

## WORK ETHIC DIMENSION AND TALENT MANAGEMENT DIMENSION AS CORRELATES OF CAREER PROGRESSION OF BUSINESS EDUCATORS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

*The study examined the influence of work ethics dependability and talent acquisition on career progression of business educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. A correlational survey research design was adopted with a population of 177 Business Educators across all the nine Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria. A census sampling was used to select the entire population of 177 business educators because of its manageable size. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire adapted from existing human resource management scales, titled: Work Ethic Dependability, Talent Acquisition and Career Progression. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by three experts, one in Education Evaluation and Counseling Psychology and two in Business Education. A reliability test was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a co-efficient value of 0.93. The data collected from the respondents was analyzed using Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Linear Regression statistics. The findings revealed that there is positive relationship between the dependability and career progression of business educators in South-West colleges of education. The findings also revealed that talent acquisition is significantly related to career progression of business educators in South-West colleges of education. It was recommended among others that the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and administrators of colleges of education should endeavor to initiate a process to review the conditions of service with a view to infuse work ethics and talent management dimensions as part of conditions and requirements for promotion towards ensuring an all-round career progression among business educators in Nigerian colleges of education.*

**Keywords:** *Business Educators, Career Progression, Colleges of Education, South-West Nigeria, Talent Acquisition, Work Ethics Dependability.*

### **Introduction**

Educational standards are traceable to the quality of teachers in terms of knowledge and skills possessed. Teachers' career progression in relation to their functionality may be moderated by the prevailing work ethics and talent management programmes in institutions. Career progression according to Suzanne (2017) is regarded as climbing the ladder; getting ahead; working up the ranks and represent an act of earning more challenging projects and responsibilities as one gains experience in a field. Career progression in business education may be regarded as the ability of a

business educator to gain or acquire greater experience, expertise, qualifications or working at higher level in teaching his/her chosen subject as well as gaining more leadership and management responsibilities.

Business educators in Colleges of Education are employed to train Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) manpower to develop teachers to teach at the upper basic schools and to render auxiliary functions in training the recipients to create a middle level manpower for industry. In colleges of education, the career progression of business educators' spans through a period of eighteen years to rise through all the ranks from the entry level (Assistant Lecturer) to the peak of the career (Chief Lecturer) by advancement of knowledge through research, dissemination of knowledge including teaching and community service. These key functions are intended to bring about national development and competitive advantage to the educational system of a country at the global level. The achievement of these technical core job responsibilities, to a large extent, depends on the academic staff because of the critical role they play in the educational process. How effectively an academic staff performs the above-mentioned functions is often the core basis for promotion. Promotion of an academic staff from a lower rank to a higher rank is an indication that the staff has shown evidence of scholarship and effective performance in all the criteria for promotion as stipulated by the policy document of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). However, it appears that the assessment of productivity among business educators in Nigerian Colleges of Education is based mainly on publications, while teaching competence and other criteria for career progression are either partially observed or totally neglected.

The pressure to publish rapidly and constantly is a phenomenon engulfing academia in all countries in the globe; while neglecting other aspects of job behaviour such as work ethics and talent management strategies. The aforementioned human resource constructs are factors of workers efficiency and effectiveness that are requirements for job satisfaction and a guarantee for career progression among teachers of tertiary institutions with particular reference to business educators in Nigerian colleges of education. The emphasis on publication as the only requirement for promotion has over the years affected quality instructional delivery and innovations in a mostly negative way. In Nigerian tertiary institutions in particular, this culture has mainly been a syndrome manifested by the determination among lecturers to publish for promotions and positions than for genuine research production, quality instructional delivery and meaningful community service which forms the fulcrum of lecturers' responsibilities.

