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SUSTAINING TEACHING AND LEARNING OF OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN THE NEW NORMAL ERA

PAUL-MGBEAFULIKE, V. S (Ph.D)
Department of Technology and Vocational Education,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Anambra State.
E-mail; vs.paul-mgbeafulike@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

The study examined approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) in South-eastern Nigeria Tertiary Institutions in the New Normal era. Three research questions were answered while three null hypotheses were tested. Descriptive survey research design was adopted in carrying out the study. Multistage sampling technique was used to select 93 Business education lecturers that constituted the sample for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured close-ended questionnaire. The instrument was face-validated by three experts while the reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha reliability method which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.886. Data collected were analysed using mean, standard deviation, t-test statistics and ANOVA. The results identified 8 funding approaches, 17 online teaching approaches and 8 ICT capacity building of lecturers approaches for sustainable teaching and learning of Secretariat Studies in South-Eastern Nigeria tertiary institutions in the New Normal era. There was no significant (p<0.05) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of male and female Business Education Lecturers on funding approaches. There was no significant (p<0.05) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business Educators on online teaching approaches based on their academic qualifications. Though, there was significant (p<0.05) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business Education lecturers on ICT capacity building of lecturers approaches for sustainable teaching and learning of OTME based on their academic qualifications. The study among others recommended improved government funding of Business Education programme for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME in the New Normal Era.

Keywords: Teaching and learning, Office Technology and Management Education, South-eastern, Tertiary Institutions, New Normal

Introduction

Education, most especially at tertiary level is key to skill acquisition and socio-economic development of man and his society. Tertiary education is made up of Universities, Polytechnics, Monotechnics and Colleges of Education (Babalola, 2012). Tertiary institutions, according to Okute and Agomuo (2010) are third tier of learning which provide training in an ever-increasing number of specialization necessary for the modern society.

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Tertiary institutions in Nigeria education system include Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Monotechnics whose aims are: to contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training, develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society, develop the intellectual capability of individual to understand and appreciate their local and external environment, acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self reliant and useful members of the society, promote and encourage scholarship and community services, forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). Tertiary institutions are established and charged with the mandate of providing knowledge, skills and training to students who have successfully completed their secondary education and desirous of pursuing a chosen discipline for future career through education of higher learning. In the opinion of Jaja (2013), tertiary institutions are organised form of learning activities at the higher education level. Contents of tertiary education are organized into specific areas where students are trained for future career development. One of the major areas in tertiary education is Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) one of the options in Business Education. Ohaegbulem (2004) affirmed that Business Education programme at tertiary institution level covers: accounting, generalbusiness, teaching practice, students industrial work experience scheme (SIWES), marketing and distributive trade, OTM and general education.

Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) is a component of vocational education that provides knowledge and skills needed to perform efficiently and effectively in the world of work. It involves acquisition of skills, knowledge and competencies and makes the recipient proficient in office and managerial profession (Amoor and Magaji, 2015). Office Technology and Management option deals with the education and training given to a person to equip him or her with such skills as: information processing skills (analyzing, synthesizing, keyboarding, transcription editing, displaying, proofreading, printing etc) (Ohaegbulem, 2004). According to Aliyu (2006), Office Technology and Management education prepares the students for performing all roles of a secretary, the accountant and office manager. In the opinion of Okolo (2001), Office Technology and Management education provides students with adequate skills and information needed to function well in office occupation. Office Technology and Management education provides adequate training and education in office administration, office technology and information systems to would be secretarial administrators to understand complex assignments and to play a major role in the general operations of a business office. Some tertiary institution use Office Technology and Management education while others regard it as Secretarial education. But for sake of this paper it regarded as Office Technology and Management Education (OTME).

The teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management like other aspects of education has equally been affected by the outbreak of COVID-19. United Nations (2020) reported that the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption of education systems in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents. Closures of schools and other learning spaces have impacted about 94 per cent of the world's student population at all levels of education. Similarly, Kaur, Singh, Mahajan, Lal, Singh and Kaur (2021) affirmed that the current corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has led to the disruption of academic activities including which has made online learning only available options for continuing education worldwide. Palia (2021) observed that with the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, institutions recommended social distancing guidelines, schools switched from traditional on-campus classroom instruction to remote online learning. Mishra, Boland and Woreta (2020) noted that COVID-19 pandemic transformed education overnight and accelerated the adoption of innovative e-virtual learning resources for teaching and

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learning. These changes, according to Mishra, et al (2020) will undoubtedly remain part of the new paradigm of education in the post-COVID era.

Teaching and learning is about creating, innovating and cultivating curiosity in learners. Having easy access to new and different ways of experiencing the world most especially in the COVID-19 new normal era will go a long way to nurturing that curiosity. In order to sustain teaching and learning in the face of the pandemic, there must be increased investment and engagement in online teaching and learning to minimise human to human contacts in order to curtail the spread of the deadly virus. Palia (2021) stated that the transition from traditional classroom learning to online learning during the pandemic presented great opportunity to monitor and sustain learning engagement of students. Though, online teaching and learning engagement of students in the "New Normal" era is more effective and functional in developed countries like USA, UK, China, Australia among others where there is intense use of ICTs for teaching and learning. Nigeria being a third world country is still lagging in developing the required capacities to effectively cope with teaching and learning in the COVID-19 "New Normal" era. Hence, this study examined approaches for Sustaining Teaching and Learning of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) in South-Eastern Nigeria Tertiary Institutions in the New Normal Era with funding, improved online teaching and ICT capacity building of educators in focus.

Research Questions

1. What are the funding approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME in South-eastern Nigeria tertiary institutions in the New Normal era?
2. What are the online teaching approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME in South-eastern Nigeria tertiary institutions in the New Normal era?
3. What are the ICT capacity building of lecturers approaches for sustainable teaching and learning of OTME in South-eastern Nigeria tertiary institutions in the New Normal era?

Hypotheses

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Education Lecturers on funding approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME in the New Normal era.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers on online teaching approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME in the New Normal era based on their educational qualifications.

$H0_3$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers on ICT capacity building of lecturers approaches for sustainable teaching and learning of OTME in the New Normal era based on their educational qualifications.

Methods

Three research questions were answered, and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted to carry out the study using multistage sampling technique. The first stage involved random selection of two states (Abia, and Enugu) out of the existing five states in southeast Nigeria. The second stage involved purposive selection of six public Universities and Colleges of Education offering Business education programme in the two states. The six selected institutions are: (i) Abia State University, Uturu, (ii) Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, (iii) Abia State College of Education, Arochukwu, (iv) University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, (v) Enugu State University of Science and Technology, (vi) Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu, Enugu State. The third stage of the sampling involved the selection of all the 93Business education

lecturers from the six selected public tertiary intuitions (Universities and Colleges of Education) in the study area.

The instrument for data collection for the study was a structured close-ended questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "New Normal Teaching and Learning of Office Technology and Management Education Questionnaire (NNTLOTMEQ)". The questionnaire was structured into three sections in line with the three specific purposes of the study. Section one of the questionnaire focused on funding approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) in the New Normal Era, Section two was designed to elicit data on online teaching approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME in the New Normal era while section three was to gather data on ICT capacity building of lecturers approaches for sustainable teaching and learning of OTME in the New Normal era. The response option of the questionnaire was structured on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The instrument was face-validated by three experts who are Senior Lecturers in Business Education in Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka, Anambra State. The reliability of the questionnaire was ascertained by trial testing 15 copies of the instrument on Business education lecturers in the University. Data collected from the trial testing were analysed using Cronbach Alpha reliability method which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.886. The reliability result indicates that the instrument was about 89% reliable for data collection for the study. In affirmation, Hamed (2016) noted that reliability coefficients range from 0.00 to 1.00, with higher coefficients indicating higher levels of reliability.

Data for the study were collected by the researchers with the help of six research assistants. Each of the six research assistants handled data collection in each of the six schools covered for the study. Due to close monitoring of the research assistants, the entire 93 copies of the questionnaire administered were completed and returned representing 100% rate of return. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions while the hypothesis one was tested using t-test statistics and hypotheses two was tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The cut-off point of 2.50 was obtained for answering the research question on 4-point rating scale. Based on the obtained cut-off point value, any item with mean value of 2.50 and above was interpreted as "Agreed" while those less than 2.50 were interpreted as "Disagreed. The hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted when the p-value (sig.) is greater than 0.05 level of significance. On the other hand, the hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected when the p-value (sig.) is less than 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One

What are the funding approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) in South-eastern Nigeria tertiary institutions in the New Normal era?

Table 1: Funding Approaches for Sustaining Teaching and Learning of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) in South-eastern Nigeria Tertiary Institutions in the New Normal Era (n = 93)

SN	Funding approaches for sustaining Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) teaching:	$\overline{X}$	SD	Rmks
1	Adequately funding of OTME in the COVID-19 New Normal Era.	3.46	0.55	**Agree**
2	Seeking alternative sources of funding outside government OTME in the COVID-19 New Normal Era.	3.69	0.60	**Agree**
3	Financial incentives of Business education lecturers for quality service in delivery in the COVID-19 New Normal Era.	3.37	0.78	**Agree**
4	Improved impress to Business education programme for effective running of activities in the COVID-19 New Normal Era.	3.42	0.62	**Agree**
5	Funding professional training of Business education lecturers in virtual teaching in the COVID-19 New Normal Era.	3.60	0.52	**Agree**
6	Public Private Partnership (PPP) for improved funding for sustaining Business Education programme in the New Normal.	3.53	0.48	**Agree**
7	Intervention funding for replacing or upgrading Instructional technologies in Business Education programme in the pandemic.	3.55	0.53	**Agree**
8	Supports for lecturers in data subscriptions for effective engagement in online teaching and learning with students.	3.63	0.54	**Agree**
	Cluster Mean	**3.53**	**0.57**	**Agree**

Note: ***X*** **=** *Mean;* ***SD*** *= Standard Deviation;* ***N*** *= No of Respondents.*

The mean ratings of the respondents on the eight items in Table 1 ranged from 3.37 to 3.69 which are all greater than the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicates that the eight identified items in the table are funding approaches that could be adopted for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME in South-eastern Nigeria tertiary institutions in the New Normal era. The standard deviation values of the eight items ranged from 0.48 to 0.78 which shows that the responses of the respondents are close to the mean and one another.

Research Question Two

What are the online teaching approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) in South-eastern Nigeria tertiary institutions in the New Normal era?

Table 2: Online Teaching Approaches for Sustaining Teaching and Learning of Technology and Management Education (OTME) in South-eastern Nigeria Tertiary Institutions in the New Normal Era (n = 93)

SN	Online teaching approaches for sustaining Office Technology and Management Education teaching in the New Normal Era:	$\overline{X}$	SD	Rmks
1	Adequate provision of online teaching facilities for Business Education lecturers.	3.52	0.54	**Agree**
2	Ensure uninterrupted internet connection for effective engagement of lecturers and students in online teaching and learning.	3.61	0.75	**Agree**
3	Test running online teaching resources before actual teaching and learning experience with students.	3.50	0.68	**Agree**

4	Choosing online teaching platform wisely	3.53	0.54	**Agree**
5	Adopt multiple modes for engaging online teaching contents with students.	3.78	0.53	**Agree**
6	Structure Secretarial studies online teaching to create a sense of routine to learners.	3.55	0.65	**Agree**
7	Create room for interaction among students in the online teaching experience	3.44	0.58	**Agree**
8	Create room for students' active participation and engagement in the online teaching experience	3.55	0.71	**Agree**
9	Blending both synchronous and asynchronous methods of teaching on online teaching and learning.	3.46	0.59	**Agree**
10	Revamp lessons to the online environment with engaging discussions, screen recordings, and interactive technological tools	3.71	0.48	**Agree**
11	Set clearly specified dates and times early for engaging students in online teaching and learning experience.	3.52	0.55	**Agree**
12	State clearly behavioural expectations in every online teaching and learning experience.	3.48	0.54	**Agree**
13	Build a strong and reliable online classroom community with students	3.74	0.37	**Agree**
14	Utilize screen recordings to pre-record lecturers' instruction and the actual online lessons with students.	3.48	0.56	**Agree**
15	Set and enforce consequences in live online teaching and learning discussions.	3.73	0.60	**Agree**
16	Give positive reinforcement such as public or private shout-outs for performing students in online teaching.	3.56	0.56	**Agree**
17	Maintain best practices in all online teaching and learning experience with students.	3.61	0.47	**Agree**
	Cluster Mean	**3.57**	**0.64**	**Agree**

Note: ***X*** **=** *Mean;* ***SD*** *= Standard Deviation;* ***N*** *= No of Respondents.*

The mean ratings of the respondents on the seventeen items in Table 2 ranged from 3.44 to 3.78 which are all greater than the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This implies that the seventeen identified items in the table are online teaching approaches that could be adopted for sustaining teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management Education in South-eastern Nigeria tertiary institutions in the New Normal era. The standard deviation values of the seventeen items ranged from 0.37 to 0.75 which shows that the responses of the respondents are close to the mean and one another.

Research Question Three

What are the ICT capacity building of lecturers approaches for sustainable teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) in South-eastern Nigeria tertiary institutions in the New Normal Era?

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Table 3: ICT capacity building Approaches for Sustaining Teaching and Learning of OTME in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions in the New Normal Era (n = 93)

SN	ICT capacity building approaches of lecturers for sustaining OTME teaching in the New Normal Era:	$\overline{X}$	SD	Rmks
1	Quality training of Business Education lecturers in effective use of online teaching and learning resources.	3.50	0.54	**Agree**
2	Training of Business education students in the use of online learning resources.	3.46	0.51	**Agree**
3	Capacity building of Business Education lecturers in the use of ICT-based teaching techniques.	3.37	0.52	**Agree**
4	Recruitment of computer literate Business Education lecturers for effective adoption of online teaching in New Normal era.	3.58	0.72	**Agree**
5	Subjecting Business education lecturers into regular online conferences, workshop and seminars.	3.40	0.51	**Agree**
6	Provision of personal ICT teaching resources such as computers, IPAD and IPOD to lecturers.	3.49	0.50	**Agree**
7	Recommending Business Education lecturers for higher degree training of abroad.	3.56	0.44	**Agree**
8	Timely provision of subscription fund to Business education lecturers in the New Normal era.	3.66	0.52	**Agree**
	Cluster Mean	**3.50**	**0.62**	**Agree**

Note: ***X*** **=** *Mean;* ***SD*** *= Standard Deviation;* ***N*** *= No of Respondents.*

The mean ratings of the respondents on the eight items in Table 3 ranged from 3.37 to 3.66 which are all greater than the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This signifies that the eight identified items in the table are ICT capacity building approaches of lecturers that could be adopted for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME in South-eastern Nigeria tertiary institutions in the New Normal era. The standard deviation values of the eight items ranged from 0.44 to 0.72 which shows that the responses of the respondents are close to the mean and one another.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Education Lecturers on funding approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME in the New Normal Era.

Table 4: Result of t-test statistics for significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Education Lecturers on funding approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) in the New Normal era

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	DF	Std. Error	t-cal	p-value	Level of sig.	Decision
Male Lecturers	49	3.55	0.48						
Female Lecturers	44	3.52	0.50	91	0.026	0.30	0.74	0.05	**NS** (Accept $H0_1$)

Note: Level of Sig. = 0.05; **NS** = Not Significant

The result presented on the t-test statistics in Table 4 showed that the p-value of 0.74 was greater than 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that there was no Significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of male and female Business Education Lecturers on funding approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME in the New Normal era. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the male and female Lecturers is accepted on hypothesis one.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers on online teaching approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) in the New Normal era based on their educational qualification.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test of significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers with B.Ed, M.Ed and Ph.D qualifications on online teaching approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME.

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-Cal	p-value	Level of Sig	Decision
Between Groups	0.692	2	0.45	0.37	0.46	0.05	**NS** (Accept $H0_2$)
Within Groups	78.433	90	0.41				
Total	79.125	92					

Note: Level of Sig. = 0.05; N**S** = Not Significant

The result of analysis of variance (ANOVA) in Table 5 revealed that the p-value of 0.46 was greater than 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that there was no significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business Educators with B.Sc (Ed); M.Sc (Ed) and PhD qualifications on online teaching approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management Education in the New Normal era. This indicates that educational qualification of the Business Education lecturers is not a significant source of

difference in their responses. Consequently, the null hypothesis of no significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean responses of the Business Education lecturers based on academic qualification is accepted on hypothesis two.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers on ICT capacity building of lecturers approaches for sustainable teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) in the New Normal era based on their educational qualification.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test of significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers with B.Ed, M.Ed and Ph.D qualifications on ICT capacity building approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME.

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-Cal	p-value	Level of Sig	Decision
Between Groups	0.983	2	0.54	3.25	0.02	0.05	**Sig.** (Reject $H0_3$)
Within Groups	85.637	90	0.49				
Total	86.620	92					

Note: Level of Sig. = 0.05; **Sig** = Significant

The result of analysis of variance (ANOVA) in Table 6 showed that the p-value of 0.02 was less than 0.05 level of significance. This implied that there was significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business Educators with B.Sc (Ed); M.Sc (Ed) and PhD qualifications on ICT capacity building of lecturers approaches for sustainable teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management Education in the New Normal era. This indicates that educational qualification of the Business Education lecturers is a significant source of difference in their responses. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean responses of the Business Education lecturers based on academic qualification is rejected on hypothesis three.

Discussion of Findings

The study on research question one identified funding approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management Education in the New Normal era to include: adequately funding of OTME, seeking alternative sources of funding OTME outside government, financial incentives Business education lecturers for quality service in delivery, improved impress to Business education programme for effective running of activities, funding professional training of Business education lecturers in virtual teaching and Public Private Partnership (PPP) for improved funding for sustaining Business Education programme among others. Lawal, Bassey and Ani (2008) found that measures for stepping up the use of electronic teaching methods include: increased funding and provision of relevant ICT facilities. Tarus, Gichoya and Muumbo (2015) who found that the expansion of e-learning infrastructure to facilitate the access to e-learning can be achieved through provision of stable power supply and adequate funding for integrating the use of modern technologies in teaching and learning.

This study in respect to research question two identified online teaching approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME in the New Normal era to include: adequate provision of online teaching facilities for Business Education lecturers, ensuring uninterrupted internet

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connection for effective engagement of lecturers and students in online teaching and learning, test running online teaching resources before actual teaching and learning experience with students, choosing online teaching platform wisely, adopting multiple modes for engaging online teaching contents with students, setting clearly specified dates and times early for engaging students in online teaching and learning experience, stating clearly behavioural expectations in every online teaching and learning experience, building a strong and reliable online classroom community with students and setting and enforcing consequences in live online teaching and learning discussions among others. The findings of this study supported that of Corwin (2021) who identified strategies for effective online teaching and learning during COVID-19 to include: test running online teaching resources before actual teaching and learning experience with students, adopting multiple modes for engaging online teaching contents with students, structure online teaching to create a sense of routine, creating room for interaction among students in the online teaching experience. Jackson (2020) and Albert (2021) highlighted revamping of lessons to the online environment with engaging discussions, screen recordings, and interactive technological tools, blending both synchronous and asynchronous methods of teaching on online teaching and learning, stating clearly behavioural expectations in every online teaching and learning experience, building a strong and reliable online classroom community with students and maintaining best practices in all online teaching and learning experience with students as some of the effective strategies for engaging online teaching and learning in the COVID-19 and New Normal era.

This study as regards research question three identified ICT capacity building approaches of lecturers for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME in the New Normal era to include: quality training of Business Education lecturers in effective use of online teaching and learning resources, training of Business education students in the use of online learning resources, capacity building of Business Education lecturers in the use of ICT-based teaching techniques, recruitment of computer literate Business Education lecturers for effective adoption of online teaching in New Normal era, subjecting Business education lecturers into regular online conferences, workshop and seminars and timely provision of subscription fund to Business education lecturers in the New Normal era among others. Online learning during the pandemic helped to ensure remote learning as students could conveniently access teachers and teaching materials easily without location barrier (Mukhtar, Javed, Arooi and Sethi, 2020). The findings agreed with that of Snelling and Fingal (2020) who strategies for online learning in COVID-19 era to include: digital equity, establish daily schedules, provision of robust learning, designing of independent learning, choosing the right tools and stick with them and provision of clear expectations to teachers and learners.

Conclusion

The study examined approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of Office Technology and Management Education in South-eastern Nigeria Tertiary institutions in the New Normal Era**.** Data were collected from Business Education Lecturers and analysed using mean and standard deviation for answering research questions while t-test statistics and ANOVA were used for testing the hypotheses. The results of the study identified 8 funding approaches, 17 online teaching approaches and 8 ICT capacity building of lecturers approaches for sustainable teaching and learning of OTME in South-eastern Nigeria tertiary institutions in the New Normal era. The result on hypotheses tested revealed that there was no significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of male and female Business Education Lecturers on funding approaches for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME. Similarly, there was no significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business Educators with B.Sc (Ed); M.Sc (Ed) and PhD qualifications on online teaching approaches for sustaining teaching and

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learning of OTME in the New Normal era. Though, there was significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business Educators with B.Sc (Ed); M.Sc (Ed) and PhD qualifications on ICT capacity building of lecturers approaches for sustainable teaching and learning of OTME in the New Normal era. The study therefore recommended:

i. Improved government funding of Business Education programme for sustaining teaching and learning of OTME in South-eastern Nigeria Tertiary institutions in the New Normal era.
ii. Stepping up of online teaching and learning approach through appropriate policies backed with provision of required facilities for effective online instruction in the New Normal era.
iii. Improved capacity building of Business Education Lecturers through training and retraining in effective use of online teaching and learning resources New Normal era.

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STRATEGIES AND UTILIZATION OF DIGITAL RESOURCES IN TEACHING COMPETENCY SKILLS TO BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

[1]AGWAZIE BRIDGET
Department of Business Education
University of Delta, Agbor
Email: agwaziebridget484@gmail.com

[2]PROF PAC ORDU
Department of Business Education
Federal University Otuoke
Bayelsa State
Email: *pacordu2019@gmail.com*

Abstract

This paper focused on the Utilization of Emerging Digital Resources in Teaching Business Education Students for Employability Competency Skills Acquisition in South-South, Nigeria. The paper examined the utilizable emerging digital resources, their adequacies and challenges militating against the Utilization of Emerging Digital Resources in Teaching Business Education Students for Employability Competency Skills Acquisition in South-South, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study was conducted in universities in the south-south region of Nigeria. The population of the study constitutes 300 business educators in six federal universities in the six south-south states. A self-structured instrument titled "Emerging digital resources and employability in business education programme questionnaire (EDREBEPQ)" was used for data collection. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency which yielded an overall reliability co-efficient of 0.80. Data were collected by administration of validated questionnaire on the respondents. Mean and Standard deviation were used to answer research questions. The findings showed that word processors, spreadsheet and data analysis tools, and teleconferencing as the most utilizable emerging digital resource in teach business education for employability skill competence skill. It showed that challenges such as maintenance, resistance to change, lack of fund, lack of exposure, power failure, and lack of adequate trained personnel as factors that militate against the utilization of emerging digital resources in teaching business education for employability skill competence skill acquisition in the tertiary institutions. It concluded that the uses of digital resources in business management help in the acquisition of employability competency skill for business expansion and economic growth. Unfortunately, the adoption of digital resources in teaching in Nigerian universities has remained a mirage due to its slow pace of acceptance and use. The study recommended that Preparation of lecturers to face the challenges of an ICT enriched teaching and learning environment is crucial.

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Introduction

The University is said to be an institution of higher learning and a citadel where tertiary education is offered. The National Policy on Education (FRN,2014) explains the goals of education as the development of the individual to be self-reliant and useful member of the society through the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills. These skills when acquired would make learners employable. Yet, many graduates of Nigerian universities cannot find work leading to an intractable problem of growing joblessness, and raises question as to whether functional education is really the pursuit in universities.

This unusual trend has been attributed to economic changes in countries and global labour market which increasingly resulted in new requirements on the quality of graduates and new approaches to their competitiveness (Aimzhan, Gaukhar, Zhanar, Turar, Laura &Kulzinat, 2015). Ordu (2019) blamed this on the disparity and inconsistency of the curriculum to current economic realities of the 21st century. Simply put, it is the acquisition of skills, knowledge, attitudes and commercial acumen that purports to empower fresh graduates to add productive and informed contributions to the attainment of organizational objectives immediately after employment (Singh & Singh, 2018). Omar, Bakar and Rashid (2012) maintained that these skills are needful not only to secure employment, but also to advance within an entity in a way that one can achieve his potential and contribute meaningfully to an entity's strategic direction. The acquisition of these skills in the words of Mike (2014) brings with it such benefits as being self-employed, ability to create diverse job opportunities, and reduction in crime rate.

On the other hand, failure to acquire these skills or poorly acquiring them has over the years made graduates unemployed, and for those seen as employed, they are at best underemployed and paid pittance in comparison with what they would have deservedly earned. The continuous lack of acquiring these skills made **Ekpenyong (1988)** to tag the universities products as half- baked and unusable unless they are further trained. Probing the causation of this behemoth further, Ordu, (2020), Adebakin, Ajadi&Subair (2015) traced it to a mismatch between the education and training received from the universities and the expectations of the employers. Munishi (2016) attributed the poor competence of universities graduates on the job to poor educational training many at the tertiarylevel, fueled by many factors including poor strategies and utilization of emerging digital resources.

Again, critics have equally lamented the slow adaptation of business education in Nigeria to research and technological challenges (Ekpenyong & Nwabuisi, (2013), Okoro & Ihimekpen, 2013), increasing changes pose by technology, inadequate teaching resources and teaching methods which negatively affected effective teaching and learning experiences (Coker, 2011). The above scholarly arguments indicate that the business education in Nigeria curriculum lack broad-based learning experiences and is inconsistent with its philosophy of employability. Many graduates unfortunately in Nigeria have retired by age while waiting consciously either for employment in government owned parastatals or in the organized private sector. National Bureau of Statistics (2016) captured the current economic reality of unemployed or underemployed at 24.4 million in first quarter of the year to over 26.06 million with negative consequences on the Gross Domestic Product. The GDP growth plummeted deeper from 0.36 in first quarter to 2.06 percent year-on-year in second quarter with over 16 percent inflation. The curriculum structure of business education varies from one country to another. Business education in Nigeria is at variance with global business education standards. As ours is a mix of business and education. Although envisioned to adequately prepare graduates, its curriculum has been education dominated in Nigeria with well over 30 percent non-business education courses. What we teach can hardly prepare graduates to have global understanding of international economy.

The challenge for educators in tertiary institutions is not just centred on covering the course content or adopting appropriate teaching or pedagogical aids alone, but also embracing

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emerging digital resources in teaching and learning. In this regard, Ordu and Abdulkarim (2019) opined that for Business Education students to develop employability competencies there is need to shift from the traditional instructional designs that favour theoretical knowledge competency acquisition to instructional designs that guarantee both theoretical knowledge competence acquisition and skill, and attitude-related competencies development. In the same vein, Ozuruoke and Abdulkarim (2016) has earlier noted that with the advancement of technology and its integration in doing businesses, traditional methods of instruction such as lecturer and demonstration methods alone cannot be utilized to assist Business education students develop e-business competencies. There is therefore the need for the business educators to be up-to-date in their digital skills knowledge and the utilization of these facilities in teaching and learning situations.

The integration of digital skills technology in teaching is a crucial matter in ensuring quality of business education courses. There are two equally important reasons for integrating emerging digital resources into the teaching and learning curriculum of business education. Firstly, students would become familiar with the use of these emerging digital resources, since all jobs in the society today are dependent on emerging digital resources. Secondly, the teaching of business education courses utilizing emerging digital resources will improve the quality of business education graduates thereby making them more effective and efficient (Okolocha & Nwadiani, 2015). Since business education provides students with requisites skills which are needed to increase their productive power of any nation, the work force is accordingly motivated to initiate independent productive ventures and carry out skilled works of divergent nature independently.

It is inevitable for teachers integrating emerging digital resources into subjects to assist in students' learning with teaching materials, teaching methods, and diversified teaching media. It is the common responsibility for educators to make teaching become more efficient and cultivate the new generation with creative and rational communication and critical thinking with technologies and network information in the new era. Digital teaching aims to have students actively participate in learning activity to achieve the set learning outcome (Ordu, 2020), (Pai & Tu, 2011).

Despite the importance of digital resources in the acquisition of employability skill by fresh graduates in Nigerian labour market, it is unfortunate that responses of employers of labour on competencies on the use of modern technology by recent graduates reveal that these skills are lacking. Corroborating this fact, Williams (2013) reported that graduates are deficient in transferable skills required of the workforce in the era of modern technology. Tymon (2011) added that employers view that graduates are not yet ready to enter and face the complexities and challenges of the world of work in the era of modern technology. To help students, universities have come under intense pressure to review their curricula so as to equip students with more than just academic skills.

Research Questions

1. To what extent are the emerging digital resources utilized in Teaching Business Education Students for Employability Competency Skills Acquisition in Tertiary Institutions in South-South, Nigeria?
2. To what extent are the available emerging digital resources adequate in Teaching Business Education Students for Employability Competency Skills Acquisition in Tertiary Institutions in South-South, Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges associated with the utilization of emerging digital resources in Teaching Business Education Students for Employability Competency Skills Acquisition in Tertiary Institutions in South-South, Nigeria?

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Method

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study was conducted in universities in the south-south region of Nigeria. The population of the study constitutes 300 business educators in six federal universities in the six south-south states. A self-structured instrument titled "Emerging digital resources and employability in business education programme questionnaire (EDREBEPQ)" was used for data collection. The response pattern adopted for the questionnaire was a four- point scale of: Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). A pilot test was conducted to establish the reliability of the instrument by administering it to 20 business educators in a state university in Rivers State which were not part of the study and Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency which yielded an overall reliability co-efficient of 0.80. Data were collected by administration of validated questionnaire on the respondents. Frequency count, simple percentage and mean were used to answer research questions.

Result

Research Question one: To what extent are the emerging digital resources utilized in Teaching Business Education Students for Employability Competency Skills Acquisition in Tertiary Institutions in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 1: Extent of digital resource Utilization for Employability Competency Skills Acquisition

s/n	Item Description	Mean	SD	Rating
1	Teleconferencing activities are used to enhance students' communication competency skills	3.55	0.351	VHE
2	Artificial intelligence is used to improve problem solving	2.48	0.723	VLE
3	Display boards are used to acquire numeracy skills	3.49	0.475	HE
4	Computer Assisted Instruction is used to improve the critical thinking skills of students	3.44	0.333	HE
5	Big data and machine learning allows students to collaborate with peers according to their proficiency levels thereby enhancing their team work skill	2.49	0.789	VLE
6	Advanced robotics and drones help students in decision making	3.00	0.652	HE
7	Virtual university enhance planning and organizing skills of students	3.22	0.411	HE
8	sensors and intelligent manufacturing enhance the self-management skill of students	3.14	0.415	HE
9	Word Processors are used for continuous learning by students	3.86	0.218	VHE
10	Spreadsheet and data analysis tools that allow students to organize and analyze information	3.58	0.312	VHE
	Set Mean	**3.47**	**0.378**	**HE**

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The table showed the extent to which emerging digital resources are utilized for employability skill competence. The table revealed that emerging digital resources such as Word Processors ($\bar{x}$ =3.86; SD = 0.218), Spreadsheet and data analysis tools ($\bar{x}$ =3.58; SD = 0.312), and Teleconferencing ($\bar{x}$=3.55; SD = 0.312) can be utilized for employability skill competence to a very high extent. While artificial intelligence ($\bar{x}$=2.48; SD = 0.723) and big data and machine learning ($\bar{x}$=2.49; SD = 0.789) can be utilized for employability skill competence to a very low extent. The set mean ($\bar{x}$=3.47; SD = 0.378) indicated that emerging digital resources are utilized for employability skill competence to high extent.

Research Question two: To what extent are the available emerging digital resources adequate in Teaching Business Education Students for Employability Competency Skills Acquisition in Tertiary Institutions in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 2: Available emerging digital resources adequate in Teaching Business Education Students for Employability Competency Skills Acquisition

s/n	Indicate the extent to which the following digital resources are adequate for in Teaching Business Education Students for Employability Competency Skills Acquisition	Mean	SD	Rating
1	Teleconferencing and Video conferencing tools	2.89	0.478	HE
2	Artificial intelligence	2.23	0.784	VLE
3	Display boards	3.89	0.251	VHE
4	Computer Assisted Instruction	3.48	0.322	VHE
5	Big data and machine learning	2.41	0.621	LE
6	Advanced robotics and drones	2.03	0.891	VLE
7	Virtual university	3.56	0.355	VHE
8	sensors and intelligent manufacturing	2.68	0.452	HE
9	Computer software applications such as word processors, desktop publishers, graphics, power- point, spreadsheet.	3.77	0.514	VHE
10	Spreadsheet and data analysis tools	3.65	0.448	VHE
11	Micro-computers with software applications Skillful keyboard	3.47	0.621	HE
12	Broadcast materials, E-book reader and Streaming videos.	2.87	0.354	HE
13	Multi-media projector	3.87	0.257	VHE
14	Smart board and Mimeo boards	2.98	0.547	HE
15	EDUSAT (Educational Satellite)	2.86	0.478	HE
	Set Mean	**2.79**	**0.478**	**HE**

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The table above showed the extent to which available emerging digital resources are adequate for Teaching Business Education Students for Employability Competency Skills Acquisition in Tertiary Institutions in South-South, Nigeria. It showed that emerging digital resources such as display boards ($\bar{x}$=3.89; SD = 0.251); multimedia projector ($\bar{x}$=3.87; SD = 0.257); computer software application ($\bar{x}$=3.77; SD = 0.514); spread sheet and data analysis tools ($\bar{x}$=3.65; SD = 0.448) were adequate to a very high extent while artificial intelligence ($\bar{x}$=2.23; SD = 0.784); big data and machine learning ($\bar{x}$=2.41; SD = 0.621) and advance robotics and drones ($\bar{x}$=2.03; SD = 0.891) were adequate to a very low extent. However, the set mean ($\bar{x}$=2.79; SD = 0.478) indicate that emerging digital resources are adequate for Employability Competency Skills Acquisition in Tertiary Institutions in South-South, Nigeria to a high extent.

Research Question three: What are the challenges associated with the utilization of emerging digital resources in Teaching Business Education Students for Employability Competency Skills Acquisition in Tertiary Institutions in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 3: Challenges of utilization of emerging digital resources in Teaching Business Education Students for Employability Competency Skills Acquisition

s/n	Item Description	Mean	SD	Rating
1	Majority of the practicing Business Educators in the country still hold on to traditional methods of teaching	3.65	0.448	VHE
2	Most of these equipment are very expensive and many Nigerian institutions do not have financial capability to make them available for use in teaching	3.42	0.487	HE
3	Constant Power Failure	2.87	0.387	HE
4	The maintenance/repair for most of the instructional equipment is not locally available	3.77	0.484	VHE
5	The few Business Educators that are currently available are not well trained on the use of this equipment	2.51	0.621	LE
6	Many of the business educators have not even seen some of this equipment let alone knowing how to make use of them	3.03	0.511	HE

The table above identified challenges in the utilization of emerging digital resources in the teaching of business education for employability competency skills acquisition in Tertiary Institutions in South-South, Nigeria. It showed that challenges such as maintenance ($\bar{x}$=3.77; SD = 0.484) resistance to change ($\bar{x}$=3.65; SD = 0.448); lack of fund($\bar{x}$=3.42; SD = 0.487); lack of exposure ($\bar{x}$=3.03; SD = 0.511); power failure ($\bar{x}$=2.87; SD = 0.621); and lack of adequate trained personnel ($\bar{x}$=3.51; SD = 0.621).

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 identified Word Processors, Spreadsheet and data analysis tools, and Teleconferencing as the most utilizable emerging digital resources in teach business education for employability skill competence skill. Also, it showed that artificial intelligence and big data and

machine learning are least utilizable emerging digital resource in teach business education for employability skill competence skill. In terms of the adequacy of these available emerging digital resources, table 2 showed display boards, virtual university, computer software application, spread sheets and data analysis tools, multimedia projector were identified as the most adequate emerging digital resources. Other resources such as Teleconferencing and Video conferencing tools, Computer Assisted Instruction, Virtual university, sensors and intelligent manufacturing, Micro-computers with software applications Skillful keyboard, Broadcast materials, E-book reader and Streaming videos, Smart board and Mimeo boards were also adequate to a high extent. However, resources such as artificial intelligence, bigdata and machine learning, advanced robotics and drones were identified to be inadequate in teaching business education for employability skill competence skill acquisition in the tertiary institutions.

The findings of this study was consistent with the study of Ademiluyi (2012) who reported that Nigerian students are not experiencing modern instructional delivery due to inadequate provision of ICT resources in tertiary institutions. The outcome of this study could be attributed to the underfunding of business education programme in colleges of education in Delta State. The finding also supports the study of Onyesom (2013) who reported that paucity of ICT resources for teaching and learning in business education courses in colleges of education in Edo and Delta States. This finding tallies with the empirical study of Yusuf and Pascal (2019), which discovered that available ICT resources are functional for effective utilization by educators in Nigeria. Perhaps, the maintenance efforts of technical support staff in tertiary institutions could be responsible for the functionality of ICT resources. The finding of the study supports Adebule and Ayoola (2015) who reported that to a certain extent, the ICT instructional materials are functioning. The finding of the study tallies with Jiriko, Olorunaiye, Nwafulugo and Omengala (2015) which revealed that modern instructional materials for teaching and learning are not functional in educational institutions. However, contrary to the findings of this study, the functionality of ICT resources such as telephone, fax machine, scanners, video machine, video DC/DVD, digital camera and microfilm were not ascertained because they were not adequate at all in the institutions of study. These findings are in consonance with Apagu and Wakili (2015) report that there are limited functional ICT facilities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

It showed that challenges such as maintenance, resistance to change, lack of fund, lack of exposure, power failure, and lack of adequate trained personnel as factors that militate against the utilization of emerging digital resources in teaching business education for employability skill competence skill acquisition in the tertiary institutions.

