

ISSN 3005 - 7256  
AJeIN

# African Journal of Entrepreneurship & Innovation



FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

## Problems and Prospects of Academic Collaboration in Business Teacher Education Programmes in Colleges of Education in Delta State

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### **Abstract**

*This study explored the challenges and opportunities of academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes at colleges of education in Delta State. Guided by two research questions, data were gathered through a survey of 123 lecturers, using structured questionnaires. The analysis involved calculating the mean and standard deviation. Results revealed significant issues, including limited resources, poor communication between institutions, and a lack of institutional support. Conversely, notable opportunities included increased research prospects, better teaching methods, and greater global exposure for students and faculty. The findings emphasised the importance of stronger partnerships between colleges and external organisations to promote professional growth, curriculum relevance, and a more vibrant educational setting. The study recommended that both institutional leaders and government agencies invest in fostering meaningful academic collaborations.*

**Key Words:** *Academic Collaboration, Business Teacher Education, Colleges of Education, Collaborative Academic Programmes, Collaborative Research*

### **1. Introduction**

Education is fundamental to individual empowerment and national progress, as it provides citizens with the essential knowledge, skills, and values necessary to make meaningful societal contributions. In Nigeria, the educational system encompasses various levels, with Colleges of Education playing a crucial role in training qualified teachers to shape future generations. These colleges are specialised institutions focused on training educators, especially for primary and junior secondary level schools. According to Aina and Akintunde (2022), these colleges play a crucial role in providing professional training that combines both theoretical and practical aspects of teaching. Similarly, Suleiman et al. (2020) stated that Colleges of Education focus on developing pedagogical skills and subject matter expertise among teacher trainees. Furthermore, Goh and Abdul-Wahab (2020) averred that the importance of colleges of education lies in fostering educational research and innovation to enhance teaching methodologies.

The goals of Nigerian Colleges of Education are to produce competent teachers equipped with essential skills to provide quality education at the primary and secondary levels. These institutions aim to instil ethical principles, encourage continuous professional growth, and promote educational

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research to tackle emerging challenges in teaching (Aina & Akintunde, 2022). Business Education is a vital programme intended to prepare students for careers in business and commercial sectors. Business teacher training in Nigeria focuses on developing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of both prospective and current educators to facilitate the effective teaching of business subjects. This includes initial training and ongoing professional development to keep educators informed about new teaching methods and industry best practices. Edokpolor and Owenbiugie (2017) state that business teacher education aims to equip individuals with the competencies needed to adapt to the changing nature of business environments and teaching techniques. Typically, a business teacher has a background in fields like accounting, marketing, human resources, or advertising, and applies this expertise in educational settings. These teachers are vital in delivering practical business knowledge and skills to students at secondary and higher education levels, preparing them for the business sector (Edokpolor & Owenbiugie, 2017). Despite its importance, Business Education programmes in Nigerian Colleges of Education face several challenges that limit their effectiveness. A key issue is the shortage of qualified personnel, which impacts the quality of instruction and student learning results (Umezulike et al., 2023). Additionally, Business Education is often viewed as less prestigious, leading to lower enrollment and interest among students (Igberaharha & Utoware, 2023). A significant contributor to these problems is the lack of academic collaboration between educational institutions and industry stakeholders.

Academic collaboration refers to the partnership between educational institutions and external entities, such as businesses and industries, to enhance the relevance and quality of educational programmes (Onajite, 2023). Academic collaboration refers to the partnership between individuals, groups, or organisations, often across institutions or even countries, to jointly deliver, design, supervise, or assess academic programs, research, or learning experiences (University of Glasgow, n.d.). These collaborations are typically mutually beneficial and often involve students, faculty, and staff, resulting in shared teaching, research, and occasionally joint or multiple academic awards. Amdaoud et al. (2023) opined that effective collaboration between institutions and industries is essential for aligning curricula with industry needs, providing students with practical experiences, and ensuring that graduates possess the skills required in the workforce.