Besides, the culture of publishing extensively has become a tactic used by many business educators to demonstrate their talents and distinguishing themselves among their peers with the objective of career progression and attracting positions of responsibilities to themselves. This according to Kearney (2015) has, in fact become a harsh reality in most institutions across the globe. It has been observed by a number of critics that the "publish or perish" syndrome has had adverse effect on teaching and research in tertiary institutions, with particular reference to colleges of education. The phenomenon has continued to push many lecturers to devote less time to teaching and concentrate more energy on writing for publication, which may not necessarily be for the purpose of knowledge advancement in their chosen field; but for the purpose of promotion. The above situation had continued to be responsible for people sitting in a corner to write "anything and publish anything", just for the purpose of progressing on the job without the needed work ethics and talents for career progression. However, career progression of business educators in colleges of education ought not only to be limited to promotion through publications, but also work ethics of an employee supposed to form part of the conditions for career advancement. This is because, the work ethics of business educator largely contribute to opportunities to head privilege positions and key portfolios such as head of departments, directors, coordinators of centres and so on.

Work ethic is one of the important soft skills that determine work related behaviour in the workplace and influence salient behavioural outcomes such as job performance, quality of work, productivity and organizational citizenship behaviour as well as how employees feel about their jobs, career or vocation. Work ethics involves a set of characteristics that reflect a person's attitude, behaviour, beliefs, values, respect, communication and interaction with the work and other workers (Gorman & Meriac, 2016). Work ethics are characteristics that reflect honesty, integrity and accountability, dedication to duty, competence and professionalism. These characteristics are expected of business educators to progress in their career. It determines how an employee behaves in his/her workplace. This is closely related to the employee's relationship with his employer, colleagues, or corporate guests. It comprises three dimensions which according to Hill and Petty (2005) are measured with occupational work ethic inventory (OWEI) which include; interpersonal skills, initiative and dependability. Work ethics therefore represent a strong component of employability skills that has long been identified as important component of vocational education, business, athletics, and many other contexts. Employers place a positive value on doing a good job and continue to seek workers with a strong work ethic (Park & Hill 2016). Employers often state that a strong work ethic is one of the most desired characteristics of a new employee. Work ethics are set of characteristics and behaviour that reflect a person's beliefs, values, attitudes and relationships toward work (Meriac, Woehr, Gorman & Thomas, 2013; Park & Hill, 2016; Petty & Hill, 2005). Thus, establishing an educational basis and environment for students to reflect on occupational work ethics and further develop employability skills is meaningful ways. To this end, research to develop a concise measure of work ethics attributes would provide a useful tool to enhance work ethic instruction, especially at the Colleges of Education sector in Nigeria.

Essential skills needed in the twenty-first-century workplace are repeatedly stressed by scholars and experts in education; hence, the World Economic Forum published a report (World Economic Forum, 2015) and defined a set of sixteen skills as crucial proficiencies that students should develop in the twenty-first century. The sixteen skills were categorized into three domains: "foundational literacy, competencies and character qualities" (World Economic Forum, 2016). Foundational literacy included literacy, numeracy, scientific literacy, information and communication technology (ICT) literacy and cultural and civic literacy. Critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity, communication, and collaboration were identified as needed competencies. Character qualities included curiosity, initiative, persistence and grit, adaptability, leadership, social and cultural awareness. These skills overlap with the attributes encompassed by work ethic and lend support to work ethic being the most essential in the twenty-first century world of work. Rojewski and Hill (2014) identified work ethic along with career navigation and innovation as essential competencies that job seekers and employees must have or develop in the twenty-first-century workplace. As the world has become globalized more rapidly, employers need employees who can perform their jobs with a positive work ethic, regardless of their ethnic background and religions. Considering that many enterprises from various countries collaborate with one another to produce goods, work ethic attributes such as communication skills and dependability are essential in the globalized workplace where cooperation and collaboration are emphasized (Park & Hill, 2016). Employees who are adept at collaboration, communication, and problem-solving are better positioned for success in the rapidly evolving digital world (World Economic Forum, 2016).

However, the third dimension that is the only variable of interest in this paper is dependability which represents attributes that seek to fulfill the expectations for satisfactory job performance and living up to institutional commitments. Dependability is an important quality for a worker to possess because it enhances a wide variety of job performance categories. A dependable business educator therefore, would not only show up for work on time, but would also produce

consistent work and be able to apply institutional policies and business strategies evenly to each task and assignment. Dependability can lead to job security, which is all too important in tough economic environment. A dependable business educator would apply self to the contemporary knowledge on the job and progress with ease without any hitch. Work ethics no doubt, may likely play an important role in educational organizations, especially colleges of education which its programmes are directed towards the training and production of teachers in Nigerian primary and secondary school sectors. It is one of the constructs in human resource management that assists the development of the required talents that can guarantee career progression.