The result of this study implies that adequacy and effective utilization of instructional resources significantly enhanced the teaching of business education for employability skill competence skill acquisition in the tertiary institutions. Therefore, emerging digital resources enhanced employability competency skill in business education by providing and ensuring the effective utilization of the emerging digital resources and this will enable business education graduates of tertiary institutions to acquire sufficient on-the-job competencies to become self-reliant citizens in society. Bongotons and Onyenwe (2010) reported that instructional resources had a positive impact on successful implementation of curriculum. The finding is also consistent with the study of Ngozi, (2011). The author revealed that successful curriculum implementation depends to a large extent on instructional materials or learning resources. Similarly result were reported in the studies of Sajjad, (2012); Patius (2014). The studies found that adequate utilization learning materials impacted positively on the implementation of curriculum.

Conclusion

The uses of digital resources in business management help in the acquisition of employability competency skill for business expansion and economic growth. Unfortunately, the

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adoption of digital resources in teaching in Nigerian universities has remained a mirage due to its slow pace of acceptance and use. Little knowledge of digital resource usage is observed among business teachers, as their students prove naive of e-learning practices in their trainings. This has been attributed to such factors as inadequate fund available to schools for training of their teachers in digital skill acquisition, high cost of digital equipment and electronic devices and constant electric power failure. Inadequate equipment and infrastructure, poor knowledge of curriculum developers, inadequate personnel, inadequate textbooks and other teaching materials and the impediments in the power sector are found to be some impeding factors.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Business Education students should be encouraged to look beyond the classroom for hands-on-training to enable acquire emerging digital knowledge competencies that will help them become employable.
2. State government and management of tertiary institutions should encourage and sponsor business educators and laboratory technologists for re-training programmes to update their digital skill competencies to effectively utilize the available ICT resources in business education programmes for employability competency skill acquisition.
3. Business Educators need to be equipped with the fundamentals of office automation and sufficient understanding on the integration of these tools in teaching and learning.

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SECRETARIAL PROFESSION IN THE DIGITAL WORK PLACE.

DR. EZEONWURIE OLUFUNKE ABIOLA

Department of Office Technology And Management Education,
School of Secondary Education (Business)
Federal College of Education (Technical) Bichi, Kano State.

funkeezeonwurie@gmail.com

Abstract

The main aim of this research was to ascertain the secretarial profesion in the digital work place. The study was carried out in the North West States of Nigeria. A survey research design was used for the study. The population comprised 60 secretaries across ministries, department and agencies in Kano States Nigeria. A self structured questionnaire developed by the researchers and carefully validated by two experts. From Faculty of Vocational Technical education, department of Business Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. Was used to solicit information from the respondents. The instrument consists of 35 questionnaire items. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The result of the study showed that for the secretarial profession to remain relevant in the work place, there is need for the secretaries across ministries, department and agencies to acquire requisite skills and competencies in digital work skill needs. The study was concluded that the secretaries need to be adequately equipped with relevant knowledge, attitude and competencies in digital work place skill needs to be relevant and also to be able to effectively and efficiently execute tasks. It was recommended amongst others that: Secretaries across ministries, department and agencies should attend periodic training and retraining on professional competencies in order to acquire current digital work place skills and competencies needed to utilize and manage a digital work places. Also, that there **should be an orientation programme organised by the head of service for newly employed secretaries where they will be taken through skills and competencies needed ij digital work place as identified in this study.**

Keywords*: Secretarial, profession, Digital work place,*

Introduction

The office today is dynamic and challenging. The advances in office technology and information systems have greatly transformed the role and functions of the secretarial profession in both public and private organizations in the 21st century. The system of office information generation, acquisition, processing, storage, dissemination and even the business environment all over the world have witnessed tremendous changes in its traditional methods and practices thus making the secretarial profession to fall among office personnel who have come face-to-

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face with the challenges of the new technology (Ezeonwurie, 2017). For decades now, fast changes have been taken place in all facet of human life including the office environment as a result of technology. Buttressing this fact, Okolocha and Baba (2017), opined that it is an indisputable fact that presently, there is a wide spread of technological advancement in ways and means of rendering office services. The function of the office remains the same but its responsibilities and expectations changes as a result of changes in technology. in the word of Adu (2014), the secretarial profession in the world are witnessing a lot of technical and practical changes on daily basis. This ever changing technology has come with new roles and responsibilities for the secretary in the modern office called: 'Digital Work Place'.

A secretary as we all know play a very vital role in an office. That is to say a secretary is an indispensable office personnel. Supporting this assertion, Adebayo and Akinyele (2012), expressed the view that a secretary is an executive assistant who has mastery of office skills, demonstrates the ability to assume responsibility with or without supervision, exercises initiatives and judgment and makes decision within the scope of assigned authority. A professional secretary according to Oguejiofor (2015), is not only needed to have theoretical and practical knowledge of the new technologies but to be competent in the usage of those computer packages that are needed and necessary for her secretarial work performance in the digital work place. The roles of secretarial professionals have been turned around by technology. It has provided the tools that shift the role of secretaries from that of information recorders to business strategists (Adedoyin, 2010; Appah and Emeh, 2011 and Jaiyeola, 2007). Several other authors in the secretarial profession are of the view that the secretary has to be well equipped with requisite digital work place skill needs to meet the present challenges. It was concluded the changes will reshape both the office and the secretarial profession (Boladele, 2012; Onifade, 2009; Igbinedion, 2010).

A secretary in the view of Adozoga and Massnawain Ezeonwurie (2017) is expected to be computer literate and proficient in a number of word processing, spreadsheet and desktop publishing software including sending and receiving electronic mail (e-mail) and browsing the World Wide Web (www) (that is the internet). In the same vein, Boladele (2012), opined that the secretary's value to the organization is often measured by response to these challenges. That She is no longer confined to taking notes, typing and making tea. Buttressing the above assertion, Nwaokwa and Okoli (2012) assert that the efficiency and effectiveness of the secretary depends on her ability to operate electronic equipment-computer and this requires the acquisition of new skills, new knowledge and new techniques of managing information.

Statement of the Problem

The advancements in information communication technologies has led to the need for secretaries to reposition themselves in other to continue to be relevant in their performance of office functions as well as cope with the trend of technological changes in digital work place. The secretarial profession has been affected in one way or the other due to the introduction of digital work place. At this junction, one may pause and ask, If the demand in digital work place will make additional demands on the analogue secretaries in terms of skill training. It is to this question that the research work was carried out to ascertain the place of the secretarial profession in the digital work place.

Research Question

1. What are the digital work place skill needs of the secretarial profession?

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Method

A descriptive survey research design was used to carry out this study. The design is appropriate for this study because it makes use of questionnaire to elicit respondents opinion on the subject matter. The population of the study is made up of 60 secretaries drawn from ministries department and agencies in Kano State Nigeria. There was not sample used as the entire population was reached and managed. The instrument used to elicit information for the study was a structured questionnaire containing a 35 items. The instrument was validated by two experts. From Faculty of Vocational Technical education, department of Business Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha reliability formula which yielded 0.74 were used for data analysis. The descriptive statistical design was used for the analysis. Mean score of 2.50 and above was used for the acceptance of items on digital work place skills. The decision rule with respect to hypotheses was not to accept the null hypotheses when the calculated value is greater than the critical value, while, the hypotheses be accepted when the calculated value is less than the critical value

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Presentation of Data

Research Question 1

1. What are the digital work place skill needs of the secretarial profession.

Table 1: Digital work place skill needs of the secretarial profession**. (N = 60)**

S/N	Digital Work Place Skill Needs	X	SD	Remark
1.	Mastery of word processing packages/Software	4.06	0.51	Needed
2.	Ability to create and organize computer files and folders	4.08	0.50	Needed
3.	Ability to use storage devices (hard disk, diskette, CD, flash etc.) for storing and sharing files	3.85	0.82	Needed
4.	Generate MS office document using integrated application	3.76	0.85	Needed
5.	Manipulate hardware devices like printer, scanner, digital camera and projector to create electronic records.	3.88	0.58	Needed
6.	Inserting pictures and symbols into a document	4.07	0.60	Needed
7.	Using computer aided design such as digital camera, touch screen, trackballs etc for records creation	3.92	0.96	Needed
8.	Opening and working with more than one application at a time (multi –tasking) for records creation	3.91	0.70	Needed
9.	Using Word Art to create and shape text in a Document	3.95	0.61	Needed
10.	Use of electronic document imaging for the storage and retrieval of bitmapped documents	4.00	0.62	Needed
11.	Use of Microsoft Access to generate management reports	3.41	0.73	Needed
12.	Use of Microsoft Access to generate management reports	3.82	0.84	Needed
13.	Knowledge to access the Internet application			

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software or web browser	3.88	0.61	Needed
14. Creating an e-mail account	3.85	0.79	Needed
15. Opening and composing mail online	3.86	0.80	Needed
16. Sending and receiving mails with attachment	3.89	0.62	Needed
17. Uploading information into the internet	3.82	0.76	Needed
18. Ability to communicate with colleagues and clients online	3.42	0.90	Needed
19. Ability to use shared devices with a network	3.89	0.71	Needed
20. Refreshing and saving a web page	4.06	0.48	Needed
21. Downloading information from the interne	3.88	0.72	Needed
22. Ability to print a web page document	4.06	0.48	Needed
23. Generate and use electronic mail	4.05	0.49	Needed
24. Placing and confirming orders online (electronic marketing)	3.92	0.68	Needed
25. Use the internet to store specifically formatted documents in multimedia and graphics	3.92	0.68	Needed
26. Opening a PowerPoint work area	4.08	0.36	Needed
27. Ability to create slides using different layout	4.07	0.38	Needed
28. Adding titles and subtitles to a slide	4.11	0.57	Needed
29. Changing font and sizes of text in a slide	4.17	0.53	Needed
30. Applying the slide show effects	4.02	0.34	Needed
31. Adding sounds and videos to presentation	4.09	0.64	Needed
32. Applying transition effects	4.10	0.42	Needed
33. Running slide show in a power point	4.11	0.40	Needed
34. Create PowerPoint graphics/slides of business products to be sent online (Electronic marketing	4.08	0.42	Needed
35. Ability to make presentation using slides and projectors	4.11	0.57	Needed

Source: field trip 2021

The data shown in Table 1 reveals that all thirty-five items listed to answer Research Question One, were accepted by the respondents as the digital work place skill needs of the secretarial profession. This implies that secretaries across ministries, department and agencies unanimously accepted all the items listed as digital skill needs of secretaries profession.

Discussion of findings

The findings of this study are discussed based on research questions as follows:

The findings of this study regarding digital work place skill needs of professional secretary shows that the respondents agreed that the secretarial profession needed the thirty-five identified digital work place skill needs. The identified skill needs include: mastery of word processing packages/software, ability to create and organize computer files and folders, Use the internet to store specifically formatted. documents in multimedia and graphics for storing and sharing files, Ability to make presentation using slides and projectors among others.

The findings of this study on digital work skill needs agreed with the findings of Ezeonwurie (2017) who identified computer skill needs of secretaries to include, Create PowerPoint graphics/slides of business products to be sent online (Electronic marketing, opening an existing document, using page set-up and paper sizes,

Ability to communicate with colleagues and clients online, Use the internet to store specifically formatted documents in multimedia and graphics. Furthermore, The findings are also in agreement with Ezeonwurie (2021) who stated that for the secretarial profession to remain relevant in the digital work place, there is need for the secretaries to acquire skill that will enable them to be able to create PowerPoint graphics/slides of business products to be sent online, use computer aided design such as digital camera, touch screen, trackballs for records creation, placing and confirming orders online (electronic marketing), Opening and working with more than one application at a time amongst others.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, It was concluded that the Secretarial profession of the 21st century are saddled with a lot of responsibilities and organisations expect so much from them. This need is further compounded by the dynamic nature of today's offices which have gone highly electronic. Thus, the secretaries need to be adequately equipped with relevant knowledge, attitude and competencies in digital work place skill needs to be relevant and also to be able to effectively and efficiently execute tasks.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Secretaries across ministries, department and agencies should attend periodic training and retraining on ICT in order to acquire current digital work place skills and competencies needed to utilize and manage a digital work places.
2. There should be an orientation programme organised by the head of service for newly employed secretaries where they will be taken through skills and competencies needed ij digital work place as identified in this study.
3. The office technology and management education curriculum should be constantly reviewed, revised and adjusted by specialists in the field in collaboration with the industries. This is necessary to enable graduates fit properly and competently in the digital workplace of the 21st century.
4. Governments should recognize the need for Information Communication Technology skills and their benefits to the progress of every organization. Consequently, adequate training and resources should be provided. Model offices should be equipped with the latest equipment's/facilities to enable students have adequate exposure to practical's.

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DIGITAL SKILLS OF BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES IN ABIA STATE: IMPLICATION FOR CURRICULUM RE-ORGANIZATION AND DIVERSIFICATION

[1]UZOKA OBIOMA AGATHA,
Department of Business Education
Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe
E-mail: obiomsy@gmail.com
Phone No.: 08035017333

[2]OKOLI CATHERINE E.
Department of Office Technology and Management
Federal Polytechnic, Nassarawa
E-mail: cathyokoli@gmail.com
Phone No. : 08052956885

Abstract

The need to reduce incidence of unemployment among business education graduates necessitated this study. The study ascertained digital skills of business education graduates: Implications for curriculum re-organization and diversification. The study adopted survey research design while all the employers of labour in Abia State formed the population of the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 61 employers in Abia State. A-23 item questionnaire face validated by three experts in the field of education was used for data collected. The reliability of the instrument was established using pilot-test and data collected analyzed using Cronbach alpha formula which yielded coefficients of 89, .81 and .78 obtained for clusters B1 to B3. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used for data analysis. Findings showed that employers of labour indicated that business education graduates in Abia State do not possess majority of digital accounting, digital marketing and digital information and data skills. Findings also showed that educational qualification was not a significant factor on the mean ratings of employers of labour regarding digital accounting skills, digital marketing and digital information and data skills possessed by business education graduates. Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that business education graduates in Abia State lack the three digital skills covered in this study. It was recommended among others that, curriculum planers should re-organize and diversify accounting education curriculum to include digital courses that will ensure that students acquire digital skills for global competition.

Key Words: Digital Skills, Business Education Graduate, Re-organization, Diversification

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Introduction

Currently, the theoretical delivery model of education has been deemed insufficient for the 21st century labour market preparation. Experts and researchers are worried about the global skill mismatch between graduates and technological-driven workplace. Many employers today, find it increasingly difficult in recruiting graduates with the right skills which has contributed to the global unemployment phenomenon (Akpomi & Ikpesu, 2020). In Nigeria, youth/graduate unemployment has taken a new dimension, and has become the major concern of the government. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2020) reported that about 50 million Nigerian youths are unemployed, of which 25 million of them are graduates of various tertiary institutions. NBS noted that the Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the unemployment situation.

In Nigeria, the government recognizes the need to empower youths with skills by providing functional and qualitative education to make them job creators and reduce youth/graduate unemployment. Ezeani (2014) stated that many countries consider business education programme relevant preparing the youths for productive living. Business education is a dynamic skill-based education programme designed to prepare students by equipping them with requisite skills for gainful employment or self-employment upon graduation. Olumese and Ediagbonya (2016) stated that business education is vocational-oriented and exposes recipients to a number of specialist areas such as secretarial/OTM studies, business management, distributive education, ICT, marketing studies and accounting education. Akpan and Naboth-Odum (2018) view business education as a programme that prepares students for work life experience. It prepares youth for specific skills such as teaching skills, office skills, business skills and other valuable skills for occupation and for employment generation. Business education includes other elements such as the development of technical and entrepreneurial skills to a required standard. Business education prepares individual to take up their work role in the various profession and occupation. It aims at achieving the required skills for self-reliance which will enhance economic development.

The pace of technological change is transforming many occupations thus increasing the need for digitalskills (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), 2020). A few years ago, digitization affected only a handful of occupations, but presently; almost every occupation requires the use of digital technologies. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2018) stated that the rapid growth of internet access and connectivity has paved way for the development of a digital economy globally. In agreement, Berger and Frey (2016) stated that majority of occupations now require application of digital skills as they have become critically important for present and future jobs. Additionally, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2017) pointed out that developed countries now lay great emphasis on the citizens to acquire digital skills that will allow them to fully participate in the knowledge society. Similarly, the mass shift to online business operations by organizations due to the COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the need for graduates to possess digital skills that will enable them help businesses successfully transition to e-commerce world. Employers realize this, and are prioritizing graduates who can showcase digital skills (Kispeter, 2018). Furthermore, by possessing digital skills, graduates have a chance to contribute to their communities, build their careers, and explore a wide range of occupational opportunities.

Digital skills refer to the ability to find, evaluate, use, share, and create content using digital devices, such as computers and smartphones. UNESCO (2018) defined digital skills as those skills needed by workers to utilize electronic gadgets to access and manage information.Okeji, Nwankwo, Anene and Olorunfemi (2020) viewed digital skills as a set of skills that enables individuals to effectively and efficiently perform tasks using new technologies in the digital environment. Development Economics (2013) saw digital skills as those characteristics that enable an employee and his or her company both to use digital equipment and to access,

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create or share digital information through the internet and thereby benefit from opportunities in the digital economy. Digital skills refer not only the acquisition of IT skills, it also include other skills such as social, emotional and interpersonal skills that enhance the use of technologies. Today, digital skills required for employability are many, more advanced, and employers expect every graduate of tertiary institution to possess vast majority of them, not just a selected few. Digital skills include cognitive and physical abilities, content and processing skills, social system and complex problem-solving skills, resource management skills and technical skills (World Economic Forum, 2016). Gui and Argentin (2016) listed types of digital skills as operational data skills, formal skills and information and data skills. Others are digital marketing kills, digital accounting skills, data management skills and digital safety skills. This study covered digital accounting digital skills, digital marketing skills and information and data skills.

Digital accounting skills include ability to: use spreadsheet software tool to enter, sort, calculate, manipulate, and analyze sets of financial data. It also involves ability to use advanced excel package, quick book, and Peachtree accounting software among others for stock control, financial records or in assisting management with budgetary control or sales analysis. According to Schwartz (2020) listed ability to use Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software to carry out business functions; help shape user experiences that enhance performance; help manage expectations regarding budget, schedule and resources; and manage change and contingency plans.

Today's technology-driven economy demands business education graduates to acquire digital marketing skills required self-reliance. Digital marketing is a career that combines traditional marketing, web design, SEO, social media marketing, and content writing. Digital marketing skills include ability to: utilize functional procedures and modern software to gather and process a wide range of marketing information from different online interactions, get rid of incorrect, duplicated or incomplete data from database, generate online marketing brand that will attract consumers' interest, use Search Engine Optimization (SEO) tools to identify target customers and products visible to targeted customers. Other digital marketing skills are ability to: connect with the customers online on regular basis, spreading impactful marketing messages, establish online trust and business relationships, use videos, and as well as social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, LinkedIn o engage customers. Information and data skills required of accounting education graduates encompass abilities to: browse the internet, search for relevant information on the internet, filter or sort data and content, evaluate and analyze information online, manage data, manage digital contents by organizing and storing them (Vuorikari, Punie, Carretero, amp; & Van den Brande, 2016).

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2016), the educational system has the mandate to develop students' digital skills so as to prepare them for employments today and the future. Jørgensen (2019) agreed that higher education have a key role in the digital transformation of societies, particularly in addressing digital skill gaps. As the digital transformation is forging ahead, the question of digital skills possessed by Nigerian graduates has been raised by employers (OECD 2017). The outbreak of COVID-19 has lead to digital skills crises in Nigeria (African Union (AU), 2020). AU stated that employers of labour are concerned about the digital skill gap among male and female graduates in Nigeria. Employers want graduates with digital skills to assist them overcome the effects of Covid-19 pandemic. However, Sunday (2021) observed that majority of graduate lack digital skills to contribute to the growth of Nigerian economy. Similarly, the revelation of World Economic Forum (2020) that Nigeria ranked 122nd out of 140 countries in digital skills development. Similarly, UNESCO (2018) posited that there are major inequalities in digital skills in developing countries along socio-economic status such as race, gender, geography, age and educational background. UNESCO asserted that gender divides in digital skills are severe in women than

men. UNESCO averred that the gender gap in digital technology usage has widened, and tasked tertiary institutions to play leading role in bridging this gap.

Tertiary institutions remain the main agent of change in Nigeria (Adeoye & Adeoye, 2017), and help its technological development by producing graduates with requisite skills. In view of this, Endouware and Yusuf (2021) stated that it is imperative for graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria to acquire digital skills for employment generation. Berger and Frey asserted that as new technologies emerge, narrow technical skills become insufficient for many emerging jobs and businesses while the demand for higher digital level skills increases. It is more important than ever for business education from time to time to re-organize and diversify their programme to make it more responsive to current as well as future digital skill needs (Bradshaw, 2017). Bradshaw noted that now is the ideal time, therefore, for planners of business education curriculum to re-organize and diversify it to remain relevant.

Re-organization refers to the process of overhauling existing business strategy, setup, and operations to improve productivity (Blakely-Gray, 2019). It can take place when there are financial challenges; emergence of new skills, or standard/quality of service delivery fall below expectations. In the context of this study, re-organization simply means making necessary changes to business education curriculum to reflect current digital skill needs. O'jules (2020) defined re-organization of business education as the act of going back to the drawing board to re-plan, considering modern changes in the planning process to ensure emerging skills and innovative teaching strategies among others are embedded in the teaching and learning of the programme. Re-organization of business education curriculum involves presenting business problems electronically rather than physically (paper). It also includes teachers delivering business education courses using innovative strategies such as case studies, collaborative group work, work-based and flipped classrooms.

Diversification refers to different and various ways of doing things that are acceptable. Diversification according to Offorma (2015), means to differentiate or to give variety to a product or programme. Teichler (2008) defined it as a deviation or departure from a uniform and rigid method or system of delivering a programme to a flexible system that accommodates varying demands within a society or country. The aim of diversification of business education programme is to increase its variety in terms of service delivery. Diversification of accounting education curriculum also involves offering business education students many different digital courses that will help to equip them with digital skills, adopting varied student-centered teaching strategies delivering business education courses taken into consideration students' needs and capabilities, and applying different modern instructional technologies in teaching the courses taken into consideration their suitability to the respective courses.

Business education graduates from tertiary institutions in Nigeria have high hope that after the completion of their studies, they will possess requisite skills for self-reliance. The view is that the competencies acquired should be able to open employment doors for them and they will be able to help such organization enhance increase productivity. However, the fact that most business education graduates remain unemployed years after graduation means that it has become necessary for them to have a more realistic view. Since business education graduates are expected to work in modern business organizations, the opinions of employers on digital skills of business education graduates are important for these graduates to have a realistic view of digital skills they possess given their limited experiential training. Research in various regions of the world has indicated that many graduates lack the digital skills required by employers (Rasul, Abd Rauf, Mansor and Puvanasvaran, 2012). In the last few decades, however, the demand for digital skills has increased throughout the world (Baciu & Lazar, 2011). As business organization operations of today is in constant change, business education graduates must be

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able to adapt by developing the digital skills that employers demand. As the numbers of business education graduates have rapidly proliferated, competition for jobs that require digital skills has become more intense.

Employers of labour may differ in their views of digital skills possessed by business education graduates for better productivity based on educational qualifications. Educational qualification refers to the official confirmation, usually in the form of a certificate, diploma or degree, certifying the successful completion of an education programme. Employers with M.Sc./M.Ed./MBA degree and more may differ with those with only B.Sc./B.Ed./HND degrees on digital skills probably due to having attended higher education which offer them more opportunities to learning and acquire varied digital skills. However, this assumption has not been empirically ascertained in Abia State. The problem of this study is that, in this COVID-19 era, employers of labour are expecting business education graduates to apply digital skills during school to help them recover their significance losses they suffered. However, the fact that many business education graduates remain unemployed years after graduating means that they may not possess the required digital skills needed to fit into modern workplaces. The researcher is worried that if this situation is not addressed, it could worsen the already high graduate unemployed rates in Nigeria especially in Abia State. Based on this background, this study sought to determine digital skills of business education graduates: Implications for curriculum re-organization and diversification. As a result, unemployment rate of Abia State graduates continues to rise while employability rate continues to decline.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to ascertain digital skills of business education graduates: Implications for curriculum re-organization and diversification. Specifically, the study determined;

1. Digital accounting skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State.
2. Digital marketing skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State.
3. Information and data skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study,

1. What are the digital accounting skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State?
2. What are the digital marketing skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State?
3. What are the Information and data skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State?

Null Hypotheses

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

1. Employers of labour do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital accounting skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State based on educational qualification.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of employers of labour on digital marketing skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State based on educational qualification.
3. Employers of labour do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital information and data skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State based on educational qualification.

Method

This study adopted survey research design. It was carried out in Abia State. The population of the study comprised of all the employers of labour in Abia State. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 61 employers in Abia State. Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire Titled "Digital Skills of Accounting Education Graduates (DSAEG) with two section A an B. Section A was designed to elicit demographic information of the respondents such as educational qualification while section B contains 23 items broken down into three clusters of B1 to B3 according to the research questions. The instrument is structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The face validity of the instrument was established using experts in Accountancy, Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was carried out using pilot-test and data collected were calculated with Cronbach Alpha formula to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and correlation coefficients of .89, .81 and .78 obtained for clusters B1 to B3. Data were collected personally by the researchers Out of 61 copies of questionnaire distributed, 56 were correctly filled and returned and used for data analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the researcher questions while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis. A null hypothesis was rejected where the p-value is less than the significant level; otherwise the null hypothesis was accepted. The analysis was carried out using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0.

Results

Research Question 1

What are the digital accounting skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State?

Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings and standard deviation on digital accounting skills possessed by business education graduates

S/N	Items on Digital Accounting skills	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to use spreadsheet package to enter financial data	2.51	.78	Agree
2	Ability to use advance excel package to analyze financial data of an organization	1.41	.67	Strongly Disagree
3	Ability to use QuickBooks software to prepare employees' payroll	1.39	.81	Strongly Disagree
4	Ability to use Peachtree accounting software to prepare organization's budget	1.09	.71	Strongly Disagree
5	Ability to use Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software to manage budget	1.29	.69	Strongly Disagree
6	Ability to work in a cloud computing environment to save financial data	2.17	.59	Disagree
7	Ability to use of robots (bots) or digital workers to conduct audits	1.29	.71	Strongly Disagree
8	Ability to use of robots (bots) or digital workers to prepare employee's payroll	1.08	.80	Strongly Disagree
	Cluster Mean	**1.52**		**Disagree**

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Data in table 1 shows that employers rated item 1 agree with mean score of 2.51, item 6 is rated disagree with mean score of 2.17 while the remaining six items (items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8) with mean scores ranging from 1.09 to 1.41 are rated strongly disagree. The cluster mean score of 1.52 shows that on the whole employers of labour indicated that business education graduates do not possess majority of digital accounting skills listed. The standard deviation for all the items range from .59 to .81 meaning that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean responses.

Research Question 2
What are the digital marketing skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State?

Table 2: Respondents' mean ratings and standard deviation on digital marketing skills possessed by business education graduates

S/N	Items on Digital Marketing skills	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
9	*Ability to use software like Agorapulse and Hootsuite for scheduling posts, engaging with followers and developing monthly reports*	1.67	.72	Disagree
10	Ability to use *keyword research and WordPress for content management and publishing.*	2.49	.87	Disagree
11	Ability to generate online marketing brand that will attract consumers' interest	3.24	.81	Agree
12	Ability to use Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to identify target customers	2.20	.75	Disagree
13	Ability to use Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to visible to targeted customers	2.41	.67	Disagree
14	Ability to use *paid search platforms like Facebook and Google ads. in online marketing*	2.51	.64	Agree
15	Ability to successfully *tracking new market developments and try innovative market methods or strategies*	2.19	.77	Disagree
	Cluster Mean	**2.39**		**Disagree**

Data in Table 2 shows that out of 7 digital marketing skills listed that business education graduates are expected to possess, employers agree that they possess items 11 and 14 with mean scores of 2.51 and 3.24 while they disagree on the remaining five items with mean scores of 1.67 to 2.49. The cluster mean score of 2.39 shows that employers of labour indicated that majority of the digital marketing skills listed are not possessed by business education graduates in Abia State. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range meaning that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean responses.

Research Question 3
What are the Information and data skills possessed by business education graduates o in Anambra Stat?

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Table 3: Respondents' mean ratings and standard deviation on digital information and data skills possessed by business education graduates

S/N	Items on Digital Information and Data skills	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
16	Ability to find digital information	2.52	.78	Agree
17	Ability to organize digital information	2.42	.71	Disagree
18	Ability to store digital information	2.75	.65	Agree
19	Ability to create digital messages across a range of digital media e.g. graphics, text, audio, animation	1.57	.89	Disagree
20	Ability to communicate digital messages across a range of digital media e.g. graphics, text, audio, animation	2.12	.77	Disagree
22	Ability to manage financial data created online	2.41	.82	Disagree
23	Ability to understand and act upon appropriate guidelines, protocols and safeguards in the use of differing data	1.87	.83	Disagree
	Cluster Mean	**2.24**		**Disagree**

Data in Table 3 reveals that items 16 and 18 with mean scores of 2.52 and 2.75 are rated agree by respondents while the remaining five items are rated disagree with mean scores ranging between1.57 to 2.42. The cluster mean score of 2.24 shows that employers indicated that the majority of digital information and data skills listed are not possessed by business education graduates in Abia State. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range meaning that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean responses.

Hypothesis 1

Employers of labour do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital accounting skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State based on educational qualification.

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis of employers of labour on digital accounting skills possessed by business education graduates

Educational Qualification	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
B.Sc./B.Ed/HND	19	1.46.	.74				
	54	.12	.13		Not Significant		
M.Sc. and Others	37	1.40	.70				

Table 4 shows a t-value of .12 at 54 degree of freedom with a p-value of .13. Since the p-value of .13 is greater than the criterion value of .05 (P > .05), the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that employers of labour do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital accounting skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State based on educational qualification.

Hypothesis 2
There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of employers of labour on digital marketing skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State based on educational qualification.

Table 5: Summary of t-test analysis of employers of labour on digital marketing skills possessed by business education graduates

Educational Qualification	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
B.Sc./B.Ed/HND	19	2.39.	.61				
	54	.32	.43		Not Significant		
M.Sc. and Others	37	2.20	.68				

Table 4 shows a t-value of .32 at 54 degree of freedom with a p-value of .43. Since the p-value of .43 is greater than the criterion value of .05 (P > .05), the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of employers of labour on digital marketing skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State based on educational qualification.

Hypothesis 3
Employers of labour do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital information and data skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State based on educational qualification.

Table 6: Summary of t-test analysis of employers of labour on digital information and data skills possessed by business education graduates

Educational Qualification	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
B.Sc./B.Ed/HND	19	2.41.	.86				
	54	.18	.08		Not Significant		
M.Sc. and Others	37	2.47	.81				

Table 4 shows a t-value of .18 at 54 degree of freedom with a p-value of .08. Since the p-value of .08 is greater than the criterion value of .05 (P > .05), the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that employers of labour do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital information and data skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State based on educational qualification.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study showed that employers of labour indicated that majority of digital accounting skills such as Abilities to: use advance excel package to analyze financial data of an organization, use QuickBooks software to prepare employees' payroll, use Peachtree accounting software to prepare organization's budget, use Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software to manage budget, work in a cloud computing environment to save financial data, and use of robots (bots) or digital workers to conduct audits and prepare employees' payroll are not possess by business education graduates in Abia State. The findings of this study is not surprising to the researcher considering the high rate of unemployment among business education graduates in Abia State. Perhaps, this exponential unemployment rate could be linked to digital accounting skill gaps among business business graduates. The findings of this study agree with that of Akpomi and Ikpesu (2020) which revealed that employers of labour find it increasingly difficult in recruiting graduates with the right skills which has contributed to the global unemployment phenomenon. Rasul, Abd Rauf, Mansor and Puvanasvaran (2012) revealed that employers

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indicated that many graduates lack digital skills required for employability. The findings of the study showed that educational qualification did not influence employers' opinion on digital accounting skills possess by business education graduates in Abia State. This implies that employers of labour in Abia State regardless of their academic qualifications have observed the digital accounting skills gap of business education students.

Findings of the study also revealed that employers of labour indicated that majority of digital marketing skills listed such as abilities to: *use software like Agorapulse and Hootsuite for scheduling posts, engaging with followers and developing monthly reports,* use *keyword research and WordPress for content management and publishing,* use Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to identify target customers, use Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to visible to targeted customers, use *paid search platforms like Facebook and Google ads. in online marketing, and* successfully *tracking new market developments and try innovative market methods or strategies are not possessed by* business *education graduates. It could be that* business *education graduates were not adequately prepared while in school which have contributed to digital skill gaps among them. The findings of the study agrees with the report of* OECD (2017) that *employers of labour are worried that graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria lack digital skills required to fit into the modern business organizations.* The findings further showed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of employers of labour on digital marketing skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State based on educational qualification. This means that the choice of digital marketing skills employers of labour need from business education graduates has nothing to do with their educational qualification

The findings of the study revealed that employers of labour disagree that business education graduates in Abia State possess digital information and data skills. Employers of labour indicated that abilities to: organize digital information,create digital messages across a range of digital media e.g. graphics, text, audio, animation, communicate digital messages across a range of digital media e.g. graphics, text, audio, animation, manage financial data created online, and understand and act upon appropriate guidelines, protocols and safeguards in the use of differing data are not possessed by these graduates while they agree that the graduates possess ability to find digital information and ability to store digital information. In agreement, Jobberman (2020) revealed that graduates in Nigeria may hardly benefit due to the digital and soft skills gaps., Odu (2018) found lack of digital skills among graduate workers in Nigeria, and attributed it to mismatch between to skills in demand within the digital sector and those that graduates possess. Findings of the study also showed that employers of labour do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital information and data skills possessed by business education graduates in Abia State based on educational qualification.

Conclusion

Digital skills are no longer optional for business education graduates of tertiary institutions in Abia State, they have become the new normal, and employers are paying increasing attention to hiring graduates that possess them. The findings of this study revealed that employers of labour indicated that business education graduates in Abia State do not possess digital accounting skills, digital marketing and digital information and data skills. Vased on the findings of this study, the researchers conclude that business education graduates in Abia State lack the three digital skills covered in this study.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. Curriculum planers should re-organize and diversify business education curriculum to include digital courses that will ensure that students are equipped with digital skills.

2. Business education lecturers should be re-trained to enable them up-date their digital skill competencies for proper teaching of digital skills.
3. Business education graduates should embark on further digital skill training programmes to acquire digital accounting, digital marketing and digital information and data skills. This will enhance their employability potentials.

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UTILIZATION OF DIGITAL INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR TEACHING OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT STUDENTS IN THE NEW NORMAL IN POLYTECHNICS, IN NORTH-CENTRAL, NIGERIA

[1]BABA EDNA I., PhD
Department Of Office Technology And Management
Federal Polytechnic, Idah, Kogi State.
E-Mail: ednababa876@gmail.com

[2]IWUOHA CHARITY U., PhD
Department Of Business Education
Alvan Ikoku Federal College Of Education,
Owerri, Imo State.
E-MAIL: chatsu4sure@yahoo.com

[3]ALHASSAN DEBORAH A.
Department Of Office Technology And Management,
Federal Polytechnic, Idah, Kogi State.
EMAIL: alhassandeborah2017@gmail.com

Abstract

This study was carried out to determine utilization of digital instructional technologies for teaching office technology and management students in Polytechnics Nigeria. To direct the study, three research questions guided the study and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient measure of internal consistency was used to test the reliability value of the instrument. The results of the reliability test were 0.90, 0.91. The population of the study comprised 144 lecturers in OTM department in the North Central, Polytechnics. The study adopted complete enumeration method. A structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher and validated by three experts. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The t- test was used to test the three null hypotheses. The data analysis revealed the following findings: OTM lecturers in the North Central, Polytechnics utilize digital instructional technologies to a moderate extent. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that; the information and Communication Technology (ICT) unit of polytechnics should organize workshops and on the job training programmes for lecturers in Office Technology and Management programme on how to effectively use multimedia in their instructional delivery; and that the school curriculum should increasingly be interwoven with ICT such that teachers and students should be given opportunities to utilize hardware tools for teaching and learning.

Keywords: *Digital Technology, Covid-19, Office Technology and Management, Polytechnic*

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Introduction

The COVID-19 (Corona virus) pandemic ravaging around the globe has caused large-scale institutional and behavioral "shock effects" in various areas of human activity including education. The impact on learners is unprecedented. Due to massive and unexpected closures, affected countries and communities have been forced to large-scale lock downs and pushed to seek alternatives in online platforms, including digital learning as a replacement for normal educational processes (UNESCO, 2020).

Over the last two decades educational researchers and Higher Education institutions have explored how digital literacy could support teaching and learning allowing students to meet 21st century challenges. In line with this social transformation, the utilization of digital technologies in such new personal, organizational and educational environments has become very crucial (Carroll & Conboy, 2020). Digital instructional technologies are electronic tools, systems devices and resources that generate store or process data. Well known examples include social media, online games, multimedia and mobile phones (Teach with digital technologies, 2019).

Mary and Neena (2017) described digital instructional technology as any process in which the teacher or learner uses digital equipment such as a computer, (or a Laptop, tablet, MP3 player, or console) to access digital tools such as learning platforms and virtual learning environments (VLEs), and/or learning with digital technology resources to improve students' knowledge and skills. Instructional technologies are those devices used to support teaching and learning (Seymoureducate, 2016). Similarly, Sharma and Sharma in Nnajiofor, and Ejikeme (2020) defined instructional technology as the system and network devices, instruments, methods and techniques used to achieve certain defined set of learning objectives. Instructional technology is one of many tools that can enhance the presentation of content and convey information to students. It is, however, merely a tool, which teachers use only in conjunction with effective instruction.

