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Article

Staff Capacity-Building Programmes Required for Enhancing the Instructional Competence of Business Educators in Rivers State- Owned Universities

Rachael Ichechi Ogbu[1], Lawrence Ikechi Ajoku[2]

1. Department of Business Education, Faculty of Education Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
2. Department of Curriculum Studies and Instructional Technology Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract: This study examined the staff capacity-building programmes required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, focusing on three core variables: digital skills training programmes, innovative pedagogical training programmes, and student engagement training programmes. The population comprised 58 Business Education lecturers from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) and Rivers State University (RSU), and the entire population was used as the sample through a census sampling procedure. Data were collected using a validated and reliable researcher-developed instrument titled Staff Capacity-Building Programmes Required for Enhancing Instructional Competence of Business Educators Questionnaire (SCBPREICQ), which yielded a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.87. All 58 copies of the questionnaire administered were retrieved and used for analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to answer the research questions, while independent samples t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that digital skills training programmes, innovative pedagogical training programmes, and student engagement training programmes were required to a very high extent for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in the two universities. The results of the independent samples t-tests further showed no statistically significant difference in the mean responses of Business Educators from the two universities, indicating a shared perception of their importance. The study concluded that digital skills training, innovative pedagogical training, and student engagement training programmes are required to a very high extent for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities. Based on these findings, it was recommended that university management should organize regular staff capacity-building programmes to improve instructional competence and enhance the quality of Business Education in the Rivers State-owned universities.

Keywords: staff capacity-building programmes, instructional competence, Business Education.

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1. Introduction

Business Education is a vital component of the Nigerian educational system because it equips individuals with the knowledge, occupational skills, entrepreneurial competencies, and professional attitudes required for gainful employment, self-reliance, wealth creation, and national development. As one of the vocational and

professional education programmes offered in Nigerian universities, Business Education is designed to prepare competent teachers, office administrators, accountants, entrepreneurs, and other business professionals capable of meeting the dynamic demands of the contemporary workplace. The National Universities Commission (NUC) through the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) emphasizes that graduates of Business Education should possess digital competence, entrepreneurial capabilities, critical thinking skills, effective communication skills, and the ability to adapt to emerging technologies in the world of work (National Universities Commission [NUC][1]. Achieving these expectations, however, depends largely on the instructional competence of Business Education lecturers who implement the curriculum.

Instructional competence is the ability of lecturers to effectively plan, organize, deliver, facilitate, assess, and evaluate learning experiences in ways that promote students' academic achievement and acquisition of relevant workplace competencies. It encompasses pedagogical knowledge, technological competence, communication skills, classroom management, assessment competence, instructional innovation, and professional ethics that enable lecturers to achieve instructional objectives effectively[2]. In Business Education, instructional competence extends beyond mastery of subject content to include the ability to integrate practical business experiences, digital technologies, learner-centred instructional approaches, and entrepreneurship-oriented pedagogies that prepare students for employment and self-reliance. Consequently, lecturers who continually update their instructional competencies are better positioned to produce graduates who are competent, innovative, and responsive to the changing needs of modern organizations.

The increasing digitalization of higher education has fundamentally transformed teaching and learning across universities globally, including Nigeria. The emergence of learning management systems, virtual learning platforms, artificial intelligence applications, digital collaboration tools, online assessment systems, cloud computing technologies, and multimedia instructional resources has changed the way lecturers design, deliver, and evaluate instruction. These developments require Business Education lecturers to continually upgrade their digital competencies to remain effective in technology-enhanced teaching environments. Studies have shown that lecturers' digital competence significantly influences instructional quality, students' engagement, and successful technology integration in higher education[3][4]. Similarly, Conklin [5] reported that integrating emerging technologies into instructional design enhances lecturers' capacity to facilitate flexible, interactive, and learner-centred learning experiences. These developments underscore the need for continuous staff capacity-building programmes that equip lecturers with the competencies required to respond to evolving educational technologies.

