



INTEGRATING E-COMMERCE IN BUSINESS EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

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Abstract

This study focused on integrating ecommerce in business education curriculum for global competitiveness. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population consisted 221 business educators. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts in business education. The reliability of the instrument was ensured using test re-test technique. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient formula which yield reliability co-efficient of 0.77. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions while ANOVA was used to test the null hypothesis. Findings revealed that the ever changing technological age has resulted to the need for change in the curriculum content so that the recipients can compete favourably in the world today. It was recommended amongst which includes that there is urgent need to review the business education curriculum to include the ecommerce needs of business education students. Efforts should also be made to highlight in the curriculum the current skills which are crucial for employment within Nigeria and the global village for business education students to continually be relevant in the ever changing technological world.

Keywords: *Integrating, E-commerce, Business Education and Curriculum*

Introduction

Business education was brought to lime light and given prominence by the new national policy on education in 1977. This policy has been severally reviewed. It is a programme of study which is geared towards equipping the learners with employability skills and knowledge which would enable them create or acquire jobs. According to Aqual (2014), Business education programme has been implemented for more than three decades now, yet graduates of the programme are also plagued by



employment. After going through the process of formal and non-formal education, the learner is expected to be able to contribute effectively to life activities in the society. The ability to contribute effectively includes the learner's ability to be gainfully employed in one job or another. Nedum-Ogbede (2017) noted that the national curriculum conference of 1969 resulted among other things into increase in the number of subjects studied in schools with the aim of making education more relevant. Despite all these reviews, it appears that the country is still facing lots of problems. This is because after successfully completing formal education programmes which business education is inclusive, the recipients or graduates are not sure of getting jobs.

Business which is referred to as the organized efforts and activities of individuals to produce and sell goods and services for profit ranges from a sole proprietorship to an international corporation. However, business applied in education is therefore called business education which is described as an education for and about business. Its primary purpose is to prepare individuals for gainful employment in business occupation with paid employment or self-employment. The emphasis is on our exposure to and acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude relevant and adequate for employment in specific business occupations. The value of any business education program could be determined by its ability to adequately prepare and equip appropriate individual in such a manner that they could fit into specific jobs, become technologically relevant, internationally competitive and economically prosperous, if properly packaged and adequately delivered. Aquah 2014 supported this by stating that for business education to provide the individual with knowledge, skill, and attitude needed to take up readily available jobs or openings in the global job market, it becomes imperative that our educational system must function optionally and the curriculum must encompass the most current topics that will provide the requisite knowledge and skills that will enable individual compete globally. A question therefore arises on how we can, as expert educators enrich our curriculum to address the ever changing global concerns.

Curriculum according to Okoye in Obi (2017) is defined as an aggregate of all experiences planned for learners under the auspices of the school. The curriculum offerings at the tertiary institution levels do not cater for some of the needs of the current century skills. The challenge here lies on how to ensure that the input (curriculum) and process (delivery system) provides satisfactory output that can compete globally in the labour market. In order to achieve this, there is need for integration of ecommerce in teaching of business education



E-commerce (electronic commerce) is the buying and selling of goods and services, or transmitting of funds or data, over an electronic network, primarily the internet. These business transactions occur either as business to business (B2B), business-to-consumer (B2C), consumer-to-consumer or consumer-to-business. It is a type of business model that focuses on doing commercial transactions through electronic network such as the internet.

Ecommerce draws on technologies such as mobile commerce, electronic fund transfer, supply chain management, internet marketing, online transaction, processing, electronic data interchange (EDI), inventory management systems, and automated data collection systems. According to Rashad and Adnis (2012), daily growing of internet technologies presents complicated opportunities and challenges to organizations. Technology has come to stay and so has ecommerce which has a lot to offer to our changing world today.

The advent of ecommerce in Nigeria brought about positive changes amongst the people and the society at large. Nir (2007) maintained that ecommerce has a potential to add a higher value to business and consumers in developing countries than in developed countries. Oguejiofor and Ezeabasili (2014) also stressed that development of a nation depends on the amiable technical knowhow yet most developing country-based enterprises have failed to reap the benefits offered by modern information technologies (ICT). Through the use of ecommerce, most Nigerians now live comfortably with the service rendered to satisfy their human needs.

It is imperative that companies and educational sector understand how important it is to move along with the changing world, hence the need to fully integrate ecommerce in business education curriculum to ameliorate persistent problems of employment and for global competitiveness.

Statement of the Problem

It is not just sufficient in this global age to be knowledgeable in any one discipline or profession. What matters today is knowledge about the myriads of issues and problems or challenges plaguing mankind today. One of the problem which is unemployment has been an issue in Nigeria even before the advent of business



education, hence the establishment of the program. The programme is meant to produce competent, skillful, and dynamic individuals for roles such as employee, entrepreneurs and employer. Our world is fast changing and it's being taken over by modern technologies, as a result of this, ecommerce is considered as a standard in industry. More people around the world increasingly tend to buy, sell, transfer or exchange products, services and/or information through the computer mediated network and internet. To salvage these situations, there is the need for integration of ecommerce in business education curriculum to produce competent and skillful individuals that can compete with their counterpart globally in the ever changing technological world.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the ecommerce competencies needed by business education students?
2. What are the positive contributions of ecommerce to business organizations?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significance difference in the mean responses of business educators as regards the ecommerce competencies needed by business education students for global competitiveness on the basis of area of specialization.
2. There is no significance difference in the mean responses of business educators as regards the positive contributions of ecommerce to the business organizations on the basis of area of specialization

Method

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This design is considered appropriate by the researcher since the study intends to collect data from business educators on the need to integrate ecommerce to business education curriculum for employability and competitiveness. The population for the study consisted of 221 business educators from eight colleges of education and seven universities that offer business education programmes in south-east Nigeria. The entire population was used for the study since it is of a manageable size.