Digital technologies have fundamentally changed the way individuals access information and elaborate knowledge. While raising the demand for new skills, they also create new opportunities for education and training. Digital learning is technology-based learning that uses gadgets such as laptops/netbooks and mobile phones to store information/content of textbooks, activities, exercises, reports, games, illustrations to deliver classroom instruction. Digital Learning is "learning facilitated by technology that gives students some element of control over time, place, path and/or pace. The Internet and the proliferation of Internet access devices have given students the ability to learn anytime, anywhere. Learning is no longer restricted within the walls of a classroom. Learning is no longer restricted to the pedagogy used by the teacher. Interactive and adaptive software allows students to learn in their own style, making learning personal and engaging. New learning technologies provide real time data that gives teachers the information they need to adjust instruction to meet the unique needs of each student. Learning is no longer restricted to the pace of an entire classroom of students. Interactive and adaptive software allows students to learn at their own pace, spending more or less time on lessons or subjects to achieve the same level of learning, (Carroll & Conboy, 2020).

Teaching and learning are the bedrock of education and training. Lecturers and students, including office technology and management students, are supposed to upgrade their skills in the use of modern computer facilities like multimedia, hardware and software among others. Utilization of instructional technology at the higher institution level requires teachers having knowledge in the course area, as well as an understanding of how students learn using varied instructional resources, and a good level of technical expertise among the teachers. Chugbuson, Durtur and Nimfel (2016) insisted that the Office Technology and Management programme being a skill acquiring discipline, remains a relevant channel for the transmission of the appropriate

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information and communication technology (ICT) skills and knowledge in order to make its graduates ICT savvy to embrace globalization and meet the demands of today's work place. Rajhans et al (2020) stated that the Covid-19 pandemic is proving to be a constructive disruptor, giving an opportunity for restructuring the present conventional classroom based educational system. Rajhans et al further pointed out that the benefit of digital technologies over the traditional face-to-face classroom kept the motivation of teachers high in adapting to e-education mode.

The integration of ICT in teaching is a central matter in ensuring quality of OTM programme. But according to Johnson et al in Winter et al (2021), challenges to its use have been identified to include; availability of equipment, access to resources, training and support. OTM teachers and students are no exception. If there is no access to computers and fast internet connections, then implementing online teaching is not feasible. If teachers have not had sufficient training in technology, then they lack the necessary skills. Working on-line means teachers have to adapt to new pedagogical concepts and mode of delivery of teaching for which they have not been trained (Schlichter, 2020).

Ogonu (2019) observed that epileptic electric power supply to a high extent influenced the use of technologies in teaching business education courses. Ogunu's study also found that poor internet service disrupts teaching process with the use of new technologies. The study also found that most business educators are deficient in the use of new technologies in teaching business courses. Similarly, Nagel in Ogonu (2019) asserted that the key among all the challenges in the use of new technologies in teaching and learning business programme is lack of suitable professional development for business educators who are required to integrate the technologies in teaching. Supporting this assertion, Akasi and Nwabufo (2016) stated that there is lack of adequate trained personnel, and the few business educators that are currently available are not well trained on the use of these equipment and there is no adequate training programme for them.

The attainment of the goals of Office technology and management programme appears to have been stalled by the covid-19 pandemic which resulted in the closure of tertiary institutions. The nature of teacher's work shifted radically. It moved into uncharted territory where there are no guidelines and where much of what works in person may not work online. Milman (2020) described this teaching online response to the crises as Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) and not just online teaching. This makes the utilization of digital instructional technologies by both teachers and students in teaching and learning of OTM progamme in polytechnics a serious episode.

OTM programme is the office education in the polytechnics. OTM programme in polytechnics could be seen as a curriculum response to the demands of dynamic and computerized workplace, which is aimed at the production of highly proficient breeds of administrative personnel that would coordinate high office information systems and provide technical skills with core business line function. Unfortunately, graduates of OTM, having undergone reasonable period of teaching and learning processes come out of school without employable skills, thus, widening the unemployment that is already at its chronic state in Nigeria. The teaching and learning of OTM programme requires the utilization of digital instructional technologies for the inculcation of these skills especially to match pace with changes already experienced globally in the way both office and business activities are carried out in the era of covid-19 pandemic. At the moment, the skill gap experienced among OTM graduates in Nigeria points to low utilization of digital instructional technologies (Odiachi, 2019).

Polytechnic education is one of the tertiary levels of education given after secondary school. Polytechnic institutions are largely owned by both federal and state governments. Federal owned polytechnics are those polytechnics owned, financed and managed by the federal

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government while the state polytechnics are those polytechnics owned, financed and managed by state governments. Ndinechi and Gude in Baba, Baba and Iwuoha (2021) posited that it is a two tier programme of studies that consist of National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) with one year industrial experience as one of the pre-requisites for HND programme. Unfortunately, there appears to be a cog in the wheel of technological impact on OTM programme.

Digital instructional technology has so many advantages on teaching and learning.Digital technology improves research by providing students with tools to analyze and understand large amounts of complex disciplines and media, including data and photographs. Digital tools create an open environment where engagement in the form of inquiry and response can be asynchronous, allowing students' time to prepare answers, promoting the exchange of diverse views and collaboration. Teachers use digital classroom technology to streamline the assessment process. Equipping teachers and students with the ability to give and receive real-time feedback through online digital tools provide a powerful incentive for learners to take charge of their classroom outcomes. The effective use of digital learning tools in classrooms can increase student engagement, help teachers improve their lesson plans, and facilitate personalized learning. It also helps student**s** build essential 21st-centuryskills, (Anderson, 2020).

However, despite these numerous advantages, some teachers still find it challenging in transiting from the analogue to the digital in teaching and learning and it has been seriously affecting the office technology and management students' academic performance as regards to the acquisition of appropriate office skills for employment. This is because teachers adopt theoretical methods as a way of teaching and learning the subject, mainly due to underutilization of instructional technology in schools (Samson, 2019).

Most researchers have tried to investigate the causes of this problem which they have identified to include lack of teaching and learning resources, lack of competent and committed lecturers, poor funding of Business Education, poor Business Education curriculum content, and so on. Sequel to this, the poor employability skills acquisition of students could have been due to the non-utilization of digital instructional technologies in the classroom which could be hinged on teachers' experiences and knowledge about instructional technology. In the same vein, research report by Aina (2019) and Nnajiofor and Ejikeme (2020) have noted that many teachers in the school system do not possess adequate instructional technological skills. This deficiency has negatively impacted on the extent of utilization of digital technologies in students' acquisition of employability skills in the area of office technology and management programme. Many of the teachers require re-tooling of their skills in order to blend and power the utilization of digital technologies in OTM instruction.

Technology ushers in fundamental structural changes that can be integral to achieving significant improvement in productivity. The instructional technologies used for instructional activities include the multimedia technologies, hardware technologies, software technologies, visual learning technologies, cloud computing technologies and many more.

Utilization of multimedia technologies in the new normal according to Simarmata and Mujiarto (2019) provides an opportunity for the implementation of the learning system, by not ignoring the health's protocols. The interaction between teachers and students is done with the assistance of multimedia. Interaction between one student and other students in the learning process can be clearly limited, but with the use of multimedia, interaction between students and teachers and other students can be intertwined, such as in the form of games involving several groups of students. Multimedia technology empowers the educational process by means of increased interaction between teachers, students, and courseware also innovative ways to make learning more dynamic, longer lasting, and more applicable to the world outside the classroom (Hilal, Ehab & Amjad, 2015).

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Zandbergen (2021) refers to ICT hardware as the collection of all the physical components of technology that can be touched or felt. Some of the hardware tools may include: The hardware technologies include: computer systems and chips, routers, printers, network card, microphone/speaker/headset and mobile device (Smartphone, iTouch, iPad, MP3 player).

Software comprises the entire set of programs, procedures and routines associated with the operation of a computer system. A set of instructions that directs a computer's hardware to perform a task is called a program, or software program. Afandi and Wahyuni (2019) pointed out that they are software technologies used for teaching and learning. Software such as: Zoom, Google classroom, Microsoft word, blackboard, Floop, Edmodo, Prezi and Idroo are very helpful in communicating remotely; all lectures and explanations can be conveyed directly without having to meet physically.

The integration of information and communication technology in teaching is a central matter in ensuring quality of office technology and Management courses. There are two equally important reasons for integrating ICT into the teaching and learning of OTM. Firstly, students would become familiar with the use of ICT, since all jobs in the society today they are dependent on ICT compliance. Secondly, the teaching of business education utilizing ICT resources will improve the quality of business education (OTM) graduates thereby making them more effective and efficient (Elogbo & Akek, 2019). However, Nwazor and Udegbunam in Umeano and Ifi (2019) saw technology integration as focusing on 'how' to use technology to support the way teaching and learning is currently being done in schools. It also enhances the use of modern instructional mode of teaching and learning in tertiary institutions to meet the demands of the current trends in academics.

Instructional technology devices are of no value to Office Technology and Management students if they are not adequately utilized by their teachers. Researchers in education (Brown, Lewis & Harcleroad, in Omariba, Gitau & Ayot, 2016) have shown that with present inadequate infrastructure, large class sizes, obsolete equipment, shortage of personnel, lack of technologically skilled teachers, gross under-funding and general neglect in public tertiary institutions in Nigeria, it is difficult to intensively achieve the goals and objectives of quality education and training. Similarly, Umeano and Ifi (2019) lamented that despite increasingly widespread adoption of technologies in virtually every aspect of education, significant challenges are preventing widespread affective implementation.

In spite of the importance of utilization of digital instructional technologies in improving students' employability skills acquisition of OTM students in the new normal, it seems no systematic investigation has been carried out in North-Central Polytechnics, Nigeria, to establish the extent of utilization of digital instructional technologies for teaching of OTM students in the new normal.

Statement of the Problem

The transition to online teaching was unexpected and rapid due to Covid-19, which took place amid a wider ICT transformation process in educational systems. With advancement in technology in the 21st century, digital instructional technology has become an invaluable technology for teaching, learning and research in education. The school lockdown according to Huber and Helm (2020) confronted teachers, students, and parents with an entirely new situation. Continued teaching and learning was only possible through alternative means of schooling. Teachers had to change to on line teaching, requiring them to use various digital tools and resources to solve problems and implement new approaches to teaching and learning. Unfortunately, there appears to be a cog in the wheel of technological impact on OTM. Consequently, it is observed that many OTM lecturers are yet to fully utilize Digital technologies for teaching and, thus, calling for research in this direction. Against this background, the

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researchers investigate the extent digital instructional technologies are utilizedfor teaching in Office Technology and Management in the new normal, in polytechnics, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do OTM lecturers utilize multimedia technologies for teaching in Office Technology and Management in the new normal in polytechnics, Nigeria?
2. To what extent do OTM lecturers utilize hardware technologies for teaching in Office Technology and Management in the new normal in polytechnics, Nigeria?
3. To what extent do OTM lecturers utilize software technologies for teaching in Office Technology and Management in the new normal in polytechnics, Nigeria.

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses have been formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean response of OTM lecturers in federal and state polytechnics on the utilization of multimedia technologies for teaching in Office Technology and Management in the new normal in Polytechnics, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean response of OTM lecturers in federal and state polytechnics on the utilization of hardware technologies for teaching in Office Technology and Management in the new normal in Polytechnics, Nigeria.
3. There is no significant difference between the mean response of OTM lecturers in federal and state polytechnics on the utilization of software technologies for teaching in Office Technology and Management in the new normal in Polytechnics, Nigeria.

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design which allowed the collection of a large amount of data from sizeable population in a highly economical way usually involving the use of questionnaire administered on a sample (Sanders et al 2009). The population for the study comprised 144 lecturers in OTM department in polytechnics in North Central, Nigeria. This consists of 52 lecturers from four (4) federal polytechnics and 92 lecturers from eight (8) state owned polytechnics. The entire population was studied; thus, the study adopted a complete enumeration method because the population size is manageable. A 21-itemstructured questionnaire was developed from the literature reviewed for the study and utilized for data collection. Each questionnaire item had a five point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE=5), High Extent (HE=4), Moderate Extent (ME=3), Low Extent (LE=2), Very Low Extent (VLE=1). Three experts face validated the instrument. Cronbach alpha coefficient measure of internal consistency was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and a coefficient of 0.79 was obtained. 144 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researcher and two research assistants and 128 copies were retrieved on completion which gave a retrieval rate of 89%. The data generated was analyzed through descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard deviation to answer the research questions. Inferential statistics (t-test) was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Any item with a mean scores and standard deviation of 3.50 and 1.75 and above shows high extent, a mean score between 3.00 – 3.49 and standard deviation between 1.50 – 1.74 suggests a moderate extent, and a mean value and standard deviation below 3.00 and 1.50 indicates low extent (Adefila, 2014).

Results

Research question 1

To what extent do OTM lecturers utilize multimedia technologies for teaching Office Technology and Management students in the new normal in polytechnics, Nigeria?

Table 1: mean ratings of OTM lecturers on the utilization of multimedia technologies for teaching OTM students in the new normal.

S/N	Extent of utilization of multimedia technologies for teaching OTM students in polytechnics in the new normal	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Combination of media in the form of graphic, text and audio.	2.60	1.34	Low extent
2	The use of computer system to convey information.	3.58	1.59	High extent
3	The use of video camera.	3.09	1.66	Moderate extent
4	The use of video cassette recorder.	3.62	1.56	High extent
5	The use of overhead projector.	2.52	1.30	Low extent
6	The use of compact disc.	3.22	1.26	Moderate extent
7	The use of DVD player.	3.41	1.38	High extent
	Grand mean	3.15	1.44	

Data in Table 1 revealed that out of the 7 items, item numbers 2 and 4 with mean of 3.58 and 3.62 fall within the range of high extent, item numbers 3, 6 and 7 with mean ranging from 3.09 to 3.41 fall within the range of moderate extent while item numbers 1 and 5 with mean of 2.60 and 2.52 fall within the range of low extent. Also the grand mean of 3.15falls within the region of moderate extent. Thus, OTM lecturers in North Central Polytechnics, Nigeria observed in the study utilized multimedia technologies for instructional deliveryto a moderate extent. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range indicating that the respondents were homogeneous in their ratings in the use of multimedia technologies for teaching.

Research question 2

To what extent do OTM lecturers utilize hardware technologies for teaching Office Technology and Management students in the new normal in polytechnics, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean ratings of OTM lecturers on the utilization of hardware technologies for teaching OTM students in the new normal

S/N	Extent of utilization of hardware technologies for teaching OTM students in polytechnics in the new normal	Mean	SD	Decision
8	The use of computer for preparation of job materials.	3.82	1.45	High Extent
9	The use of projector for PowerPoint presentations.	2.85	1.23	Low Extent
10	The use of keyboard as a communication tool.	3.94	1.51.	High Extent
11	The use of scanner to scan documents.	2.86	1.24	Low Extent
12	The use of printer to print electronic data.	4.00	1.76	High Extent
	Grand mean	3.46	1.46	

Data in Table 2 shows that item numbers 8, 10, and 12 fall within the range of high extent while item number 9 and 11 fall within the range of low extent. With the grand mean of 3.46, it can be concluded that OTM lecturers utilize hardware digital technologies for teaching in the new normalto a moderate extent. The standard deviation shows the extent of consistency of scores of respondents in their observed utilization of the hardware technologies for teaching.

Research question 3

To what extent do OTM lecturers utilize software technologies for teaching Office Technology and Management students in the new normal in polytechnics, Nigeria?

Table 3: mean ratings of OTM lecturers on the utilization of multimedia technologies for teaching OTM students in the new normal

SN	Extent of utilization of software technologies for teaching OTM students in polytechnics in the new normal	Mean	SD	Decision
13	The use of Zoom for video conferencing like online meetings, group messaging services and secure recording of session.	3.67	1.65	High Extent
14	The use of Google classroom to facilitate interaction of teacher and students.	2.63	0.84	Low Extent
15	The use of Microsoft word to create documents	4.00	1.88	High Extent
16	The use of Microsoft Teams for conversation with online video calling, screen sharing, audio conferencing and telephony.	3.26	1.24	Moderate Extent
17	The use of Blackboard in creating course content, marking test and enhancing collaborative learning.	2.78	1.10	Low Extent
18	The use of Floop to provide students with digital and interactive feedback on their paper-based assignments.	2.88	0.89	Low extent
19	The use of Edmodo to communicate, interact, collaborate and exchange educational materials.	2.65	1.08	Low Extent
20	The use of Prezi to present ideas and thoughts.	2.66	1.31	Low Extent
21	The use of Idroo to write, draw, insert images and tools.	2.74	1.29	Low Extent
	Grand mean	3.03	1.25	

Data in Table 3 revealed that out of the 9 item, numbers 13 and 15 fall within the range of high extent, item numbers 16, fall within the range of moderate extent while item number 14, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 fall within the range of low extent. Also, the grand mean of 3.03 falls within the range of moderate extent. Thus, OTM lecturers utilize software technologies for teaching in Office Technology and Management in the new normalto a moderate extent. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range indicating that the respondents were homogeneous in their ratings in the use of software technologies for teaching.

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Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean response of OTM lecturers in federal and state polytechnics on the utilization of multimedia technologies for teaching in Office Technology and Management in the new normal in polytechnics, Nigeria.

Table 4: t-test statistics on mean scores ofOTM lecturers in federal and state polytechnics on the utilization of multimedia technologies for teaching OTM students in the new normal

Variables (Institutions)	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
Federal	46	3.22	1.46	127	1.33	1.96	Not Sig.
State	82	3.19	1.48				

Data in Table 4 of the t-test analysis showed that the t-cal value of 1.33 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 127 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significance difference on mean scores of OTM lecturers in federal and state polytechnics on the utilization of multimedia technologies for teaching in Office Technology and Management in the new normal in polytechnics, Nigeria, is accepted.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean response of OTM lecturers in federal and state polytechnics on the utilization of hardware technologies for teaching in Office Technology and Management in the new normal in polytechnics, Nigeria.

Table 5: t-test statistics on mean response of OTM lecturers in federal and state polytechnics on the utilization of hardware technologies for teaching OTM in the new normal

Variables (Institutions)	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
Federal	46	3.26	1.44	127	1.54	1.96	Not Sig.
State	82	3..32	1.37				

Table 5 of the t-test analysis revealed that the t-cal value of 1.54 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 127 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significance difference in the mean response of OTM lecturers in

federal and state polytechnics on the utilization of hardware technologies for teaching in Office Technology and Management in the new normal in polytechnics, Nigeria, is accepted.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between the mean response of OTM lecturers in federal and state polytechnics on the utilization of software technologies for teaching in Office Technology and Management in the new normal in polytechnics, Nigeria.

Table 6:t-test statistics on mean scores ofOTM lecturers in federal and state polytechnics on the utilization of software technologies for teaching OTM in the new normal

Variables (Institutions)	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
Federal	46	3.13	1.10	127	1.29	1.96	Not Sig.
State	82	3.19	1.12				

Data in Table 6 of the t-test analysis showed that the t-cal value of 1.29 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 127 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significance difference on mean scores of OTM lecturers in federal and state polytechnics on the utilization of software technologies for teaching in Office Technology and Management in the new normal in polytechnics, Nigeria is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

Findings on the research question one revealed that OTM lecturers in North Central polytechnics, Nigeria utilize multimedia technologies to a moderate extent. the cluster mean fell within the range of 3.00 – 3.49 real limit suggesting moderate extent of utilization of digital technologies by OTM lecturers in north central polytechnics, Nigeria. The findings of this study however appears to disagree with earlier work by Aina (2019) and Nnajiofor and Ejikeme (2020) who noted that many teachers in the school system do not possess adequate instructional technological skills. This deficiency has negatively impacted on the extent of utilization of digital technologies in students' acquisition of employability skills in the area of office technology and management programme. Many of the teachers require re-tooling of their skills in order to blend and power the utilization of digital technologies in OTM instruction.

This is in line with Rajhans et al (2020) who stated that the Covid- 19 pandemic is proving to be a constructive disruptor, giving an opportunity for restructuring the present conventional classroom based educational system. Rajhans et al (2020) further pointed out that the benefit of digital technologies over the traditional face-to-face classroom kept the motivation of teachers high in adapting to e-education mode.

However, the plausible explanation for this contradiction could be that there is marked difference between the subject area as well as the characteristics of the research area with which these researches were conducted. For instance Aina restricted the study to the training of office technology and management education students for job demands and self-employment in Ekiti

State whereas; this study was carried out on OTM lecturers in both federal and state owned polytechnics in north central, Nigeria.

Further, findings revealed that OTM lecturers utilize hardware technologies to a moderate extent. The findings of this study is not in consonance with the findings of a study carried out by Ogonu (2019) who found that epileptic electric power supply to a high extent influenced the use of technologies in teaching business education courses. Ogunu's study also found that poor internet service disrupts teaching process with the use of new technologies that most business educators are deficient in the use of new technologies in teaching business courses. Similarly, Nagel in Ogonu (2019) asserted that the key among all the challenges in the use of new technologies in teaching and learning business programme is lack of suitable professional development for business educators who are required to integrate the technologies in teaching. Supporting this assertion, Akasi and Nwabufo (2016) stated that there is lack of adequate trained personnel, and the few business educators that are currently available are not well trained on the use of these equipment and there is no adequate training programme for them. Table 2 shows that OTM lecturers to a moderate extent utilize hardware technologies for teaching in the new normal such as the use of computer for preparation of job materials, the use of scanner to scan documents and the use of printer to print electronic data.

The disagreement in the result of the findings of this study and that of the findings of Nagel and Ogonu could be as a result of the fact that school closures due to the pandemic which have increased teacher's engagement with technology and for most part, have increased their confidence in using it. Covid–19 will have many far-reaching consequences for the society as a whole, and for education, teachers, students and parents in particular. On the positive side, it has helped to enforce the potential of technology.

The result of research question three revealed that OTM lecturers utilize the following software technologies to a low extent: the use of google classroom to facilitate interaction of teacher and students, the use of blackboard in creating course content, marking test, and enhancing collaborative learning, the use of flop to provide students with digital and interactive feedback on their paper-based assignments, the use of Edmodo to communicate, interact, collaborate and exchange educational materials, the use of Presi to present ideas and thoughts and the use of Idroo to write, draw, insert images and tools. This is in agreement with the finding of a study carried out by Johnson et al in Winter et al (2021) who observed that challenges to the use of digital technologies have been identified to include; availability of equipment, access to resources, training and support. Also, teachers attitude and beliefs about technology use, their skills and knowledge. Working on line means teachers have to adapt to new pedagogical concepts and mode of delivery of teaching for which they have not been trained (Schlichter, 2020).

The results of hypotheses showed that there exist no significant differences in the mean score on the extent of utilization of digital instructional technologies in teaching OTM students in the new normal in polytechnics, Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers conclude that digital instructional technologies are veritable tools for teaching Office technology and management students. However, despite the numerous advantages of digital technologies, some teachers still find it challenging in transiting from the analogue to the digital in teaching and learning and it has been seriously affecting the office technology and management students' academic performance as regards to the acquisition of appropriate office skills for employment. This is because teachers adopt theoretical methods as a way of teaching and learning the subject, mainly due to underutilization of instructional technology during the Covid 19 pandemic. Given the importance

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of digital technologies for instructional delivery, it is imperative that measures are put in place that will promote the use of digital instructional technologies for teaching OTM students in the new normal in polytechnics, Nigeria, especially in software technologies which they utilize to a low extent.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

1. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) unit of polytechnics should organize workshop and on the job training programmes for lecturers in Office Technology and Management on how to effectively use multimedia in their instructional delivery.
2. The school curriculum should increasingly be interwoven with ICT such that teachers and students should be given opportunities to utilize hardware tools for teaching and learning.
3. Government at all levels in Nigeria should review and implement the national information and communication technology framework that is geared towards the use of software tools for effective teaching and learning.

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GLOBALIZATION THROUGH BUSINESS EDUCATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

[1]NWAEKETE JOHN O.
Email: johngom18@gmail.com
Phone: 08038651404

[2]EGBULE COLLINS .N.
School of Business Education
Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba, Delta State
E-mail: egbule.collins@yahoo.com
Phone Number; 08037934626

Abstract

The study assessed the challenges and opportunities for Information and Communication Technology in the globalization of the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research method was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 122 business education lecturers in Delta State tertiary institutions. Instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire validated by three experts in education. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the three clusters yielded co-efficient values of 0.80 and 0.84 for section B and C respectively with over-all co-coefficient value of 0.82 which indicated that the instrument was deemed reliable for the study. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean, standard deviation. t-test used for hypotheses. Finding of the study revealed that high costs of ICT hardware, lack of funds to acquire ICT tools, incessant electric power supply, lack of capacity to manage ICT integration in the business education programme and poor attitude of lecturers towards the use of ICT for teaching among others are the challenges inhibiting the integration of ICT for globalization of business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Findings also revealed that opportunities for ICT integration for globalization through business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria are ICT improves the efficiency and effectiveness of business educators, facilitates information exchange among business educators nationally and globally, among others. The onus is for policy makers and administrators of the programme to adopt strategies for mitigating the challenges hampering the integration of ICT in the tertiary business education programme. It was recommended that Government in conjunction with administrators of business education programme should engage in public private partnership initiatives in the area of funding, capacity building, e.t.c for the integration of ICT in the business education programme.

Keywords: *Globalization, Business Education, Tertiary Institutions, Information and Communication Technology*

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Introduction

Globalization is a concept that has steered discussions and debates around the world. It's tough to define an abstract concept in concrete terms. Globalization has to do with the existence of relationship between different parts of the world, as well as the reciprocal influence that societies have on one another. Ikpeasu (2017) defined globalization as the process by which people, ideals, and things move across the globe, encouraging more connection and integration between cultures, education, government, and the economy. Globalization has improved worldwide communication, engagement, and idea exchange among people of various backgrounds and nations. Globalization affects many aspects of life, including education (Nwamuo & Adeleke, 2015). Innovations in technology have completely revolutionized the way things are done in all sectors of the economy including education. According to Lubeck, Cheng, Myszkowski, Doedijns, Drew and Snow (2015), globalization has resulted in the expansion of the global environment as well as diversifying processes to meet the diverse needs of people. The consequences of globalisation on education are the changes it brings in the learning systems around the world. It has brought about changes in ideas, values, and knowledge, changing the roles of students and teachers, and generating a shift in society from industrialisation to an information-based society (Hrehová &Teplická, 2020). This is made possible through information and communication technology. Information and communication technology (ICT) play an important part in all sectors of modern civilization. ICT has altered how we communicate with one another, find needed information, work, do business, connect with government authorities, and manage our social lives.

ICT (information and communication technology) have been hailed as potentially strong enablers of educational change and reform. ICTs are a collection of technological tools and resources that are used to communicate, as well as to create, disseminate, store, and manage data. Computers, the Internet, broadcasting technologies (radio and television), and telephones are examples of these technology. The application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in educational technology is referred to as ICTs in education. E-learning, blended learning, and open and distance learning are all examples of this. The objective of ICT's is to convey the values, information, and skills that students require for long-term success in a multinational corporate world that is constantly changing technologically and economically. The majority of today's market is built on enhanced informatization. ICT is one of the most important links in students' growth in order for them to be more competitive in the education industry. Students will lose the struggle for future competitiveness if they do not have well-applied ICT knowledge. For this reason, it is critical that ICT be fully integrated into education programmes like the business education programme and that student are able to take advantage of all of the benefits of new technology in their business education courses.

Business education as a course of study that prepares individual for business and entrepreneurial life need to be in the position to utilize the opportunities provided by ICT to ensure that their students are adequately prepared for the global business environment (Ikpesu, 2017). Ogunleye (2014) noted that business education as an academic programme is essentially geared towards preparing its recipients for the task of teaching business courses, work life and for self employment. It is therefore imperative that as the world of business becomes globally competitive that the business education programme would be at the forefront leading the innovative processes in the business environment through the integration of technology in activities. However, these appear to be an uphill task. According to Ogunleye, the business education is hampered in their bid to integrate technology in their bid to integrate technology in their processes. Some of the challenges have to do with issues related to infrastructural deficit which has to do with lack of ICT tools and gadgets to facilitate ICT integration in the business education programme. Lack of capacity to handle the ICT facilities is another challenge that has

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made it difficult to integrate ICT in the business education programme. Other issues relates to poor funding, cultural factors, lack of administrators' commitment and issues related to electricity among others (Ohaka & Akpomi, 2018). It is therefore imperative that efforts are made by stakeholders in the business education programme to ensure that these challenges are mitigate so as to improve the capacity of business education to produce competent business leaders in the global business market.

In order to be innovative, business education programs must invest in the human resources and distribution mechanisms required to compete in a world characterised by hyper-competition, technological transformation, and inventiveness (Smit, 2017). Ohaka (2015) opined that the opportunities provided by the integration of ICT in the business education programme is that it helps to develop distant business education with national and global contents, develop a system of collecting and disseminating information in business education, and encourage the core principles of lifelong learning in skill acquisition and character moulding in business education through knowledge and career global interconnectivity among others. This seems to indicate that ICT is a veritable tool for globalizing the business education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The researcher therefore empirically sought to investigate the challenges and opportunities for Information and Communication Technology in the globalization of the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Advancement in technology has brought about drastic changes in business processes and practices. Technology has made the world a global village and has diffused some of the barriers faced in the traditional business environment. This change means that business education programme in Nigeria need to update content to meet with the demands of the changing business environment. Positioning business education for globalization requires the full integration of information and communication technology in the curriculum content and process of the programme. However, doing this appears to be a daunting task for the administrators of the business education programme. It seems that the programme inability to integrate technology in their programmes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, appear to have contributed to the high rate of unemployment witnessed in the country. The failure of Nigeria's tertiary business education programme to provide students with the skills needed for global business start-up and entrepreneurship is reflected in the country's rising youth unemployment rate. The researcher is worried that business education programme in tertiary institution would lose relevance if this situation continues to persist.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the challenges inhibiting the integration of ICT for globalization through business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?
2. What are the opportunities for ICT integration for globalization through business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

Method

The Study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Delta State. Delta State has twenty five local government areas with six tertiary institutions offering business education programme namely; Delta State University, Abraka, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Federal College of Education (Technical), Agbor, Federal College of Education, Morsuger and Federal College of Education, Warri. The population of the study comprised all the 122 business educators in Delta State tertiary institutions. Instrument

used for data collection was validated by 5 experts on four point rating scale questionnaire titled, "Questionnaire on the Challenges and Opportunities for the Integration of ICT for Globalization of Business Education Programme in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria (QCOIICTGBEPTIN)". The instrument has two parts-one and two. The instrument contained 20 items in two sections of A and B according to the research questions. Section A contains 10 items on the challenges inhibiting the integration of ICT for globalization of business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria while Section B contains 10 items the opportunities for ICT integration for globalization of business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The instrument was structured on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the two clusters yielded co-efficient values of 0.80 and 0.84 for section B and C respectively with over-all co-coefficient value of 0.82 which indicated that the instrument was deemed reliable for the study. Out of the 122 questionnaires distributed, 101 were returned. This amounted to 83% questionnaire return rate.

Data collected for the study were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test for hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The mean value was used to provide answers to the three research questions while standard deviation was used to determine the harmony in opinions of the respondents. Any item with mean rating above 2.50 was regarded as agree while any item below 2.50 is agree. The t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The t-test was used to test the hypotheses. Where the calculated t value is less than critical value of t the hypothesis was accepted. On the other hand, where the calculated t value is greater than or equal to the critical t value the null hypothesis was rejected.

Results

Research Question 1

What are the challenges inhibiting the integration of ICT for globalization through business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

Table 1: Respondents Mean Ratings on the Challenges inhibiting the Integration of ICT for Globalization through Business Education Programme in Tertiary Institutions

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Lack of ICT tools	3.58	0.78	Agree
2.	Lack of capacity to manage ICT integration in the business education programme	3.57	0.75	Agree
3.	High costs of ICT hardware	3.78	0.89	Agree
4.	High costs of contents product development	3.53	0.87	Agree
5.	Lack of commitment towards ICT integration in the business education programme.	3.40	0.81	Agree
6.	Incessant electric power supply	3.65	0.88	Agree
7.	Lack of funds to acquire ICT tools	3.69	0.90	Agree
8.	Embezzlements of funds provided for the integration of ICT in the business education programme	3.48	0.72	Agree
9.	Poor attitude of lecturers towards the use of ICT for teaching	3.30	0.75	Agree
10.	Network connectivity issues	3.55	0.76	Agree
	Cluster mean	**3.55**		**Agree**

Data in Table 1 reveal that the respondents opine that items 1-10 with mean ratings ranging from 3.30 to 3.78 and standard deviations ranging between 0.72 to 0.90 are challenges inhibiting the integration of ICT for globalization of business education programme in tertiary

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institutions in Nigeria. The Cluster mean of 3.55 indicates that high costs of ICT hardware, lack of funds to acquire ICT tools, incessant electric power supply, lack of ICT tools, lack of capacity to manage ICT integration in the business education programme, network connectivity issues, high costs of contents product development and lack of commitment towards ICT integration in the business education programme as well as poor attitude of lecturers towards the use of ICT for teaching are the challenges inhibiting the integration of ICT for globalization of business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Research Question 2

What are the opportunities for ICT integration for globalization through business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

Table 2: Respondents Mean Ratings on the opportunities for ICT integration for Globalization through Business Education Programme in Tertiary Institutions

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Encourages the core principles of lifelong learning in skill acquisition	3.21	0.72	Agree
2.	Accentuates learning culture in business education	3.12	0.71	Agree
3.	Facilitates in the retrieval of business information globally	3.22	0.76	Agree
4.	Facilitates information exchange among business educators nationally and globally	3.33	0.78	Agree
5.	Improves the efficiency and effectiveness of business educators	3.38	0.80	Agree
6.	Helps to equip business education with national and global business contents	3.17	0.74	Agree
7.	Avail students the opportunities to acquire necessary business skills in from any part of the world	3.38	0.81	Agree
8.	Makes it easier for business education students to interact with their peers in other parts of the world.	3.22	0.78	Agree
9.	Emphasizes important aspects of learning thereby discouraging rote learning among students	3.10	0.73	Agree
10.	Increases students involvement in the teaching and learning process	3.23	0.81	Agree
	Cluster mean	**3.23**		**Agree**

Data in Table 2 reveals that the respondents opine that items 1-10 with mean ratings ranging from 3.10 to 3.38 and standard deviations ranging between 0.71 to 0.81 are opportunities for ICT integration for globalization through business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The Cluster mean of 3.23 indicates that the opportunities for ICT integration for globalization through business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria are that ICT improves the efficiency and effectiveness of business educators, facilitates information exchange among business educators nationally and globally, facilitates in the retrieval of business information globally, increases students involvement in the teaching and learning process as well as it accentuates learning culture in business education among others

Discussion of Findings

Findings revealed that high costs of ICT hardware, lack of funds to acquire ICT tools, incessant electric power supply, lack of ICT tools, Lack of capacity to manage ICT integration in the business education programme, network connectivity issues, high costs of contents product development and lack of commitment towards ICT integration in the business education

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programme as well as poor attitude of lecturers towards the use of ICT for teaching are the challenges inhibiting the integration of ICT for globalization of business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This finding seems to indicate a lack of commitment in terms of material and human resources in the business education programme in tertiary institutions. This is in agreement with Authors like Ogunleye (2014) who reported that business education is finding it difficult to compete in the global market because of difficulties faced by administrators, government, teachers and students in adapting to the changes by adapting technology in the teaching and learning processes in the business education programme. In the same vein Ikpesu (2017) stated that the challenge of globalizing business education through technology integration is visible in the lack of provision of funds, lack of quality teachers and experts to handle ICT integration and high cost of technology.

Findings also revealed that the opportunities for ICT integration for globalization through business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria are that ICT improves the efficiency and effectiveness of business educators, facilitates information exchange among business educators nationally and globally, facilitates in the retrieval of business information globally, increases students involvement in the teaching and learning process as well as it accentuates learning culture in business education among others. This finding appears to show that ICT holds a lot of promise in positioning the business education for the challenge of globalization. The finding agrees with the position of Ohaka (2015) who held that the integration of ICT in the business education programme provides a lot of opportunity for the development of business education students and their lecturers. In the same vein Ohaka and Akpomi (2018) found that the integration of ICT in the business education programme enhances the scientific research and data computation of business educators by upgrading their analytical abilities which includes the ability to resolve complex problems. Ohaka and Akpomi further averred that exposure to ICT allows learners in business education to develop skills that will give them an edge in an ever-increasing technology-saturated learning and teaching environment.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers conclude that positioning business education for globalization can be attainable through ICT. The researchers believe that ICT provides a tool for which the business education programme can facilitate knowledge sharing and development in the field of business globally. However, certain factors like lack of capacity of lecturers, poor funding and lack of ICT infrastructure threatens the globalization of the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria. It is therefore imperative that efforts are put in place by stakeholders to mitigate these challenges.

Recommendations

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

1. Government in conjunction with administrators of business education programme should engage in public private partnership initiatives in the area of funding, capacity building, maintenance and provision of support service for the integration of ICT in the business education programme.
2. Curriculum planners in the business education programme should adopts new contents in business education that would improve business education students' knowledge of the use of technology in business. Consideration should be given to emerging technologies like crypto currency, block chain and Artificial intelligence.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF BLENDED LEARNING PEDAGOGICAL MODELS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN NEW NORMAL

[1]ALONTA GABRIEL CHIDIEBERE
gc.alonta@unizik.edu.ng

[2]OBI OLUCHI CHINAZOR
oc.obi@unizik.edu.ng

[3]OKOLOCHA COMFORT CHIMEZIE
cc.okolocha@unizik.edu.ng

Department of Technology and Vocational Education
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Anambra State, Nigeria.