Staff capacity-building programmes have become indispensable mechanisms for improving lecturers' professional competence and enhancing instructional effectiveness in higher education institutions. Capacity-building programmes consist of organized professional development activities such as workshops, seminars, conferences, mentoring, coaching, in-service training, certification programmes, peer learning, and continuing professional development initiatives designed to improve lecturers' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional performance. Through these programmes, lecturers acquire current pedagogical knowledge, improve their technological competencies, strengthen assessment practices, and develop innovative instructional strategies that enhance students' learning outcomes. Recent evidence suggests that sustained participation in professional development significantly improves lecturers' digital competence, pedagogical effectiveness, instructional innovation, and overall teaching performance[6][7]. Consequently, universities increasingly recognize staff capacity-building as a strategic investment for improving educational quality and institutional competitiveness.

Among the various dimensions of staff capacity-building, digital skills training programmes have become particularly significant because of the increasing integration of technology into university teaching and learning. Digital skills training equips lecturers with competencies in the use of educational software, virtual learning environments, artificial intelligence tools, digital communication platforms, online collaboration technologies, multimedia applications, and electronic assessment systems. Such competencies enable lecturers to effectively integrate technology into classroom instruction and create engaging learning experiences for students. Heinsfeld and Marone[8] noted that lecturers' willingness and ability to adopt educational technologies depend largely on continuous professional learning opportunities. Similarly, Okafor and Sule[9] observed that technological competence among university lecturers significantly improves instructional effectiveness and enhances the quality of digital learning environments. In Business Education, where students are expected to acquire practical digital business skills for workplace relevance, continuous digital skills training has become essential for lecturers.

Innovative pedagogical training programmes constitute another important component of staff capacity-building that contributes significantly to instructional competence. Contemporary higher education increasingly emphasizes learner-centred instructional approaches that encourage collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, and experiential learning. Consequently, lecturers require continuous training in instructional strategies such as project-based learning, flipped classrooms, collaborative learning, simulations, inquiry-based instruction, authentic assessment, and problem-based learning to effectively facilitate competency-based education. Maheshwari and Bhatt[10] reported that lecturers who continuously engage in professional learning are better able to implement innovative instructional approaches that improve students' academic performance and creativity. Likewise, Trujillo Juárez found that structured digital competence interventions significantly enhance lecturers' instructional performance and pedagogical effectiveness. For Business Education lecturers, innovative pedagogical competence is indispensable because the discipline emphasizes practical skill acquisition alongside theoretical instruction.

Student engagement training programmes have also emerged as an important aspect of lecturers' professional development. Student engagement refers to the behavioural, emotional, and cognitive involvement of learners in educational activities that promote meaningful learning and academic success. Lecturers who possess competencies in student engagement are able to create inclusive classrooms, encourage active participation, facilitate collaborative learning, provide constructive feedback, and sustain students' motivation throughout the learning process. Professional development programmes that focus on student engagement equip lecturers with practical strategies for fostering interactive learning environments that enhance students' participation and improve learning outcomes. Pham[11] reported that technological and emotional factors significantly influence students' continuous engagement in digital learning environments, while Said[12] emphasized that educators' professional competencies should align with workplace expectations and learners' needs. These findings suggest that effective student engagement requires lecturers to continually develop their instructional and interpersonal competencies through relevant capacity-building programmes.

Within the context of Business Education in Nigeria, the integration of digital competence, innovative pedagogy, and student engagement has become increasingly important because the discipline is expected to produce graduates who possess employable, entrepreneurial, technological, and managerial competencies. Consequently, Business Education lecturers must continually participate in professional development programmes that enhance their ability to integrate emerging technologies into instruction, implement learner-centred pedagogies, and promote

active learning. Empirical evidence indicates that technology-driven teaching skills, digital pedagogical delivery, and ICT competencies significantly improve instructional effectiveness among Business Education lecturers and contribute to better learning outcomes [13][14].