Talent is a natural ability developed through the training that people must have in order to perform well their roles. Talented workers tend to make a difference to organizational goals and performance through their immediate efforts as they have the potential to make important contributions in the future depending on how the talents are managed. Talent management therefore seeks to identify, obtain, keep and develop those talented people. Talent management (TM) as used by Stahl (2007) is an organization's ability to attract, select, develop and retain key employees (in a global context). It is acknowledged that TM is part of the broader field of human resource management (HRM), being defined as all "policies, practices and systems that influence employees' behaviour, attitudes and performance" (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2010). It involves a set of selected HRM practices focusing on attraction and retention for a smaller target group of particularly talented individuals (identified by the company), compared to various HRM stakeholders (all employees, unions, customers, suppliers, investors, etcetera). Highly talented individuals can be characterized through a variety of characteristics, such as competencies, skills, abilities, experience, knowledge, intelligence, character and drive, or the ability to learn and grow within an organization. Compared to other human resources, they are supposed to be key strategic resources (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Schuler & Tarique, 2012) because they have a most important impact on organizational performance and on creating competitive advantages for a firm. They are valuable, rare and difficult to imitate. They are also referred to as "pivotal talent". TM is the automated end-to-end process of planning, recruiting, developing, managing and compensating employees throughout the organization. Because talent management involves recruiting, hiring and developing high potential employees, it requires coordinating several human resource activities, in particular workforce acquisition, assessment, development and retention.

In simplest terms, TM simply "refers to the process of attracting, selecting, training, developing and promoting employees through an organization". It is defined by Tansley and Tietze (2013) as strategies and protocols for the systematic attraction, identification, development, retention and deployment of individuals with high potential for particular organizations. It is the process of ensuring that the organization has talented people it needs to attain its business goals. It involves the strategic management of the flow of talent through an organization by creating and maintaining a talent pipeline. There are eight dimensions of talent management strategies according to the Human Capital Institute (2008) which include; talent acquisition, talent development, talent retention, management commitment, talent review process, workforce planning, staffing and performance management. In this paper, only one dimension that is, talent acquisition was combined with work ethic construct of dependability as correlate of career progression in Nigerian Colleges of Education.

Talent acquisition therefore can be achieved through identifying, nurturing, and resourcing suitable high performers both within and outside organizations and placing them in valuable roles for better organizational performance. With the changing economic and competitive marketplace economy, the challenge of finding, growing and keeping best people has become more imperative for the success of every organization, including colleges of education. Organizations need to become highly strategic and innovative to become talent magnets (Deb, 2005). Nankervis, Compton, and



Baird (2005) mentioned that poor acquisition decisions can lead to increased recruitment costs, training and orientation costs, burnout, lost opportunity, reduced profit, loss of competitive advantage, impaired image and reputation. An organization needs to become innovative when developing a recruitment strategy and should avoid using old methods of recruiting such as newspaper adverts especially when trying to attract generation of the current employees.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Today, career progression is in a state of flux and there has been an incredible pressure on human resource managers to meet up with the continuous changing environment, most especially as it relates to human resource management in business education programme in Nigerian colleges of education. Although the concept of work ethics is popularized in the general work culture in Nigeria, there seems to be little or no research or discourse in the human resource management education literature. With particular reference to business education, researches have not been able to find any serious literature review or discussion with particular reference to the areas of work ethics and talent management relating to career progression of business educators in Colleges of Education in South West, Nigeria. The conclusion from literature in business education programme is that work ethical practices and talent management strategies in Nigerian Colleges of Education that appears to influence career progression is at a low ebb or even not in place in a number of Colleges of Education across the South Western, Nigeria. This portends a dangerous trend for business educators in Colleges of Education who are saddled with the responsibility to train NCE manpower to teach at the primary and junior secondary school levels and also meant to render auxiliary functions in training individuals to create a middle level manpower for the industry. The various studies carried out were based on banking industries and other corporate organizations, with no one carried out among business educators in colleges of education, especially in Nigeria; hence the need for this study to investigate work ethic dimension (dependability) and talent management dimension (talent acquisition) as correlates of business education career progression of business educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

*Research Question 1:* what is the relationship between work ethic dimension (dependability) and career progression of business educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria?