Abstract

Blended learning includes effective instructional strategies for teaching with technology in and out of the classroom. Teachers, especially business educators will benefit from using blended learning through improved classroom efficiency and increased teaching flexibility. Similarly, learning becomes more convenient for students, as well as better learning outcomes will be ensured through engagement and collaboration. This study, therefore, sought to determine lecturers' strategies for effective deployment of blended learning in the post covid era. Two research questions were raised and answered, and two hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A total of 109 lecturers from five tertiary institutions in Anambra State participated in the study. Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection while the analyses were done using mean and standard deviation for the research questions and t-test to test the hypotheses. The study found that lecturers agreed that the blended learning model was effective for teaching and learning of business education, and that technical knowledge, lack of students' readiness as well as poor internet facilities were challenges affecting the effective use of blended learning in teaching business education in tertiary institutions.

Keywords: *Blended learning, Effective Teaching, Business Education, New Normal*

Introduction

There is a need to make conscientious and holistic effort in the teaching and learning process aimed at bridging the educational gap created by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of such strategies to adopt in closing this gap is to employ a blended learning pedagogical model for effective teaching of contents, especially at the tertiary institutions. Blended learning (BL) as a pedagogy, is an instructional method that combines traditional face-to-face education with e-

learning (Horn & Staker, 2015). According to the authors, it is when students learn in both a brick-and-mortar environment and an online environment with control over the path, methods, pace, and utilization. Hilliard (2015) defined blended learning as a training modality that combines traditional instruction with digital technology to improve knowledge and skills that students can transfer to the workplace. Blended learning is envisioned as a model that will assist teachers in integrating technology and allow them to use face-to-face instructional classes to meet the different needs of the students (Kleber, 2015), especially in teaching business education curriculum contents. BL includes effective instructional strategies for teaching with technology in and out of the classroom. There is no gainsay that teachers, especially business educators will benefit from using blended learning through improved classroom efficiency and increased teaching flexibility. Thanks to the BL model that ensures that learning becomes more convenient for students, as well as better learning outcomes through engagement and collaboration (Owston, York, & Murtha, 2013). A primary objective of blended learning, according to Shibley (2014), is to enable higher learning and enhance learner-centered pedagogy. This has further cemented a transition from an individualistic learning environment to one that is supportive and collaborative. BL activities include but are not limited to students being able to access emails, e-books, e-journals, complete online assessments, and collaborate using discussion forums and chat rooms (Mohammadyari & Singh, 2015). As the move towards the use of digital technology in modern-day education continues to grow unabated, especially to bridge the lacuna created by COVID-19 pandemic, blended learning as a strategy for effective change in teaching and learning should be implemented by business educators. Strategies are plans of action designed to achieve a specific goal or series of goals within an organizational framework. According to Freedman (2013), strategy is a high-level plan to achieve one or more goals under conditions of certainty. In the context of this study, blended learning as a strategy is one of the teaching approaches that business educators can be adopted to improve the implementation blended learning pedagogical models in the new normal. Therefore, Benson and Kolsaker (2015), stressed the need to offer students opportunities to learn in an online setting, using a learning management system (LMS), for instance.

As a result, the COVID-19 crisis is considered as an opportunity for change. Crises can make innovations that seemed previously impossible suddenly inevitable. The BL model is no more an option but a necessity. According to University World News, (2020), there will be years of reckoning that tertiary institutions need reimagining, not just repairing. Change is not easy, and, in several cases, it may cause more problems than those supposed to solve. Moving from face-to-face to blended learning can be considered as a case of change management. Some commentators are of the view that ICTs can change education by providing distance education, modernizing education, reducing obstacles to learning for all and sundries. It is therefore compelling to say that inclusion of technology in the form of blended learning in the learning process is attractive, opening the possibility of more interesting and playful learning. However, its effectiveness depends on the skills of the lecturer and the attributes of the students. Although lecturers' contribution can, in principle, be ameliorated by training, the students' attributes cannot be taken for granted. Such factors as social relationships inherent to face-to-face teaching, play a pivotal role in accepting technology driven changes in education. Research has shown that lack of direct communication with lecturers and colleagues is the main pitfall of online teaching (Landrum et al. 2020; Martínez-Caro & Campuzano-Bolarín, 2011). ICTs in education, however, will play a central role in the new normal (UNICEF, 2020). In developing countries like Nigeria, the extent to which technology can be used to recover and narrow the digital divide is still vague.

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According to the Digital 2020 Global Overview Report published in January 2020, about 60 percent of Nigerians are not connected to the internet. The statistics for mobile phones, which could also be used as a learning medium, are more hopeful. According to the report, around 169.2 million people (83 percent of Nigerians) have access to mobile phone connections. However, of these, 50 percent (around 84.5 million people), reside in urban areas. For the population with access, the proportion would be tilted towards high socio-economic households and urban households - an overwhelming majority of whom are children from wealthier backgrounds who already have a learning advantage over children from poor homes (Baum & Riley, 2019). In a state like Anambra where tertiary institutions are located both in the urban and rural areas, accessing these facilities becomes an uphill task. This reason may be that students who reside in rural areas, are more likely to experience limited access to internet connectivity, computers, and other devices for remote learning, (**Obiakor & Adeniran, 2020**). In line with the above, Jena (2020) that utilization of blended learning will depend greatly on access to internet and availability of technological devices. Participation of business education students in blended learning will be determined by accessibility to technological devices and internet facilities.

Business education students' skills acquisition is pivotal in the 21st century economy. Business education is that type of education that inculcates in its recipients' attitudes, knowledge, skills, values that is required in the business world. This is a means of producing a healthy, literate, self-reliant citizen that would create wealth for human development thereby resulting in sustainable nation's development at large. Business education like many other subjects in the school system has been defined in several ways by several scholars, to suit different situations and purposes. Bilyaminu (2011) views business education as an aspect of a total education programme that provides the knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding needed to perform in the business world as a producer and/or consumer of goods and services. Professionally, according to USLegal.com in Ibrahim (2014), business education is described as a programme designed to provide students with the basic processes of educational training; decision making; the philosophy, theory, and psychology of management; practical applications; business start-up and operational procedures In a nutshell, business education means education for business or training skills which is required in business offices, clerical occupation, and business policy analysis; or education about business aimed at preparing students how and when to buy goods for a profitable outcome, when to make best sales, and so on. To successfully achieve the objective of a business education programme in a COVID era, tertiary institutions should be able to integrate blended learning pedagogical models for effective teaching and learning.

Research Questions

1. What are the lecturers' strategies for effective use of blended learning pedagogical models in teaching and learning?
2. What are the factors affecting effective use of blended learning in tertiary institutions?

Hypotheses

1. Male and female business education lecturers do not differ significantly in the mean ratings on strategies for effective use of blended learning model
2. Lecturers in public and private tertiary institutions do not differ in their mean rating of factors affecting use of blended learning pedagogical models.

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Literature Review

In recent years, with the continuous development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), blended instruction has emerged as probably the most prominent instruction method in education, especially in tertiary institutions. The pedagogy of a blended learning environment is "based on the assumption that there are inherent benefits in face-to-face interaction as well as the understanding that there are advantages to using online methods (Clark & James in Nikolaos et. al. 2012). Blended learning is a mix of the traditional face-to-face and the on-line learning so that instruction occurs both in the classroom and on-line. It is essential to point out that the online component becomes a natural extension of the traditional classroom learning (Falconer & Littlejohn, 2007).

More specifically, Bokolo et al. (2020) carried out a study on Blended learning adoption and implementation in higher education: A theoretical and systematic review.The authors presented the constructs and factors that influence students, lecturers, and administration towards adopting BL in higher education. The findings suggest that the BL practices to be implemented for students include face-to-face, activities, information, resources, assessment, and feedback. For the lecturers, the authors identified technology, pedagogy, content, and knowledge. Dziuban, et al. (2018) investigated a study on blended learning: the new normal and emerging technologies. The authors contend that BL coalesces around access, success, and students' perception of their learning environments. The authors concluded that although blended learning preceded modern instructional technologies, its evolution will be inextricably bound to contemporary information communication technologies that are approximating some aspects of human thought processes.

Kintu and Zhu (2016) investigated the possibility of blended learning in a Ugandan University and examined whether student characteristics (such as self-regulation, attitudes towards blended learning, computer competence) and student background (such as family support, social support, and management of workload) were significant factors in learner outcomes (such as motivation, satisfaction, knowledge construction and performance). The findings from that study indicated that learner attitudes towards blended learning were significant factors to learner satisfaction and motivation while workload management was a significant factor to learner satisfaction and knowledge construction. Nikolaos, et al. (2012) researched on the impact of blended and traditional instruction in students' performance. According to the authors, blended learning environment is a hybrid of classroom and online learning that includes some of the convenience of online courses without the complete loss of face-to-face advantages. The study found that blended instruction appears as an alternative teaching practice that should be embraced by teachers, to assist students to improve their performance. From this review, it is observed that blended learning is getting increasing attention and studied in different areas on different variables.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the social constructivist theory originated from Vygotsky (1978). Social constructivism is the learning environment where teachers and students work together to explore and create new knowledge (Paily, 2013). The social constructivist model focuses on personalized learning within the context of social learning and therefore sees knowledge as a human product that is socially and culturally constructed. According to this approach, which is also relevant to this study, teacher's role is a facilitator who ensures that students are exposed to real-world experiences and are actively involved in the learning process

by having exposure to integrating technology in their learning (Aldoobie, 2015). Vygotsky recommended direct and guided teaching to assist in students' cognitive development and stressed the need for peer interaction and cooperative learning. This theory is related to this study because blended learning is a source of collaboration, interaction, and motivation to help teachers and students create a learning environment.

Methods

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The participants of the study were 109 lecturers randomly selected from five tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria. 41 lecturers were male representing (37.61%) while 68 were female representing (62.39%). Similarly, 25 lecturers were selected from private tertiary institutions while 84 were selected from the public tertiary institutions in Anambra state. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was tested for reliability using Cronbach alpha method and the coefficients were 0.83 and 0.76 for the two clusters. The instrument was also subjected to validations by experts in business education and measurement and evaluation. The instrument comprised two sections: one section was used to elicit demographic data while the second section contained items used to answer the research questions. Data collected were analyzed using the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for the research questions, while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1

What are the lecturers' strategies for effective use of blended learning pedagogical model in teaching and learning?

Table 1:

Mean responses on the lecturers' strategies for effective use of blended learning pedagogical model in tertiary institutions in COVID era.

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remarks
1	Enriching educational experiences for students	4.28	0.70	Agreed
2	Acceptability and potential use of BL model in teaching	4.03	0.61	Agreed
3	Enhancing BL structure and development	4.01	0.80	Agreed
4	Positive attitude and intention to adopt BL model	3.91	0.69	Agreed
5	Providing supportive campus environment	4.00	0.75	Agreed
6.	Assessing students' perception and readiness	3.75	0.72	Agreed
Cluster Mean		**4.00**		**Agreed**

The item-by-item analysis in Table 1 shows that all the items achieved mean scores ranging from 3.75 to 4.28, while the standard deviation scores show figures from 0.61 to 0.80. The cluster mean score of 4.00 indicates that overall, lecturers in tertiary institutions perceived the listed

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strategies as very necessary to achieve the use of blended learning pedagogical model for effective teaching and learning especially in the post COVID-19 era. The standard deviations showed homogeneity of the respondents.

Research Question 2

What are the factors affecting effective use of blended learning in tertiary institutions?

Table 2:

Mean responses on the factors affecting use of BL model in teaching and learning by business education lecturers in COVID era.

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remarks
6	Technical knowledge	4.10	1.05	Agreed
7	Curriculum design	4.17	0.95	Agreed
8	Perceived usefulness by students	3.36	0.81	Agreed
9	Poor internet facilities	4.32	0.97	Agreed
10	Epileptic power supply	3.52	1.03	Agreed
11	Inefficient delivery of practical courses	4.33	1.16	Agreed
12	Lack of interest	3.78	1.06	Agreed
Cluster Mean		**3.93**		Agreed

The item-by-item analysis in Table 2 shows that all the items achieved mean scores ranging from 3.36 to 4.33, while the standard deviation scores show figures from 0.81 to 1.36. The cluster means score of 3.93 indicates that overall, most lecturers in tertiary institutions, agreed that the listed factors above affect their use of blended learning pedagogical model for effective teaching and learning in post COVID era. The standard deviations showed homogeneity of their responses.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Male and female business education lecturers do not differ significantly in the mean ratings on strategies for effective use of blended learning model

Table 3:

The t-test summary of the difference between the mean ratings of lecturers on the strategies for effective use of blended learning model because of gender.

Gender	N	X	SD	t-cal	p-val	A	Df	Remark
Male	41	4.10	0.38	.825	.411	0.05	107	Not significant
Female	68	4.03	0.46					

Data in Table 3 showed that the P-value of .411, is greater than the alpha level of 0.05 at 107 degree of freedom. The result indicates that male lecturers in tertiary institutions in Anambra State, with a mean score of 4.10, and female lecturers with a mean score of 4.03 do not differ on

their rating of strategies for effective use of BL model. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. So, lecturers do not significantly differ on strategies for effective use of BL models in the post COVID era, because of gender.

Hypothesis 2

Lecturers in public and private tertiary institutions do not differ in their mean rating of factors affecting use of blended learning pedagogical model.

Table 4:
The t-test summary of the difference between the mean ratings of lecturers on factors affecting use of BL model as a result institutional type.

Institution type	N	X	SD	t-cal	p-val	A	Df	Remark
Private	25	3.92	0.43					
				.520	.231	0.05	107	Not significant
Public	84	3.97	0.39					

Data in Table 4 show that the P-value of .231, is greater than the alpha level of 0.05 at 107 degree of freedom. The result indicates that lecturers in private tertiary institutions in Anambra State, with a mean score of 3.92, and their counterparts in public tertiary institutions with a mean score of 3.97 do not differ significantly on factors affecting effective use of BL model in post COVID era. The null hypothesis is accepted, which implies that lecturers in private and public tertiary institutions in Anambra State do not significantly differ on factors affecting use of BL model in teaching and learning because of the type of institution.

Discussions of Findings

Findings of the study revealed that lecturers agreed that blended learning was useful to achieve greater efficiency in teaching and learning especially in the new normal. The lecturers believe that enriching educational experiences for students, having a positive attitude and intention to adopt BL model, enhancing BL structure and development, providing supportive campus environment, as well as assessing students' perception and readiness were strategies considered effective for using blended learning models in teaching and learning of business education in tertiary institutions. This finding corroborates Nikolaos, et al. (2012) who argued that blended learning appears as an alternative teaching practice that should be embraced by teachers, to assist students to improve their performance. It is therefore compelling to say that inclusion of technology in the form of blended learning in the learning process is attractive, opening the possibility of more interesting and playful learning. The effectiveness, however, will depend on the skills of the lecturer and the attributes of the students. Sarewitz and Nelson (2008) noted that lecturers' contribution can, in principle, be ameliorated by training, but the students' attributes should not be taken for granted.

The study also revealed that lecturers in tertiary institutions, despite these strategies aimed at effective use of blended learning models, face some challenges. Some of the challenges include but are not limited to technical knowledge, curriculum design, perceived usefulness by students, poor internet facilities, epileptic power supply, inefficient delivery of practical courses and lack of interest. This finding agrees with the submission of Obiakor and Adeniran (2020) who averred that students who reside in rural areas, are more likely to experience limited access to internet connectivity, computers, and other devices for remote learning. Similarly, Jena (2020) said that utilization of blended learning will depend greatly on

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access to internet and availability of technological devices. Bokolo et al. (2020) also identified technology, pedagogy, content, and knowledge as part of constructs and factors that influence lecturers towards adopting BL in higher education. Still in line with the above, Dziuban, et al. (2018) contend that BL coalesces around access, success, and students' perception of their learning environments.

Generally, under the hypothesis testing, the result of hypotheses revealed that gender has no significant influence on the lecturers' strategies for effective use of blended learning models in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. It further revealed that institution type (private & public), does not have any significant influence on lecturers' views of factors affecting effective use of blended learning pedagogical model in tertiary institutions in Anambra State, especially in the new normal. The findings of the hypotheses above are in tandem with the study of Tinmaz and Lee (2020), who found out that gender does not have a significant effect on lecturers' usage of blended learning models.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that lecturers in tertiary institutions in Anambra State strongly perceive blended learning as effective pedagogy in teaching and learning. They also agreed that poor internet facilities, lack of interest, curriculum design, epileptic power supply, among others, were challenges delaying the effective use of blended learning in classrooms. When implemented in the tertiary institutions, blended learning will contribute to students' motivation and stimulates a feeling of autonomy and responsibility.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Lecturers should attempt to acquire the requisite skill and right attitude towards adoption and utilization of bl ended learning models for effective teaching and learning, especially in the new normal.
2. Management of tertiary institutions should adequately provide the resources and enabling environment to mitigate factors inhibiting effective use of BL models in teaching and learning.

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TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE NEW NORMAL: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF DISTANCE LEARNING AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC

[1]OSAKWE, STEPHEN ONYEANWUNA {JP}
steveosakwe1212@gmail.com

[2]ANITA UFUOMA OGONA
Anita_gabari@yahoo.com
Department of Office Technology and Management,
School of Business Studies,
Delta State Polytechnic,
Otefe-Oghara.

Abstract

To continue with teaching and learning during the novel corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, most tertiary institutions have adopted distance learning. The adoption of distance learning is not without its limitations and challenges which includes limited network coverage and lack of gadgets among the students. Due to the COVID-19, we perceived the need to analyze the opportunities and pitfalls of distance education in Africa. This paper reviews the opportunities and pitfalls of integrating emerging technologies for distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking into consideration the categories and the barriers; the challenges faced by tertiary institutions can be categorized to include technological challenges, pedagogical challenges and social challenges. Also, distance education encourages student-centered learning and self-learning. It offers a lot of opportunities to tertiary institutions which includes scalability, research innovations, flexible learning, diversity, remote students support, adjustment of assessment methods, innovation opportunity, offer non-academic courses, change of pedagogical policies.

Keywords: Distance Learning, COVID-19 pandemic, Teaching, Learning

Introduction

Telecommunication technologies and the Internet have removed distance and space barriers in communication and interaction. These technologies can also be used in education in many forms which include blended learning and distance learning. Tertiary Institutions in Africa have been gradually adopting technology to support teaching and learning through learning management systems such as Moodle and Blackboard and also other emerging technologies such as virtual reality, education data mining and artificial intelligence tools. Students can access and obtain learning resources through the learning platform and lecturers can post-assessment activities on the learning platform. Even with this adoption, officially most African tertiary institutions relied on face-to-face teaching methods which are now facing challenges due to the pandemic. To alleviate the spreads of COVID-19, World Health Organization implemented COVID-19 infection control and preventive measures such as social distancing, quarantine, self-isolation and face masking among others. Also, regulatory authorities implemented restrict regulations, recursive national lockdowns to minimize movements of people in order to reduce

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new infections and deaths. Several digital technologies have been developed and implemented to enhance these regulations and to ensure the safe reopening of schools, colleges and universities as well as industries. However, due to new COVID-19 variant detected, many countries announced emergency lockdown, leaving tertiary institutions without choice other than to resort to distance learning (DL). As a result, most students and lecturers in the less developed regions of Africa were forced to use new technologies and educational resources that they were not familiar with as Tertiary Institutions tried to salvage what was left of the academic. Tertiary Institutions lost time as they tried to make the necessary plans to move both the learning activities and assessments methods online. This caused a setback in an effective education. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the setback in effective education during the COVID-19 pandemic has affected close to 9 in 10 students. This setback must be addressed to improve the quality of education. This can be achieved by addressing the challenges that have been identified in Distance Learning and also taking advantage of the opportunities that Distance Learning offers.

The main challenge in Distance Learning is how emerging technologies can be organized in teaching and learning. When technology is properly integrated into teaching and learning, it offers students the opportunity to communicate with their instructors in near real-time. It also provides a more efficient communication method among the students and provides access to various tutorials. The learning that occurs during the use of technology cannot be overlooked. Apart from the actual content of the course being provided through distance education, the students are also exposed to learning skills for using different technologies. This interaction with technology helps the students to prepare for employment in the fourth industrial revolution.

This paper aims to examine and discuss the challenges and pitfalls of Distance Learning. The core focus of this research paper is Distance Learning at African Tertiary Institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research highlights the challenges and opportunities of Distance Learning in Africa.

Research Methods and Materials

This paper is based on the analysis performed through literature review of publications on distance learning and e-learning as well as the authors' own experience of distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The reflection of the authors covers the challenges they encountered and the opportunities they identified. The focus of this research is to highlight the pitfalls and the opportunities for distance education in Africa to offer future guidance to tertiary institutions.

The Concept of E-Learning and Distance Learning

The education sector was forced to change teaching techniques and operation rules overnight. The focus of the education sector shifted from face-to-face teaching method to distance learning. Distance learning can be defined by (Salyers, 2014) as *"improved capabilities in knowledge and/or behaviours as a result of mediated experiences that are constrained by time and/or distance such that the learner does not share the same situation with what is being learned"*.

Initially, distance learning was targeted to full time working students and residents of the geographically remote place who were not able to physically attend tertiary institutions. Distance learning preceded e-learning. E-learning is the result of integrating education and ICTs. Distance learning contributed immensely to the use of ICT for educational purposes. Over the past two decades, distance learning has become pervasive and reliant on ICTs. With the advancement of technology, distance learning had migrated to be a type of electronic learning (e-learning). "*E-learning is an approach to teaching and learning, representing all or part of the educational*

model applied, that is based on the use of electronic media and devices as tools for improving access to training, communication and interaction and that facilitates the adoption of new ways of understanding and developing learning". (Dhawan, 2020) E-learning was defined by (Salyers, 2014)] as "*an integration of pedagogy, content, and technologies within a teaching and learning context*". The definition of e-learning for this research is going to be based on these two definitions.

-learning is a result of the merging of multiple disciplines which includes pedagogy, computer science and communication technology. Technologies used in e-learning include Learning Management Systems (LMS), videoconferencing, web-conferencing, instant messaging and multimedia tools. E-learning can be used for both autonomous learning and individual learning [Mbunge, 2020]. E-learning can be considered as the new way of teaching and learning especially in most parts of Africa. E-learning can be regarded as a natural evolution of distance learning. E-learning is always evolving and taking advantage of new emerging technologies. Lecturers need to understand that e-learning as an educational innovation which must be adapted to meet the changing learning needs of the students. The benefits of e-learning include increased interactivity and collaboration among students which improves the quality of learning. E-learning also provides a flexible and cost-effective form of education [Al-Samarraie, 2018]. Since distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, the mode of course delivery was done entirely through the Internet, the terms e-learning and distance education were used interchangeably throughout this paper.

Challenges and opportunities of Distance Education

Fundamentals areas of human development including education are declining across many countries (UNDP, 2020). Tertiary institutions encountered a variety of challenges in implementing Distance Learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to [Mishra, 2020], e-learning is composed of four main categories: technology, delivery system, communication and educational paradigms. These categories can be used to identify and group the challenges encountered in distance learning.

The barriers to e-learning were classified by [Mohamed, 2020] as personal inhibitors, attitudinal inhibitors and contextual inhibitors. Taking into consideration the categories and the barriers, the challenges faced by tertiary institutions can be categorized to include technological challenges, pedagogical challenges and social challenges. The following sections are going to expand on each of these challenges.

Social challenges

In addition to affecting the education sector, the COVID-19 pandemic also affected societies and economies [(UNDP), 2020]. One of the challenges in distance education in Africa is the digital divide exacerbated by poor economic conditions. The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the digital divide in most African countries. Tertiary institutions had to come up with ways to cater for students who were affected by the digital divide. The exclusion and inequality caused by the digital divide needed to be addressed to ensure that all students have equal access to educational materials.

Socioeconomic factors have to be taken into consideration as well in distance education. COVID-19 also affected humanity in terms of socio-economic [Corlatean, 2020]. Even with the decline of the cost of hardware, telecommunication and software, students from low-income families have challenges getting access to e-learning services. Due to the lockdown, the economies of most African countries suffered and this resulted in the loss of jobs, especially in middle and low-income class. Students from such families were unable to either afford to buy the necessary

digital devices required for distance learning or the students were not able to afford to buy the data they needed to access online resources.

Technological Challenges

Distance education offers learning opportunities which are not restricted by geographical locations. However, in the African context, these opportunities may be hindered by many factors which include:

a. **Lack of telecommunication services**: In some marginalized areas, distance learning resources proved to be inaccessible to students due to factors such as lack of network coverage and in some cases, students lacked devices to access the Internet. This is a problem, especially in marginalized rural areas. According to Corlatean (2020), during the lockdown, students had access to their institutions and learning resources through the Internet. This proved to be impossible for students that stay in marginalized rural areas. Students from less developed regions were most affected by the pandemic.
b. **Internet connectivity problems**: Some students are faced with a lack of Internet access due to digital divide [Mishra, and Gupta, 2020], high cost of internet data bundles [Adedoyin, 2020], weak network signals and poor network coverage [Ogunleye, 2018].
c. **Lack of digital skills**: One of the main challenges faced by institutions in implementing distance education is lack of understanding and skills for using online resources by both students and teachers. Lack of training and attitude towards using technology may also hinder the effectiveness of the virtual learning environment [Mishra andGupta, 2020]. Some lecturers were not prepared to teach online courses because of insufficient training and unfamiliarity with technology such as video recording and editing software. Lecturers require formal training on how to effectively use technology in distance learning. Technology on its own does not improve the learning process of students. Lecturers need to be creative when designing online course materials and they also need to be well informed about the available technology.
d. **Poor distance learning infrastructure**: Tertiary institutions were not prepared to offer electronic resources for teaching and learning to all the enrolled students. The technological issues such as unreliable access to LMS especially during peak hours as more users tried to access the servers where the LMS was hosted than what the servers could handle. This led to a lack of server access due to the maximum number of concurrent connections being exceeded. Lack of required technological equipment for conducting online classes also hindered lecturers.
e. **Unreliable Internet services**: Erratic Internet services affected the availability of online resources. Lectures were also faced with poor Internet services which included low bandwidth and service interruption. This hindered lecturers in delivering lectures through videoconferencing.
f. **Inadequate Power**: Lack of consistent power supply due to load shedding and other factors also affects distance learning. Most parents or students could not afford using the generating sets for a long time due to high cost of fuel (petrol and diesel).
g. **Inadequate support services**: Lack of institutional support in the use of learning techniques can also affect the use of e-learning resources by students. For distance learning to be successful, there is a need to ensure that all students and lecturers have access to the technologies that are required in online teaching and learning. Unequal access to technology is having a significant impact on distance learning. The ability to have access to technology is determined by the availability of telecommunication services and household means to provide the required gadgets. To address the lack of skills and training among lecturers, institutions need to conduct intensive training on

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creating online materials and effective use of different technologies in delivering online classes, (Akhilele, 2021).

Pedagogical challenges

One of the challenges encountered in distance education is the lack of necessary knowledge and skills on how to conduct online classes. In order to create an effective environment, lecturers need to be extensively trained on how to adapt their teaching methods to suit distance learning and how to utilize technology [Valentine, 2002]. Lack of effective teaching practices and communication patterns affect distance learning students [Markova and Glazkova, 2016]. In order to address this challenge, institutions and lecturers need to be committed and forward-thinking. There is need for lecturers to understand the needs of the student before designing course material. This knowledge will assist the lecturers in creating an effective learning environment. [Markova and Glazkova, 2016] highlighted that the "quality of students' knowledge will depend on the improved instruction and new methods of teaching rather than on replication of traditional methods". Lectures need to be committed to designing course materials that are student-centred which incorporates learning principles in technology-mediated environments. The design and delivery of teaching material should be suitable to achieve the objectives of the course. Tertiary institutions also need to acknowledge that in some instances online assessment methods are not sufficient for measuring the learning outcomes.

Opportunities

Distance education encourages student-centred learning and self-learning. It offers a lot of opportunities to tertiary institutions which includes:

a. **Scalability**: Expanding the programmes and intake is possible with distance learning. The pandemic provided an opportunity for most African tertiary institutions to recognize the possibility of expanding through distance learning.
b. **Flexible Learning**: Distance learning offers flexible learning to students which can meet the different needs of the diverse range of students. It enables the students to choose when and how they want to learn. Through access to the learning platform, the students have communication with their lecturers. This enables the students to handle their schoolwork and social life. The flexibility in distance learning includes teaching modes, assessment types and learning times. The flexibility offered the students the opportunity to learn and work. The flexibility of the courses in terms of time was still restricted with the tertiary institution's calendar.
c. **Diversity**: Tertiary institutions can cater for students with diverse profiles. Distance education offers the tertiary institutions the opportunity to reach and cater for the large number of students in various locations.
d. **Student support**: Online environment provides new support opportunities for students and enables tertiary institutions to catch up with the changing time of the digital era to meet the demand of the students. Online learning provides new forms of interaction and learner support. It also provides new methods of assessment for lecturers.
e. **Assessment methods**: Learning Management Systems (LMSs) provides various assessments methods which can be used by lecturers to instigate a grasp of the knowledge being communicated to the students. Frequent and different kinds of assessments also encourage the students to allocate more time for in-depth studying. Also, online assessments platforms should be secured and authenticate students before writing an assessment. [Elliot and Talent, 2018].
f. **Innovation Opportunity**: Distance learning in Africa provides the opportunity to create innovative teaching and learning solutions that are suitable for the African context. Such

solutions should focus on maximizing learning using available technologies. Provision of low data consumptions and transmission mobile applications will help students with financial challenges.

g. **Non-academic courses**: Distance learning provides tertiary institutions with the opportunity to offer non-academic courses which can benefit both academic students and non-academic students. This can help students to develop additional skills (Akhilele 2021)..

Conclusion

Nowadays the use of mobile devices and computers is an integral part of our lives. Over the past couple of years, the use of the Internet in communicating has been viewed as a form of efficient means of interaction among people. The Internet provides a similar interactive environment through e-learning and distance learning. In order to salvage what was remaining of the year, tertiary institutions adopted distance learning so that students would not lose the whole academic year. The research shows that distance learning is promising if implemented cautiously. The online learning provides more effective methods of communication for both the lecturers and students. However, it should be noted that the effectiveness of the communication methods also depends on the feedback that the students and the lecturers provide.

The effectiveness of distance learning depends on how the courses are designed and how students supported. All the online activities have to be designed in such a way that they support the student in grasping the course content. It is essential to have clearly defined effective interaction between lecturers and students in order for distance learning to be effective. Most students are acquainted with technology; especially technology used in social media. Students with access to technology are technologically sophisticated and appreciate integrating technology into their learning activities. Effective virtual learning environments can be created by adapting traditional teaching methods to suit distance education. As distance education is student-centered, it is important to clearly define how best to integrate e-learning technologies into the curricula taking into consideration the challenges encountered by students.

During the COVID-19, African tertiary institutions were left with no other choice than to adopt distance learning in order to continue with academic activities during the lockdown. E-learning focuses on the actual learning that the students are exposed to using the technology. This means both students and lecturers have to be efficient in using the technology that is being employed in e-learning so that the focus can be on the actual course content.

As society evolves, there is a need for education to evolve as well. According to UNESCO (2003), learning occurs at both individual and social level. [Sangra, 2008] also emphasized the importance of socialization in distance learning. Social context can be used to support the self-regulation learning process [Kocdar, 2018]. Social interactions and collaborations among students are important. Such activities help students to exercise teamwork. E-learning provides more interaction options compared to face-to-face learning [Bouhnik and Marcus, 2005]. Student-centred learning requires student to be self-regulated, without self-regulation, students have difficulty in managing their learning process [Kocdar, 2006].

The way the learning outcomes and the content are presented can have effects on student's learning. Design expertise and delivery skills are crucial in virtual environments [Salyers, 2014]. Both students and lecturers need to understand online education and the patterns of online learning for distance learning to be successful. Treating online education like face-to-face education will frustrate and burden the students.

Having an efficiently working environment will prevent the students and lecturer from being anxious and frustrated [Markova, 2016]. In addition to training lecturers, students also need

training on the effective use of the available technologies. Distance learning enables students to learn at their own pace and this can significantly reduce the time required by the students to learn.

Recommendations

Distance learning can be hindered by a lack of ICT skills among both students and lecturers. The following are therefore recommended.

1. For effective distance learning, tertiary institutions need to invest in resources that support e-learning activities.
2. In order to create effective instruction material; all stakeholders such as instructional designers, subject experts, educational technology specialists, should be involved.
3. Financial and technical support from governments in developing distance learning infrastructure and provision of electronic resources would aid in the implementation and maintenance of distance learning [Mbunge, 2018]. The pandemic provided tertiary institutions with an opportunity to explore the possibility of e-learning and blended learning. This opportunity can also alter the perceptions of both students and lecturers towards e-learning and possibly reduce resistance, which can lead to social unrests in higher institutions Kajiva, 2017].
4. The need to investigate the effects of distance learning among students during the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. E-learning environments should address the needs of diverse learners, apply suitable pedagogical strategies, and incorporate instructional design principles suitable for e-learning.
6. Institutional standards for course material design should be used in order to standardize the virtual environment for all courses. This will make it easier for students to quickly become familiar and comfortable with the technologies being used.
7. The technical abilities and experiences of students should be considered when designing the course materials and the assessments.
8. Interactions should be promoted through integrating discussions in the learning platforms. It is essential to ensure that the technologies being used in distance learning promote interaction among students and lecturers. It is important to keep open-communication line between students and lecturers. As distance learning is student-centered, communication and interaction should also be student centered in order to encourage participation of the students. The use of group-based assessments can be adapted and used to encourage communication and interaction among students.
9. The need to support flexible and interactive learning opportunities that meet the needs of the students and also the need to support different kind of technologies
10. Tertiary institutions should also implement policies for online learning and assessment. One of the issues that need to be addressed in the policies is how to measure and ensure the quality and effectiveness of distance learning.

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UTILISATION OF DIGITAL SKILLS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN THE SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

[1]EMEASOBA NNEKA CHARITY (PhD)
Department of Educational Management
(Business Education Programme)
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike
Abia State – Nigeria
nnekaemeasoba@yahoo.com
08033429094

[2]AKUDOLU, CHIKERENMA ADANMA
Department of Technology and Vocational Education
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Anambra State
chikerebeauty1@gmail.com
08035213597

[3]AGBO, ROSELINE CHINYERE
Abia State University, Uturu
08068091778

Abstract

The study assessed the extent digital skills are utilized by business education lecturers for effective teaching and learning in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. It adopts the descriptive survey design. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Population consisted of 170 Business Educators in public universities in South- South, Nigeria. No sample was used because the population is not large. The instrument was validated by experts in business education and measurement and evaluation from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. Cronbach alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument with coefficient of 0.72. A four- point response type of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very Low extent with 23 items were used. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. Findings of the study revealed that there is high extent use of mobile phone and internet and low extent use of smart board in teaching and learning of Business Education. The findings further showed no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on extent mobile phones, internet and smart boards are utilized in teaching and learning of Business Education in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. It was concluded that Digital skills have positive usefulness in teaching and learning of Business Education. However, level of digital skills adoption for teaching in some universities are low, not all school adopts the use of smart boards and mobile phones in teaching and learning. It was recommended among others that Business Education lecturers should adopt new methods of instruction delivery and presentations in our tertiary institutions to embrace the advancement in technology.

Keywords: *Digital Skills, Teaching, Learning, Business Education, Universities.*

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Introduction

The global technological innovations in the business world have brought about radical change in the educational system and instructional delivery. Technology is now a new tool that sharpens the global economy and equips individuals with long life learning. Every facet of human endeavour be it in the areas of healthcare delivery, business practices, social interaction, politics, information system, knowledge dissemination, education and others is now revolutionalized with digital technology. The traditional pedagogical practices of training in educational institutions are gradually paving way for new technological system of teaching. In line with the above view, Makinde, Makinde, and Shorunke (2013) argued that the role of technology in teaching and learning is rapidly becoming one of the most important and widely discussed issues in contemporary education policy. According to authors, most experts in the field of education agreed that, when properly used, ICT holds great promise to improve education through teaching and learning in addition to shaping workforce opportunities. In the same vein, Sarah (2017), reiterated that digital world has penetrated the education and skills domain, where technology is employed to deliver education, knowledge and skills in new and innovative ways. This has led to changes to the mode and pattern of work, which are themselves affected by policies and economic uncertainty.

Digital skills entail knowledge of the use of digital technologies for communication, collaboration and professional development, to enhance learners' active engagement. Digital technologies in teaching and learning include sourcing, creating and sharing digital resources, enhancing assessment by enabling learners to use digital technologies creatively and responsibly for information, communication, content creation, well-being and problem solving. It is the ability of individuals and groups to grasp and utilize digital technology for meaningful activities in real-life situations.Kirikoi (2015) defined digital skills as the technologies that help us record, store, process, retrieve, transfer, and disseminate recorded information. Such device could be computer system, communication device, telecommunication, telephone, satellites, telex, facsimile, internet, email, fax, video text and document delivery, electronic copiers, radio, television, among others. Harper (2016) added that these systems link schools, homes, business, students, hospitals and facilitate teaching and studying.

According to Abubakar, (2016), the role of digital skill cannot be overemphasized. Digital skills enable learners and educators to have access to a multitude of additional online educational content as well as being able to create, provide knowledge of a range of digital tools and services (apps, games, websites, etc.) which allow educators to offer a number of approaches to learning and learners can choose the approach that best suits them. Digital skills not only enable educators to offer learners the opportunity to collaborate online with others from across the world in addition to their peers within their school or early years setting. They also assist educators to deliver learning in a digital context using digital tools and services. This better aligns with learners' experience of today's digital world (Barun, 2014). Moreso, they enable educators to provide learners with access to a range of digital resources which allow 'anytime/anywhere learning' and build a level of digital skills which will be vital in today's digital world, reduce workload by using appropriate digital assessments that provide instant results and personalized feedback. With digital skills, online digital networks educators can share resources and digital tools and services expedite lesson planning.

