

Exploring the Impact of Students' Engagement and Institutional Support Services on Academic Achievement of Business Education Students at Federal University Otuoke

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between students' engagement, institutional support services, and the academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke. A correlational survey design was adopted as the research methodology. The study population comprised all business education students at Federal University Otuoke in the 2023–2024 academic session. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select a representative sample of the student population. Data were collected using two researcher-developed instruments: the Students' Engagement and Institutional Support Scale (SEISS) and the Students' Academic Achievement Scale (SAAS), both structured to assess the study variables. The instruments' validity was established through expert reviews from the Departments of Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation at Federal University Otuoke. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha yielded coefficients of 0.86 and 0.79 for SEISS and SAAS, respectively, demonstrating strong internal consistency. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC), were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed significant positive relationships between students' engagement, institutional support services, and academic achievement, underscoring the critical role of active engagement and robust institutional support in fostering academic success among business education students.

Keywords: Students' Engagement, Institutional Support Services, Academic Achievement,

Introduction

Student engagement refers to the degree of interest, involvement, and commitment that students demonstrate in their academic and extracurricular activities. It encompasses behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, all of which contribute to students' overall learning experience and academic success. In the context of Business Education, engagement is particularly significant as it influences the extent to which students actively participate in classroom instruction, industrial training programs, and skill acquisition exercises. Highly engaged students tend to demonstrate better academic performance, stronger problem-solving skills, and a greater ability to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world scenarios.

Institutional support mechanisms are structures, policies, and services implemented by educational institutions to enhance students' academic and professional development. These include career counseling, mentorship programs, access to modern learning resources, and well-structured industrial training initiatives. In Business Education, effective institutional support ensures that students receive adequate guidance, practical exposure, and infrastructural support necessary for skill acquisition. Universities play a critical role in facilitating student

success by providing opportunities for industry collaboration, offering career development workshops, and ensuring that students gain practical experience that aligns with labor market demands.

Education is a fundamental driver of national development, equipping individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies to thrive in the evolving world of work. In Nigeria, traditional education has historically emphasized theoretical instruction at the expense of practical experience, leading to a gap between graduates' academic knowledge and industry requirements. This gap is particularly evident in vocational and technical disciplines, including Business Education, where practical skill acquisition is crucial for career success (Ekpenyong, 2011). To bridge this divide, initiatives such as the Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) were introduced to provide students with hands-on industry exposure, enhancing their employability and professional competencies.

Business Education is a vocational discipline designed to equip students with relevant business knowledge, professional competencies, and entrepreneurial skills essential for success in the corporate and entrepreneurial sectors (Imeokparia & Ediagbonya, 2014). It encompasses two major specializations: Office Technology and Management, which focuses on administrative and managerial skills, and Accounting Education, which emphasizes financial and accounting expertise (Osuala, 2004). The program aligns with the objectives of vocational and technical education as outlined in Nigeria's National Policy on Education, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for both employment and self-employment opportunities.

Despite the strategic implementation of SIWES and institutional support mechanisms, concerns persist regarding the effectiveness of these interventions in enhancing students' academic achievement and career readiness. A key issue is the limited duration of industrial training for Business Education students, which may hinder comprehensive skill acquisition and professional development (Mafe, 2009). Furthermore, variations in student engagement levels during industrial placements influence the extent to which theoretical knowledge is effectively translated into practical competencies. Institutional support services, such as career guidance, mentorship, and infrastructural support, also play a critical role in shaping students' academic and professional outcomes (Ekpenyong, 2011).

Given the importance of industrial exposure and institutional support in academic achievement, this study seeks to investigate the relationship between student engagement, institutional support services, and academic performance among Business Education students at Federal University Otuoke. By addressing these objectives, the study will contribute to the ongoing discourse on the relevance and effectiveness of industrial training schemes in Nigeria's higher education system. It will provide insights into how Business Education

programs can be further enhanced to produce graduates who are not only academically proficient but also practically competent in meeting the demands of the labor market.

Objectives of the Study

This study investigated the relationship between students' engagement, institutional support services, and academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following:

- i. Ascertain the relationship between students' engagement and academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke
- ii. Investigate the relationship between institutional support services and academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke

Research Questions

- i. What is the relationship between student engagement and business education students' academic achievement at Federal University Otuoke?
- ii. What is the relationship between institutional support services and academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke?