A 20 item structured questionnaire was used for gathering data for the study. The questionnaire was validated by two experts in business education. Cronbach alpha reliability technique was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the questionnaire items and the computation yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.79. The questionnaire was structured in a five-point rating scale with response categories as “strongly agree”, “agree”, “undecided” “disagree”, and “strongly disagree”. A total of 215 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. The total of 203 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and used for data analysis. Mean scores and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions while ANOVA statistics was used to test the null hypotheses. The null hypothesis was rejected where the F-cal value was equal to or greater than the F-crit value; otherwise the null hypothesis was retained.

Results

Research Questions 1:

What are the ecommerce competencies needed by business education students for global competitiveness?

Table 1: Mean responses on the ecommerce competencies needed by business education students for global competitiveness

S/N	Competencies Needed by Business Education Students	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Low financial cost	4.01	0.81	Agreed
2.	Potential income	4.43	0.73	Agreed
3.	Sell internationally	3.91	0.86	Agreed
4.	Personalized online experience	3.89	0.86	Agreed
5.	Affordable employees	4.49	0.77	Agreed
6.	Easier to encourage impulse buying	3.71	0.04	Agreed
7.	Easy to retarget or remarked to customers	4.11	0.81	Agreed
8.	Customers get a less invasive experience	4.13	0.33	Agreed
9.	Gain access to customer data easily	4.51	0.72	Strongly Agreed
10.	Able to process a high number of orders.	3.81	0.72	Agreed
Mean of means		4.14		Agreed

Data in Table 1 show that the respondents strongly agreed in one of the items, and simply agreed with all the remaining nine items as the ecommerce competencies needed by business education students for global competitiveness.



Research Question 2

What are the positive contributions of ecommerce to business organizations?

Table 2: Mean responses on the positive contributions of ecommerce to business organizations

S/N	Positive Contributions of Ecommerce to Business Organizations	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Ability to make online-shopping and order tracking	3.71	1.02	Agreed
2.	Ability to make domestic and international payment.	3.99	0.42	Agreed
3.	Ability to secure electronic tickets	3.25	1.14	Agreed
4.	Ability to make online banking	3.66	0.90	Agreed
5.	Ability to use digital wallets	3.40	0.91	Agreed
6.	Ability to make document automation in supply chain and logistics	3.69	0.83	Agreed
7.	Ability to manage enterprise content	3.78	0.81	Agreed
8.	Ability to use shopping software messaging	3.32	1.06	Agreed
9.	Ability to make group buying instant messaging	3.81	1.02	Agreed
10.	Ability to print on demand.	3.42	0.89	Agreed
Mean of Means		3.87		Agreed

Data in table 2 show that the respondents agreed on the items as positive contributions of ecommerce to business organizations.

Testing of hypotheses

Null hypotheses 1

There is no significance difference in the mean responses of business educators regarding the ecommerce competencies needed by business education students for global competitiveness on the basis of area of specialization.

Table 3: ANOVA result of business educators regarding the e-commerce competencies needed by business education students for global competitiveness.

Variable Decision	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean of Means	F.Cal	F. Crit	Dec
Between groups	79.56	42	1.89	2.40	0.05	NS
Within groups	1984.21	161	12.32			
Total	2063.77	203	14.21			

Data used to test the first null hypothesis reveal that the sum of squares between groups is 79.56 with a mean square of 1.89. Similarly, the sum of squares within



groups is 1984.21 with a mean square of 1.89. The degrees of freedom are 42 and 161 respectively. The f.cal value was $1.43 < 2.40$ f. crit. The result shows that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of respondents regardless of their area of specializations. Hence the analysis shows that all respondents regardless of the area of study share the same opinion regarding the e-commerce competencies needed by business education students for global competitiveness. Thus the null hypothesis is retained.

Null Hypothesis 2

There is no significance difference in the mean responses of business educators regarding the positive contributions of ecommerce to business organizations on the basis of area of specialization.

Table 4: ANOVA result of business educators regarding the positive contributions of ecommerce to business organizations.

Variable Decision	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean of Means	F.Cal	F. Crit	Dec
Between Groups	99.56	42	2.38	2.40	0.05	NS
Within Groups	1984.21	161	12.32			
Total	2063.77	203	14.21			

The result of data used to test the second null hypothesis reveals that the sum of squares between groups is 99.76 with a mean square of 2.38. Similarly, the sum of squares within groups is 1894.22 with a mean square of 11.77. The degrees of freedom are 42 and 161 respectively. The f.cal value was $1.59 < 2.60$ f-crit. The result shows that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of respondents regardless of their area of specialization on the positive contributions of e-commerce to business organizations. Thus the null hypothesis is retained.

Discussion of Findings

The findings presented in table 1 show that the ecommerce competencies needed by business education students. There is need to educate business education students on ecommerce skills for globally.

The first hypothesis reveals that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of respondents regardless of their area of specialization on the ecommerce competencies needed by business education students for global competencies. Table 2 also revealed that respondents agreed on the entire item as the positive contributions of ecommerce to business organizations.



Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that business education students needs ecommerce skills in their curriculum to equip them with skills needed for employment and financial freedom since that is what business organizations needs to move their business to a greater heights.

Recommendations

In view of findings and conclusions of this study, it was recommended that

1. There is urgent need to review business education curriculum to include the ecommerce competencies needed by business education students.
2. Efforts should be made to highlight in the curriculum the current skills which are crucial for employment within Nigeria and in the global village for business education students to continually be relevant in the ever changing technological world.

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