Digital skills through learning tools and technology enable students to develop effective self-directed learning skills. In the opinion of Odu (2017), they are able to identify what they need to learn, find and use online resources, apply the information on the problem at hand, and even evaluate resultant feedback. This increases their efficiency and productivity. In addition to engaging students, digital learning tools and technology sharpen critical thinking skills, which are the basis for the development of analytic reasoning. Digital skills through digital learning tools

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create bond among educators and students. They do not only allow students to access more and more information but also ensure that the information in question is customizable and suited to their personal needs. The opportunity to help every student learn at the best pace and path for them is the most important benefit of digital learning (Harper, 2016). By embracing digital devices and connected learning, classrooms around the country and around the globe can not only coordinate with one another to share insights but also boost learning, experience, and communications skills (Ademola, Brume-Ezewu, Nwobu and Nweke, 2018). The use of digital learning tools and technology has enabled business educators to rapidly share information with other educators in real-time.

Business education, being dynamic and a programme for sustainable development should adapt to changes in technology and in the business world. Business Education is a course designed to equip individuals with the necessary skills and theoretical knowledge needed to perform in business world either for job occupations or self-employment. Business Education is one of the vocational programmes studied in universities in Nigeria. Emeasoba and Muo (2018) view Business Education as a tripartite program of instruction which prepares the recipient or the learner with skills, competencies, knowledge, attitudes and values to be a Business Education teacher, an office worker or to be an entrepreneur. University lecturers are the backbone of educational institutions, contributing significantly to the achievement of institutional objectives. With the advent of ICT, university lecturers now have a range of teaching alternatives. They must be ready to pass on vital skills, values, and information to students.

In this era of digitalization, lecturers must brace up to be digitally competent in order to meet up with the global standard (Ubong, 2019). To accomplish this, a shift from traditional teaching, learning, and research methods to a more digital approach is necessary, which involves the use of technology and digital skills in teaching and learning. The importance of highlighting the use and significance of digital skills in every learning and teaching context cannot be overstated. In order for learning to take place, the instructor must use specific digital skills that will allow him to properly educate his students.

Similarly, Ukwungwu and Oyedepo (2012) posit that students through the use of computers, internet, smart boards among others can acquire communication, creative, coordinating, calculating, commercial, concentration and cognitive skills. These skills once developed by students would lead to the improvement of their status in life, development of the nation's economy, creation of self-employment, and proper utilization of human and material resources. They also added that Internet enhances educational processes whereby teachers can handle large classes conveniently using computer–aided gadgets; aids skill acquisition and enhances problem-solving skills; makes the evaluation of students' works a lot easier; creates room for individualized instruction for different learning styles, and collaborations with peers and colleagues globally. It introduces easier ways of searching for research/ study materials at anytime and anywhere. Barun (2014) also reported that having the internet in classrooms can also help teachers avoid communication mishaps. When messages and information are shared digitally, misplaced notes and lost assignment sheets become a thing of the past. The internet can also improve class community by facilitating communication outside of the classroom. Class websites or blogs can give students the ability to download assignments and materials, talk with other students, and share their work globally.

Mobile phones on the other hand are efficient communication devices and make life easier. Udoh (2015) reiterated the role of mobile phones in education as follows: improving access to education; promoting new learning and alternative counselling processes, sustaining continuous learning and counselling. It increases access for those who are mobile or cannot physically attend learning institutions. Mobile learning makes education more accessible in that it enables learners to pursue their studies according to their own capacities in terms of chance

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(time), cost, mobility. Mobile Learning can also increase access in those situations where cost represents a significant barrier to learning. For those in rural or remote areas where environmental and infrastructure challenges hinder other learning modalities, it presents great opportunities. The ubiquity of mobile phones means that educational services can be delivered with learners' existing resources and know-how. Furthermore, Darko-Adjei (2019) said that the reliance of mobile phones is quite evident and the usage of mobile phones among youths and students is rapidly growing. The physical boundaries on the classroom and time for learning no longer prevail because the content is ambitious (can be accessed from anywhere), students can communicate with teachers, other students and anyone else to satisfy their needs for knowledge using the new generation of mobile devices-digital media players (including iPad and iPad touches), mobile phones (including iPhone, android phones, and windows phones), personal digital assistants (PDAs), and table computers (including iPads).

According to Ukwueze and Onyia (2014), a smart board is an interactive projection display that allows teachers to include a variety of learning resources, such as web pages, images, and videos, into a teaching lesson. The smart board has an electronic pencil and eraser for writing on the screen, making it ideal for classroom use, PowerPoint presentations, and games. In the same vein, Chan, Churchill and Chiu, (2017) stated that smart boards make differentiated learning much easier because teachers are able to accommodate different learning styles. Visual learners are able to observe the whiteboard, while tactile learners can learn by touching the board. The touch screen option allows teachers to run programs with the tap of their finger. This makes it not only easy to navigate for the teacher but for the students as well. In addition to that, a student's learning experience is enhanced by technology because of its ability for students to view diagrams, charts, videos, and more right on the huge screen in front of them. Their learning comes to life, and many students find it more fun to learn than ever before.

Effective teaching and learning can take place in our universities when a student is properly guided by the lecturer by way of employing various methods and means through which his teaching could be meaningful. Business Education is a discipline taught in Nigerian Universities to empower students with skills, competencies, knowledge, values among others to compete favourably with global world of work upon graduation. Therefore, there is need for business education lecturers comprising of both male and female business educators to employ the use of digital skills in teaching and learning activities. However, one of the reasons why students in our universities sometimes find it difficult to comprehend immediately what is being taught by the lecturers is because of the complexity of the subject taught, and the inability of the instructor to employ suitable skills that can easily convey the message of the lesson to the learners. The study therefore, deems it necessary to determine the extent digital skills are utilized for effective teaching and learning of Business Education in Universities in South-South Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Digital skills enhance educational processes by allowing teachers to manage large classes easily with the help of computer–assisted devices; aid skill acquisition and problem-solving skills; greatly simplifies grading students' work; and allow for individualized instruction for different learning styles, as well as global collaborations with peers and colleagues. One of the major concerns of educators in this digital age has been how to make teaching and learning more effective and efficient and with the rapid advancement of technology and its inclusion into education.

Employing digital skills in teaching and learning has been a driver of change in the educational sector, changing the sector in developed nations from basic classroom teaching to virtual learning. However, in poor countries such as Nigeria, the use of digital skills in the teaching and learning process is still in its early stages, with education lecturers having little or no

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digital literacy skills (Abubakar, 2016). This is because Nigeria's university education system is mostly focused on traditional pedagogical learning, which places a larger premium on the physical learning environment.

According to a report by the Data Centre of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2018) Institute for Statistics, of all the 189 countries, Nigeria is among four nations with the highest number of overcrowded classrooms and the less with adequate ICT teaching/learning equipment in its tertiary institution. Furthermore, the COVID-19 outbreak has emphasized the need of appropriately adopting digital learning. Additionally, the declining educational condition, as well as the growing number of technologically inexperienced students graduating each year, have proven the detrimental impact of not completely integrating digital skills in teaching and learning on the university's overall educational progress. In light of this, the purpose of the study is to ascertain the extent of use of digital skills in teaching and learning of Business Education at universities, in South-South, Nigeria.

Research questions.

The following research questions were formulated;

1. To what extent is mobile phone utilized for teaching and learning of Business Education in Public Universities South-South, Nigeria?
2. To what extent is smart board utilized for teaching and learning of Business Education in Public Universities South -South, Nigeria?
3. To what extent is internet utilized for teaching and learning of Business Education in Public Universities South -South, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and will be tested at (0.05) level of significance.

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent mobile phone is utilized in the teaching and learning of Business Education courses in public universities in the South- South, Nigeria.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent smart board is utilized in the teaching and learning of Business Education courses in public universities in the South -South, Nigeria.

Ho_3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent internet is utilized in the teaching and learning of Business Education courses in public universities in the South-South, Nigeria.

Method

The descriptive survey research design was used in this study. The population of the study was all 170 (52 male and 118 female) business education lecturers in all public universities in South-South, Nigeria. No sample was used because the population is not large. A four- point rating scale questionnaire titled: Utilization of Digital skills Questionnaire (UDSQ) containing 23 items in three sections with Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE) Low Extent (LE) Very Low Extent (D) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in business education and measurement and evaluation from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. A reliability coefficient value of 0.72 was obtained using cronbach alpha correlation coefficient. Data were collected by researchers with the help of five research assistants. Mean was used to answer the research questions and standard deviation to determine the homogeneity of the respondents' ratings. The decision was based on the cluster mean score in relation to the boundary mean score of 2.50. A cluster with mean score equal to or above 2.50

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was high extent while the one with mean score less than 2.50 was low extent. t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was not rejected where the calculated value is less than the significant level of 0.05 and rejected if the calculated value is equal to or greater than the significant level of 0.05.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent is mobile phone utilized for teaching and learning of Business Education in Public Universities in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings on the extent of utilization of mobile phone for teaching and learning of Business Education.

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Business educators use mobile phones to schedule lecture activities with reminder and demonstrate subject matter.	2.28	1.51	LE
2	Business Educators use mobile phones to make teaching of Business Education to be more meaningful, motivating and interesting.	2.36	1.54	LE
3	Business Educators store and share lecture materials using mobile phones.	2.56	1.60	HE
4	Mobile phones are used to facilitate presentation of visual information to the students in Business Education	2.75	1.66	HE
5.	Business educators use mobile phones in online discussion with students.	2.46	1.57	LE
6	Mobile Phone is used to link to the internet and find information from reputable sources that can be used in teaching Business Education	3.34	1.83	HE
7.	Business Educators used mobile phones to post assignments and due dates, which helps students stay connected.	3.34	1.83	HE
	Cluster Mean	2.72	1.65	HE

Table 1 shows that items 3, 4, 6 and 7 out of 7 mobile phone skills have mean scores above the cut off mean of 2.50. This means that the respondents admitted that the use of mobile phones in teaching of business education in order to motivate student's interest in learning, present visual information and link to the internet is at a great extent. While the mean score of item 1, 2, and 5 respectively were less than 2.5. This implies that respondents admitted that the use of mobile phone to stimulate students, develop subject matter and to make learning more meaningful is at a low extent for teaching business education in public universities South-South, Nigeria. However, the cluster mean score of 2.72 shows that the respondents agreed that Business Education lecturers utilize mobile phones in teaching and learning to a high extent. The

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standard deviation scores for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents are homogeneous in their ratings.

Research Question 2: To what extent is smart board utilized for teaching and learning of Business Education in Public Universities in South -South, Nigeria?

Table 2: Respondents' mean ratings on the extent of utilization of smart board for teaching and learning of Business Education.

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Remarks
8	Business Educator use smart board to motivate students interest in learning of business Education	2.58	1.61	HE
9	The smart boards are used to store notes and images in computer or memory storage device	2.31	1.52	LE
10	Presentation of topics using smart board creates an interactive and engaging class	2.28	1.51	LE
11	The use of smart board in teaching business education aids students to have a good understanding.	2.31	1.52	LE
12	Use of Smart board animation, images, and visual illustrate concepts clearer and better.	2.49	1.58	LE
13	The use of smart board creates productive learning among students.	2.72	1.65	HE
14	Business Educator use smart board in their teaching techniques.	2.12	1.46	LE
15	Business Educator use smart board to access knowledgeable databases that can help them reinforce their lessons	2.43	1.56	LE
16	Every Business Educator/student with his computer can interact with the smart board.	2.12	1.46	LE
	Cluster Mean	**2.42**	**1.56**	**LE**

Table 2 shows that the mean scores of item 8 and 13 were respectively greater than 2.5. This translates that the respondents admitted that the use of smart board in teaching of Business Education in order to stimulate student's interest and create productive learning is of high extent. While the mean scores of item 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16 were respectively less than 2.5. This implies that respondents admitted that the use of smart board to create an interactive and engaging class, aid students to have a good understanding, illustrate concepts clearer and better and access knowledgeable databases is at a low extent for teaching Business Education. However, the cluster mean score of 2.42 shows that the respondents agreed that Business

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Education lecturers utilize smart board in teaching and learning to a low extent. The standard deviation scores for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents are homogeneous in their ratings.

Research Question 3: To what extent is internet utilized for teaching and learning of Business Education in Public Universities in South -South, Nigeria?

Table 3: Respondents' mean ratings on the extent of utilization of internet for teaching and learning of Business Education.

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Remarks
17	Business educators use internet to demonstrate various historical events in Business Education	2.79	1.67	HE
18	The use of internet aid Business Educators manage time more efficiently.	2.63	1.62	HE
19	Business Educator use internet to give students opportunities to learn by doing.	2.92	1.71	HE
20	The Business Educators use the internet to overcome the learning barriers	2.82	1.68	HE
21	The use of internet improves students level of understanding and learning behavior	3.13	1.77	HE
22	Business Educators use internet to motivate students to think critically about the subject taught	2.82	1.68	HE
23	Business Educator uses the internet to make animation, PowerPoint slides, and images to capture the students' attention.	3.11	1.76	HE
	Cluster Mean	**2.89**	**1.70**	**HE**

Table 3 shows that the mean scores of all the items are greater than 2.5 mean score. This applied that the respondents admitted that the use of internet in teaching of Business Education in order to demonstrate various historical events in Business Education, manage time more efficiently, give students opportunities to learn by doing, overcome the learning barriers, improve students level of understanding, motivate students to think critically and make animation, PowerPoint slides, and images are at a great extent. However, the cluster mean score of 2.89 shows that the respondents agreed that Business Education lecturers utilize internet in teaching and learning to a high extent. The standard deviation scores for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents are homogeneous in their ratings.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent mobile phone is utilized in the teaching and learning of Business Education courses in public universities in the South -South, Nigeria.

Table 4: t-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent mobile phone is utilized.

Groups	Number	Mean	S.D	D.F	T.Cal	T.tab	Level of Sig.	Decision
Male	52	2.62	0.71	168	1.41	1.96	0.05	Not significant
Female	118	2.73	0.82					

The t-test analysis presented in Table 4 revealed that the t-calculated (t-cal) value of 1.41 is less than the t-table (t-tab) value of 1.96 at P≤ 0.05 levels of significance and at 168 degree of freedom (df). This showed that, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent mobile phone is utilized in the teaching and learning of Business Education in public universities in the South-South, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent smart board is utilized in the teaching and learning of Business Education courses in public universities in the South -South, Nigeria.

Table 5: t-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent smart board is utilized.

Groups	Number	Mean	S.D	D.F	T.Cal	T.tab	Level of Sig.	Decision
Male	52	2.49	0.86	168	1.10	1.96	0.05	Not Significant
Female	118	2.42	0.87					

The t-test analysis presented in Table 5 revealed that the t-calculated (t-cal) value of 1.10 is less than the t-table (t-tab) value of 1.96 at P≤ 0.05 levels of significance and at 168 degree of freedom (df). This showed that, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent smart board is utilized in the teaching and learning of Business Education in public universities in the South-South, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted.

Ho_3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent internet is utilized in the teaching and learning of Business Education courses in public universities in the South-South, Nigeria.

Table 6: t-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent internet.

Groups	Number	Mean	S.D	D.F	T.Cal	T.tab	Level of Sig.	Decision
Male	52	3.03	0.73	168	0.22	1.96	0.05	Not Significant
Female	118	2.96	0.62					

The t-test analysis presented in Table 6 revealed that the t-calculated (t-cal) value of 0.22 is less than the t-table (t-tab) value of 1.96 at P≤ 0.05 levels of significance and at 168 degree of freedom (df). This showed that, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent internet is utilized in the teaching and learning of Business Education in public universities in the South-South, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted.

Findings

The findings of research question one showed that the respondents admitted that the use of mobile phones in teaching of business education in public universities in South-South, Nigeria is to a high extent. However, the hypothesis one test results indicate that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent mobile phone is utilized in the teaching and learning of Business Education courses in public universities in the South-South, Nigeria. The finding of this study is in agreement to the study of Msunju (2012) who found that the high use of mobile phones for teaching and learning was because it enables you to carry your files around wherever you go, ensuring that you are always with important documents. Darko-Adjei (2019) also in his findings noted the positive usefulness of the use of smart phone in the students learning activities such as easy sharing and accessing of lecture materials online, easy communication among others. However, this finding disagrees with that of Amhag, (2016), Amhag, (2017), Anshari and Alas (2015), who found that use of mobile phone in teaching and learning is not conducive to recall and retention of material.

The findings of research question two showed that the use of smart board in teaching of Business Education in public universities in South-South, Nigeria is to a low extent. There is also no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent smart board is utilized in the teaching and learning of Business Education courses in public universities in the South-South, Nigeria. These finding further reveals the level of technological adoption for teaching in our universities as not all school adopts the use of smart board in their teaching and learning aligning with the work of Ukwueze and Onyia (2014) who found that there is low use of smart board in our universities.

The findings of research question three showed that the use of internet in teaching of Business Education in public universities in South-South, Nigeria is to a high extent. Also, that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent internet is utilized in the teaching and learning of Business Education courses in public universities in the South-South, Nigeria. This finding confirms the important role the internet plays in teaching and learning as it facilitates easy and quick access to needed information. This findings conforms with the work of Apuke and Iyendo (2018) who found that because the use of internet enables both teachers and students to perform research ahead of time, tackle multiple home-works, widen the scope of reading and learning its use in teaching and learning is at high extent.

Conclusion

From the findings, level of digital skills adoption for teaching in some universities is very low since some universities do not adopt the use of smart boards and mobile phones in their teaching and learning process. It was concluded that effectiveness of digital skills in teaching and learning business education in public universities was positive. In the education system, digitalization helps business education lecturers to develop their digital skills, as well as to develop the skills necessary for students to function in the digital world. Digital skills promote the future of Business Education in Nigerian universities and favourable competition of its recipients in the global world.

Recommendations

In view of the afore-mentioned result of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Business Education lecturers should use mobile phones in instructional delivery to make teaching more meaningful, motivating and interesting to students.
2. Government and school administrators should train business educators on the use of smart board in teaching to create productive learning among students and supervise their conformity in usage.
3. Government and school administrators should provide internet facilities in public universities to enable Business Education lecturers and students use them to their full potential and advance in knowledge.

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LECTURERS' PERCEIVED STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING BUSINESS EDUCATION CONTENT FOR THE ACQUISITION OF SKILLS COMPETENCIES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN CROSS RIVER STATE

[1]UKAH, TIMOTHY ANDAH
Department of Vocational Education
University of Calabar, Calabar
Email:*Ukahtimothy@gmail.com* **Tel: 08036552418**

&

[2]DR. CLETUS AKPO ATAH
Department of Vocational Education
University of Calabar, Calabar
Email:Cleatah4real@yahoo.com **+23408138847990**

Abstract

The study examined Lecturers Perceived Strategies for Teaching Business Education Content for the acquisition of Skills Competencies in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population consisted of ninety two (92) Business Educators from four tertiary institutions such as University of Calabar, University of Cross River State, College of Education Akamkpa and Federal College of Education Obudu respectively. A 30-item questionnaire titled "Lecturers Perceived Strategies for Teaching Business Education Content for Skills Competencies" (LPSTBECSC) was used for data collection. The instrument was face validated by three experts in University of Calabar. The Cronbach Alpha reliability test was used to determine the internal consistence of the instrument which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.86. Mean rating and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected for the study. The mean rating of 2.50 was used for decision regarding the research questions. This was calculated based on the 4 point using interval scale. Items with mean values of 2.50 and above were considered as agreed while items with means value below 2.50 were considered as disagreed respectively. The result of the findings shows that, management collaboration strategy and management resource exhibition strategy enhance students' acquisition of skills competencies among business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Based on the findings, conclusions were draw while the recommendations were made among others that, the institutional collaboration strategy should be integrated among Nigeria tertiary institutions for maximum productivity and Business education management resource exhibition should be made as a course to be taught in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

Keywords: *Lecturers, Strategies, Content, and Skills Competencies*

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Introduction

Teaching is a process of imparting skills and knowledge to learners in the classroom environment or any given opportunity where learning takes place. However, effective teaching and learning depend on the ability of the teacher to motivate learners (students) to pick an interest in learning through different strategic instructional strategies. Strategies are laid down as the framework of plans and actions of an organization geared towards achieving its set objectives in the short and long run. Nwazor and Onokpaunu (2016) maintained that in the context of education, strategies entail how institutions of learning equip students with the desirable competitive advantage beyond mere classroom performances to deal with the problems of lack of skills and competencies among tertiary institutions students. The quality of the teachers and the utilization of the right strategies by the teachers play an important role in the acquisition of skills and competencies among business education students. The teaching of business education content requires the use of instructional strategies that could encourage students by doing thereby leading to the development of skills competencies**.** The researchers are in the opinion thatmanagement Collaboration strategy and management resource exhibition strategy could enhance the acquisition of skills competencies among business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

Otum and Atah (2021) asserted that competencies are qualities that are exclusive to a position or field within the organization. In a work place context, competency is the combination of cognitive skills (technical knowledge, expertise and abilities) and personal or behavioral characteristics (principles, attitudes, values and motives which are function of an individual's personality). *Competencies are identified knowledge, skills, abilities, and mindsets, evaluated through demonstrated behaviors, which directly and positively contribute to the success of the organization and to the success of employees in their job role, position, and function.* In the work place, competency is what the workers give in exchange for numeration. If the competency (or the cluster of skills popularly referred to as aptitudes) given is satisfactory, the worker gets satisfaction and the employer gets satisfaction in correspondence. This process, if sustained culminates in promotion, retaining and prolonged tenure that leads to productivity (Adeyemi, 2010). On retirement from active working life, man's repertoire of skills will no longer be relevant to help him to adjust to life. He needs new skills on how to enjoy his leisure and adjust in his new way of life. This situation is the same for a handicapped person, a widow or indeed any person whose way of life has changed radically. Hence man's rehabilitation in these contexts requires new skills with special consideration to his aptitudes and work functions. In this case of youth, whole adjustment in the world of work will rest solely on competencies developed and used first at school and later at work; the economic, moral and political time of the nation will in time to come and depend on it and these will from time to time determine its survival (Adeyemi, 2010).

Competencies can be used to help develop, qualify, distinguish, and recognize individual performance and abilities in specific areas. An up to-date set of competencies can be used by individuals for self-improvement and by human resource for skill development including needs to be addressed by training, professional development or changes in policies and procedures. An organization can use competencies to inform and guide hiring practices, for example, as input for job specifications in a position description or job posting. Organizations use competencies to distinguish between job applicants, especially those with apparently similar academic backgrounds. Using competencies as performance indicators can help managers in organizations provide substantive, clear performance feedback and recognition, possibly identifying those individuals who are ready for advancement or who have demonstrated exemplary performance as compared to competency based performance standards. Competencies are often a structural base for many human resource processes (hiring, recruitment, employee training and development).

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Business Education is a discipline that emphasize on work skills acquisition by recipients. This is enable business Education to prepare the beneficiaries to be able to face the challenges of Employee skills expectations and entrepreneurial skills requirement for self-establishment in Business Education (Okon, 2012). It is gradually becoming common practice by skills oriented discipline or professional discipline like medicine, law, Accountancy and the likes to organize instructional resources exhibition. Instructional resources exhibition therefore, involves planned process or a planned public display of instructional resources available for use in various tertiary institutions who are registered with the organizers of such exhibition (Okon, 2012). The essence of the exhibition is to create and impressive forum where students and lecturers can have access to the use of all kinds of equipment in their professional discipline. It equally enable the teacher and learners to share ideas and knowledge on the use and importance of sophisticated equipment in the field of study. Resources exhibition in Business Education is therefore, being encourage such that Business Educators and students would have the ample opportunity to come in contact with new and more sophisticated equipment that can support the acquisition of work skills in the field of Business Education. Okon (2012) noted that the exercise is best organized when industrialist or experts the field practicing coop-ted to participate in the exhibition. This could give or create pollination of ideas in the use of Business Education resources for skills acquisition.

Collaboration in Business Education implies cooperation with the industries. Nwosu (2008) noted that the major consumers of business education graduate job sectors are the industries. To ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the production process, and to ensure that of Business Education graduates are produced to be well equipped skillfully to the taste of the consumers (industries), the industries therefore, need to be coopted and be involved in the process. It is on the premise of the above that industrial collaboration in Business Education is viewed as a necessity if the graduates of Business Education are going to stand the taste of time and competition in employment opportunities. Collaboration in Business Education will assist to create goodwindows of opportunities for experts in the field practicing to exchange ideas that would help to improve the exchange ideas that would help to improve the teaching and learning process in Business Education. Industrial collaboration will as well help to create a new ground of interaction, context and breaking ground information in Business Education especially to the benefit of the teachers and students (Ukah and Atah 2021).

To ensure that the short and long term expectations, benefits and risks are understood and appropriate agreements have been put in place with regards to distribution of risks, as well as benefits arising from collaboration (Akeke, Aluko, and Atah, 2019). Collaboration literally means working together.The term is often used when individuals or organizations work together towards some common aims and objectives (Otum and Atah, 2021). Collaboration also means Joining of power between two or more companies, institutions or individual from the same country or different countries in order to implement a particular operation (Parker 1994). It is a distinct mode of organizing with a positive, purposive relationship between organisations that retain autonomy, integrity and distinct identity, and at the same time, the possibility to withdraw from the relationship (Cropper 1996). Collaboration is a process in which organisations exchange information, alter activities, share resources and enhance each other's capacity for mutual benefit and a common purpose by sharing risks, responsibilities and rewards (Hill and Brian 2006). Collaboration is equally a positive form of working in association with others for some form of mutual benefit (Huxham1996). Collaboration is a links between companies to create and support a service or product for its service life, including final disposal (Jordan and Michel 2000). Collaboration is also a number of autonomous organisations working together, pooling and sharing resources, information, systems and risk for mutual benefits. In other word, before

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institution or organizations collaborate there must be a target benefits and a purpose of collaborating. Just like others organsiations collaborated to achieve a desire goals, business education needed to be collaborated because when collaborating, organizations share resources in common and equally exchange information that complement each other's weaknesses.

In Otum and Atah (2021), Atah and Ukah (2021) opined that collaboration had it foundation in the bible. The Holy Bible teaches us that God the father the creator of heaven and the earth partnered with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit to get things done to fulfill the purpose of creations. The reason why we are having a successful and a perfect creation is because God partnering with the trinity to get things done. If God could be involved in partnering with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit then, there is a need for individuals, organization and the institutions to understand the gravity and benefits of partnering or collaborate with one another for effective teaching and learning process.

Chukwurah and Atah (2019) agreed that the collaboration in business education will bring job creation, recognition and opportunities among business educators' to interact and learn from others institutions what one could not have at a moment. When universities, industry and organisations collaborate, this would give them the opportunities to make available use of facilities and equipment of others universities have to contribute to the teaching and learning process in Nigeria institutions. This facilities refer to immovable property, physical structures, assets and facilities belonging to or allocated to an educational institution, used primarily for educational purposes and activities, these include classrooms, laboratories and equipment, libraries, hostel furniture, staff quarters, playground (Atah, 2019). Chukwurah and Atah (2018) affirmed that if business educators and others universities/organizations if collaborated it will bring relationship among the universities and organization for maximum productivity. Bessong, Atah and Ugbadu (2019) agreed that collaborating Business Education will help the organization to share facilities such as intranet which is a computer network, using shared world internet web language to transmit data among the collaborators for effective teaching and learning process of business education curriculum content. Agim, Ochui, & Atah (2020) opined that, technology keeps on advancing and it is becoming very essential in our lives, everyday people use technology to improve on the way they accomplish specific tasks and business education will not be exceptional. If business educators in various institutions collaborate with each another it will go a long way improving the teaching and learning for the acquisition of skills competencies business education graduates. For example, we use technology in education to improve on the way we learn, we use technology in business to gain competitive advantage (Agim, Ochui, & Atah, 2020). collaboration with others institutions is highly needed especially in this season of global pandemic to give room to universities collaborated to manipulate software programme like MS Excel, MS term, Zoom and Peer tutoring in training students of universities to acquire skills competencies (Atah, Ukah and Crossdale 2019) emphasis.

The collaboration can be done locally and international, business education Joining of power between two or more private sectors from the same or different countries in order to implement a particular operation in class room setting (Parker 1994). Edet and Atah (2019) opined that, when institutions are collaborated there will be Job creation mentality among graduates of the universities by engaging they brain in a deep-seated thought with positive ideas nurtured that could create jobs. Collaboration and resources exhibition play a vital role among the collaborators. It could bring security in institutional progamme by sharing scar resources among the collaborated universities to fulfil it programme. Security is the dynamic condition which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interest and their primary beneficiaries are the collaborators (Atah, 2019). It is necessary for the universities and others institutions to get involved in synergy and collaboration to ensure in the share of resources to inculcate growth and development among business educators in Nigeria universities. Atah

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and Abeng (2019) also agreed that, Collaboration and resources exhibition will allow the universities to share institutional variables that are centered on students supports provided by the colleges and universities that the students attend. Such institutional variable include classroom climate which referred to as the learning environment, as well as atmosphere, ambience, ecology, and milieu.

Business Education is a discipline that emphasize on work skills acquisition by recipients. This enables business Education to prepare the beneficiaries to be able to face the challenges of Employee skills expectations and entrepreneurial skills requirement for self-establishment in Business Education (Okon, 2012). It is gradually becoming common practice by skills oriented discipline or professional discipline like medicine, law, Accountancy and the likes to organize instructional resources exhibition. Instructional resources exhibition therefore, involves planned process or a planned public display of instructional resources available for use in various tertiary institutions who are registered with the organizers of such exhibition (Okon, 2012). The essence of the exhibition is to create an impressive forum where students and lecturers can have access to the use of all kinds of equipment in their professional discipline. It equally enables the teacher and learners to share ideas and knowledge on the use and importance of sophisticated equipment in the field of study. Resources exhibition in Business Education is therefore, being encourage such that Business Educators and students would have the ample opportunity to come in contact with new and more sophisticated equipment that can support the acquisition of work skills in the field of Business Education. Okon (2012) noted that the exercise is best organized when industrialist or experts the field practicing coop-ted to participate in the exhibition. This could give or create pollination of ideas in the use of Business Education resources for skills acquisition competencies among business education students in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. How could management Collaboration with others institutions enhance the acquisition of Skills Competencies among business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State?
2. How could management resource exhibition enhance the acquisition of Skills Competencies among business education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State?

Methods

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of business education lecturers in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire tagged *Lecturers Perceived* Strategies for Teaching Business Education Content for Skills Competencies Questionnaire (LPSTBECSCQ*)*. The questionnaire is made up of 12 items were placed on 4 point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4, Agreed (A) = 3, Disagreed (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1. The instrument was face validated by three experts in University of Calabar. The Cronbach Alpha reliability test was used to determine the internal consistence of the instrument which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.86. The 20 copies of questionnaires were administered by the researchers to the lecturers in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Mean rating and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected for the study. The mean rating of 2.50 was used for decision regarding the research questions. This was calculated based on the 4 point using interval used in the study. Items with mean values of 2.50 and above were considered as agreed while items with means value below 2.50 were considered as disagreed respectively.

Results

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Table 1: Mean Rating on management collaborating strategy for Teaching Business Education Content for the acquisition of skills competencies among Business Education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

S/N	Management Collaboration	X	SD	Decision
1	Business Education lecturers in my institution collaborate with other institutions in research and development	3.15	1.11	Agree
2	Business Education lecturers in my institution make use of other institutions' facilities for the teaching and learning process	3.81	1.42	Agree
3	Business Education lecturers in my institution provide opportunities for other institutions to participate in the training of their students	3.20	1.17	Agree
4	Business Education lecturers in my institution provide opportunities for other students share ICT resources	3.78	1.32	Agree
5	The Business Education lecturer in my institution provides the students with opportunities to learn new technologies skills from other institutions	3.19	1.10	Agree
6	Business Education lecturers in my institution provide Students with teachers relationship for the acquisition of skill competencies	3.21	1.13	Agree
	Aggregate means and standard deviation	**3.74**	**1.70**	**Agree**

Table 1 revealed that the respondents were unanimous in their responses to all the constructs in the above table, as they all agreed to all the six (6) constructs in the table above. This agreement was very evident as all the mean scores are above the fixed decision value of 2.50. There was also significant by the aggregate mean and standard deviation of 3.74 and 1.70 respectively. The implication is that management collaborating strategyamong business educators' benefits in teaching and learning process for the development of business education programme and the acquisition of skills competencies among business education students in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

Table 2: Mean rating on Management Resource Exhibition Strategy for Teaching Business Education Content for the acquisition of Skills Competencies among Business Education students in tertiaryinstitutionsin Cross River State.

S/N	Management Resource Exhibition	X	SD	DECISION
1	Resource exhibitions strategy can create an avenue for business education students to acquire skills and competences	3.24	1.32	Agree
2	Students of Business Education can develop skills and competencies by participating in management resource exhibition	3.72	1.59	Agree
3	Participation in management resource exhibitions can help Business Education students to acquire ICT competences	3.31	1.18	Agree
4	Resource exhibition can create an avenue for business education students to acquire ICT competences	3.60	1.41	Agree

5	Management resource exhibitions can create opportunities for Business Education to meet with their employers	3.70	1.48	Agree
6.	Management of resource exhibition can afford the learners the opportunity to come in contact with employers of labour in the world of work	3.02	1.12	Agree
	Aggregate means and standard deviation	**3.55**	**1.41**	**Agree**

The result in table 2 revealed that the respondents were unanimous in their responses to all the constructs in the above table, as they all agreed to all the six constructs. This agreement was very evident as all the mean scores are above the fixed decision value of 2.50. There was also significant by the aggregate mean and standard deviation of 3.55 and 1.41 respectively. The implication is that business education management resource exhibition will enhance the development and the acquisition of skills competencies among business education students in tertiary institutions.

Discussion of findings

The study examined the management collaborating strategy for Teaching Business Education Content for the acquisition of Skills Competencies among students of Business Education in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. The result of the finding study found out that, management collaboration and management exhibition strategies enhance the acquisition of skills competencies among business education graduates.. Such benefits have the potential to truly transform business education students to be exposed to workplace-based learning. The finding of the study shown that collaboration will provide opportunity needed for the acquisition of skills competencies needed by employers to be taught to students and reinforce in the classroom environment. This finding supports the finding of (Okon, 2015). Who stated that when universities collaborate with others institutions, it will bring a new direction to the achievement of the set goals among the institutions of learning. This means collaboration exposed business education graduates to re-training programmes like SIWES and teaching practices among others. Management collaboration will equally help the tertiary institutionsof learning to share the resources.

Oyinloye, and Asonibare (2019) study also found that collaboration between universities will face challenges among which include; inadequate supply of MS term, zoom equipment, facilities, poor and outdated universities training facilities and inadequate practical training to meet the modern trends in the 21st century E-learning. Also corruption, lack of cooperation is synergy and collaboration between universities partnership. This means that despite the numerous benefits of synergy and collaboration among universities and organization, there are still challenges that will hinder the achievement of goal of collaborating. Atah (2019) address these challenges and established the link between universities and others institutions. Okon (2015) stated that tertiary institutions need to restructure it programmes to be responsive to the needs of the job market, especially the 21st century global competitiveness.

Management Resource Exhibition Strategy for Teaching Business Education Content for the acquisition of Skills Competencies among graduate of Business Education in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

This study revealed the finding items as Business Education resources management exhibition strategy for graduate acquisition of skill competencies. This could create competitive ground for institution to showcase their equipment for employability skill acquisition could spur students to action in developing self-outside school environment, this item could help lecturers to up-date self in order to feature in this arrangement calling for skill demonstration in the use office

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technology, could create opportunities for employers of business education graduate, again, the strategy can create opportunities for manufacturers of varied office technology equipment, assist to expose the students to firsthand knowledge in the use of office technology equipment, could afford the students the opportunity to come in contact with employers of labour and could extend her activities beyond ordinary training exhibition to minor maintenance tutorial. The above results indicate show that the entire items of the Business Education management resource exhibition strategy for graduate acquisition of skills competencies. The findings agreed with Okon (2015) noted that Business Education resource exhibition strategy can create competitive grand for participants, motivate students into developing self-outside school environment as well as assisting lecturers to developed or improve on their ICT Skills outside the school setting of teaching and learning.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was revealed that that, management collaboration and management resource exhibition strategies could enhance graduates acquisition of skills competencies among business education students in tertiary institutionsin Cross River State.

Recommendations

Based on the research work the following recommendations were made:

1. The institutional collaboration strategy should be integrated among Nigeria Tertiary institutions
2. The Business education management resource exhibition should be made as a course to be taught in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

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COLLEGIALITY TEACHING STRATEGY: A MEANS OF PROMOTING LECTURERS DELIVERY PERFORMANCE FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

[1]UMEZULIKE, ANTHONIA NGOZI (Asso.Prof.)
Department of Vocational Education
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu
University, Igbariam Campus
Anambra State
Email:toniaumezulike@yahoo.com
Phone Number: 07067650365

[2]CHARLES-IBEZIM DORIS UKAMAKA
Provost Staff, Federal College of Education
(Technical)
P.M.B.1044 Asaba, Delta State.
Email: ukamakadoris73@gmail.com
080-37291982; 080-58026118

Abstract

The need to improve the quality of instructional delivery to ensure quality assurance in tertiary institutions necessitated this study. The study investigated how collegiality teaching strategy can be used for improving lecturers' performance for quality assurance. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. The study adopted survey research design and110 business education lecturers from four public tertiary institutions offering business education programme in Anambra State were studied without sampling. A-10 items structured questionnaire validated by three experts in the field of Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation Unit was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established using trial-test while Cronbach alpha formula was used to calculate the correlation coefficient which yielded value of .86. The researchers personally administered copies of the questionnaires on the respondents with the help of two research assistants. Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at.05 level of significance. Findings showed that respondents agree that collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance. Type of institution was not a significant factor on how collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that effective implementation of collegiality in business education programme in tertiary institutions can promote lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance of the programme. It was recommended among others that; administrators of tertiary institutions should organize regular training and re-training programmes for business educators on how to develop effective collegial system in their various departments.