Academic collaboration refers to partnerships between educational institutions aimed at enhancing the quality and scope of academic programmes and research efforts. It can be divided into two

categories: collaborative academic programmes and collaborative research activities (Kwok, 2022). Collaborative academic programmes involve joint responsibilities in designing, delivering, and awarding degrees, including validated programmes, franchised programmes, joint, double, or multiple awards, dual degrees, and articulation agreements (El-Allame, 2022). Collaborative research activities encompass joint research projects conducted by departments within an institution, as well as between different institutions, academia, industry, and government agencies. International collaborations expand these partnerships across borders, allowing researchers from various countries to collaborate on global issues. These partnerships not only enhance educational and research capacities but also provide students and faculty with broader opportunities for learning and contributing to their fields (Chan, 2025).

Academic collaboration offers significant benefits for enhancing research quality, driving innovation, and fostering capacity building. However, several challenges reduce its effectiveness. In Nigeria, the main obstacles include inadequate funding, limited mentorship, and infrastructural shortcomings. Akinyele et al. (2024) argued that lack of funding for research, low motivation, and brain drain are significant barriers to research productivity in Nigerian academic institutions. These issues are worsened by insufficient training and the failure to pay allowances, which discourage researchers and lead to the migration of skilled academics to other countries. Moreover, power imbalances and cultural differences can impact collaborative efforts. Miao et al. (2024) found that researchers from less-developed countries often assume subordinate roles in international collaborations, thereby limiting their contributions and benefits. Additionally, Van Biljon and Mwapwele (2023) observed that cultural norms and expectations can hinder effective collaboration, especially when they overshadow the objectives of the collaborative space. Despite these challenges, the opportunities for academic collaboration remain promising. International partnerships can improve academic quality and reputation, expand research horizons, and prepare students for a globalised world. According to Theodora (2024), such collaborations give universities access to diverse knowledge, unique datasets, and specialised equipment, leading to more innovative and impactful research outcomes. However, these perspectives have not been empirically examined in Anambra State. It is in this context that the researcher explored the challenges and opportunities of academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes in colleges of education in Delta State.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Business teacher education programmes at colleges of education in Delta State are crucial for training skilled teachers with the appropriate skills and knowledge to adapt to the changing business landscape. However, these programmes encounter major obstacles that affect their effectiveness, especially regarding academic collaboration. A key issue is the lack of cooperation among business educators within institutions, which limits opportunities for knowledge sharing, joint research, and professional growth. This gap often results in outdated curricula and teaching methods that are not aligned with current industry standards (Ekoh-Nweke & Offia, 2023). Additionally, limited funding and resources hinder institutions from establishing and sustaining collaborative efforts, diminishing educational quality. Nonetheless, there are opportunities to improve academic collaboration in these programmes. Building partnerships among institutions can foster the exchange of best practices, joint curriculum development, and collaborative research, all of which are vital for achieving better educational outcomes (Onajite, 2016). Furthermore, utilising technology can facilitate virtual collaborations, enabling educators to connect and share resources across geographic boundaries. Based on these issues, the researcher explored the challenges and opportunities of academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes at colleges of education in Delta State.

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the challenges and opportunities of academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes in colleges of education in Delta State. Specifically, the study examined the

1. Problems of academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes in colleges of education in Delta State.
2. Prospects of academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes in colleges of education in Delta State.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the problems of academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes in colleges of education in Delta State?
2. What are the prospects of academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes in colleges of education in Delta State?

## **2. Methodology**

The study employed a survey research design, chosen for its efficiency in gathering information from the target population and ease of administering questionnaires related to the research problem. The population included 123 business education lecturers in colleges of education in Delta State. Since the population was small and manageable, no sampling technique was used; instead, all 123 lecturers participated as respondents. Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire titled “Problems and Prospects of Academic Collaboration in Business Teacher Education Programmes Questionnaire (PPACBTEPQ),” created by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A collected demographic data, while Section B contained items that addressed the research questions. Items in Section B were rated on a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was validated by two experts from the School of Secondary Education (Business) and one Measurement and Evaluation expert from the Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, who reviewed the items for clarity, appropriateness, and alignment with the study's goals. Their feedback led to necessary modifications, resulting in the final version of the questionnaire.