Null Hypotheses

H₀₁: Student engagement does not significantly relate with academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke.

H₀₂: Institutional support services does not significantly relate with academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke.

Methodology

This study adopted a correlational survey research design to examine the relationship between students' engagement, institutional support services, and academic achievement among Business Education students at Federal University Otuoke. A correlational survey design is appropriate for investigating the association between two or more variables, determining the direction and strength of the relationships (Nwankwo, 2016). This design enabled the collection of relevant data from Business Education undergraduates who had participated in industrial training, thereby facilitating an assessment of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The population of the study comprised all 562 Business Education students at Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State. A sample of 362 Business Education students was selected using a purposive sampling technique. The sample consisted of all third- and fourth-year students from the 2023/2024 academic session who had participated in the mandatory industrial training scheme. This ensured that only students with relevant exposure to the training experience were included in the study.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Impact of Industrial Training Scheme Scale (IITSS)” and “Students’ Academic Achievement Scale (SAAS),” developed by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of two sections:

- i. **Section A:** Collected demographic information of respondents, including age, gender, and year of study.
- ii. **Section B:** Comprised five sub-sections (A–E) measuring key study variables, namely: internship duration, skill acquisition, student engagement, institutional support services, and industry exposure. Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1).

Students’ academic achievement was assessed using the Students’ Academic Achievement Scale (SAAS), which extracted students’ results from official department records. Academic performance was categorized on a five-point scale: First Class (5), Second Class Upper (4), Second Class Lower (3), Third Class (2), and Pass (1). The content and face validity of the instrument were ensured by three experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation, as well as the research supervisor, all from the Faculty of Education at Federal University Otuoke. These experts reviewed the instrument’s content, structure, and clarity, ensuring that all items aligned with the research objectives. Constructive feedback and suggestions from the validators were integrated into the final draft of the questionnaire. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted with 20 Business Education students from a neighboring university who shared similar characteristics with the target population. The Cronbach Alpha reliability formula was used to assess internal consistency, yielding reliability coefficients of 0.86 for IITSS and 0.79 for SAAS, which were considered appropriate for the study. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to students with assistance from a research assistant within the university. Prior to distribution, respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study and the significance of their participation. A one-on-one questionnaire administration method was employed to maximize response rates and ensure the accuracy of data collection. The research questions were answered using correlation coefficients, while hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at a 0.05 level of significance. The interpretation of the correlation values was as follows:

- i. $r \geq 0.5$ – Strong relationship
- ii. $r < 0.5$ – Weak relationship

For hypothesis testing, if the calculated p-value exceeded the critical p-value (0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected. Conversely, if the calculated p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Results

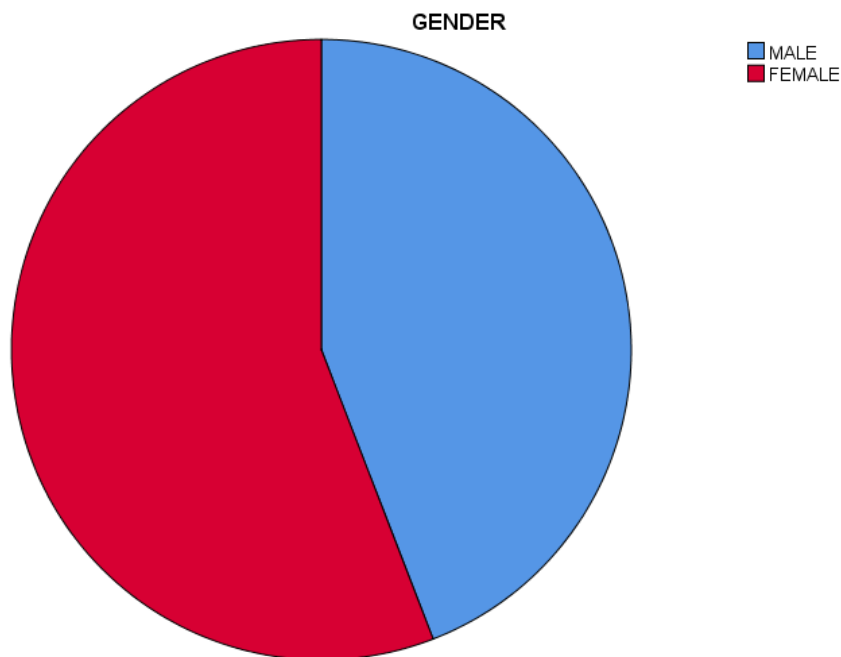
Data Presentation

The results, analysis, and interpretation of the data gathered for this investigation. The researchers used the simple percentage method to examine the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1: Simple Percentage Analysis of Respondents by Gender

