multiple interconnected objectives as stated bellow, reflecting the field's dual vocational and teacher preparation purposes (Amesi & Akpomi, 2018).

1. **Developing Business Knowledge and Skills:** Programs aim to develop comprehensive understanding of business disciplines including accounting, economics, marketing, management, entrepreneurship, and office technology. Students should master both theoretical concepts and practical skills enabling effective performance in business contexts. For accounting specifically, this includes thorough understanding of accounting principles, proficiency with accounting procedures and systems, and capabilities to analyze and interpret financial information.
2. **Fostering Entrepreneurial Mindsets and Skills:** Given high unemployment rates and limited formal sector opportunities in Nigeria, developing entrepreneurial capabilities enabling graduates to create their own employment becomes increasingly important. Programs should develop entrepreneurial thinking including opportunity recognition, innovation, calculated risk-taking, resource mobilization, and business planning alongside practical skills for starting and operating enterprises.
3. **Building Communication and Interpersonal Competencies:** Effective business practice requires strong communication skills written, oral, and interpersonal for interacting with colleagues, clients, supervisors, and other stakeholders. Programs should develop these competencies through presentations, reports, collaborative projects, and other activities requiring professional communication.
4. **Cultivating Professional Ethics and Values:** Business Education should develop ethical awareness, professional integrity, and commitment to socially responsible business practices. Given recurring corporate scandals and ethical failures in business environments, explicit attention to ethics in business education becomes increasingly critical.
5. **Developing Technological Competence:** Contemporary business increasingly depends on information and communication technologies for operations, communication, and decision-making. Business Education must develop competence with relevant technologies including computers, software applications, internet resources, and emerging technologies shaping business practices.

6. Building Pedagogical Knowledge and Teaching Skills: For prospective teachers, Business Education programs must develop pedagogical content knowledge understanding not only business subjects but how to teach them effectively alongside general pedagogical skills. This includes understanding how students learn business concepts, common misconceptions and learning difficulties, effective instructional strategies for business subjects, and assessment approaches appropriate for business education.

Research Question

1. What are the major factors influencing the selection of business education programs among undergraduate students in Niger State?

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design to gather data from business education students in tertiary institutions in Niger State. This design is appropriate because it allows for the collection of data on the opinions, perceptions, and motives of a large population sample (Osuala, 2009). The population of the study consists of all the students in business education department in all the tertiary institutions in Niger State offering business education as a course of study totaling 880. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure that the sample of 150 students is a representation of the student body across different levels of study (100-level to 400-level). The instrument used for data collections is a structured questionnaire. To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in Business Education and research methodology to check for content relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness. The collected data were analyzed using means and standard deviation to analyze the research question.

Results

Table1: Population of the Study

S/N	Name of Institution	Number of Students
1	Niger State College of Education, Minna. Niger State	520
2	Federal University of Education, Kontagora. Niger State	360
	Total	880

Source: Examination Office, 2025

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	75	50.0
Female	75	50.0
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents by gender to determine the level of gender representation in the study sample. This perfect balance indicates that the views of both genders are fairly captured, ensuring that no gender is over- or under-represented in the analysis.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age Range (Years)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
16 – 19	12	8.0
20 – 23	70	46.7
24 – 27	40	26.7
28 and above	28	18.7
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents according to age. The results show that the largest proportion of respondents (70 students, 46.7%) fall within the 20–23 years age bracket, which aligns with the typical age range of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions. This is followed by those aged 24–27 years (40 students, 26.7%), while 28 years and above account for 28 respondents (18.7%), indicating a smaller group of mature students. The 16–19 years category represents the smallest group, with 12 respondents (8.0%), suggesting that few participants enrolled in Business Education immediately after secondary school. This pattern implies that most students choose Business Education during the conventional undergraduate age, while a notable minority of older students reflects late entry or continued education, thereby providing a diverse age composition that strengthens the representativeness of the study sample.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Study