*Research Question 2:* what is the relationship between talent management dimension (talent acquisition) and career progression of business educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria?

### **Research Hypotheses**

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

*Research Hypothesis 1:* There is no significant relationship between dependability and career progression of business educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.

*Research Hypothesis 2:* There is no significant relationship between talent acquisition and career progression of business educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.

## Method

### Research Design

A correlational survey research design was adopted in this study. This type of research design “involves collecting data to determine whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables” (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009, p. 195). Correlational survey research designs would, therefore, enable the authors of this study to establish the extent of relationship or correlation between the independent variables and dependent variable in the study (Edokpolor & Abusomwan, 2018).

### Population and Sampling Procedure

The population of this study comprised 177 Business Educators across all the 9 Colleges of Education in South West Nigeria. Census sampling method was used to select the entire population of 177 business educators as the participants for the study.

### Measurement Scale

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is titled, Work Ethic Dependability, Talent Acquisition and Career Progression. Work ethic dependability was adapted from Occupational Work Ethic Inventory (OWEI) developed by Hill and Petty (2005) to measure the construct of work ethic, namely dependability. The inventory consists 50 items; out of which 14 items was used to measure dependability on a seven-point likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always). 11 items of talent acquisition adapted from human capital index developed by the Human Capital Institute (2008) were used to measure the talent acquisition on a four-point rating scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Career progression questionnaire was constructed by the authors.

### Measurement Scale Validity and Reliability

The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by three experts, one in Education Evaluation and Counseling Psychology and two in Business Education, all from University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. The reliability test was calculated using Cronbach’s alpha, which yielded a co-efficient value of 0.93. The co-efficient value obtained was considered adequate for the study.

### Data Collection and Procedure

Copies of the questionnaire were administered with the help of five research assistants. The instrument was retrieved from the respondents within an interval of two weeks with 168 returned from a population of 177 representing 95% return rate.

### Data Analysis

Data collected from the respondents was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and Linear Regression statistics. The PPMCC statistic was used to answer the research questions, while linear regression statistic was used to test the research hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

*Research Question 1:* what is the relationship between work ethic dimension (dependability) and career progression of business educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Pearson’s Correlation of the Relationship between Dependability and Career Progression of Business Educators.**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r
Dependability	168	4.9532	.99002	
Career Progression	168	2.9454	.48710	.109

The data presented in Table 1 depicts relationship between dependability and career progression of Business Educators. The table shows that the correlation coefficient between dependability and career progression is .109 which is positive but very low. The data analysis also shows that mean of 4.9532 and 2.9454, as well as standard deviation of .99002 and .48710 was obtained for dependability and career progression of Business Educators respectively. This therefore means that the correlation between dependability and career progression of Business Educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria is positively very low.

*Research Question 2:* what is the relationship between talent management dimension (talent acquisition) and career progression of business educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria?

**Table 2: Pearson’s Correlation of Relationship between Talent Acquisition and Career Progression of Business Educators.**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r
Talent Acquisition	168	2.7242	.61306	
Career Progression	168	2.9454	.48710	.522

The data presented in Table 2 indicates the relationship between talent acquisition and career progression of Business Educators. The table shows a mean of 2.7242 and 2.9454, likewise a standard deviation of .61306 and .48710 for talent acquisition and career progression respectively. The correlation coefficient value obtained for talent acquisition and career progression is .522 which indicates positive but moderate relationship. It therefore means that correlation between talent acquisition and career progression of Business Educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria is positively moderate.

## Testing the Hypotheses

*Research Hypothesis 1:* There is no significant relationship between dependability and career progression of business educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.

**Table 3: Summary of Linear Regression Estimate between Dependability and Career Progression of Business Educators.**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Regression	.470	1	.470	1.991	.160 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	39.154	166	.236		
Total	39.623	167			

The data presented in Table 3 indicates that the linear regression based on career progression as predicted by dependability of business educators is statistically not significant ( $F(1, 166) = 1.991$ ,  $p = .160 > .05$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis is retained. This means that there is no significant relationship between dependability and career progression of Business Educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.