Despite increasing awareness of the importance of staff capacity-building in higher education, concerns remain regarding the adequacy of professional development opportunities available to Business Education lecturers in many Nigerian universities. Available evidence suggests that capacity-building programmes are often irregular, inadequately funded, poorly coordinated, or insufficiently aligned with emerging instructional demands. Consequently, some lecturers continue to experience challenges in integrating digital technologies into classroom instruction, adopting innovative pedagogical practices, and effectively engaging students during the teaching-learning process. These challenges may adversely affect instructional competence, students' acquisition of employable skills, graduate quality, and the achievement of the objectives of Business Education programmes.

Furthermore, although numerous studies have examined digital competence, technology integration, instructional effectiveness, and professional development in higher education, limited empirical evidence exists on the specific staff capacity-building programmes required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Education lecturers in Rivers State-owned universities. Most previous studies have focused on lecturers generally without examining the unique professional development needs associated with Business Education, particularly in the areas of digital skills training, innovative pedagogical training, and student engagement training. This gap in the literature necessitates an empirical investigation that will provide evidence-based information for improving professional development practices among Business Education lecturers in Rivers State-owned universities.

It is against this backdrop that this study investigates the staff capacity-building programmes required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Education lecturers in Rivers State-owned universities. Specifically, the study examines the extent to which digital skills training programmes, innovative pedagogical training programmes, and student engagement training programmes are required for enhancing lecturers' instructional competence. The findings of the study are expected to provide empirical evidence that will assist university administrators, educational planners, professional bodies, and policymakers in designing effective staff development programmes capable of improving instructional competence and strengthening the quality of Business Education in Nigerian universities.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The instructional competence of Business Educators is critical to the achievement of the objectives of Business Education programmes in universities. In today's dynamic higher education environment, Business Educators are expected to integrate digital technologies into instruction, adopt innovative pedagogical approaches, and employ effective student engagement strategies to improve teaching and learning. Meeting these expectations requires continuous participation in relevant staff capacity-building programmes that equip lecturers with the knowledge and skills needed to respond to emerging trends in higher education.

The increasing emphasis on digital transformation and learner-centred instruction has made staff capacity-building programmes in digital skills, innovative pedagogy, and student engagement indispensable for effective instructional delivery. These programmes can enhance lecturers' ability to integrate educational technologies, implement innovative teaching strategies, and create interactive learning environments that improve students' learning experiences. However, it is observed that many Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities seem not to have adequate opportunities to participate in these capacity-building programmes, which

may affect their instructional competence and the quality of teaching. Given this situation, there is a need to identify the specific staff capacity-building programmes required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators. This study, therefore, sought to examine the extent to which digital skills training programmes, innovative pedagogical training programmes, and student engagement training programmes are required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities, Nigeria.

1.2 Aim and objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the staff capacity-building programmes required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Identify the digital skills training programmes required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities.
2. Examine the innovative pedagogical training programmes required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities.
3. Assess the student engagement training programmes required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are digital skills training programmes required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities?
2. To what extent are innovative pedagogical training programmes required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities?
3. To what extent are student engagement training programmes required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities?

1.4 Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Educators from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Rivers State University regarding the extent to which digital skills training programmes are required for enhancing their instructional competence.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Educators from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Rivers State University regarding the extent to which innovative pedagogical training programmes are required for enhancing their instructional competence.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Educators from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Rivers State University regarding the extent to which student engagement training programmes are required for enhancing their instructional competence.

2. Materials and Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine staff capacity-building programmes required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect and analyze quantitative data