Key Words: *Collegiality, Teaching Strategy, Delivery Performance and Quality Assurance*

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Introduction

Students' poor performance and over stay in institutions has been a source of concern to the institution administration. To ensure that students graduates on time without unnecessary delay, collegial teaching was introduced in order to facilitate teaching and learning, and also to ensure effective instructional delivery.

Collegiality according to Fielding (2014) was introduced into academic institutions to divide power and responsibilities among lecturers to prevent delay and ensure productive teaching for quality assurance. That is why Lazega (2017) considered collegiality as an organizational device used by autocrats to prevent experts and professionals from challenging monocratic and sometimes arbitrary powers. Collegiality is defined by Johnson (2013), as relationship between colleagues who are explicitly united in a common purpose and respecting each other's abilities to work toward that purpose. It simply means "team teaching" that is coming, together of lecturers who share common purpose to plan, share ideas, knowledge, skills experiences and values on how to achieve effective instructional delivery for quality assurance in Business Education Programme.

Business Education is a productive and functional form of education that boasts employment generation, students' self-reliance and self-actualization (Ezeani, 2014).Business education programme is a vital instrument for nation building and for achieving government developmental objectives, especially the quest for sustainable national development.

Instructional delivery takes more individualistic approach than collaborative method and this is at the expense of quality assurance prior to students' graduation. This may be due to sentiments which offer results in barrier of privacy and isolation to problem solving. According to Akpomnudjere (2014), the individualistic approach to problem solving may hamper qualitative lesson plan, delivery of instruction and assessment of students' performance and it could as well lead to high attrition rate among lecturers and render them ineffective in instructional delivery practice. Ineffectiveness in instructional delivery could skew the attainment of lesson objectives which could pose challenges to quality assurance and lecturers end up producing business education graduates that are not competent to perform in the labour market. To remedy this situation, the researchers came up with the idea of collegial teaching strategy which result the researchers hope will tremendously help in the academic performance of business education students, as business education programme is structured to equip its recipients with the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to be self- reliant economically.

Collegiality teaching can be a solution to lecturers' ineffective instructional delivery and students' poor performance. This is because collegiality teaching strategy will help in preparing lecturers fully for the teaching task expected of them. Where collegiality teaching strategy is being practiced, lecturers (both male and female) are likely to shun norms of individualism and embrace supportive team work, and engage in professional instructional dialogue regularly to enhance their effective instructional delivery practice. Similarly, it will enable lecturers to efficiently utilize instructional resources in teaching problems with maximum cooperation that would have lowered individual lecturer's attrition rate. Shah (2014) noted that through collegial teaching, lectures will be able to share their failures, mistakes, uncertainty and inadequacies together and provide possible solution rather than protecting and defending them. The process could facilitate easy coverage of whole course content without much stress on individual lecturer. The relationship could be collegial pair, group or mentoring. Dean and Forray (2018) maintained that enduring collegiality could foster lecturers' relationship to have meaningful discussion in order to think, reflect, analyze and take useful decisions which could increase their pedagogical competencies. Higher collegiality teaching practices could lead to higher quality instructional delivery thereby increasing students' academic achievement. The acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills is a sine-qua-non to quality assurance in Business Education programme.

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This could be achieved through efficient planning and delivery of the curriculum content as well as assessment of students' performance. Collegiality can help lecturers in both Universities and Colleges of Education become more open and receptive to new teaching strategies and to avoid any form of sentiment that could be inimical to their effective instructional delivery practices. This facilitate the attainment of the lesson objective and guarantee quality assurance in business education.

Collegiality, according to Baporikar (2015) is one of the priorities for all countries across the world to make instructional delivery in education more meaningful and holistic. Fiorentino, Boyce and Oates (2016) stated that ensuring collegiality is the cornerstone of teaching excellence and developing academe. Teaching is not something one learns to do once and for all, and then practices problem free for a lifetime. Teaching depends on growth and development and it is practiced in dynamic situations that are never twice the same. Ayers (2013) maintained that teachers must be lively in their instructional delivery, this will not only arouse the learners' interest but will ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the discharge of their core mandate.

Akpomnudjere (2014) observed with dismay that lecturers' individualistic approach to teaching and sentiments such as unnecessary and unhealthy competition, conservatism, and resentment, jealousy, over self-esteem and over confidence among others prevent them from test and compare new practices in teaching strategies. The product of unplanned instructions is poor lecture delivery, complete lack of students' interest to the lesson objectives and this could affect the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, needed in the field of study which in turn diminishes the quality assurance.

National Policy on Education (FRN) (2013) Section 1 Sub section 8 (f) states that quality of educational instruction in institutions should be oriented towards inculcating competencies necessary for self-reliance in order to attain the set standard in business education programme. The onus of the lecturers is to make paradigm shift from the individualistic approach to more proactive approach of instructional delivery to ensure quality assurance (qualitative manpower development) in order to combat the unemployment challenges facing graduates. A qualitative instructional delivery is sin-qua-non to qualitative man power development if education must thrive in playing a pivotal role in developing sound and effective citizens. Against this background, the researchers ascertain ways collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance.

Statement of the Problem

Observation shows that some business education programme lecturers seem not to be too effective in their instructional delivery practices that could guarantee quality assurance. Their individualistic approach to teaching which can easily lower individual lecturer's attrition rate and render them ineffective in curricula delivery seem to be responsible. Also Lecturers' extreme busy schedules, course loads, and additional material duties make it difficult for them to make the time to talk or work together. This could be a hindrance to quality assurance in Business Education Programme. It becomes imperative therefore to explore strategies that could enhance lecturers' proficiencies in instructional delivery practices to guarantee quality assurance by attaching the newly recruited lecturers with already experienced lecturers until high level theory and strong operational ability is ensured. Collegiality can enable lectures to engage in team teaching and problem solving with maximum cooperation seems to be a good platform for this unequivocal task. However, there are dearth's of empirical studies on the relevance of collegiality towards effective instructional delivery in business education programme for quality assurance. This study therefore specifically ascertained ways collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance of business education in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

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Research Question

In line with the study, one research question was raised to guide the study.

1. In what ways does collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was raised and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1. Business educators in universities and those in colleges of education do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on ways collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance.

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Anambra State using 110 business educators in the four public tertiary institutions that offer business education in Anambra State as thus: Nnamdi Azikiwe University (21); Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (6); Nwafor Orizu College of Education (16) and Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze (67). The entire population was studied using census sampling technique since the population was manageable and accessible to the researcher. Therefore, there was no sampling. Structured questionnaire tagged "Collegiality Teaching Strategy for Promoting Lecturers Performance for Quality Assurance (CTSPLPQA)" was used for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of two sections A and B. Section A contained item on demographic information of the respondents such as types of institution while Section Bcontained10 items on ways collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance. Section B was a 4-points rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Face and content validity of the instrument was ascertained using three experts, two from the field of Business Education and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation Unit all from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu University, Anambra State.

The questionnaire was trial-tested using 20 business educators from College of Education (Technical), Asaba Delta State who were not part of the study population. Data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha formula and coefficient value of .86 was obtained which indicates that the instrument was reliable for the study. The researcher with the help of two trained research assistants administered the instrument to the respondents. On the spot distribution and collection was employed and those who did not fill theirs immediately were revisited on another agreed date. Out of 110 copies of questionnaire administered, 101 were correctly filled and returned which was used for data analysis.

Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research question and determine the homogeneity of the respondents' views. The t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. The hypothesis was rejected if the p-value is less than the Alpha value but not rejected where the p-value is greater or equal to the Alpha value. The analyses were carried out using SPSS version 23.0.

Results

Research Question

In what ways does collegiality promote lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance?

Table : Respondents' mean ratings and standard deviation on ways collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance

S/N	Item Description	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Enhance lecturers' use of modern teaching methods in instructional processes	3.57	.53	Strongly Agree
2	Collegiality will enhance lecturers' teaching proficiencies	3.62	.50	Strongly Agree
3	Enhances the selection of instructional strategies to use in teaching students	3.47	.51	Agree
4	Help lecturers to explain topics and concepts clearly and correctly to students	3.16	.49	Agree
5	It will facilitate lecturers' new knowledge and skills through professional dialogue	4.00	.32	Strongly Agree
6	Collegiality will enable lecturers test and compare new practices to develop new approach to teaching	3.54	.85	Strongly Agree
7	Collegiality will enable lecturers take useful decision to improve their teaching styles and techniques.	2.59	.82	Agree
8	Collegiality will sustain lecturers and enable them to attempt innovation that would have lowered individual's attrition rate	3.44	.56	Agree
9	Helps new lecturers to adapt and adjust to new teaching styles and environment	3.60	.59	Strongly Agree
10	Helps lecturers to demonstrate skills correctly and expertly answer students	3.56	.74	Strongly Agree
	Cluster mean	**3.46**		**Agree**

Data in table shows that items 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10 have mean scores ranging from 3.54 to 4.00 meaning that the respondents strongly agree that collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance. The remaining four items have mean scores of 3.16 and 3.47 showing that the respondents agree that collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance. The clusters mean score of 3.46 shows that on the whole, respondents agree that collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

Null Hypothesis

Business educators in universities and those in colleges of education do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on ways collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance.

Table 2: Summary of t-test analysis of significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in universities and those in colleges of education on ways collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	T-value	P-value	Decision
Universities	34	2.96	.86	99	1.47	.07	Not Significant
Colleges of Education	77	3.00	.81				

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Table 2 shows that the t-value of 1.47 with 99 degree of freedom has p-value of .07which is greater than the alpha level of.05 (P-value = .07 >.05). This means that business educators in universities and those in colleges of education do not differ significantly in their mean perception ways collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion

Findings of this study revealed that business educators agree that collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance. The findings identified key roles of collegiality such as enhancing lecturers' use of modern teaching methods in instructional processes, enhancing lecturers' teaching proficiencies, helping new lecturers to adapt and adjust to new teaching styles and environment, and helping lecturers to demonstrate skills correctly and expertly answer students among other key roles. The findings of the study agree with that of Shah (2014) who stated that collegial communities create such a cooperative climate that heightens the level of innovation and enthusiasm among lecturers and provides a continuous support for staff professional enhancement. Martin (2018) asserted that teacher collegiality modify instruction. Troncoso-Skidmore (2017) also stated that lecturers who work in collegial settings become more open to new ideas, teaching methods, and resources than those who work in isolation.

Findings of the study further revealed that business educators in universities and those in colleges of education do not differ significantly in their mean perception on how collegiality can promote lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance. This implies that type of institution was not a significant factor in the response of business educators on how collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance.

Conclusion

To ensure that tertiary education students are graduating on time without unnecessary delay from lecturers, collegial teaching was introduced as a strategy to facilitate teaching and learning, and to ensure effective instructional delivery. The findings of this study revealed that collegiality promotes lecturers' delivery performance for quality assurance. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that effective implementation of collegiality in business education programme in both universities and colleges of education institutions can promoted lecturers; delivery performance for quality assurance of the programme.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Heads of Department of business education programme in tertiary institutions in Anambra State should ensure that conducive academic environment is provided for collaboration and teamwork among lecturers and the administrative staff.
2. Experienced business educators or senior lecturers should initiate collegiality culture among junior lecturers to improve their teaching competencies and performance.

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INTEGRATING DIGITAL SKILLS IN BUSINESS EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS FOR DIGITAL ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT

[1]Ndubuisi, Ikechukwu Samuel
School of Business Education
Federal College of Edudation
(Tech), Umunze

[2]Ezeani, Chukwuebuka Francis
School of Business Education
Federal College of Edudation
(Tech), Umunze

E-mail: ndubisiekene2@gmail.comezeanichukwuebukaf@gmail.com

[3]C. M. Ile
Department of Technology and Vocational Education
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
E-mail: *ilechika2011@yahoo.com; cm.ile@unizik.edu.ng*

Abstract

This study determined the integration of digital skills in business education curriculum in tertiary institutions for digital economy development in Anambra State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 102 business educators from four tertiary institutions that offered business education programme in Anambra State. There was no sampling. A 36-item structured questionnaire validated by two experts in the field of business education and measurement and evaluation was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established using trial-testing and data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha which yielded coefficient value 0.91. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. Findings showed that digital skills were highly needed in business education programme in tertiary institutions for digital economy development. It was further revealed that the identified digital skills were suitable for preparing business education students for digital economy development. The researchers concluded that the curriculum of business education should accommodate digital skills that are critical to the growth of the nation's economy. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that curriculum of business education should be reviewed from time to time to accommodate required digital skills. This will enhance digital skill acquisition of students for job creation.

Keywords: *Digital Economy, Digital Skills, Education, Business Education and Curriculum*

Introduction

Digital technologies have developed rapidly in recent time, changing people access information as well as human interaction and communication. This transformation includes emergence of digital economy. Digital economy refers to an economy that encompasses

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businesses that sell goods and services via the internet, and digital platforms that connect spare capacity and demand. The World Economic Forum and the Group of Twenty (G20) (2018) defined the digital economy as a broad range of economic activities comprising all jobs in the digital sector as well as digital occupations in non-digital sectors. The digital economy is estimated to make up around 5% of global GDP and 3% of global employment (Bukht & Heeks 2017). Digital economy has enabled fast revenue growth for many firms; encouraged the shift from tangible flows of physical goods to intangible flows of data and information; enabled firms in developing economies to connect across borders; and has thus facilitated a surge in cross-border data flows. Most importantly, they have also transformed various sectors, impacting global education (business education inclusive) and society.

Business education as a branch of vocational education equips it recipients with relevant skills needed in the world of work. According to Ezenwafor and Onokpaunu (2017), business education programme is a branch of vocational education concerned with exposing its recipients to the internal and external foundations and functioning of the workplace. Business education is a work-focused, skill-based, result-oriented and technology-based educational programme (Ugwoke, 2011). With the knowledge of business education, students are better informed and groomed with skills and understanding to cope with the unpredictable challenges of the business environment.However, business education programme which is charged with the responsibility of unveiling the dynamics of the world of work must ensure that its recipients possess relevant skills needed for effective entry and efficient participation in economic development. Oguejiofor (2020) in support of the above stated that the value of any business education programme could be determined by its ability to adequately prepare and equip individuals 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. Extensively, business education is that aspect of general education that prepares students for employment and advancement in a broad range of office occupations, accounting profession, marketing occupation, teaching profession and entrepreneurship venture (Onokpaunu, 2016). However, the reliable medium through which the mission and vision of business education programmes can be achieved, stems from effective review and implementation of its curriculum (Ezenwafor & Onokpaunu, 2017).

Curriculum is the means through which laid down educational philosophy of a nation is translated into concrete reality. It contains prescribed course of studies which students must learn in order to reach a certain level of education. According to Igbe (2016), curriculum is an orderly collection of obligatory, essential and vital subjects included in a specific course programme for studies in a school, college or university. Curriculum is described as an integrated course of academic studies. This however, portrays the fact that so many courses are academically put together to form the curriculum which is subject to review between three to five years (Ohiwerei, 2019).

In addition, Efanimjor and Okolocha (2020) stated that curriculum is responsible for the systematic organisation of formal and informal experiences geared towards facilitating the development of the cognitive, physical, psychomotor and socio-emotional potentials of students. Thus, business education curriculum is a set of learning experiences designed to enable students attain the objectives of business education programme. Correspondingly, Okoro (2015) opined that business education curriculum entails educational training which an individual receives in order to acquire adequate attitudes, concepts, knowledge, understanding and skills in business activities for vocational use in careers as administrators, managers, teachers wherever

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one may find oneself in the business world. It is believed that the curriculum of business education exposes students to educational and business related experiences. However, Oguejiofor (2020) reported that curriculum offerings at the tertiary institution levels do not cater for some of the needs of the current century skills. In agreement, Ikpesu (2017) stated that business education in Nigeria is at variance with global digital world. This variance, however portrays a total disconnection between what higher education offer and the needs of the labour market. The challenge here lies on how to ensure that the curriculum and delivery system provide satisfactory output that can compete globally in the labour market. In order to achieve this, there is need for the integration of digital skills in the teaching of business education programme.

Digital skills are a set of technological abilities used to access and manage digital information. According to UNESCO (2018), digital skills are a range of abilities to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information. They enable people to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems for effective and creative self-fulfillment in life, learning, work and social activities at large. Ferrari (2013) saw digital skills as the ability to critically analyse and assess digital information, problem solving through the use of digital tools, creation and recreation of content and so forth. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (2018) defined digital skills as a set of technological abilities that may be fully or partially acquired before entering the world of work.

In the context of this study, digital skills are the abilities of using digital technologies to transform existing traditional and non-digital business processes and services, or creating new ones, to meet evolving market and customer expectations. Some digital skills are required to use and interact with technology in order to fulfil specific tasks, while others are required to design, create and maintain tools and solutions for different industries. ITU (2018) categorized these skills as: basic digital skills, intermediate digital skills and advanced digital skills.

Basic digital skills are the fundamental skills needed to use digital technologies, such as using a browser, connecting to the internet, and keeping passwords secure. The skills are required for effective use of ICT tools, system and devices to support task/functions. Basic digital skills foster competency in interaction with basic digital tools. Basic skills level cover the hardware and software know-how required to use various technological assets such as computers, smartphones, software (word processors, applications), online operations (Internet, search engines, social networks, e-commerce, privacy) and communication media (Laar, Dijka, & Haan, 2020).

The Intermediate digital skills are skills needed to configure digital tools to produce and consume digital content or enhance digital tools through basic programming skills. Intermediate skills can also benefit from basic knowledge of programming language, such as spreadsheet manipulation through Visual Basic macro programming or front-end web design that is HTML- and JavaScript-dependent, or other languages that are specific to particular domains (accounting, enterprise resource planning, among others).

Advanced digital skills on the other hand are skills needed for researching, developing, designing, producing, installing, managing and maintenance of ICT software and system. It is enhanced knowledge acquired through specific curriculum aspects to improve technological proficiency, programming skills and advanced aspects of specific digital branches (advanced programming, machine learning, Internet of things (IoT), networking, engineering, hardware design, among others). Examples of advanced digital skills include science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and social, mobility, analytics and cloud (SMAC).

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The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2015) identified digital skill as digital foundation skills, communication skills, information skills, content creation skills, safety skills, transacting skills and problem solving skills. Digital foundation skill is the ability to use digital technologies, such as using a browser, connecting to the internet, and keeping passwords secure. Communicating skill is the ability in sending emails securely, using attachments, and participating on social media. Information and content creation skill is the ability in using search engines and accessing content across devices. It is the ability to evaluate information. Transacting skill is the ability to set up accounts to use or purchase goods/services online, using different secure payment methods, filling in online forms. Safety skill is the ability for data storage/sharing, updating and keeping passwords secure, and taking precautions against viruses. Problem-solving skill is the ability to find solutions to problems using tutorials/chat, presenting solutions through software, and improving productivity.

Alyoubi (2015) noted that students need digital skills for effective participation in the development of digital economy. The World Economic Forum (2018) reported that digital skills are required for the development of every sector of economy (such as health, agriculture, finance, transportation, education, construction, tourism, information and communication technology industries among others). The ITU (2020) in support of the above stated that digital skills are highly required to participate in the labour market and recommended that digital skills should be embedded in education and training, to enable individuals to participate fully in modern digital economy, whether as technology specialists, leaders of digitally-enabled businesses or workers in digitally-enabled jobs across the economy. Okoye (2017) in corroboration, stated that basic ICT skills should be embedded into business education curriculum in higher institutions in order to prepare students for global work competition. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2015) equally stated that for higher education to be a beacon for digital skills provision, there is need to provide high quality training standards for teachers and students and ensure that digital skills are learned pervasively at all stages of education and training. Brandes and Zobrist (2017) observed that digital knowledge provides platforms that allow one to connect and collaborate. It opens up opportunities to learn about new and important issues, and empowers innovations.

In business education in particular, digital skills extends to all aspects of teaching and learning, and help students to acquire basic digital skills and knowledge. Bakhshi, Downing, Osborne and Schneider (2017)in their view, stated that in general, educational institutions and teachers should continue to incorporate strategies for providing technical, managerial, personal and social skills to create digital citizens(people who use digital technology purposefully and confidently to communicate, find information and purchase goods/services);digital workers(people who have the ability to evaluate, configure and use complex digital systems and digital makers(people with the skills to build digital technology – typically software development). Laar, Dijka, Alexander and Haan (2020) noted that the academic world as well as other sectors are tremendously adopting different electronic means for the development of digital skills or tools for education and job market in the teaching and learning environment. The idea is to fulfill the need of students and teachers and between students and students and made them aware of all digital tools that are crucial for learning and growth in the digital age. However, Orji, Ali and OKanazu (2015) revealed that digital skills are required in technology and vocational education to boost the digital literacy of teachers and students. Tripathy (2019) also noted that digital skills required in this new digital economy must be taught to the students to minimize the risk of digital skills gap. However, Okolocha and Ile (2012) posited that comprehensive and systematic

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transformation of business education programme must occur to address the challenges of preparing well qualified individuals for the development of the nation.

Business educators should therefore equip themselves with new technological skills needed to train students to fit into the demands of modern business world. Effective teaching of digital skills in business education will adequately equip business education graduates with relevant ICT skills needed to establish and manage their personal business enterprises more profitably for the development of required digital economy.

Statement of the Problem

In the current phase of technological changes in the business world, students should be properly equipped with necessary ICT skills to enable them be successful future drivers of the economy. These new skills are in the areas of technological assets such as computers, smartphones, software applications, online operations and communication media web-based initiatives among others. In business education the situation is the same. As the world is going digital there is need for business education students to acquire the right digital skills needed to meet up with the modern economy. This can only be achieved when students move with current trends in technological advancement which is reflected in the changing patterns of business education curriculum. Policymakers, researchers and educational stakeholders alike are beginning to recognize that closing this digital skills gap is essential for preparing the nations' educational sector (especially business education) for development of digital economy. Therefore, to close this gap, there is the need for the integration of digital skills into the business education curriculum in tertiary institutions to produce competent and skillful individuals that can compete with their counterparts globally in the ever changing technological world.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain digital skills needed to integrate into business education curriculum in tertiary institutions for digital economy development. Specifically, the study:

1. Determine the digital skills needed by business education students for digital economy development.
2. Ascertain the extent to which identified digital skills are suitable for digital economy development.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the digital skills needed by business education students for digital economy development?
2. To what extent are the identified skills suitable for digital economy development?

Null Hypotheses

H01: Business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital skills needed by business education students for digital economy development based on school type.

H02: Business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital skills suitable for digital economy development based on school type (Colleges of Education and Universities)

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Method

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 102 business educators from four tertiary institutions offering business education courses in Anambra State. The whole population was studied because the population was not too large. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Digital Skills Needed by Business Education Students for Digital Economy Development (DSNBESDED)". The questionnaire was divided into two-parts. A and B. Part A was designed to elicit demographic information of the respondents such as school type. The instrument was developed based on a modified 4-points likert of Highly Needed (HN-4), Needed (N-3), Fairly Needed (FN-2) and Not Needed (NN-1) and Very Great Extent (VGE-4), Great Extent (GE-3), Small Extent (SE-2) and To No Extent (TNE-1). The instrument was validated by two experts in the field of business education and one experts in measurement and evaluation. Trial testing method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument using 20 business education lecturers outside the study area who were not part of the study. Data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha which yielded an overall coefficient value of 0.91. The researcher personally administered copies of the questionnaire with the help of two research assistants adequately briefed. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One

What are the digital skills needed by business education students for digital economy development?

Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings of digital skills needed to prepare business education students for digital economy development.

S/N	Digital skills for digital economy development	Mean	SD	Remark
	Information Skills:			
1	Browsing, searching and filtering information ability	3.77	0.51	Highly needed
2	Storing and retrieving information ability	3.67	0.53	Highly needed
3	Access contents across devices ability	3.97	0.56	Highly needed
4	Creating personal information strategies ability	3.52	0.47	Highly needed
5	Evaluating information ability	3.96	0.19	Highly needed
	Communication Skills:			
6	Interacting with different technologies ability	3.57	0.63	Highly needed
7	Sharing information and content ability	3.74	0.56	Highly needed
8	Engaging in online citizenship ability	3.69	0.52	Highly needed
9	Corroborating through digital channels ability	3.76	0.54	Highly needed
10	Managing digital identity ability	3.67	0.53	Highly needed
11	Having behavioural norms in online interactions ability	3.95	0.20	Highly needed
	Content Creation Skills:			
12	Developing content ability	3.21	0.46	Needed
13	Integrating and re-elaborating digital content ability	3.22	0.49	Needed
14	Copyright and licences ability	3.00	0.40	Needed
15	Programing ability	3.14	0.58	Needed
	Safety Skills:			

16	Protecting devices ability	3.18	0.48	Needed
17	Protecting personal data ability	3.23	0.49	Needed
18	Protecting health ability	3.36	0.54	Needed
19	Protecting the environment ability	3.14	0.57	Needed
	Problem Solving Skills:			
20	Solving technical problem ability	3.69	0.55	Highly Needed
21	Identifying needs and technology responses ability	3.84	0.65	Highly Needed
22	Innovating and creatively using technology ability	3.75	0.54	Highly Needed
23	Identifying digital competence gaps ability	3.82	0.46	Highly Needed
	Digital Business skills:			
24	Data analytics ability	3.86	0.57	Highly Needed
25	Business analysis ability	3.82	0.63	Highly Needed
26	Design and data visualization ability	3.81	0.63	Highly Needed
27	Product management ability	3.73	0.53	Highly Needed
28	Digital marking ability	3.73	0.52	Highly Needed
29	Social medial ability	3.79	0.48	Highly Needed
30	Copyright and plagiarism ability	3.69	0.56	Highly Needed
	Cluster mean	**3.61**	**0.51**	**HN**

Data in Table 1 shows that items 1-11, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29 and 30 are highly needed with mean scores 3.00 and above, while the other items are simply needed. The cluster mean score of 3.61 shows that the respondents agreed that the identified digital skills are seriously needed for preparing graduates of business education for digital economy development.

Research Question Two

To what extent are the identified skills suitable for digital economy development?

Table 2: Respondents' mean ratings of the extent identified skills are suitable for preparing business education student for effective digital economy development.

S/N	**Digital skills suitable for digital economy development**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Remark**
31	Information skills	3.88	0.74	Very Great Extent
32	Communication skills	3.74	0.54	Very Great Extent
33	Content creation skills	3.10	0.50	Great Extent
34	Safety skills	3.08	0.49	Great Extent
35	Problem skills	3.76	0.67	Very Great Extent
36	Business skills	3.84	0.65	Very Great Extent
	Cluster Mean	**3.57**	**0.60**	**VGE**

Data in Table 2 with cluster mean of 3.57 indicate that identified digital skills are very greatly suitable for preparing graduates of business education for digital economy development.

Hypothesis One

Business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the digital skills needed by business education students for digital economy development based on school type.

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Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of colleges of education and universities business educators on the digital skills needed by business education students for digital economy development in Anambra State.

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-value	P-value	Decision
College of Education	74	3.64	0.52	100	0.37	0.96	Accepted
University	28	3.58	0.50				

Data in Table 3 show that t-value of 0.37 at 100 degree of freedom with p-value of 0.96, is greater than the criterion value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the digital skills needed by business education students for digital economy development.

Hypothesis Two

Business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital skills suitable for digital economy development based on school type.

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of colleges of education and universities business educators on the extent to which the identified digital skills suitable for preparing business education students for digital economy development in Anambra State.

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-value	P-value	Decision
College of Education	74	3.59	0.62	100	0.35	0.79	Accepted
University	28	3.55	0.58				

Data in Table 4 show that t-value of 0.35 at 100 degree of freedom is greater than the criterion value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is upheld. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators in colleges of education and universities on the extent to which identified digital skills suitable for preparing business education students for digital economy development.

Discussion

The results of this study revealed that digital skills are highly needed in business education programme in tertiary institutions for digital economy development. This is in consonance with Orji, Ali and Okanazu (2015) who stated that digital skills are highly required in vocational education in tertiary institutions to boost the digital literacy of teachers and students. Moreso, business education as a skilled programme is expected to produce graduates fortified and prepared for digital economy development. In support of the above, Okoye (2017) advocated that basic ICT skills should be embedded in the business education curriculum in higher institutions in order to prepare students for global work competition.

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The identified digital skills in this study were needed to a very great extent to acquire capability and skills for digital economy development. This is in line with the report of the International Telecommunication Union (2020), that digital skills are highly required to participate in the labour market and recommended that digital skills should be embedded in education and training, to enable individuals participate fully in the modern digital economy, whether as technology specialists, leaders of digitally-enabled businesses or workers in digitally-enabled jobs across the economy. Digital literacy helps to boost students engagement in technology education and as well helps students stand out from their competition in the job market. Therefore, business educators should equip themselves with the new technological skills needed to train students to fit into the demands of modern business world. In agreement, Bakhshi, Downing, Osborne and Schneider (2017) asserted that educational institutions and teachers should continue to incorporate strategies for providing technical, managerial, personal and social skills to create digital citizens, digital workers and digital makers for transformation of digital economy.

Conclusion

Digital skills are required for the development of every sector of economy. Effective skills in using technology, combined with the knowledge and competencies to innovate, can increase the matching of digital skills to the needs of the digital economy. Employers of labour expect certain skills from every prospective graduate employees for effective job performance and efficiency. Digital skills can also help graduates to become self-employed as digital entrepreneur and as well for creation of employment for others. The findings of this study revealed that digital skills are highly needed in business education curriculum for digital economy development. The researchers concluded that the curriculum of business education should accommodate digital skills for the transformation of digital economy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The curriculum of business education should be review from time to time to accommodate digital skills needed by students. This will enhance digital skill acquisition of students for job creation.
2. There should be provision for periodic retraining of business educators to update their knowledge in the various areas of ICT and in the use of ICT. This will expose them to modern trends in technology across the globe and enhance effective teaching.
3. Curriculum implementers should encourage and inspire students to acquire various digital skills. This will help to boost the students' digital competencies upon graduation.
4. The National Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should work with industry to understand digital skills that are of particular strategic importance to the development of nation economy. This is will help to align the programmes of business education in tertiary institutions with the real-world work practices.

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EXTENT BUSINESS SUBJECTS TEACHERS IN IMO STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS UTILIZE SPREADSHEET SKILLS IN TEACHING BUSINESS SUBJECTS

[1]UMEZULIKE, ANTHONIA NGOZI (ASSO. PROF.)
Department of Vocational Education
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu
University, Igbariam Campus
Anambra State
Email: toniaumezulike@yahoo.com

[2]AMAECHI, FLOURISH CHIDOZIE
Registry Staff, Federal Polytechnic Nekede
P.M.B. 1036 Owerri, Imo State
Email: mimymario@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study was aimed to find out the extent business subjects teachers in Imo State secondary schools utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects. Descriptive survey research design was adopted and the population of 272 business subject teachers was studied without sampling. Trial-testing was used to establish the reliability of the instrument using Cronbach Alpha method which yielded coefficients of .90. Two hundred and sixty five (265) duly completed copies of the instrument were retrieved and used for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while the t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. Findings revealed that the business subjects teachers utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects to a low extent. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business subject teachers with B.Sc. degree and above and those with below B.Sc. degree in secondary schools in Imo State, on the extent they utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that business subjects teachers do not adequately utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects in secondary schools in Imo State. It was therefore recommended that Ministry of Education in Imo State should organize continuous training and re-training ICT programmes (in which spreadsheet skills is inclusive) for business subjects teachers to enable them up-date their knowledge so as to embrace spreadsheet skills for effective utilization in teaching business subjects in Imo State secondary schools.

Keywords: *Business Subjects, Utilization, Spreadsheet Skills, Teaching and Information and Communication Technology*

Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is playing major role in the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge which are fundamental aspects of the education process. The impact of ICT on education is enormous. ICT is potentially powerful enabling tools for educational change and reform. When used appropriately, different ICT gadgets will help to expand access to education, strengthen the relevance of education to the increasingly digital workplace, and raise educational quality by helping to make teaching and learning a process that is connected to real life.

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Utilization to a layman can be defined as the act of putting something into use. According to Hornby (2018), utilization is the use of something for practical purposes. It is the action of making practical and effective use of something (Murray, 2020). It can also be said to be a measurement of typically in hours or mileage to indicate how frequent a vehicle or piece of equipment is used within a given period of time, may be in a month, quarter or year (Hahn, 2019). In the utilization of Information and Communication Technology in educational sector, it is the use of ICT facilities in teaching and learning. However, in this context, it means the act of putting into use the basic ICT skills by Business Subject Teachers in teaching business subjects. According to McIntosh (2015), utilization is being defined as the act of using something in an effective way. That is to say that utilization is a way of using anything worth working without wastages.

Teaching according to Hornby (2018) is the process of showing somebody how to perform a task so that they can carry it out successfully. It also entails giving students' information about a particular subject to help them learn. According to Nwaukwa (2015), teaching is a cluster of activities that are noted about teachers such as explaining, deducing, questioning, motivating, talking attendances, keeping record of works, students meet predetermined learning goals. In addition, teaching is a deliberate effort by a matured or experienced person to impact information, knowledge, skills and so on to immature or less experienced person (Aguokpgbuo, 2002). Teaching as it relates to this study entails imparting of ICT knowledge from the business subjects teachers to students of business subjects.

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013), business subjects are vocational subjects offered at the senior secondary school level, which include Financial Accounting, Economics, Commerce, Computer Studies/Keyboarding, Shorthand, Office Practice and Marketing. In the same view, Esene and Ohiwerei in Nwaukwa (2015) defined business subjects as vocational subjects designed for the senior secondary schools. The authors further explained that it is from this group of subjects (i.e Financial Accounting, Economics, Commerce, Computer Studies/Keyboarding, Shorthand, Office Practice and Marketing) that a business student may choose any three or more subjects in the final Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE).

Business subjects in this study encompasses vocational subjects taught at the senior secondary school level with the aim of preparing students for entry into business related areas in tertiary institutions, or to make a living in this modern society.

A spreadsheet according to Maher (2019) is an interactive computer application for organization, analysis and storage of data in tabular form and it is developed as computerized analogs of paper accounting worksheets. The program operates on data entered in cells of a table and each cell may contain either numeric or text data, or the results of formulas that automatically calculate and display a value based on the contents of other cells Maher (2019). Spreadsheet users can adjust any stored value and observe the effects on calculated values. This makes the spreadsheet useful for analysis since many cases can be rapidly investigated without manual recalculation. Modern spreadsheet software can have multiple interacting sheets, and can display data either as text and numerals, or in graphical form. Apart from performing basic arithmetic and mathematical functions, modern spreadsheets provide built-in functions for common financial and statistical operations. For instance, such calculations as Net Present Value or Standard Deviation can be applied to tabular data with a pre-programmed function in a formula. Spreadsheet programs also provide conditional expressions, functions to convert between text and numbers, and functions that operate on strings of text. Although they were first developed for accounting or bookkeeping tasks, they now are used extensively in any context where tabular lists are built, sorted, and shared (Maher, 2019).

In modern spreadsheet applications, several spreadsheets, often known as worksheets or simply sheets, are gathered together to form a workbook. A workbook is physically

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represented by a file, containing all the data for the book, the sheets and the cells with the sheets. Worksheets are normally represented by tabs that flip between pages, each one containing one of the sheets, although Numbers changes this model significantly (Pardo, 2015).

Cells in a multi-sheet book add the sheet name to their reference. However, since spreadsheet program is one of the main components of an office productivity suite, which usually also contains a word processor, a presentation program, and a database management system, the Business Subjects Teachers should be able to know how to use it appropriately. The usage can be seen by entering texts or numbers into the worksheets, doing other mathematical functions like: adding; dividing and multiplying numbers within the worksheets.

Constructivist Teaching and Learning Theory

Constructivist teaching and learning theory was propounded by Jerome Bruner in 1961. He was of the opinion that the aim of education should be to create autonomous learners (i.e. learning to learn). For Bruner (1961), the purpose of education is not to impart knowledge, but instead to facilitate a child's thinking and problem-solving skills which can then be transferred to a range of situations. Specifically, education should also develop symbolic thinking in children. Bruner's work also suggests that a learner even of a very young age is capable of learning any material as long as the instruction is organized appropriately (Bruner, 1961 pgs., 21-32).

In applying Bruner's theory to this study, it will enable the business teachers help students to discover their own way of utilizing these spreadsheet skills in their own way as it encourages learner to develop their most suitable way of doing things.

Secondly, this theory will help the business subject teachers to organize their instruction/teaching spreadsheet skills in an appropriate manner that will attract full attention of the learner without being distracted or confused at any point.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers in public secondary schools are expected to apply ICT skills to support their instructional delivery and as well enable secondary school students to use these skills to meet their learning needs. Low utilization of ICT skills in teaching business subjects means producing students with only theoretical knowledge thus lacking relevant practical skills required of business' graduates for gainful employment or self-reliance. Effective utilization of ICT skills by business subjects teachers is dependent on teachers' ICT skill acquisition, level of training and re-training on the use of ICT in teaching, teachers ability in using ICT facilities for enhancing instructional delivery among others.

Business subjects teachers' over-reliance in using traditional/conventional teaching methods and obsolete instructional materials such as chalkboard, papers and typewriters among others suggest that they are not adequately utilizing ICT skills to enhance instructional delivery. The inability of business subjects teachers to utilize ICT skills in their teaching means that business subjects students on graduation may not be adequately equipped with relevant ICT skills needed for gainful employment or self-reliance in this technological age. Thus, the need to find out the extent business subject teachers utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching of business subjects in Imo State public secondary schools and thus make possible recommendations for improvement.