To establish reliability, a test-retest approach was used, administering the questionnaire twice to 10 business education lecturers at the Federal College of Education (Technical), Umuze, in Anambra State, who were not part of the main sample. A pilot study assessed the instrument's reliability using Cronbach's Alpha, with a threshold of 0.87 considered acceptable. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires. Out of 123 copies distributed, 102 were returned in good condition. The collected data were analysed using means and standard deviations. Responses were interpreted based on a benchmark mean score of 2.50. Items with a mean score of 2.250 or above were considered agreement, while those below 2.250 were regarded as disagreement.

## **3. Results**

### **3.1 Research Question One**

What are the problems of academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes in colleges of education in Delta State?

**Table 1: Respondent Mean Ratings on the Problems of Academic Collaboration in Business Teacher Education Programmes in Colleges Of Education in Delta State (N=102)**

S/N	Item Statements	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Lack of institutional policies supporting academic collaboration	3.42	0.77	Agree
2	Inadequate funding limits collaborative activities	3.36	0.81	Agree
3	Poor internet access hinders virtual academic partnerships	3.29	0.73	Agree
4	Excessive teaching workload prevents lecturers from engaging in collaborations	3.17	0.78	Agree
5	Weak inter-institutional linkages reduce collaboration opportunities	3.21	0.80	Agree
6	Limited exposure to research grants discourages academic partnerships	3.25	0.76	Agree
7	Absence of administrative support undermines collaborative efforts	3.33	0.74	Agree
8	Competition among institutions limits willingness to collaborate	3.14	0.85	Agree
9	Lack of incentives reduces staff interest in joint academic initiatives	3.18	0.79	Agree
10	Bureaucratic challenges delay the implementation of collaborative agreements	3.30	0.72	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>3.27</b>		<b>Agree</b>

Table 1 data show that respondents agree with all ten items as issues impacting academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes in Delta State colleges of education. Mean scores, ranging from 3.14 to 3.42, are all above the 2.50 threshold, indicating consensus. These issues include the lack of supportive institutional policies, poor internet infrastructure, heavy teaching loads, inadequate funding, and weak inter-institutional links. Standard deviation scores between 0.72 and 0.85 suggest respondents' opinions were consistent. The cluster mean of 3.27 confirms that these are the key problems affecting academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes in Delta State colleges.

### 3.2 Research Question Two

What are the prospects of academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes in colleges of education in Delta State?

**Table 2: Respondent Mean Ratings on the Prospects of Academic Collaboration in Business Teacher Education Programmes in Colleges Of Education in Delta State (N=102)**

S/N	Item Statements	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Academic collaboration promotes interdisciplinary research among business educators	3.38	0.69	Agree
2	Collaborative programmes will improve the quality of teacher education	3.41	0.74	Agree
3	Shared resources between institutions can enhance teaching and learning	3.36	0.72	Agree
4	Joint publications can raise the professional profile of lecturers	3.30	0.76	Agree
5	Collaborative networks encourage professional development	3.44	0.70	Agree
6	Academic partnerships improve access to research funding	3.28	0.81	Agree
7	Student mobility across institutions fosters academic exposure	3.25	0.79	Agree
8	Co-teaching models can enhance course delivery and learner outcomes	3.35	0.77	Agree
9	Collaboration can enhance curriculum innovation in business education	3.40	0.75	Agree
10	Long-term institutional partnerships build global visibility	3.32	0.78	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>3.35</b>		<b>Agree</b>

The data in Table 2 show that all average responses exceed the benchmark of 2.50, reflecting overall agreement among respondents regarding the benefits of academic collaboration in business teacher education programs. The most highly rated benefits include professional development, curriculum innovation, and interdisciplinary research. The standard deviation values, ranging from 0.69 to 0.81, suggest that respondents' opinions were relatively consistent. The overall cluster mean of 3.35 indicates a strong positive perception of the potential benefits of academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes at colleges of education in Delta State.