*Research Hypothesis 2:* There is no significant relationship between talent acquisition and career progression of business educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.

**Table 4: Summary of Linear Regression Estimate between talent acquisition and Career Progression of Business Educators.**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Regression	10.813	1	10.813	62.299	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	28.811	166	.174		
Total	39.623	167			

Table 4 depicts that the summary of linear regression based on career progression as predicted by Business Educators talent acquisition is statistically significant ( $F(1, 166) = 62.299$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant relationship between talent acquisition and career progression of Business Educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.

## Discussion

The findings from research question one reveals a positive, but very low correlation coefficient between dependability and career progression of business educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria. In the same vein, the results from the data analysis on hypothesis one shows that dependability does not significantly predict career progression of business educators in Colleges of Education with the low variance in career progression as explained by dependability of business educators; it is an indication of a low effect relationship, hence, the null hypothesis is retained that no significant relationship exist between dependability and career progression of business educators in Southwest colleges of education. This finding is opposed to the view of Sandy (2017) who opined that dependability is an important element of becoming a reliable employee. A business educator must make him or herself capable of being dependable so that others can depend on him/her. The finding also disagrees with Seidel (2019) who affirmed that a dependable member of the workforce usually garners steadily increasing levels of responsibility within a department or the larger institution. Basically, if a business educator is dependable, he/she requires less supervision, can work with increasing levels of autonomy and management may even begin to trust such an individual to supervise other workers. This may lead to appointment into position of responsibilities



like Head of Department or Unit, Coordinator of Centres, Director, etc. and may begin an ascent up the college leadership structure.

The results from data analysis on research question two shows a positive, but moderate correlation coefficient relationship. This indicates that, there is positively moderate relationship between talent acquisition and career progression of business educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria. Also, the results from the data analysis on hypothesis two depicts that the summary of linear regression based on career progression as predicted by business educators talent acquisition is statistically significant. This shows that talent acquisition predicting career progression of business educators was statistically significant such that talent acquisition yielded a p-value of higher variance in career progression is explained by talent acquisition. This value is a large effect (Cohen, 1988). From the overall model analysis, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between talent acquisition and career progression of Business Educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria. This corroborates the opinion of Brundage and Koziel, (2010) that talent management practices such as talent acquisition ensures that the right people willing to join the company are brought in as new and effective workers in the organization. This implies that, to attract and retain talent in business education, the colleges need to know what talents they want and consequently, have to set the incentive system in line with their needs. Subsequently, their esteem needs are fulfilled and, as a result, talents demonstrate higher job satisfaction and motivation with the end result on career progression.

The finding is also in line with the position of Cappelli (2008) who found that talent acquisition focuses on recruiting the right people with the right competencies at the exact point in time when they are needed, either internally or from outside the organization. Therefore, it can be affirmed that with the changing economic and competitive marketplace economy, the challenge of finding, growing and keeping best business educators to inculcate the markets demand skills and attributes across Colleges of Education has become more imperative for the success of business education programme in South-West, Nigeria.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that business educators in southwest Colleges of Education need more grooming in work ethics construct of dependability and talent acquisition for career progression; despite it positive correlation. The dimensions of these variables appear not in existence based on the findings from the analysis; hence, noticeable dysfunctional work ethical behaviour and non-career progression abound among business educators in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.

## Recommendations

The authors recommended that:

1. The NCCE should endeavour to initiate a process for conditions of service review and innovation with a view to infusing work ethics dimensions and talent management strategies as part of conditions and requirements for promotion towards ensuring an all-round career progression in Nigerian colleges of education.
2. talent management strategies and practices with a strong focus on career progression and its alignment with overall business education goals in Colleges of Education should be instituted in Nigerian Colleges of Education system. The idea of employing business educators and be allowed to learn and do things by trial and error should be discouraged;

hence, lecturers recruited newly should be attached to senior colleagues for coaching and mentoring to assist their talents growth with seamless career progression.

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