Research Question

This research question guided the study:

1. To what extent do business subjects teachers in Imo State secondary schools utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects?

Hypothesis

This null hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business subject teachers with B.Sc. degree and above and those with below B.Sc. degree in secondary schools in Imo State, on the extent they utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects.

Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study because it is concerned with collecting data from members of a population in order to determine conditions that exist, opinions that are held and processes that are going on. The survey research design is deemed appropriate for this study since it sought to obtain the views and opinions of business subjects teachers on the extent they are utilizing word processing skills in teaching business subjects.

The researchers administered and retrieved copies of the questionnaire to the respondents by hand after establishing contacts with the principals of the different schools under study with the aid of three research assistants adequately briefed on the modalities for administration and retrieval of the questionnaires. However, respondents that were not able to complete their copies immediately were revisited on an agreed date. This ensured timely and high return rate of the instrument as 265 out of the 272 copies distributed were correctly filled and returned. The exercise lasted for a period of two weeks.

Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Mean was used to answer the four research questions posed for the study while standard deviation was used to ascertain how homogeneous or heterogeneous the respondents' opinions are relative to the questionnaire items. Decision on the research questions was based on the cluster mean relative to the real limits of numbers. t-test was used to test the four null hypotheses at .05 level of significance using Special Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0.

Results

Research Question

To what extent do business subjects teachers in Imo State secondary schools utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects?

Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings on the extent business subjects teachers utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects (N = 265)

S/N	Spreadsheet Skills	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to activate data in a cell	2.18	.67	Low Extent
2	Ability to enter data in a cell	1.54	.64	Low Extent
3	Ability to format data in a cell	1.41	.58	Very Low Extent
4	Ability to draw appropriate graphs	1.40	.91	Very Low Extent
5	Ability to format data to currency, time and number	1.46	.51	Very Low Extent
6	Ability to use sum formula	1.48	.72	Very Low extent
7	Ability to change/adjust width and row height	2.45	.89	Low Extent
8	Ability to use suitable commands to select range of cells in a row	1.47	.77	Very Low Extent
	Grand Mean	**1.67**		**Low Extent**

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Data in table 1 shows that out of 8 spreadsheet skills listed, business subjects teachers indicated that they utilize items 1, 2 and 7 in teaching business subjects to a low extent with mean scores ranging between 1.54 to 2.45 while remaining five items are utilized for the same purpose to a very low extent with mean scores ranging between 1.40 to 1.48. The grand mean score of 1.67 shows that on the whole, business subjects teachers utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects to a low extent. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range meaning that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business subject teachers with B.Sc. degree and above and those with below B.Sc. degree in secondary schools in Imo State, on the extent they utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects.

Table 2: T-test analysis of business subjects teachers with B.Sc. degree and above and those with below B.Sc. on the extent they utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects

Qualification	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	T-value	P-value	Decision
B.Sc. degree and Above	199	1.78	.55				
				263	.68	.41	Not Significant
Below B.Sc. degree	66	1.48	.66				

Table 2 shows that t-value of .68 at 263 degree of freedom with a p-value of .41 is greater than the criterion value of .05 (.41 > .05). Since p-value is greater than the significant value, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business subject teachers with B.Sc. degree and above and those with below B.Sc. degree in secondary schools in Imo State, on the extent they utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study indicated that business subjects teachers in secondary schools in Imo State utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects to a low extent. The findings of the study corroborate the findings of Asogwa (2011) that majority of business teachers are still showing negative attitude in utilizing ICT skills in teaching. Ilechukwu (2011) opinioned that the wide gap between the experience of the ICT experts who developed the ICT system and the slow and sometimes unwilling designers of education instructional system planners is also a challenge to teachers utilizing ICT skills in teaching. In agreement Alu (2011) noted that the issue of ICT literacy among teachers (business subjects teachers inclusive) and availability of personal computers among teachers is lacking. Alu lamented that these situations hinder utilization of spreadsheet skills in teaching and learning in secondary schools. The author averred that there is no rigorous ICT training in the process of teacher preparation to help teachers' usage and as a result, many teachers and learners are ICT illiterate.

The findings that business subjects teachers utilize spreadsheet skills to a low extent is not surprising to the researchers considering the fact that there are lack of capacity building programmes as well as ICT training and re-training programmes for secondary schools teachers in Imo state to up-date their ICT skills to enhance their professional practice. This the researchers believed might have contributed to business subjects teachers' low level of utilization of spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects. The findings of the study also revealed that

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there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of business subject teachers with B.Sc. degree and above and those with below B.Sc. degree in secondary schools in Imo State, on the extent they utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects. This suggests that business subjects teachers regardless of educational qualifications indicated that they utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects to a low extent. This homogeneity in mean ratings could be attributed to lack of ICT facilities or poor training of business subjects teachers in ICT skills.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it was discovered that many of business subject teachers utilize spreadsheet skills teaching business subjects to a low extent. Despite the prevalent nature of ICT in virtually every aspect of human endeavors, they have not been widely utilized by business subjects teachers in teaching processes in secondary schools. Spreadsheet skills utilization will not only revolutionize teaching of business subjects, they will stimulate the development of students' innate technological and critical thinking abilities and acquisition of ICT skills needed to fit into the modern society after graduation. Based on the findings of this study, the researchers conclude that business subjects teachers do not adequately utilize spreadsheet skills in teaching business subjects in secondary schools in Imo State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers recommended that continuous training and re-training of ICT programmes should be provided by Imo State Ministry of Education to the business subjects teachers in which spreadsheet skills is inclusive to enable them up-date their knowledge in the use of ICT skills for effective utilization in teaching business subjects in secondary schools.

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PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF COMPUTER AIDED INSTRUCTION ON STUDENTS' ACQUISITION OF KEYBOARDING SKILLS IN THE NEW NORMAL

[1]ESTHER OLAITAN OLUPAYIMO
Department of Business Education,
Adeyemi College of Education,
P.M.B. 520, Ondo
estherolupayimo@gmail.com

[2]LAWRENCE FEMI ADEMILUYI, Ph.D
Faculty of Education,
Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education,
Kwara State University, Malete.
femiluyi44@gmail.com

Abstract

The study investigated perceived effects of computer aided instruction (CAI) on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills in the new normal. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Population comprised 115 business educators from six public colleges of education from South west, Nigeria. The total population was used for the study since it is manageable. Hence, there was no sampling. Instrument for data collection was a questionnaire tagged "Perceived Effects of CAI on Keyboarding Skills Acquisition" (PECKSA). Two experts validated the instrument. Cronbach Alpha reliability test was used to determine the consistency of the instrument with 0.8 co-efficient. The questionnaire was structured on a four-point rating scale as VHE - 4 points, HE - 3 points, LE - 2 points and VLE - 1 point. The researchers and an assistant administered 115 questionnaire out of which 81 (70.43%) copies were retrieved. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. Mean rating of 2.50 was used for decision on research questions. Items of mean value of 2.50 and above were considered as high extent and vise-versa. Findings revealed that CAIhas brought convenience, flexibility engagement and interactivity into teaching/learning of keyboarding skills as learning through CAI with or without face-to-face interaction with the teacher is possible. It blends students on correct fingering, sitting position and building speed for optimal typing accuracy. The study found that insufficient modern infrastructure, laboratory, technological tools and epileptic power supply, are some of the challenges of teaching/learning using CAI. The study recommends that CAI be adopted as a strategy for teaching/learning keyboarding skills in the new normal and the challenges resolved.

Keywords: *Computer Aided Instruction (CAI), acquisition, keyboarding skills, new normal.*

Introduction

Keyboarding is one of the courses taught in business education. It is an art of communicating fluently with the keyboard through manipulation of the keys to produce mailable documents from typewritten or handwritten manuscripts. Being a skill-based course, it is

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expected of keyboarders to have face-to-face interaction with their teachers for appropriate acquisition of the skills as done in the traditional setting of teaching and learning. However, there was an outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic that disrupted all activities of all sectors in the whole world. The effect of this pandemic on education sector was so great as a result of the lockdown generally observed across board. Nevertheless, the International Commission on the Futures of Education established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 2019 came up with strategies to resuscitate the dying education sector one of which is virtual teaching and learning.

The pandemic, as observed by Pacheco in (2020), ushers in a "new normal", in which digitization enforces ways of working and learning. The "new normal" emphasizes two ideas which include competence-based education referred to as knowledge in the Delors Report, and a new learning framework structured by digital technologies (OECD, 2019a). Pacheco added that the pandemic forces education further into digitization, a development already well underway but the outbreak of COVID-19 meant that changes intended to occur over months or years had to be implemented in a few days. UNESCO (2020) buttressed this that the pandemic forced immediate transfer of learning to online modalities, without authentic planning and modification of curriculum design to adapt it to the online mode.

Furthermore, Daniel (2020) noted that many institutions had plans to make greater use of technology in teaching and learning, but the outbreak of COVID-19 has fast forwarded the intended changes meant to happen in the future. This view was supported by Barbara (2021) that the COVID-19 pandemic has forced the world to engage in the ubiquitous use of virtual learning. In essence, the outbreak of COVID-19 has changed the strategy of teaching and learning with the assistance of technology aided learning such as Computer Aided Instruction (CAI) through the use of internet, computer and other related new technological tools.

According to Obi in Oyedele, Ademiluyi and Olupayimo (2021), teaching strategies are the most prominent among several reasons which impact on students' acquisition of effective skills needed to be professional and active participators in creative building. In other to encourage the students to acquire necessary skills in keyboarding, teachers have to prepare them using strategies that would arouse their interest and as well enhance their acquisition of the skills.

Computer Aided Instruction (CAI) is an interactive instructional technique whereby a computer is used to present the instructional material and monitor the learning that takes place. It is an instruction or remediation presented on a computer which improves instructional qualities and it is also used to train individuals for vocations (Dowdle, 2016). According to Him, CAI programmes are interactive and can illustrate a concept through attractive animation, sound, and demonstration. It allow students to progress at their own pace and work individually or problem solve in a group.

In the opinion of Dowdle in Olupayimo (2018), Computer Aided Instruction (CAI) is a term often used interchangeably with Computer-Based Instruction (CBI), Web Based Instruction (WBI), Computer-Assisted Learning (CAL), Computer Enriched Instruction (CEI), and Web Based Training (WBT). It is also known as Computer Based Training (CBT) when used to train individual for vocations. It combines presentation of material with drill-and-practice, games, or a simulation to emphasize material and assist in learning.

Computer aided instruction (CAI) is a diverse and rapidly expanding spectrum of computer technologies that assist the teaching and learning process. CAI systems can be categorized based on who controls the progression of the lesson. Early systems were linear presentations of information and guided drill, and control was directed by the author of the software. In modern systems, and especially with visualization systems and simulated environments, control often rests with the student or with the instructor. This permits information to be reviewed or examined out of sequence. Related material also may be explored. In some group instructional activities,

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the lesson can progress according to the dynamics of the group (Ekoro, Ekoro & Udo in Olupayimo, 2018).

Moreover, computer aided instruction (CAI) to Alasoluyi (2015) is an educational software programmes that follow the same design as programmed instruction whereby students receive some instructional material, followed by a probe (a small test); it allows users to move on to the next lesson after each correct response; or repeat the lesson or receive a different lesson covering the same material if the responses were not correct.

In the author's further explanations, CAI is often repetitive, and it reduces learning to discrete units that sometimes obscure the relationship between ideas. CAI is better suited for drill and practice than for building concepts and promoting comprehension. Computer aided instruction (CAI) is a diverse and rapidly expanding spectrum of computer technologies that assist the teaching and learning process (Ekoro, Ofem and Sylvester, 2013).

Keyboarding is the act of producing written words as a printed document using either word processor or computer. Nyam (2012) defines keyboarding as the work of inputting information into the computer using a keyboard. Likewise, Virginia Department of Education (2012) describes keyboarding as the input of data using touch method on a standard alphanumeric keyboard such as the QWERTY keyboard. Keyboarding is the ability to input data by touch, using alphabetical and numeric keys on the computer keyboard. Mastery of keyboarding skills have become necessary and equally important in the world of work as the use of computer has tended to dominate today's business environment (Oborah, 2011). In this technological era, it is expected of students to produce handwritten and computer generated works vis-à-vis assignments and other forms of assessments such as test, examinations and write their long essays using word processors requiring a level of keyboarding proficiency.

Skills is the ability to do something well through the experience gained in a particular training or practice. Adigun (2015) defines skills as the ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustained efforts to smoothly and adaptively perform functions involving ideas, things and people. Likewise, Ezenwafor (2014) sees skills as aptitudes and abilities appropriate for a specific job. In other words, a skillful person is someone who is very good at what he is doing. It is the knowledge that enables an individual to meet established performance criteria (Aina, 2013). Keyboarding skills, therefore, are the abilities and aptitudes that enable someone communicate fluently with the keyboard, touch type speedily and accurately and fit into the world of work in this globalized world.

Contributing, Willer (2013) sees keyboarding skill as the ability to fluently communicate through a computer keyboard. Fluent keyboard communication is the ability to formulate thoughts, compose sentences, and emit them through our fingers without a conscious thought of how our fingers make the words. To communicate fluently, the individual must use all five fingers of each hand in a conventional manner. For students, fluent keyboard communication would be of great advantage to their entire academic career and they will also find it an essential skill for every job in this globalized world.

In *computer aided instruction* (CAI), the performance of the students, the sequence of learning and the amount of time spent on learning tasks are determined by learners themselves, the achievement of each learner is assessed against a given performance standard rather than against the performance of other learners (Muraina, Adeleke & Rahman, 2011). Consequently, with the use of CAI, students can learn well in considerably less time, help a student in all areas of the curriculum and it is probably one of the easiest ways to deliver individualized instruction which encouraged the acquisition and mastery of keyboarding skills. Students' acquisition of keyboarding skills is very much necessary because it blends students on correct finger placement and building speed for optimal typing accuracy; and production of malleable document needed in today's workplace.

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CAI provide immediate feedback, letting students know whether their answer is correct. If the answer is not correct, the programme shows students how to correctly answer the question. It offer a different type of activity and a change of pace from teacher-led or group instruction. Moreover, CAI improve instruction for students with disabilities because students receive immediate feedback and do not continue to practice the wrong skills. It capture the students' attention because the programmes are interactive and engage the students' spirit of competitiveness to increase their scores. CAI move at the students' own pace and usually do not move ahead until they have mastered the skill (Alasoluyi, 2015).Technology through computer aided instruction has brought convenience, flexibility engagement and interactivity into teaching and learning process. In the light of the foregoing, CAI may be seen as a good instructional strategy in teaching keyboarding skills in the new normal.

Despite the benefits of CAI to teaching and learning of keyboarding skills, CAI is being faced with a lot of challenges such as insufficient modern infrastructure, laboratory and technological tools, epileptic power supply, lack of access to internet connectivity, limited training period, inadequate trained personnel, high cost of purchasing computer system, lack of skills on the part of users, lack of relevant software and poor maintenance, among others. In addition, Cahapay (2020) opines that teachers may be faced with the challenge of moving from offline mode to online mode, changing their teaching methodologies, and managing their time since teaching and learning keyboarding skills cannot be effective with the use of CAI alone.Conversely, provided lasting solutions are proffered to the identified challenges, CAI may be considered a good strategy for teaching and learning keyboarding skills.

Statement of the Problem

Before the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, some institutions have introduced virtual teaching and learning into their academic programmes. While some institutions are still operating the face-to-face method of teaching and learning process, some are just warming up for this development of virtual teaching and learning and suddenly, the insurgency occurred which ravaged the whole world for several months. The UNESCO suggested some strategies of teaching and learning the chief of which is virtual as a result of the challenges posed on all spheres of life by COVID-19 pandemic, including educational sector. Teaching and learning through virtual means was embraced by the whole world for continuity in education since education is the bed rock of any successful nation. However, some school of thought believed that teaching and learning of keyboarding skills may be a little difficult task for fresh keyboarders who supposed to have face-to-face interaction with their teachers for proper teaching and learning process to take place most especially in public colleges of education in the South-west geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The question agitating the mind of this researcher now is what strategy can be adopted in teaching and learning of keyboarding skills to enable the students acquire appropriate keyboarding skills in the new normal? It is against this backdrop that the researchers intend to investigate the perceived effects of computer aided instruction on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills in public colleges of education in South west geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

1. What is the extent of effects of computer aided instruction on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills as perceived by business educators?
2. What are the perceived challenges of teaching and learning with computer aided instruction on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H_{o1}: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business educators in public colleges of education on the perceived extent of effect of computer aided instruction on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills.

H_{o2}: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business educators on the perceived challenges of teaching and learning with computer aided instruction on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills.

Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 115 business educators from six public colleges of education from South west geopolitical zone of Nigeria which includes Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo (16),Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka (34), College of Education, Ila-orangun (12), College of Education, Ikere (22), Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo (18) and Tai Solarin College of Education (13) (one college from each State, comprising three Federal and three State colleges of education respectively). The total population was used for the study since it is manageable. Hence, there was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire tagged "Perceived Effects of CAI on Keyboarding Skills Acquisition" (PECKSA). Three experts, one in tests and measurement and two in business education from Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo and Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka respectively validated the instrument. The Cronbach Alpha reliability test was used to determine the consistency of the instrument which yielded 0.8 reliability co-efficient. The questionnaire was structured on a four-point rating scale as Very High Extent (VHE) - 4 points, High Extent (HE) - 3 points, Low Extent (LE) - 2 points and Very Low Extent (VLE) - 1 point. The researchers with the help of two research assistants administered 115 questionnaire out of which 81 (70.43%) copies were retrieved. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. Regarding the research questions, mean rating of 2.50 was used for decision. Items of mean value of 2.50 and above were considered as high extent while items with mean values below 2.50 were considered as low extent.

Result

Research Question 1: What is the extent of effects of computer aided instruction on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills as perceived by business educators?

Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation of respondents on extent of effect of computer aided instruction on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills.

S/No	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	CAI has brought convenience, flexibility engagement and interactivity into teaching and learning of keyboarding skills.	3.10	.87	High Extent
2	It blends students on correct finger placement, sitting position and building speed for optimal typing accuracy.	3.22	.72	High Extent
3	Learning through CAI with or without face-to-face interaction with the teacher is possible.	2.87	.76	High Extent
4	Allow students to learn at their own pace without skipping until they have mastered a particular skill.	3.05	.81	High Extent
5	CAI capture the students' attention because the programmes are interactive and engage the students' spirit of competitiveness to increase their scores.	3.11	.76	High Extent

6	Provision of immediate feedback, letting students know whether their answer is correct or not.	3.28	.84	High Extent
7	It offer a different type of activity and a change of pace from teacher-led or group instruction.	2.65	.77	High Extent
8	CAI improve instruction for students with disabilities	2.89	.71	High Extent
9	Helps in covering the curriculum content of keyboarding	3.19	.80	High Extent
10	Using CAI saves time and helps in covering a large class	3.12	.78	High Extent
11	Reduces teachers stress in delivering keyboarding instruction	3.15	.72	High Extent
12	The achievement of each learner is assessed against a given performance standard rather than against the performance of other learners	3.09	.74	High Extent
	Grand mean and standard deviation	**3.06**	**.77**	**High Extent**

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 1 reveals the respondents' positive response to all the items on the perceived effect of computer aided instruction (CAI) on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills with mean scores of 2.65 to 3.28. This positive response was very obvious as the mean scores were above the fixed decision value of 2.50 coupled with the grand mean of 3.06 and standard deviation of 0.77 respectively. The implication is that adopting computer aided instruction (CAI) as a strategy of teaching and learning keyboarding skills will go a long way to enhance the students' acquisition of keyboarding skills in the new normal.

Research Question 2: What are the perceived challenges of teaching and learning with computer aided instruction on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills?

Table 2: Mean scores and standard deviation of respondents on the perceived challenges of teaching and learning with computer aided instruction on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills

S/No	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Insufficient modern infrastructure, laboratory and technological tools affects teaching and learning of keyboarding skills	3.48	.74	High Extent
2	Epileptic power supply	3.21	.72	High Extent
3	Inadequate trained personnel	3.45	.81	High Extent
4	High cost of purchasing computer system	3.02	.70	High Extent
5	Lack of skills on the part of users	2.85	.82	High Extent
6	Lack of access to internet connectivity	2.80	.82	High Extent

7	Poor maintenance	3.01	.79	High Extent
8	Socio-economic status of parents	2.87	.80	High Extent
9	Lack of interest on the part of the learners	3.10	.77	High Extent
10	Lack of relevant software for teaching keyboarding skills	3.33	.84	High Extent
	Grand mean and standard deviation	**3.11**	**.78**	**High Extent**

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 2 reveals the respondents' positive response to the perceived challenges of teaching and learning using computer aided instruction (CAI) on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills with mean scores ranging from 2.80 to 3.48. This positive response was very obvious as the mean scores were above the fixed decision value of 2.50 coupled with the grand mean of 3.11 and standard deviation of 0.78 respectively. The implication is that as beneficial as using computer aided instruction (CAI) as a strategy of teaching and learning keyboarding skills is in the new normal, it is still being faced with a lot of challenges. These needs urgent attention in order to make the use of CAI in teaching and learning of keyboarding skills in the new normal effective.

Hypothesis 1

Table 3: t-test analysis on the mean ratings of male and female business educators' on extent of effect of teaching and learning with computer aided instruction (CAI) on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills in the new normal.

Variables	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Remarks
Male	56	3.01	0.76	79	0.21	1.96	NS
Female	25	2.98	0.82				

Data in tables 3 shows that the calculated t-value of 0.21 is less than the calculated critical value of 1.96. This reveals that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators' on extent of effect of teaching and learning with computer aided instruction (CAI) on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills in the new normal, hence, the null hypothesis is upheld.

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Hypothesis 2

Table 4: t-test analysis on the mean ratings of male and female business educators' perception of challenges of using computer aided instruction on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills in the new normal.

Variables	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Remarks
Male	56	3.00	0.76	79	0.45	1.96	NS
Female	25	3.18	0.79				

Tables 4 reveals that the calculated t-value of 0.45 is less than the calculated critical value of 1.96. This is an indication that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators' perception of challenges of using computer aided instruction on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills in the new normal. The null hypothesis is therefore, upheld.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the perceived effects of computer aided instruction (CAI) on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills in the new normal. The result emanating from the study reveals business educators' positive response on their perception of the effects of CAI on students' keyboarding skills acquisition with highest mean score of 3.28 as it has brought convenience, flexibility engagement and interactivity into teaching and learning of keyboarding skills as learning through CAI with or without face-to-face interaction with the teacher is possible. It blends students on correct finger placement, sitting position and building speed for optimal typing accuracy. Also, with CAI, students can learn at their own pace without skipping until they have mastered a particular skill. It provide immediate feedback, letting students know whether their answer is correct or not and by this, CAI capture the students' attention because the programmes are interactive and engage the students' spirit of competitiveness to increase their scores. This means that if CAI is adopted as a strategy for teaching and learning of keyboarding skills in the new normal, students will be exposed to the correct fingering and sitting position which will enhance their speed and accuracy development in keyboarding. This is in line with the opinion of Muraina, Adeleke & Rahaman (2011) that the effect of CAI in teaching and learning of keyboarding skills is high because it blends students on correct finer placement and building speed for optimal typing accuracy and production of mailable document in today's workplace. Alasoluyi (2015) also supported the view by stating that CAI move at the students' own pace and usually do not move ahead until they have mastered the skill which may be impossible in the traditional teaching and learning setting. In essence, the effect of CAI on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills in the new normal will be very high if adopted as a strategy of teaching and learning keyboarding skills.

The study also found that insufficient modern infrastructure, laboratory and technological tools affects teaching and learning of keyboarding skills, epileptic power supply, inadequate trained personnel; high cost of purchasing computer system, lack of skills on the part of users; lack of access to internet connectivity, lack of interest on the part of the learners, socio-economic status of parents, poor maintenance and lack of relevant software for teaching keyboarding skills are some of the challenges of teaching and learning using computer aided instruction on

students' acquisition of keyboarding skills as perceived by business educators with the highest means score of 3.48. This was in agreement with the submission of Oyedele, Ademiluyi and Olupayimo (2021) that some of the challenges of virtual teaching and learning are epileptic power supply, high cost of purchasing personal computer and lack of interest on the part of the learners, among others. It therefore, implies that if lasting solution is not provided to resolve the challenges, adopting CAI as a strategy for teaching and learning of keyboarding skills in the new normal may not yield the expected result. Hence, the effect of CAI on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills in the new normal will be very low.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it was concluded that adopting computer aided instruction (CAI) into teaching and learning of keyboarding skills in the new normal in public colleges of education in South west geopolitical zone of Nigeria will have a very high effect on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills. Similarly, to record a remarkable effect of CAI on students' acquisition of keyboarding skills, solution should be proffer to the recurring challenges.

Recommendations

In the light of this conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Computer aided instruction be adopted as a strategy for teaching and learning keyboarding skills in the new normal.
2. Lasting solution be proffer to the challenges facing teaching and learning of keyboarding skills using computer aided instruction be in the new normal.

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DIGITAL SKILLS NEEDED BY BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES FOR UNEMPLOYMENT REDUCTION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

[1]KEHINDE ENIOLA ELIZABETH (Ph. D)
Office Technology and Management Department
Moshood Abiola Polytechnic,
Abeokuta, Nigeria
E-mail: dotenny@yahoo.com

[2]OLATUNDE, ADEBOLA MORENIKE (Ph. D)
Department of Business Education,
Federal College of Education,
Abeokuta, Nigeria
E-mail:adebolaolatunde1070@gmail.com

Abstract

The study was conducted to ascertain the digital skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century in Ogun State, Nigeria. A self-designed four rating scale questionnaire titled: Digital Skills for Employment Questionnaire (DSEQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts and was also subjected to internal consistency testing using Cronbach Alpha, and the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.83. The population of the study comprised 470 Business education students: 165 males and 305 females in three colleges of education in Ogun State. The sample of the study comprised 216 (male 76 and female 140) respondents determined by using yaro yemen's model and proportionate sampling technique. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data and find answers to the research questions, while t-test was used to test the research hypotheses. Findings of the study suggested that e-commerce, digital business analysis and digital communication skills are needed for unemployment reduction among business education graduates. The results of hypotheses testing revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female business education graduates on e-commerce related skills; there is no significant difference in the mean score of business education graduates in federal and state owned colleges of education on digital business analysis related skills; and there is no significant difference in the mean score of business education graduates in public and private colleges of education on digital communicating skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century. It was recommended among others that colleges of education should continue to provide equal training for both male and female undergraduates to acquire e-commerce skills to be successful in the digital economy of the 21st century.

Introduction

Business education is a field of study concerned with how to teach business in vocational programs to students at various grade levels. In the opinion of Mansueto Ventures (2021),

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Business education is a term that encompasses a number of methods used to teach students the fundamentals of business practices. Business education provides undergraduates with the knowledge, skills, and techniques to start up and manage small businesses effectively. Business education offers various skills training in business studies, commerce, word processing, computer, entrepreneurship education, accounting, business management, economics, marketing and office technology management (OTM) among others at various grade levels. In the assertion of McVay, Murphy, and Yoon in Badawia, Reyada, Khamisa, Hamdana, and Alsartawia (2019), one of the major objectives of business education is to provide technical competencies to undergraduates to have a successful career as professionals. Similarly, Edokpolor and Egbri in Edokpolor and Owenvbiugie (2017:2) noted that the actual goals of business education shall be to:

1. Prepare students for specific career in office occupations;
2. Equip students with the requisite skills for job creation and entrepreneurship; and
3. Expose students with knowledge about business, including a good blend of computer technology, which incorporates Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Skill is a vital aspect of business education training. It is the ability to perform a task with the minimum outlay of time, energy, or both. For Green (2015), skill is a personal quality with three key features, namely: Productive (using skill is productive of value); Expandable (skills are enhanced by training and development) and Social (skills are socially determined). What characterized a skill as captured by Proctor and Dutta in Nakayama and Sutcliffe (2017:6) include:

A skill is not innate, but must be learned.
A skill behavior is goal directed (A skill develops in response to some demand imposed by the task environment).
A skill is acquired when the behavior is highly integrated and well organized. Through experience, the components of the behavior become structured into coherent patterns. Cognitive demands are reduced as skill is acquired.

Generally, skills are classified into hard and soft. Hard skills are also referred to as technical skills; such skills focus more on practical abilities. Kagan and Kindness (2021) defined hard skills as learned abilities acquired and enhanced through practice, repetition, and education. For Doyle (2020b), hard skills are teachable abilities or skill sets that are easy to quantify and are learned in the classroom, through books or other training materials, or on the job. They can also be acquired through training programs, apprenticeships, short-term training classes, online courses, and certification programs. Teachable as used here mean that hard skills can be develop them through dedicated training over a time period. In the opinion of Cheary (2020), hard skills are specific abilities. Meaning that such skills cannot be transferred from one industry to another.

There are various types of hard or technical skills. Some include: proficiency in a foreign language, degree or certificate; typing speed; machine and equipment operation and computer programming (Doyle 2020a). Others are coding ability, bookkeeping, computer and ICT skills, marketing and accounting. Furthermore, the Skill Competencies Matrix for Malaysia ICT Industry in Kapur (2018:3) grouped hard skills to:

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Creative multimedia: these are creative content pre-production, creative content production, creative content post-production and creative content management.
System design and development: these include, architectural design, system design and software engineering.
Information Technology: includes, software development, database management, technical support, IT consultancy, IT sales and marketing and IT management.
Shared services and outsourcing: this includes, contact center, human resources and finance and accounting.

Soft skills refer to behavior and personality abilities. They are self-developed attributes, which are not specific to develop for a particular task. According to Kagan and Kindness (2021), they are less tangible and harder to teach or judge quickly. Soft skills are also known as "people skills" or “interpersonal skills” because they allow an individual to get along with others easily, listening well, and engaging in interactive discussions. In general, soft skills enhances interaction among people. Examples are: creativity, persuasion, collaboration, adaptability, emotional Intelligence, communication, leadership, motivation, patience, negotiation, problem solving, teamwork, time management and many more.

Digital skills are defined as a range of abilities to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information (UNESCO, 2018). Digital skills goes beyond the ability to just use devices. It extend to production, selection, evaluation, sharing, and using digital devices, such as computers and smartphones as well as relevant applications. In this vein, the Cornell University in Burton (2016) defines digital skills as ‘the ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share, and create content using information technologies and the Internet. Chaouchi and Bourgeau (2020) noted that some digital skills are required to use and interact with technology in order to fulfil specific tasks, while others are required to design, create and maintain tools and solutions for different industries. The rapid growth of Internet access and connectivity has been attributed to the development of a digital economy across the world.

The relevance of digital skills in the 21st digital economy cannot be overemphasized. According to Burton (2016), digital age is expanding into all areas of our lives, and it is not just those who work in IT that will need to be alert of this change. Therefore, having digital skills that are highly valued now and shall continue to be in the future in the modern workplace, is very vital. According to UNESCO (2018), such skills enable people to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems for effective and creative self-fulfillment in life, learning, work, and social activities at large. In addition, UNESCO noted that they are linked to higher earning potential, and experts have predicted a growing number of jobs for people with advanced digital skills. By way of affirmation, Teltscher (2020) revealed that64 per cent of large enterprises and 56 per cent of small and medium-sized enterprises that recruited ICT specialists in 2018 reported that these vacancies were hard to fill. To this end, the Digital Marketing Institute (2017) had suggested that jobseekers require such specialized skills to help them stand out from the crowd. Because of the importance attached to digital skills, vocational institutions are already incorporating digital skills into their programs to match workplace requirements (Chaouchi and Bourgeau, 2020).

Graduates unemployment in the country is alarming. Many youths roam the streets each day looking for jobs that do not exist. Paradoxically, the demand for labor with digital skills exceed its supply. In this 21st century, the Bureau of Labor Statistics in Nakayama and Sutcliffe (2017) estimated that the demand for IT professionals, such as computer engineers, computer support specialists, database administrators, and systems analysts, would grow at rates

exceeding 70%. This suggest that industries and nations are having serious IT skills shortage. To find solution to this major problem, will eventually create an economic boom for individuals with IT skills which will translate into employment. Affirming this, Nakayama and Sutcliffe (2017) noted that firms will always use better talents and skills in critical areas of their business operations so they can become more competitive.

Depending on the type of career, one need additional skills that pertain to specific role. To this end, the Digital skills one may need in the workplace include original content creation, e-commerce, network and information security, digital marketing, social media marketing, digital business analysis, and data analytics. Others are communicating, programming and coding, human-robot interaction, voice control command systems, or virtual reality-based interactions with connected processes and artificial intelligence. The list of the type of digital skills is endless. However, as pertains to business education graduates, interest was given to e-commerce, digital business analysis and communicating skills

The internet has paved way for e-commerce activities to be successful. Many people are increasingly using the internet on a daily basis thereby providing a platform for the buying and sell of goods and services. E-commerce has the potential to overcome market barriers and connect consumers and businesses; especially as everything from shopping and banking to remote work have moved online. E-commerce skills are the ability to buy and sell goods or services on the internet. E-commerce skills facilitate online transactions such as transfer of money to complete transactions, display of products, and keeping in touch with customers among others. Roggio (2016) suggested some e-commerce skills to include: content marketing, data analysis, design, advertising, email marketing, marketing automation, and search engine optimization.

E-commerce is still much a fertile ground for job creation in Africa and in the world generally. As predicted in the report by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in Jacobs (2019), e-commerce could create around 3 million new jobs in Africa by 2025. In the assertion of the World Bank (2019), it can create jobs directly as well as through logistics services and other parts of the wider e-commerce ecosystem, improve household consumption and reduce inequality by bringing to people in rural areas the convenience, variety, and low prices enjoyed by urban dwellers, and contribute to economic growth by lowering the asymmetry of information and increasing economic efficiency. In the opinion of Shaw (2020),e-commerce has created employment opportunities in numerous sectors. By way of affirmation, AllAfrica (2020) noted that e-Commerce contributes more than 5% of total employment in China, as online purchases have become part of daily life for many Chinese households; and it also created job opportunities for many Nigerians within its logistics and supply value chain, who worked as last mile delivery agents, drivers and bike riders. Business education graduates can brace up to take job opportunities created by e-commerce by developing relevant skills.

Digital business analysis is another sellable skills highly needed in recent times. As Digital Skills Global (2021) noted, digital business analysis have become the hottest skills to have in the 21st Century. It is the skill that helps organizations to make the right decision by collecting and analyzing online mass business data. Pratt and White (2019) noted that Digital business analyst help guide businesses in improving processes, products, services and software through data analysis; they also bridge the gap between IT and the business to help and improve efficiency. They help organizations develop a digital ecosystem of technologies that will help drive digital transformation and business growth (Digital Skills Global, 2021). They are also responsible for overseeing the digital footprint of a company, which includes its website and social media content. Some notable digital business analyst skills include: Knowledge of agile development methodologies; deep understanding of digital technology; In-Depth business

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knowledge; familiarity with customer-centric business models; design thinking; data capture, analysis, and strategy; cloud computing; Infrastructure (intelligent) automation; Vast domain knowledge; Social media strategy and online advertising; and web development (Daily Excelsior, 2020).

Communicating skills are those skills which are needed by a person to pass and receive information effectively through speaking and writing. For Digital Skills Global (2021), Communication is the number one skill an individual must learn to become an entrepreneur. With the advancement in technology in recent times, communication have move online. In this regards, Doyle (2019) maintained that most organizations today use a wide range of online channels from their website to mobile chat to blogs to connect with current and prospective customers, employees, and other stakeholders. In a similar way, (Pachițanu, 2016) stressed that online media is evolving continuously, occupying a more and more important place in organizations' marketing communication and it is becoming a very strong communication channel. With the existence of digital-based information technology, communication in the digital era and online corporate communications has been strengthened (Rozalena, Sulaeman, Mulyati and Gunawan, 2020).

Online communication involves the use of emails, social media, blogs and websites to relate with other persons or businesses; and it therefore requires skills in these areas. Some essential abilities here are **content marketing, digital advertising, data-driven marketing, search engine optimization (seo) and social media skills. it also include** the ability to have a clear, concise, objective, consistent, complete, relevant, and understanding of audience knowledge; and share content information online using online platforms. Individuals who have the understanding of how to effectively utilize these technological abilities have advantage. As Doyle (2019) noted, employers across industries are looking for digital communication professionals with a variety of specific skill sets. These individuals are highly need by business organizations for everything from creating online brand assets to building an engaged social media audience with the hope of promoting sales and increase profits.

Business education graduates considered in this study are basically male or females studying in public and private institutions. To this end it will be necessary to consider these variables in the study. For Borgonovi et al., in Verkroost, Kashyap, Garimella, Weber and Zagheni (2020) gender gaps disfavoring women in Internet access and basic digital skills can be sizeable, especially in less developed countries, gender gaps in high-level digital skills, such as those required to work in jobs in the information technology (IT) sector, are thought to be even larger in most countries. Similarly, Pawluczuk, Yates, Carmi, Lockley and Wessels (2020) found that ICT infrastructure often fail to reach women and therefore the digital gender gap persists. These findings can only be verified through an empirical study which this study intend to do.