on lecturers' perceptions regarding the extent to which specific staff capacity-building programmes are required for improving instructional competence. The population of this study comprises 58 academic staff engaged in teaching Business Education programmes in Rivers State-owned universities. Specifically, the population consisted of 25 lecturers from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) and 33 lecturers from Rivers State University (RSU). These population data were obtained from the Heads of Department of Business Education in the two universities respectively to ensure credibility of the data. A census sampling procedure was employed since the population was manageable and accessible; therefore, the entire population of 58 Business Education lecturers constituted the sample. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: "Staff Capacity-Building Programmes Required for Enhancing Instructional Competence of Business Educators Questionnaire" (SCBPREICQ) developed by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of 15 items organized into sections based on the three core variables of the study, namely: Digital skills training, Innovative pedagogical training, and Student engagement training as Staff Capacity-Building programmes required for enhancing instructional competence of Business Educators. The questionnaire was subjected to face and contents validation by three experts, two in Business Education and one in Measurement and Evaluation from Rivers State University. Their suggestions were used to improve the clarity, relevance, and adequacy of the instrument. Reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot test involving 10 Business Education lecturers from Delta State University, who were not part of the main study. Data obtained from the pilot test were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.87, indicating a high level of internal consistency. The questionnaires were administered to all respondents with the assistance of two trained research assistants, resulting in a 100% retrieval rate. Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while independent samples t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In interpreting the mean responses, the following scale was adopted: Very High Extent (VHE) = 3.50–4.00; High Extent (HE) = 2.50–3.49; Low Extent (LE) = 1.50–2.49; and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 0.50–1.49. The null hypothesis was accepted when the calculated t-value was less than the critical t-value (t-crit), and rejected when the calculated t value was equal to or greater than the critical value, indicating a statistically significant difference at 0.05 level of significance.

3. Results

3.1 Research Questions 1

To what extent are digital skills training programmes required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities?

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation on the Extent Digital Skills Training Programmes are Required for Enhancing the Instructional Competence of Business Educatorsin Rivers State-Owned Universities

S/N	Items	IAUE (n=25) Mean	SD	Rmk	RSU (n=33) Mean	SD	Rmk
1.	Business Educators require training in the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS) to enhance their instructional competence	3.85	0.36	VHE	3.79	0.40	VHE
2.	Business Educators require training in integrating digital technologies into classroom instruction to improve instructional delivery	3.81	0.39	VHE	3.75	0.42	VHE
3	Business Educators require training in the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools for lesson preparation, teaching and assessment	3.77	0.41	VHE	3.71	0.44	VHE
4	Business Educators require training in the development and use of digital instructional materials for effective classroom instruction	3.74	0.43	VHE	3.68	0.46	VHE
5	Business Educators require training in the use of digital assessment and feedback tools to enhance instructionalcompetence	3.71	0.45	VHE	3.66	0.47	VHE
	Grand Mean	**3.78**	**0.41**	**VHE**	**3.72**	**0.44**	**VHE**

Table 1 shows that digital skills training programmes are required to a very high extent for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) and Rivers State University (RSU). This is evidenced by the grand mean scores of 3.78 for IAUE and 3.72 for RSU, which fall within the Very High Extent (VHE) category on the 4-point rating scale. The standard deviation values of 0.41 for IAUE and 0.44 for RSU indicate a high level of closeness in respondents' ratings, suggesting considerable agreement among Business Educators in both universities. Overall, the findings imply that digital skills training programmes are highly required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators, particularly in the areas of Learning Management Systems, digital technology integration, artificial intelligence applications, digital instructional material development, and digital assessment and feedback tools.

3.2 Research Questions 2

To what extent are innovative pedagogical training programmes required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities?

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation on the Extent Innovative Pedagogical Training Programmes are Required for Enhancing the Instructional Competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-Owned Universities

S/N	Items	IAUE (n=25) Mean	SD	Rmk	RSU (n=33) Mean	SD	Rmk
6.	Business Educators require training in student-centred teaching approaches to enhance instructional competence	3.81	0.38	VHE	3.75	0.41	VHE
7.	Business Educators require training in problem-based and project-based learning strategies for effective classroom instruction	3.76	0.40	VHE	3.71	0.43	VHE
8.	Business Educators require training in competency-based teaching approaches to improve instructional delivery	3.72	0.42	VHE	3.69	0.45	VHE
9.	Business Educators require training in collaborative and experiential learning strategies to enhance students' learning experiences	3.69	0.44	VHE	3.66	0.47	VHE
10.	Business Educators require training in innovative lesson planning and instructional delivery techniques to improve teaching effectiveness	3.70	0.46	VHE	3.64	0.49	VHE
	Grand Mean	**3.73**	**0.43**	**VHE**	**3.67**	**0.45**	**VHE**