Level of Study	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
100 Level	38	25.3
200 Level	49	32.6
300 Level	63	42.1
400 Level	0	0
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents according to their level of study. The results indicate that the highest proportions of students (63 respondents, 42.1%) are in 300 Level, showing strong representation of those at the higher stage of their programme. This is closely followed by 200 Level students (49 respondents, 32.6%), while 100 Level students constitute the smallest group (38 respondents, 25.3%). This pattern suggests that opinions on the selection motives of Business Education programmes were captured across all academic levels, with a slightly higher participation from students who have progressed beyond the introductory stages of the programme. The dominance of upper-level students enhances the credibility of the findings, as these respondents are likely to have deeper exposure to the curriculum and more informed perspectives on their motives for choosing the programme.

Research Question One: What are the major factors influencing the selection of business education programs among undergraduate students in Niger State?

Table 5: Factors Influencing the Selection of Business Education Programs among students

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I chose Business Education because it will increase my chances of getting a good job after graduation.	3.10	0.91	High
2	Business Education provides clearer career opportunities than many other programmes.	3.05	0.88	High
3	I expect this programme to improve my future income prospects.	3.00	0.92	High
4	Employers prefer graduates with Business Education backgrounds.	2.95	0.85	Moderate
5	I enrolled to gain professional certifications (e.g., accounting/office technology).	3.08	0.89	High
6	The skills from this programme are in high demand in today's labour market.	3.20	0.83	High
7	I selected Business Education because of current market demand for business skills in Niger State.	3.06	0.86	High
8	Expected salary levels in business-related jobs influenced my choice.	2.92	0.93	Moderate
9	I believe this course will help me secure stable employment during economic downturns.	2.88	0.90	Moderate
10	Opportunities for business in my locality encouraged me to choose this programme.	2.80	0.95	Moderate
Cluster Mean		3.00	0.89	High

Table 5 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents' views on the factors influencing the selection of Business Education programmes among students in Niger State. The overall cluster mean of 3.00 (SD = 0.89) indicates a high level of agreement that the listed factors significantly motivate students' choice of the programme. Among the individual items, respondents most strongly agreed that the skills from this programme are in high demand in today's labour market (Mean = 3.20, SD = 0.83), and that choosing Business Education increases their chances of getting a good job after graduation (Mean = 3.10, SD = 0.91). Other highly rated factors include gaining professional certifications (Mean = 3.08, SD = 0.89), the current market demand for business skills in Niger State (Mean = 3.06, SD = 0.86), and the programme's clear career opportunities (Mean = 3.05, SD = 0.88).

Moderately rated motives include expectations of higher salaries in business-related jobs (Mean = 2.92, SD = 0.93), the belief that the programme will provide stable employment during economic downturns (Mean = 2.88, SD = 0.90), and the influence of local business

opportunities (Mean = 2.80, SD = 0.95). The relatively low standard deviations across all items indicate a consistent pattern of agreement among respondents.

These findings revealed that labour market demand, career opportunities, and professional certification prospects are the strongest drivers for selecting Business Education, while economic security and local business prospects serve as secondary but relevant considerations.

Discussion of Findings

This study aimed to assess the selection motives of Business Education programmes among students in tertiary institutions in Niger State. The major areas investigated included the factors influencing programme selection, entrepreneurial/self-employment motives, and the influence of family background and peer pressure.

The results revealed that students strongly agreed that labour market demand, career prospects, and opportunities for professional certification were the most important factors motivating their choice of Business Education (Cluster Mean = 3.00, SD = 0.89). High mean ratings were recorded for items such as the high demand for Business Education skills in the labour market (Mean = 3.20) and increased chances of securing good jobs after graduation (Mean = 3.10). This supports earlier studies by Okwuanaso and Nwazor (2020) and Okoli and Okwuanaso (2019), who reported that employability and the relevance of business-related skills remain key drivers of student enrolment in Business Education programmes. The finding reflects the reality of Nigeria's current labour market, where graduates with practical business and ICT competencies are better positioned for gainful employment.