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	154	44.1
	Female	195	55.9
	Total	349	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

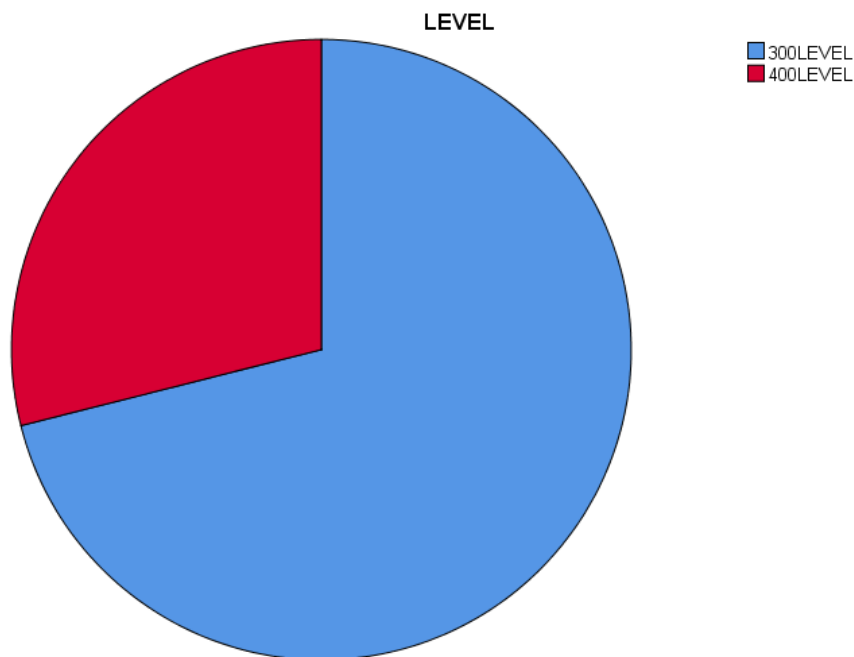
**Figure 1: Pie Chart of Respondents by Gender**

The data presented in Table 1 indicates that 154 (44.1%) of the total respondents were male business education students and 195 (55.9%) were female business education students. This simply implies that each gender was adequately represented in the study.

Table 2: Simple Percentage Analysis of Respondents by Level

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	300level	248	71.1
	400level	101	28.9
	Total	349	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

**Figure 2: Pie Chart of Respondents by Level**

The data presented in Table 2 indicates that 248(71.1%) of the total respondents were in 300 level and 101(28.9%) were in 400level. This simply implies that 300 level respondents were more in number than their 400 counterparts in the study.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between student engagement and business education students' academic achievement at Federal University Otuoke?

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis on the relationship between the student engagement and academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke

		Student Engagement	Academic Achievement
Student Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.745**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	349	349
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.745**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	349	349

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The data presented in Table 3 indicated that, the correlation coefficient (r-value) between skill acquisition level and academic achievement is .745. Since the r-value is positive and greater than 0.5, then a strong positive relationship exists. Therefore, there is a strong positive relationship between the student engagement and academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between institutional support services and academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke?

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis on the relationship between the institutional support services and academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke

		Institutional Support Services	Academic Achievement
Institutional Support Services	Pearson Correlation	1	.603**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	349	349
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.603	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	349	349

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The data presented in Table 4 indicated that, the correlation coefficient (r-value) between skill acquisition level and academic achievement is .603. Since the r-value is positive and greater than 0.5, then a strong positive relationship exists. Therefore, there is a strong positive relationship between the institutional support services and academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke.

Testing Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis: Student engagement does not have a significant relationship with academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis on the relationship between the student engagement and academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke

		Student Engagement	Academic Achievement
Student Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.745**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	349	349
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.745**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	349	349

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The data presented in Table 3 above indicated that, at r-value of .745 the p-value is 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 alpha level then the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that, Student engagement have a significant relationship with academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke is rejected.