Table 2 shows that innovative pedagogical training programmes are required to a very high extent for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) and Rivers State University (RSU). This is reflected in the grand mean scores of 3.73 (IAUE) and 3.67 (RSU), which fall within the Very High Extent (VHE) category on the 4-point rating scale. The standard deviation values of 0.42 (IAUE) and 0.45 (RSU) indicate a high level of closeness in respondents' ratings, suggesting strong agreement among Business Educators across both universities. Overall, the findings imply that innovative pedagogical training programmes are widely recognized as essential for enhancing instructional competence, particularly in the areas of student-centred teaching, problem-based and project-based learning, competency-based teaching, collaborative and experiential learning, and innovative lesson planning and instructional delivery techniques.

3.3 Research Questions 3

To what extent are student engagement training programmes required for enhancingthe instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities?

Tables 3. Mean and Standard Deviation on the Extent Student Engagement Training Programmes are Required for Enhancing the Instructional Competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-Owned Universities

S/N	Items	IAUE (n=25) Mean	SD	Rmk	RSU (n=33) Mean	SD	Rmk
11.	Business Educators require training in strategies for promoting active student participation during classroom instruction.	3.84	0.36		3.79	0.42	
12.	Business Educators require training in effective classroom communication techniques to improve student engagement.	3.79	0.41		3.73	0.45	
13.	Business Educators require training in strategies for motivating students to participate actively in learning activities.	3.76	0.44		3.70	0.46	
14.	Business Educators require training in inclusive teaching practices that address learners' diverse learning needs.	3.72	0.43		3.68	0.48	
15.	Business Educators require training in the use of interactive learning technologies to enhance student engagement during instruction.	3.69	0.47		3.65	0.50	
	Grand Mean	**3.76**	**0.42**		**3.71**	**0.47**	

Table 3 shows that student engagement training programmes are required to a very high extent for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) and Rivers State University (RSU). This is evidenced by the grand mean scores of 3.76 (IAUE) and 3.71 (RSU), which fall within the Very High Extent (VHE) category on the 4-point rating scale. The standard deviation values of 0.42 (IAUE) and 0.47 (RSU) indicate a high level of closeness in respondents' ratings, suggesting strong agreement among Business Educators in both universities. Overall, the findings imply that student engagement training programmes are highly required for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators, particularly in promoting active student participation, strengthening classroom communication, motivating learners, implementing inclusive teaching practices, and utilizing interactive learning technologies during instruction.

3.4 Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Educators from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Rivers State University regarding the extent to which digital skills training programmes are required for enhancing their instructional competence.

Table 4. t-test Analysis of the Difference in Mean Responses of IAUE and RSU Business Educators regarding the Extent to which Digital Skills Training Programmes are required for enhancing their Instructional Competence

Respondents	n	Mean	SD	df	α	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
IAUE	25	3.78	0.41					
				56	0.05	0.61	2.003	Accepted
RSU	33	3.72	0.44					

The results of the independent samples t-test, presented in Table 4, show a calculated t-value (t-cal = 0.61). This value is less than the critical t-value (t-crit = 2.003) at 56 degrees

of freedom and a 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value (0.61) does not exceed the critical value (2.003), the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses of Business Educators from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) and Rivers State University (RSU) regarding the extent to which digital skills training programmes are required for enhancing their instructional competence.

3.5 Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Educators from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Rivers State University regarding the extent to which innovative pedagogical training programmes are required for enhancing their instructional competence.