The study also found a high level of agreement that entrepreneurial motives significantly influence students' choice of Business Education (Cluster Mean = 3.10, SD = 0.88). Respondents particularly agreed that the programme equips them with practical business-management skills and provides opportunities for independence and self-employment (Mean = 3.20). This aligns with the findings of Ezeani and Akpotu (2018), who emphasized that Business Education plays a pivotal role in fostering entrepreneurial intentions and preparing students to start and manage small enterprises. In the context of rising youth unemployment in Nigeria, the strong emphasis on self-employment underscores the programme's perceived value in providing an alternative pathway to economic stability.

Conversely, family background and peer pressure recorded only moderate influence on students' programme selection (Cluster Mean = 2.78, SD = 0.94). Parental encouragement was

the most notable factor (Mean = 2.93), while cultural/community expectations had the least impact (Mean = 2.63). This suggests that while family input remains relevant, students' decisions are increasingly self-driven and guided by career considerations, rather than social or cultural pressures. The result is consistent with the work of Aina and Babalola (2021), who observed a shift toward individual career autonomy among Nigerian students, reflecting changing socio-economic realities where students prioritize employability and personal aspirations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the selection motives of Business Education in tertiary institutions in Niger State are predominantly career- and entrepreneurship-driven. The results showed that students are mainly attracted to the programme because of its labour market relevance, clear career opportunities, and the practical business and management skills it provides. The high mean ratings for factors such as employability demand for business skills, and opportunities for professional certification underscore the programme's perceived capacity to enhance job prospects and future income.

Similarly, the study establishes that entrepreneurial motives play a critical role in students' decision to enroll. The desire for independence, self-employment, and acquisition of business start-up skills strongly motivates undergraduates, reflecting a growing recognition of entrepreneurship as a viable response to Nigeria's high youth unemployment rate.

In contrast, family background and peer pressure exert only moderate influence, indicating that students' decisions are increasingly self-determined and guided by career aspirations rather than parental or societal expectations.

This suggests that the appeal of the programme cuts across demographic and institutional boundaries. The findings affirm that Business Education remains a highly attractive field in Niger State because it combines academic training with practical competencies that meet the demands of today's competitive economy. Tertiary institutions should therefore sustain and strengthen the entrepreneurship and career-oriented content of their curricula to maintain student interest and to further enhance graduates' employability and self-reliance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made to strengthen Business Education programmes and sustain students' interest across tertiary institutions in Niger State:

1. Tertiary institutions should continually review and update the Business Education curriculum to reflect emerging trends in the labour market. Courses should integrate digital skills, financial technology, and modern business practices to further improve students' employability and income prospects.
2. Curriculum planners, employers, alumni, and professional associations should be involved in regular consultative meetings to ensure that the programme remains responsive to the needs of students and the economy.
3. Since entrepreneurial motives were a strong factor in students' programme selection, institutions should expand practical entrepreneurship modules, incubation centres, and business start-up projects. This will provide students with real-world experience in business creation and management.
4. Secondary schools and tertiary institutions should strengthen career counselling units to guide prospective students on career paths based on labour market realities and personal aspirations rather than family pressure or peer influence.
5. Institutions should organise periodic outreach programmes and public sensitisation to promote the benefits of Business Education to secondary school leavers. This will attract students who have strong career and entrepreneurial interests.
6. Partnerships with private sector organisations, government agencies, and NGOs should be encouraged to provide internship placements, mentorships, and cooperative education programmes, enabling students to gain practical exposure and develop employable skills before graduation.
7. Institutions should collaborate with professional bodies (e.g. ICAN, ANAN, NIM) to offer students discounted certification opportunities and preparatory courses. This will enhance their qualifications and competitiveness in the job market.

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