Null Hypothesis 2: Institutional support services do not have a significant relationship with academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis on the relationship between the institutional support services and academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke

		Institutional Support Services	Academic Achievement
Institutional Support Services	Pearson Correlation	1	.603**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	349	349
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.603	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	349	349

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The data presented in Table 4 above indicated that, at r-value of .603 the p-value is 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 alpha level then the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that, Institutional support services have a

significant relationship with academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Relationship between students' engagement and academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke

The result in research question three revealed that student engagement has a strong positive and significant relationship with the academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke. The findings from research question three indicate that student engagement has a strong, positive, and significant relationship with the academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke. This suggests that higher levels of student engagement are associated with improved academic performance among these students, reflecting the idea that active participation and involvement in learning activities enhance academic success. The positive correlation implies that as student engagement increases, so too does academic achievement, highlighting the role of active learning in fostering academic outcomes. This result confirms a significant, positive correlation between student engagement and academic achievement, emphasizing the importance of fostering an engaging learning environment in business education. These findings align with those of Akinbiyi and Olorunfemi (2020), Chukwuma and Okoro (2019), Ogunlade and Ojo (2021), who observed a positive relationship between student engagement and academic performance in Nigerian universities, suggesting that students who are more engaged with their studies tend to achieve better academically. Similarly, Ejikeme and Obi (2020), noted that engaged students display improved learning outcomes, as their involvement in class activities, discussions, and assignments translates into deeper understanding and retention of knowledge.

In contrast, these findings differ from the study by Okoro (2019), who reported no significant relationship between student engagement and academic performance in certain non-business disciplines, suggesting that engagement may have varying impacts depending on the field of study. Nonetheless, this study underscores the importance of student engagement in enhancing academic performance, particularly for business education students who benefit from active participation in learning experiences that strengthen their academic understanding.

Relationship between institutional support services and academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke

The result in research question four revealed that Institutional support services have a strong positive and significant relationship with academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke. The findings from research question three indicate that institutional support services have a strong, positive, and significant relationship with the academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke. This suggests that enhanced institutional support services are associated with improved academic performance among these students, supporting the view that access to academic resources,

guidance, and administrative support promotes student success. The positive correlation implies that an increase in the availability and quality of institutional support services corresponds to an increase in students' academic achievement scores.

This result confirms a significant, positive correlation between institutional support services and academic achievement, emphasizing the role of supportive academic infrastructure in fostering academic success within business education. The findings align with previous research by Akinbode and Ojo (2019), Chukwuemeka and Okoro (2020), Nwankwo and Ugochukwu (2021) who observed a positive relationship between institutional support and student performance in Nigerian universities, arguing that services such as counseling, library access, and academic advising enhance students' ability to focus on their studies. Similarly, Uche and Ibe (2018) found that well-implemented support services directly contribute to improved learning outcomes, as they address students' academic and personal needs.

In contrast, the current findings differ from the study by Obasi (2019), who found no significant relationship between institutional support services and academic achievement in certain technical fields, suggesting that the impact of support services may vary based on specific academic disciplines. Nonetheless, this study highlights the critical importance of institutional support services in enhancing academic performance, particularly for business education students who benefit from structured support systems that facilitate learning and academic engagement.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between student engagement, institutional support services, and the academic achievement of business education students at Federal University Otuoke. The findings revealed that both student engagement and institutional support services have strong, positive, and significant relationships with students' academic performance. This indicates that students who actively participate in learning activities, discussions, and assignments tend to achieve better academic outcomes. Likewise, institutional support services—such as access to academic resources, counseling, and administrative assistance—play a crucial role in enhancing student success by providing an enabling environment for learning.

These findings align with previous research that underscores the importance of student engagement and institutional support in academic achievement. However, some contrasting studies suggest that the impact of these factors may vary across different academic disciplines. Despite these variations, the results of this study highlight the necessity of fostering an engaging learning environment and strengthening institutional support mechanisms to enhance students' academic performance.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that educational institutions, particularly Federal University Otuoke, implement strategies to increase student engagement, such as interactive teaching methods, participatory learning experiences, and mentorship programs. Additionally, universities should improve their institutional support services by

expanding academic advisory programs, enhancing library resources, and providing adequate counseling services to address students' academic and personal challenges. By prioritizing these factors, business education students can be better equipped for academic success and professional readiness.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were put forward:

1. Increased student engagement through active learning strategies should be encouraged to foster higher academic achievement.
2. Institutions should enhance support services such as counseling, library resources, and academic advising to provide the necessary guidance for students' academic growth.

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