Table 5. t-test Analysis of the Difference in Mean Responses of IAUE and RSU Business Educators regarding the Extent to which Pedagogical Training Programmes are required for enhancing their Instructional Competence

Respondents	n	Mean	SD	df	α	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
IAUE	25	3.73	0.43					
				56	0.05	0.56	2.003	Accepted
RSU	33	3.67	0.45					

The results of the independent samples t-test, presented in Table 5, show a calculated t-value (t-cal = 0.56). This value is less than the critical t-value (t-crit = 2.003) at 56 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value (0.56) does not exceed the critical value (2.003), the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses of Business Educators from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) and Rivers State University (RSU) regarding the extent to which innovative pedagogical training programmes are required for enhancing their instructional competence.

3.6 Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Business Educators from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Rivers State University regarding the extent to which student engagement training programmes are required for enhancing their instructional competence.

Table 6. t-test Analysis of the Difference in Mean Responses of IAUE and RSU Business Educators regarding the Extent to which Student Engagement Training Programmes are required for enhancing their Instructional Competence

Respondents	n	Mean	SD	df	α	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
IAUE	25	3.76	0.42					
				56	0.05	0.55	0.55	Accepted
RSU	33	3.71	0.47					

The results of the independent samples t-test, presented in Table 6, show a calculated t-value (t-cal = 0.55). This value is less than the critical t-value (t-crit = 2.003) at 56 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value (0.55) does not exceed the critical value (2.003), the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses of Business Educators from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) and Rivers State University (RSU) regarding the extent to which student engagement training programmes are required for enhancing their instructional competence.

4. Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that digital skills training programmes are required to averyhigh extent for enhancin the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities. This finding reflects the increasing importance of digital competence in contemporary higher education, where lecturers are expected to integrate technology into teaching, learning, and assessment. The high ratings assigned to training in Learning Management Systems (LMS), digital technology integration, artificial intelligence tools, digital instructional m terial development, and digital assessment tools indicate that Business Educatorsrecognize digital competence as indispensable for effective instructional delivery. As higher education increasingly embraces digital transformation, lecturers require continuous professional development to remain relevant and effective in technology-enhanced learning environments. Heinsfeld and Marone asserted that lecturers' effective adoption of educational technologies depends largely on sustained professional learning opportunities that strengthen their digital competencies. Similarly, Amoako and Anane reported that digital teaching competence significantly enhances instructional effectiveness and lecturers' ability to adapt to evolving educational technologies. The implication of this finding is that universities should prioritize continuous digital skills training programmes to improve instructional quality and prepare Business Education graduates with relevant digital workplace competencies.

Furthermore, the finding of the study revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses of Business Educators from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) and Rivers State University (RSU) regarding the extent to which digital skills training programmes are required for enhancing instructional competence. This suggests that lecturers in both universities share similar perceptions concerning the importance of digital capacity-building. The absence of a significant difference indicates that the demand for digital competence is driven by common instructional challenges and technological changes in higher education rather than institutional differences. This finding supports Okafor and Sule, who maintained that technological competence has become a universal requirement for effective university teaching irrespective of institutional location. Likewise, Okon and Chukwurah emphasized that Business Education lecturers require continuous digital skills development to effectively integrate technology into instructional delivery. The finding therefore suggests that staff development policies relating to digital competence should be implemented uniformly across Rivers State-owned universities.

The study also revealed that innovative pedagogical training programmes are required to a very high extent for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities. This finding underscores the growing emphasis on learner-centred instructional approaches in higher education. The high ratings assigned to student-centred teaching, problem-based learning, project-based learning, competency-based teaching, collaborative learning, experiential learning, and innovative lesson planning indicate that lecturers acknowledge the importance of modern pedagogical approaches in improving instructional effectiveness. Contemporary university education requires lecturers to facilitate active learning experiences that promote critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving rather than relying solely on conventional lecture methods. Maheshwari and Bhatt observed that lecturers who continuously participate in professional development programmes are better equipped to implement innovative instructional strategies that improve students' learning outcomes and creativity. Similarly, Trujillo Juárez found that professional development interventions significantly improve lecturers' pedagogical competence and instructional performance. The implication of this finding is that universities should continuously organize pedagogical training programmes that expose lecturers to emerging instructional approaches capable of improving students' academic achievement and workplace readiness.