#### 4. Discussion of Findings

The study identified several challenges facing academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes at colleges of education in Delta State. Key issues include insufficient funding, lack of institutional support, absence of formal collaboration policies, and poor communication between institutions. These problems highlight systemic and structural weaknesses that impede the development and sustainability of partnerships. For example, limited funding restricts investments in infrastructure, such as digital platforms, research grants, or mobility programmes. This supports Igberaharha and Utoware's (2023) finding that financial constraints are a significant barrier to effective



academic partnerships in Nigerian higher education. Additionally, the absence of formal frameworks and policies hampers the formation of consistent, mutually beneficial collaborations. Without clear agreements, partnerships often remain informal and short-term in nature. Uzo-Okoro (2020) highlighted that the absence of defined institutional policies can lead to misunderstandings and inefficiencies, especially in teacher education. Another issue is the limited use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), vital for contemporary collaboration. Eze and Nwankwo (2019) found that many Nigerian colleges of education still struggle with digital integration, which hampers virtual collaboration and shared research efforts.

The study also highlighted notable opportunities for partnership in business teacher education programmes. Respondents agreed that collaboration fosters interdisciplinary research, improves curriculum development, supports professional growth, and boosts access to research funding. This positive outlook indicates that lecturers in colleges of education in Delta State recognise the transformative power of academic collaborations. Such optimism may arise from increased awareness of global best practices and exposure to successful models elsewhere. The finding that collaboration can drive innovation and enhance the quality of business teacher education aligns with Miao et al. (2024), who argued that academic partnerships promote pedagogical improvements and curriculum renewal. Likewise, Van Biljon and Mwapwele (2023) confirmed that collaborative networks can significantly boost research capacity and global visibility for business educators. These prospects are emerging at a time when interdisciplinary knowledge and cross-institutional connections are crucial for academic relevance and quality assurance.

## 5. Conclusion

The study examined the challenges and opportunities of academic collaboration in business teacher education programmes at colleges of education in Delta State. Results showed several barriers to effective collaboration, including insufficient funding, weak institutional backing, absence of formal partnership frameworks, limited international network exposure, and inadequate technological infrastructure. Nonetheless, the study also identified notable opportunities, including improved curriculum delivery, increased research output, staff professional development, and opportunities for knowledge sharing.

In conclusion, although academic collaboration has not yet been fully institutionalised in these colleges, there is strong recognition among educators of its value. The potential for academic advancement, innovation, and improved teaching quality through collaboration is evident, but achieving these benefits requires addressing current challenges through strategic policy, funding, and infrastructure improvements.

## **6. Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. The federal and state governments, in collaboration with the administrators of colleges of education, should make concerted efforts to establish and strengthen institutional structures dedicated to fostering academic collaboration. This includes setting up dedicated offices or units that can effectively manage and coordinate collaborative programmes, ensuring that adequate resources and policies are in place to support joint academic initiatives both locally and internationally.
2. To address the financial constraints hindering academic collaboration, the government and colleges of education should collaborate on increasing funding for collaborative initiatives. This funding should be directed towards facilitating joint research projects, enabling staff exchanges, and supporting the organisation of academic conferences or workshops that promote the sharing of knowledge and best practices among business education professionals.
3. The government should prioritise the creation of clear and comprehensive policies that govern academic collaboration. These policies should provide guidelines on how collaborations are initiated, executed, and evaluated, ensuring consistency and clarity in all collaborative activities. Transparent frameworks will help stakeholders understand their roles and ensure that the objectives of each partnership are met.
4. It is recommended that the government and the administrators of colleges of education actively promote international collaboration. By engaging with universities and academic institutions abroad, they can create opportunities for joint research projects, staff exchange programmes, and shared degree offerings. These international partnerships will enhance the global competitiveness of business education, providing students and lecturers with exposure to best practices from around the world.
5. Strengthening partnerships with industry and government agencies is crucial for making business education more relevant to current market needs. The government, together with the

administration of colleges of education, should establish stronger linkages with industries, creating pathways for practical exposure for students. This will also provide businesses with an opportunity to contribute to curriculum development, ensuring that the training business teachers receive is aligned with industry demands.

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