Additionally, the finding of the study revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses of Business Educators from IAUE and RSU regarding the extent to which innovative pedagogical training programmes are required for enhancing instructional competence. This finding indicates that lecturers in both universities possess similar views concerning the importance of innovative pedagogical practices. The similarity in responses suggests that the instructional demands facing Business Education lecturers are comparable across Rivers State-owned universities, thereby creating common professional development needs. The finding agrees with Okon[15] who reported that instructional competence among Business Education lecturers significantly influences effective curriculum implementation and students' learning outcomes. It also supports the National Universities Commission which emphasizes learner-centred and competency-based instructional approaches within the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS). Therefore, the absence of significant institutional differences suggests that innovative pedagogical training should constitute a common component of staff capacity-building programmes across universities.

Moreover, the study revealed that student engagement training programmes are required to a very high extent for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities. This finding highlights the importance of equipping lecturers with competencies that promote active student participation, effective classroom communication, learner motivation, inclusive teaching practices, and the use of interactive learning technologies. Effective student engagement is increasingly recognized as a major determinant of meaningful learning, improved academic performance, and enhanced classroom interaction. The finding suggests that Business Educators appreciate the role of professional development in creating interactive, inclusive, and learner-centred classrooms that encourage students' active participation throughout the teaching-learning process. Pham reported that both technological and emotional factors significantly influence students' engagement in learning environments. Similarly, Said emphasized that educators' professional competencies should align with learners' needs and workplace expectations through effective instructional and interpersonal practices. Consequently, continuous staff development in student engagement strategies is essential for improving instructional competence and learning outcomes in Business Education.

Finally, the finding of the study revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses of Business Educators from IAUE and RSU regarding the extent to which student engagement training programmes are required for enhancing instructional competence. This indicates that lecturers in both universities share similar perceptions regarding the importance of developing competencies that promote active learning and meaningful student participation. The uniformity in responses suggests that Business Education lecturers experience similar instructional realities and recognize student engagement as a critical element of effective teaching irrespective of institutional affiliation. This finding supports Okon who argued that lecturers' instructional competence significantly enhances classroom interaction and students' learning experiences. It also agrees with Conklin, who found that integrating emerging technologies and innovative instructional strategies enables lecturers to facilitate more engaging and learner-centred educational experiences. The absence of significant difference therefore implies that efforts aimed at improving instructional competence through student engagement training should be implemented across Rivers State-owned universities without institutional differentiation.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study have established that staff capacity-building programmes are required to a very high extent for enhancing the instructional competence of Business Educators in Rivers State-owned universities. Specifically, digital skills training programmes, innovative pedagogical training programmes, and student engagement training programmes were all perceived by Business Educators as essential for improving

their ability to deliver effective, learner-centred, and technology-driven instruction. These findings reflect the increasing demand for continuous professional development in higher education as lecturers are expected to respond to rapid technological advancement, evolving pedagogical practices, and changing students' learning needs.Based on these findings, it is concluded that continuous investment in digital skills training, innovative pedagogical training, and student engagement training programmes is indispensable for strengthening the instructional competence of Business Educators and improving the quality of Business Education in Rivers State-owned universities and Nigeria at large.Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made: University management in Rivers State-owned universities should organize regular digital skills training programmes for Business Educators to strengthen their competence in the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS), artificial intelligence tools, digital instructional materials, and digital assessment technologies for effective instructional delivery, Universities offering Business Education programmes in Rivers State should provide continuous innovative pedagogical training programmes that expose Business Educators to student-centred teaching approaches, problem-based learning, competency-based teaching, collaborative learning, and innovative lesson planning techniques to improve instructional competence, Faculties and Departments of Business Education should regularly organize student engagement training programmes to equip Business Educators with effective strategies for promoting active student participation, classroom communication, learner motivation, inclusive teaching, and the use of interactive learning technologies during instruction.

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