Problem of the study

With the high level of unemployment which has been worsen by the social distance syndrome brought about by COVID-19 pandemic in the country, it will be even more difficult for graduates to get job and fit into the digital economy of the 21st century without digital skills. As Teltscher (2020) noted, a large number of activities related to work, education, caring, shopping, socializing and other pastimes have been moved from the physical to the virtual world. Thus, a lack of digital skills opens citizens up to personal, social and financial risks; and limits their ability to operate as fully informed active citizens in a growingly digital society (Pawluczuk, Yates, Carmi, Lockley and Wessels, 2020). Therefore, being a person with digital skills, in the giving current economic situation, has never been more lucrative. It is on this basis that the study was conducted to ascertain the digital skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century

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Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the e-commerce skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century?
2. What are the digital business analysis skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century?
3. What are digital communicating skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses guided the study and were tested at 0.05 Alpha level of significant:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female business education graduates on e-commerce skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean score of business education graduates in federal and state owned colleges of education on digital business analysis skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean score of business education graduates in public and private colleges of education on digital communicating skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. A self-designed four rating scale questionnaire titled: Digital Skills for Employment Questionnaire (DSEQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts and was also subjected to internal consistency testing using Cronbach Alpha, and the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.83. The population of the study comprised 470 Business education students: 165 males and 305 females in three colleges of education in Ogun State. The sample of the study comprised 216 (male 76 and female 140) respondents determined by using yaro yemen's model and proportionate sampling technique. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data and find answers to the research questions, while t-test was used to test the research hypotheses. For any of the item in the research questions to be answered to, the individual item mean must not be less than 2.50, and so with the grand mean of each research question. Similarly, for any of the null hypotheses to be accepted, the calculated t-value must be less than the critical t-value at 0.05 level of significant, otherwise rejected.

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Results

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the e-commerce skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century?

Table 1: *the mean and standard deviation score on e-commerce related skills*

S/N	E-commerce skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction include the ability to:	Mean	Std	Decision
1	Make e-payments	3.27	0.47	Agree
2	Secure an electronic wallet	3.04	0.30	Agree
3	electronic funds transfer	3.56	0.49	Strongly Agree
4	supply chain management	3.13	0.34	Agree
5	online transaction processing	3.14	0.72	Agree
6	marketing automation	3.62	0.58	Strongly Agree
7	search engine optimization	3.29	0.45	Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.29**	**0.47**	**Agree**

Table1 show that item 1,2,4,5, and 7 were agreed to, while item 3 and 6 were strongly agreed to. Also, the grand mean of 3.29 was greater than the midpoint value of 2.50, indicating that e-commerce skills are needed for unemployment reduction among graduates.

Research Question 2: What are the digital business analysis skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century?

Table 2: *the mean and standard deviation score on digital business analysis related skills*

S/N	Digital business analysis skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction include the ability to:	Mean	Std	Decision
8	Manage electronic data	3.02	0.17	Agree
9	Social media strategy	3.19	0.43	Agree
10	design thinking	3.04	0.30	Agree
11	data capture	3.07	0.48	Agree

12	Manage vast domain	3.02	0.23	Agree
13	Interpretation data	3.10	0.30	Agree
14	Analysis data	2.90	0.37	Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.04**	**0.32**	**Agree**

Table 2 revealed that all the items were agreed to and the grand mean value of 3.02 was equally greater than the midpoint value of 2.50, meaning that digital business analysis skills are needed for unemployment reduction among graduates.

Research Question 3: What are the digital communicating skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century?

Table 3: *the mean and standard deviation score ondigital communicating related skills*

S/N	Digital communicating skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction include the ability to:	Mean	Std	Decision
15	Content organization	3.40	0.47	Agree
16	Email marketing	3.01	0.30	Agree
17	Online advertising	3.47	0.49	Agree
18	Maintain a chat group to connect with customers	3.13	0.34	Agree
19	Obtain feedback from customers	3.14	0.72	Agree
20	Answer customers satisfactorily	3.52	0.58	Strongly Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.27**	**0.48**	**Agree**

In table 3, item 15 to 19 were agreed to while item20 was strongly agreed to by the respondents. The grand mean of 3.27 was greater than the midpoint value of 2.50, suggesting that digital communicating skills are needed for unemployment reduction among business education graduates.

Research Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female business education graduates on e-commerce skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century.

Table 4: *t-test result* of male and female business education graduates *on* e-commerce *skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction* *df =214*

ITEM	Gender	N	Mean	Std.	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
1	Male	76	3.28	0.48	0.26	1.97	Accept
	Female	140	3.27	0.47			
2	Male	76	3.03	0.30	0.76	1.97	Accept
	Female	140	3.04	0.31			
3	Male	76	3.56	0.49	0.80	1.97	Accept
	Female	140	3.57	0.49			
4	Male	76	3.13	0.34	0.22	1.97	Accept
	Female	140	3.14	0.35			
5	Male	76	3.13	0.73	0.17	1.97	Accept
	Female	140	3.15	0.72			
6	Male	76	3.61	0.58	0.12	1.97	Accept
	Female	140	3.62	0.57			
7	Male	76	3.30	0.46	0.15	1.97	Accept
	Female	140	3.39	0.45			
	Grand Mean				**0.35**	**1.97**	**Accept**

In table 4 the grand mean of the calculated-t value of 0.35 was less than the critical-t value of 1.97. The null hypothesis 1 was retained. Meaningthere is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female business education graduates on e-commerce skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century.

Research Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean score of business education graduates in federal and state owned colleges of education on digital business analysis skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century.

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Table 5: *t-test result* of business education graduates in federal and state owned colleges of education on digital business analysis skills *on df = 177*

ITEM	Public Institns	N	Mean	Std.	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
8	Federal	124	3.04	0.21	1.66	1.97	Accept
	State	55	3.00	0.00			
9	Federal	124	3.14	0.41	1.33	1.97	Accept
	State	55	3.23	0.42			
10	Federal	124	3.07	0.34	1.32	1.97	Accept
	State	55	3.00	0.33			
11	Federal	124	3.01	0.50	1.58	1.97	Accept
	State	55	3.14	0.48			
12	Federal	124	3.04	0.30	1.16	1.97	Accept
	State	55	3.00	0.00			
13	Federal	124	3.08	0.28	1.13	1.97	Accept
	State	55	3.14	0.35			
14	Federal	124	2.95	0.37	2.67	1.97	Reject
	State	55	2.78	0.41			
	Grand Mean				**1.55**	**1.97**	**Accept**

Table 5 revealed that the grand mean of the calculated-t value 1.55 was less than the critical-t value of 1.97. Null hypothesis 2 was retained, suggesting thatthere is no significant difference in the mean score of business education graduates in federal and state owned colleges of education on digital business analysis skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century.

Research Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean score of business education graduates in public and private colleges of education on digital communicating skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century.

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Table 6: *t-test result on DF =214*

ITEM	Ownership	N	Mean	Std.	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
15	Public	179	3.25	0.47	1.40	1.97	Accept
	Private	37	3.37	0.49			
16	Public	179	3.05	0.33	0.89	1.97	Accept
	Private	37	3.00	0.00			
17	Public	179	3.55	0.49	0.70	1.97	Accept
	Private	37	3.62	0.49			
18	Public	179	3.13	0.34	0.44	1.97	Accept
	Private	37	3.16	0.37			
19	Public	179	3.18	0.71	1.81	1.97	Accept
	Private	37	2.94	0.77			
20	Public	179	3.63	0.56	0.34	1.97	Accept
	Private	37	3.59	0.64			
	Grand Mean				**0.93**	**1.97**	**Accept**

In Table 6, the grand mean of the calculated-t value 0.93 was less than the critical-t value of 1.97. The null hypothesis 3 was accepted and concluded thatthere is no significant difference in the mean score of business education graduates in public and private colleges of education on digital communicating skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century

Discussion

Results in Table1 show that the grand mean of 3.29 was greater than the criteria value of 2.50, which agreed with that e-commerce skills are needed for unemployment reduction among graduates. The finding mirrors the global trend of businesses in the 21st century which is largely aided by technology. It agreed that business activity are now easily carried out online and with the right skills an individual can be gainfully employed by e-commerce. The finding is in agreement with AllAfrica (2020) that online purchases have become part of daily life for many households; and it has also created job opportunities for many Nigerians within its logistics and supply value chain, who worked as last mile delivery agents, drivers and bike riders.

Similarly, in table 4 the grand mean of the calculated-t value of 0.35 was less than the critical-t value of 1.97. The null hypothesis 1 was retained. Meaning there is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female business education graduates on e-commerce skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century. This find explain the value of e-commerce to both males and females. E-commerce is a business open to all a sundry and can be profitable to the males as well as females. This finding is supported by the World Bank (2019) that it can create jobs directly as well as through logistics

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services and other parts of the wider e-commerce ecosystem, improve household consumption and reduce inequality by bringing to people in rural areas the convenience, variety, and low prices enjoyed by urban dwellers, and contribute to economic growth by lowering the asymmetry of information and increasing economic efficiency.

Table 2 revealed that all the items were agreed to and the grand mean value of 3.02 was equally greater than the midpoint value of 2.50, meaning that digital business analysis skills are needed for unemployment reduction among graduates. This finding captures the importance of analysis to a business. Proper business analysis enables the firm to make good decisions. More so, individuals who are capable of gathering, analysis, present and manage digital data are of great value to companies.

Furthermore, Table 5 revealed that the grand mean of the calculated-t value 1.55 was less than the critical-t value of 1.97.null hypothesis 2 was retained, suggesting that there is no significant difference in the mean score of business education graduates in federal and state owned colleges of education on digital business analysis skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century. By extension, the business education graduate from either federal or state owned collages of education can become a digital data analyst. These findings aligned with Digital Skills Global (2021) that digital business analysis have become the hottest skills to have in the 21st Century. Meaning it can create jobs for people including business education graduates who possess these skills.

Results in Table 3 suggested that digital communicating skills are needed for unemployment reduction among business education graduates. This remain a fact as communication is key to the success of any business organization. By way of agreement, the Digital Skills Global (2021) revealed that communication is the number one skill an individual must learn to become an entrepreneur.

Also, in Table 6, the grand mean of the calculated-t value 0.93 was less than the critical-t value of 1.97. The null hypothesis 3 was accepted and concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean score of business education graduates in public and private colleges of education on digital communicating skills needed by business education graduates for unemployment reduction in the 21st century. Every institution of learning, public or private is responsible for training the manpower need of the society; and training the manpower that can be gainfully be employ is an applause. Therefore, there is no distinction between the publicly and privately owned colleges of education especially when it comes to training students in business communications. The finding also revealed that digital communication is one area that can reduce graduates unemployment and graduate with these skills are looked for by companies. This agreed with Doyle (2019) that employers across industries are looking for digital communication professionals with a variety of specific skill sets. These individuals are highly need by business organizations for everything from creating online brand assets to building an engaged social media audience with the hope of promoting sales and increase profits.

Conclusion

Unemployment remains an evil that threatens graduates' social and economic welfare. With the trend of technology, it will be even more difficult for graduates to get job and fit into the digital economy of the 21st century without digital skills. As findings show, a large number of activities related to work, education, caring, shopping, socializing and other pastimes have been moved from the physical to the virtual world. Thus, the lack of digital skills opens citizens up to personal, social and financial risks; and limits their ability to operate as fully informed active citizens in a growingly digital society. Therefore, being a person with digital skills, in the giving current economic situation, has never been more lucrative. It is on this basis that the study carried out to ascertain the digital skills needed by business education graduates for

unemployment reduction in the 21st century. The study revealed that e-commerce, digital business analysis and digital communication skills are needed for unemployment reduction among graduates.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, it was recommended that:

1. Colleges of education should continue to provide equal training for both male and female undergraduates to acquire e-commerce skills to be successful in the digital economy of the 21st century.
2. Digital business analysis should be inculcated in the business education curriculum to enable institutions in the proper training of undergraduates to fit into the digital age.
3. Owners of colleges of education running business education program should provide funds for the purchase and maintenance of ICT facilities to the learning of digital communication skills.

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SECRETARIAL PROFESSION IN NIGERIA: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND THE FUTURE

TERVER M. KWAGHBO, PhD, Maben
Department of Vocational and Technical Education,
Benue State University, Makurdi – Nigeria
e-mail: tkwaghbo62@gmail.com

Abstract

The paper considered issues, challenges and the future of the secretarial profession in Nigeria. The concepts of secretary and profession were addressed, and the historical perspective of the secretarial profession in general, and in Nigeria in particular, was reviewed. It was observed that the profession has evolved over the years as a result of changes in commerce and industry, and technological advances in the society at large; such that the title 'secretary' has now changed to administrative professional. Six issues/challenges: performance/professional growth, rewards, hazards, training, the B.Sc.-HND dichotomy, and attitude of autocratic leaders were identified and analysed. Further, the future of the secretarial profession in Nigeria was examined and noted as bright since the profession is developing and expanding, thereby creating more employment opportunities in the world of work. Recommendations were that more occupational growth opportunities should be created; appropriate reward system should be imbibed; adequate security measures should be made for secretaries considering their exposure to hazards; training and retraining of secretaries should be enhanced to provide for adequate skills acquisition for the demands of secretarial work; and that the B.Sc.-HND dichotomy be removed.

Keywords: Secretary, Secretarial Profession, Issues and challenges, Future, Nigeria

Introduction

The secretarial profession is one of the areas of human endeavour that has contributed largely to the growth and development of commerce and industry in particular, and the society at large. Organizations all over the world, large or small, have depended on secretaries for their survival, growth and proper functioning due to the indispensable roles of secretaries. Secretaries organize and coordinate office tasks, maintain records and provide other services that assist in providing directions for decision-making and organizational performance. The term 'secretary', according to Zuin and Findlay (2014), is derived from a Latin word 'secretum', meaning keeper of secrets. A secretary is, therefore, a person entrusted with secret and private matters. Different people have considered a secretary in different ways. For example, Ubon and Abidoye (2015, p. 1) present that "a secretary is a mere servant; his position is that he has to do what he is told, and no person can assume that he has any authority to represent anything at all, nor can anyone assume that statements made by him are necessary to be accepted as trustworthy without

further enquiry". However, according to Professional Secretaries International, PSI, (cited in Adebayo & Akinyele, 2012), a secretary is an executive who possess a mastery of office skills, demonstrates the ability to assume responsibility without direct supervision, exercises initiative and judgment and makes decisions within the scope of assigned authority. A professional secretary performs tasks similar to an executive or administrative assistant, and the functions of a professional secretary are central to the success of every organization, since no office can easily function without a secretary (Adam 2015). Because of this, secretaries have been given different titles such as 'next in command to the boss', 'memory aid', 'protector of the boss', 'eyes and ears of an organisation', and 'company's image maker'. The importance of secretaries in organizations, business or social, can therefore, not be overemphasized.

A profession may be regarded as a body of knowledge clearly defined and well-organized, and acquired intellectually. This implies that for one to be a professional, one has to undergo the relevant course of study and acquire the requisite knowledge, skills and aptitudes to function in the area. The practitioners must also be guided by the ethical codes of conduct for members of the profession. In this regard, the secretarial profession is founded on well-grounded principles, an organized and well-articulated course of study, and a code of ethics which practitioners are expected to imbibe and observe. For this reason, Musa (2016) reasoned that various office workers perform some aspects of secretarial work, but not all the workers are secretaries; as secretaries have more responsibility for their work. Lobato, da Silva-Aleluia and da Costa (2013) assert that the scope of secretary's work nowadays has expanded and secretaries have to be increasingly well-trained and prepared. Relatedly, Adebayo and Akinyele (2012) posit that the professional secretary, in addition to coordinating the daily routines of an office and organising of office schedules, analyses prevailing situations, exercises judgment, technical knowledge and creativity. Modern professional secretaries are therefore now referred to as office managers by some people because of the work they do, their education and training, knowledge and skills acquired; and even expectations from their bosses and the general public. A professional secretary is no longer merely the assistant who sits behind the typewriter, takes dictations in shorthand, and attend to visitors.

Historical Perspective

There is no known evidence of the origins of the secretarial profession. However, Shulz (2013) avers that the Romans were the first to employ educated and prominent men as 'scribes' who took down dictation and also sometimes acted as trusted advisers to their principals. Oliveira et al (2021) indicate that the secretarial profession was documented around 3,300 years B.C., and the denomination was of scribes because they had some functions similar to the secretarial professionals. The scribes also had multiple knowledge at the time, such as languages, numerical reasoning, writing, operating tachygraphs, organizing archives, and constant contact with several areas.There was also the natural need for a superior to have an assistant. Mambo (2014) submits that during the Middle Ages, secretarial work was mostly carried out by clergymen hence the word 'clerk' is derived from the word 'cleric' which means of, or pertaining to, clergy. Clerical tasks later expanded into records keeping and bookkeeping as the merchant class began to rise, and clerical roles moved away from the church to trade and commerce (Evans, 2014). This is the source of the present-day title of clerical secretary.

The secretarial profession has evolved over the years with many changes occasioned by changes in the society, commerce and industry, and advances in technology. Historically, people drifted into secretarial work after studying basic shorthand and typing, often beginning in the

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typing pool and progressing from junior to senior secretary, then personal assistant. There were certainly no opportunities for advancement beyond the limited secretarial world (Zuin & Findlay, 2014). According to Mambo (2014), men dominated secretarial jobs until the late 1880s, and in the 1930s, women started to dominate the profession, as some were promoted from steno pools while others were employed as graduates of business colleges and secretarial training schools. The dominance of women during this period resulted from increase in employment opportunities as a result of industrial revolution, and the manufacture of typewriters which were easier to operate compared to the chisels used upon stone and styluses used on clay, wood or wax tablets that men used. There was also the thought that women had an aptitude for work requiring finger dexterity. More schools training typists were also opened and their students were mostly females; in addition to the fact that more females had completed high schools and were ready to find jobs that required literacy skills. Moreover, the office had become very routinized and women's passivity suited them for jobs that required them carrying endless routine tasks. Women were also said to be more conscientious than men and better able to keep business matters confidential. Also, when the World War II erupted in 1940, a vast number of men enlisted in the army and more openings were created for women to enter the labour force. Also, women were considered cheaper labour compared to men.

As commerce and trade expanded, wealthy and powerful people needed secretaries, confidants and trusted agents to handle correspondence on private or confidential matters, most particularly on matters of state (Emeti, n.d.). The increase in the number of secretaries prompted a search for a professional status. Shulz (2013) adds that the female secretaries also wanted to enjoy the pay previously enjoyed by their male counterparts. As secretaries began to assume various levels of responsibilities, researchers in 1934 determined a need to distinguish between different clerical roles, namely secretary, clerk, typist, stenographer, and personal assistant (Evans, 2014). A group of secretaries in America then formed an organization that would help to professionalize the occupation and in 1942, the National Secretaries Association (NSA), (now known as the International Association of Administrative Professionals, (IAAP), was formed. This body coordinates and standardizes practice in the secretarial profession. Secretaries are also known by various titles including administrative assistants, executive assistants, office managers, executive secretary, legal secretary, medical secretary, private secretary, etc. The NSA first administered the certified professional secretaries' examination, a standard of excellence for the profession, in 1951 (Usman, 2021).

In Nigeria, the secretarial profession has its roots from the introduction of formal business education programme in schools in the 1930s. The need for clerical and stenographic personnel by the British companies in Nigeria propelled the establishment of commercial schools or institutes, mostly by private individuals (Ikpe & Undie, 2014). These institutes offered secretarial training and prepared students for the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and Pitman's Examinations, all of Great Britain. The increase and demand for high quality secretarial personnel coupled with developments in education attracted and activated government interest in business education (secretarial education inclusive) which further led to the establishment of formal secretarial training programmes in higher educational institutions including universities. The Rivers State University of Science and Technology is credited as the first university to mount a degree programme in secretarial administration. However, other universities also offer specialized secretarial training programmes in Office Technology and Management (OTM) and other business education programmes. The Institute of Chattered Secretaries and Administrators of Nigeria was established in 1988, and in 2003, the Nigerian Institute of Professional Secretaries

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(NIPS) was established under Act 1990. The objectives of these bodies include to promote secretarial administration and business education in Nigeria; and to promote and maintain standards of competence of secretaries. The bodies therefore set standards, regulate, and conduct professional examinations for the practitioners in the secretarial profession. Despite all these effort and the number of secretaries produced in the various tertiary institutions in the country, there are still some challenges in the operations of secretaries in organisations.

Issues and Challenges

In principle, the secretarial profession is accorded due recognition and its importance is stressed in Nigeria. Section 3 of The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) recognises the importance of technical and vocational and education and training, TVET, (secretarial education inclusive) as a means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work. The policy also adds that the goals of TVET shall be to:

a) provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advance craft and technical levels;
b) provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development; and
c) give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals for self-reliance economically. (p. 16.)

Such submissions are not without implications. For instance, how can highly motivated, conscientious and efficient secretaries be produced in Nigeria? Do our educational/training institutions possess the capabilities to produce such secretaries? Are the secretaries through their training being provided with the necessary skills and competencies required for their assignments as well as making them adaptable to the changing technologies? Generally, are the secretaries properly prepared to offer the desired assistance to their superiors? These questions are the issues considered in relation to the secretarial profession in Nigeria.

Despite the importance of the secretarial profession in the society and its development in Nigeria, it is faced with certain challenges. These include the following, most of which are closely linked and interwoven;

i. Performance/Professional Growth: Many analysts observe that the world of work today demands more performance skills by employees (Okoye & Arimonu, 2016; Ekpoh, 2015). According to Zuin and Findlay (2014), new technology has changed the shape of many occupations in recent years and the secretarial occupation is one of them. Odia and Iyamu (2021) assert that technology appears to be the driving force behind the continuous rise in demand for performance skills in the way of doing office work. There is therefore a need for secretaries to acquire skills in order to be able to perform in today's office. In Nigeria, there seem to be too much emphasis on educational certificates possessed than skills acquired and actual work performance. Clark (2013) submits that there is concern that a large segment of today's workforce does not have the required skills as desired by employers. It should also be noted that most of our educational institutions place more emphasis on theoretical training against practical. Okoye and Arimonu (2016) aver that the curriculum of subjects with practical content are generally organized into an average of 67% for theoretical classes and 33% for practical. The practical courses that are supposed to expose students to real practical training for skill acquisition and performance have become a myriad (Obunadike, 2015). The graduates of these institutions and secretarial training programmes therefore, sometimes, acquire 'good' certificates but cannot perform practically on the job. The

secretarial profession is that which requires practical skills for adequate performance. On the other hand, those with practical skills and can perform, in most cases, do not have the opportunities for professional growth as they may be required to possess certain minimum educational qualifications before being elevated to certain positions. This hampers professional growth, and many with only practical skills retire as mere clerks and typists. Precisely, there seem to be no clearly articulated career structure in the secretarial profession. This could discourage some people taking career paths in the secretarial profession.

ii. Rewards: Reward is another issue of concern in the secretarial profession. This includes both placement and financial rewards usually attached to the secretarial cadre in organizations. Even though secretarial roles and responsibilities have changed, the secretary is still being considered as 'an assistant' to an executive. As an assistant, the rewards the secretary gets are usually not comparable to the executive and also commensurate with work done. Kobernovicz et al (2017) postulate that there is still a lack of knowledge about the evolution of activities that are currently performed by secretaries and this directly affects the identities and value of secretarial professionals and conclusively causes the remuneration of secretarial professionals to be lower while having more and more responsibility. This could discourage some people venturing into the secretarial profession.

iii. Hazards: Though there are hazards in every human endeavour, the hazards in the secretarial profession in an office organization appear to be very pronounced and to overweigh other office jobs. From history, secretaries were also performing the role of defending their superiors, hence the title 'protector of the boss'. This implies that the secretary is first exposed to some danger, before the boss. To add further, the secretary is the conserver of the organisation's secrets, as he/she handles and keeps all the organisation's records. Even in today's office organizations, the secretary usually occupies the front office, implying that the secretary is met first before the executive. It is also the secretary that usually conveys management decisions to third parties, some of which could be 'painful'. These are risky duties. Apart from exposure to physical danger, the modern technological equipment like the computer and telephone have their own hazards on continuous exposure to and use. These hazards have a negative effect on the secretarial profession.

iv. Training: Training and retraining of secretaries should be a continuous exercise in order to ensure currency with happenings in the secretarial profession and the quality of secretarial services desired. Also, the curriculum content of the secretarial training programme and the facilities/materials should be adequate in terms of quality and quantity; and in line with the current technological demands. It is also expected that training of secretarial students in educational institutions should reflect what is currently required in the world of work in terms of skills, attitudes, and equipment. This will place the recipients better to function in the world of work on graduation. However, secretarial education, just like education generally in Nigeria, is fraught with many challenges including inadequate funding, inadequate manpower, curriculum, modern infrastructure and facilities, and information technology (IT) services. It should be noted, also, that in some cases, the curriculum content does not include some essential courses/and or topics that should be offered. Ezeh, Ezeahurukwe and Ameh (2021), amd Ali, Lang, Zainol and Manser (2012) lament that the knowledge and skills learnt by Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduates in formal schools are not adequate to meet every demand of their daily activities in the world of work in the 21st century modern office. Okoli and Azhi (2015) observe that unemployment among graduates

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from Nigerian universities in Nigeria is a critical issue of the widening gap between university curriculum and the challenges of the work as the educational curriculum does not balance theoretical training with skill acquisition. This trend poses a lot of challenges to secretarial graduates in the labour market due to lack of skills.

v. The B.Sc.-HND dichotomy in Nigeria is also an issue in secretarial training. It should be noted that only a few universities in Nigeria offer specialized secretarial training. Majority of secretaries obtain training in polytechnics which award Higher National Diploma as the highest qualification. On graduation and employment, the HND holders in secretarial studies are usually placed below their degree holder counterparts. This could have a negative effect on choice and growth in a career in the secretarial profession.

vi. Another big challenge is the issue of autocratic leaders in organisations. The attitude and actions of these autocratic leaders, often times, scare potential secretaries from venturing into the secretarial profession. Secretaries by their calling, work closely with leaders in organisations. Often, these leaders are so autocratic in handling the operations of the organisations that their secretaries are at loss as to how to perform their legitimate duties to the satisfaction of their boss and progress of the organisation.

These issues and challenges are an indication that secretarial education is not adequately organised and delivered, and as such not capable of equipping recipients and practitioners with the requisite attributes for gainful employment, adequate performance and further education. Also, the operational environment is always not quite conducive for effective secretarial practice.

The Future of the Secretarial Profession in Nigeria

Changes in the society have caused the evolving roles of secretaries in organizations. It could be noted that the secretary of the past could always be seen with a notepad and pen to take dictations in shorthand, transcribe, then produce documents that were required. With the evolution of the organisations and technological advances, the secretarial professionals had to increase their knowledge to be able to perform multiple functions (Oliveira et al, 2021, Zuin & Findlay, 2014). The modern secretary in an organization has assumed the position and role of managers as a result of restructuring in organizations, eliminating some levels and adopting flatter structures. Secretaries can now demonstrate their abilities to perform tasks more demanding than traditional clerical duties.

The evolving roles of the secretaries have caused secretaries to perform various tasks in organizations, ranging from clerical tasks to executive functions. As a result, several types of secretaries have emerged, such as private secretary, personal secretary, administrative secretary, legal secretary, medical secretary and executive secretary. IAAP Editor (2014) submit that the 21st century office secretaries have transformed their titles, roles and responsibilities into what is called administrative professionals, encompassing administrative assistants, office coordinators, executive assistants, office managers, and various other titles. These roles and responsibilities require skills in management functions and technology such as project management, integrated computer software applications, organization and scheduling, internet/intranet communications and research, document preparation, storage and retrieval, with emphasis on electronic record keeping, customer service, and public relations.

The implication of this is that the scope of work of the administrative professionals have expanded beyond strictly clerical roles. Bogenschneider and Slack (2011) posit that the roles include purchasing office equipment and supplies, organizing special events, liaising with vendors and suppliers, interviewing, orienting and supervising other staff, writing and editing

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documents, handling correspondence, and maintaining computer files, directories, and databases. Amoor and Magaji (2015) emphasise that these have transformed the work place and placed high premium on technical abilities and interpersonal skills of professional secretaries. Zuin and Findlay (2014) cite France (2009) as positing that although advance in technology is changing the role of assistants in organisations, there will always be need for assistants as their role remains important. Zuin and Findlay then predict that the secretarial occupation will be kept as part of the labour market and will develop. Although more career paths have been opened for administrative professionals with different levels and different job requirements, job descriptions, as well as duties and responsibilities, it is required of professional secretaries to possess the technical abilities and skills in order to perform and remain relevant. Secretaries also have to develop attitudes that can enable them cope with the different behavioural styles of their bosses in organisations.

In Nigeria, Office Technology and Management (OTM) is the new nomenclature for secretarial studies. According to Taiye and Modupe (2020), the change in name of the programme was as a result of the review of the curriculum by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) in 2004 in order to make the secretarial studies programme to be more Information and Communication Technology (ICT) compliant. The curriculum was therefore expanded to include courses that could prepare students with appropriate office skills and competences to manage office technologies in line with the present-day ICT, and also prepare students for gainful employment in office occupations. This new design paves way for more employment opportunities in the still expanding secretarial profession.

Conclusion

The secretarial profession has evolved and expanded resulting to transformation of secretarial jobs into administrative professional jobs and responsibilities. The demand for highly skilled labour therefore continues to grow. The advances in technology with the development of complicated ICT machines and gadgets also require competent personnel with the required skills and technical knowledge to operate and maintain them. Lack of skills and talent mismatch is therefore a challenge in the secretarial profession. The need therefore arises for adequate training and encouragement for those involved and interested in careers in the secretarial profession. The continuous expansion of roles and responsibilities required of secretaries (or administrative professionals) portends that the profession is ready to engage more people with the required skills to work in organizations. This implies creating more employment opportunities in the world of work and career paths in the secretarial profession. It may, therefore, be said that the secretarial profession has a very bright future in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the above analysis and presentation, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. More opportunities should be created by employers for occupational growth. Performance based on skill should be accorded adequate recognition and opportunities provided for those without theoretical knowledge but possess practical skills to also grow beyond certain levels. Employers should develop a career structure for the secretarial profession.

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2. Rewards in the secretarial profession should be improved. Secretarial personnel with functional and relevant skills should always be rewarded and placed appropriately in organizations, instead of continuously working as assistants.
3. Provisions should be made for adequate security (physical, job, and emotional) of secretaries by employers to reduce their exposure to security challenges and other occupational hazards.
4. Continuous training and retraining of secretarial staff should be enhanced. The curriculum of the training programmes should always be reviewed and up-dated to accommodate emerging technologies and requirement in the secretarial profession, while practical training should also be improved. Training should also connect what is learned in schools to real life career scenarios, in conformity to Prosser's environmental theory of vocational education.
5. The dichotomy between the B. Sc. and HND holders should be practically removed and holders should be rated and placed strictly based on performance.

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DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SKILLS REQUIRED FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING OF BUSINESS EDUCATION COURSES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN PLATEAU STATE

TIMYA NANVEN NIMFEL
(timyanimfel@gmail.com
Plateau State Polytechnic Barkin Ladi,
Department of Office Technology and Management.

Abstract

The study examined digital technology skills required for teaching and learning of business education courses in tertiary institutions. The study was guided by one research question and one hypothesis of no significant difference. Descriptive survey design was adopted. The population of the study consisted of 54 lecturers drawn from tertiary institutions offering business education courses in Plateau state. The entire population was adopted as the sample in view of the small size. The main instrument for data collection was a four-point rating scale questionnaire, with 20 items, tagged; Digital Technology Skills Required for Teaching and Learning of Business Education Courses Questionnaire (DTSRTLBECQ). The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The mean was used to answer the research questions while the standard deviation was used to determine the closeness or otherwise of the responses from the mean. The null hypothesis stated was tested using the independent t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The finding revealed that lecturers required to a high extent, digital technology skills for teaching and learning of business education courses in tertiary institutions. The findings further revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of highly experienced and less experienced lecturers on the digital technology skills required for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions (t_{52} = 0.764, P>0.05). The study concluded that the design of effective learning environments and embedding digital technologies are critical. This can serve as catalysts for teachers to experiment new things, explore creative alternatives and reflect on their own practices. Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it was recommended among others that the authorities of tertiary institutions should ensure adequate implementation of policies that will propel the adoption, development and deployment of digital technologies for teaching and learning in the areas of improved infrastructure, adequate funding, re-training programmes and quality assurance.

Keywords: *Digital Technology; Digital Skill; Teaching and learning; Business Education*

Introduction

The digital world is increasingly penetrating the education and skills domain, with technology gradually being used to deliver education, knowledge and skills in new and

innovative ways. This penetration is coupled with future changes to the mode and pattern of work, which are themselves affected by the current climate of economic uncertainty, as well as by political shifts. Zakka, Bewaran and Moris (2020) report that the effective application of digital technologies in teaching will facilitate the realization of the stated objectives of the educational programme, by improving innovativeness, curiosity and creativity of the learners. Given the increased use of fast changing digital technologies in the workplace, new skills need have emerged. The rapid evolution of digital technologies and the increasing complexity that comes with its exploding potential, explains why digitalization in business education continues to receive special attention. Digital technologies also drive innovation in many different spheres of life. The innovative capacity of technology is very much conditioned by the level of digital skills of the population (Kyari, Adiuku-Brown, Abechi & Adelakun, 2018). No wonder there is a very strong correlation between education and skills and the uptake and use of digital technologies in various spheres of life.

Broadly, digital technologies include the use of personal computers, digital television, radio, mobile phones, robots etc. The term is used to describe the use of digital resources to effectively find, analyze, create, communicate, and use information in a digital context. This includes the use of web tools, digital media tools, programming tools and software applications. Similarly, Bates (2011) observes that digital technology includes all types of electronic equipment and applications that use information in the form of numeric code. This information is usually in binary code—that is, code that can be represented by strings of only two numeric characters (0s and 1s). Devices that process and use digital information include personal computers, calculators, automobiles, traffic light controllers, compact disc players, cellular telephones, communications satellites, and high-definition television sets.

Digital technology skill on the other hand involves the ability, confident, critical and responsible use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society. It includes information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cyber security), and problem solving (UNESCO, 2020). This definition emphasizes engagement with digital technologies, the growing importance of digital technology use for education purposes and the need to actively promote digital technologies in teaching and learning and seize technological opportunities so that education can keep up with other sectors. Similarly, Heinz (2016) views digital competence as the confident, critical and creative use of digital technologies to achieve goals related to work, employability, learning, leisure, inclusion and/or participation in society. Krumsvik in Ottestad (2014) provides a definition of digital skill specifically for teachers: “Digital skill is the teacher’s ability to use ICT with a good pedagogical-didactic ICT understanding and to be aware of how this might impact the learning strategies and educational formation of pupils”. This means that the teacher must make decisions about what kind of digital tools should be used in each teaching situation, how they should be used and why. In order to attain these skills, the

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individual needs to acquire basic training or knowledge levels related to the task to be performed whether through formal, informal or combination of the two.

Teaching and learning is an act whereby the teacher imparts or transfers knowledge, behaviour, skills, values or preferences to a learner and the learner acquires or modifies what is taught and learnt to a potential change in synthesizing information, depth of the knowledge, attitude or behaviour relative to the type and range of experience (Akpomi, 2018). It is a system involving the teacher, the learner and the learning task as well as the learning environment. Teaching therefore is a set of events, outside the learners which are designed to support internal process of learning, while learning is about a change: the change brought about by developing a new skill, understanding a scientific law, changing an attitude.

Business education involves teaching students the fundamentals, theories and processes of business. Education at this stage occurs at several levels including secondary education and higher education with the greatest activity occurring in the latter. Business education typically prepares students for an occupation in business or a business related field or a teaching career in academics (Dhaka in Inalegwu, 2018). Thus business education helps individuals to acquire saleable skills that will enable them fit into various business organizations or be self-employed in the absence of paid employment. Business education as a discipline is expected to expose its recipients to diversity of curricula, hence, it is that type of education that inculcate in its recipient attitudes, knowledge, skills, values that is required in the business world (Olupayimo, 2018). A well-articulated business education, if properly implemented with efficiently delivered infrastructure can help bridge the skill gaps existing between the school graduates and the requirements of the corporate business organizations thereby reducing the huge cost of human resource development in business organizations.

Digitalization has created a glaring need for business education lecturers to acquire relevant skills in order to bring up the caliber of graduates that will fit squarely into the digital work trends (Zakka, Bewaran & Moris, 2021). It is globally recognized that the use of digital technologies in teaching and learning is a relevant and functional way of providing education to learners that will assist in imbibing in them the required capacity for the world of work. In addition, effective application of digital technologies in teaching will facilitate the realization of stated objectives of any educational programme through improve innovativeness, curiosity and creativity of the learners.

However, a lot of challenges are witnessed in the utilization of digital technologies especially in public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Ezeabii, Ile and Ezugwu (2018) note that most lecturers and students of business education have not been making effective use of digital resources in their academic work. The hindrances and constraints come as a result of manpower shortage/wastage, shortage of technological facilities, lack of knowledge and use of computer aided instructions. Added to this is the fact that most digital facilities are not available in the tertiary institutions and where they exist, they are either not functional or inadequate and lecturers and students do not employ digital technologies for teaching or learning. Umoru (2015) reports that in

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Nigeria, many business education teachers lack skills in technology application as a result of which they face their work with fear and trepidation. Furthermore, the students of this generation are adept and superbly familiar with new technologies, especially social media platforms. This situation compounds teachers' problems as they are challenged the more to adopt and as a result, they become isolated and confused. It is against this backdrop that the study examines digital technology skills required for teaching and learning of business education courses in tertiary institutions in Plateau State.

Statement of the Problem

Effective teaching in any learning environment requires demonstration of various skills which invariably enable students to learn by improving their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. The business education lecturers are vital in the impartation of required skills to the students through the acquisition and possession of the required digital technology skills.

However, Nwokocha and Onwuchekwa (2014) observe that despite the enthusiasm towards the use of digital technology and the huge investments in the acquisition of these tools, the potential of increased instructional effectiveness and an economic financial investment, the use of digital technologies seem to have little impact in the class room because some business education lecturers are showing signs of apathy towards digital technologies. Similarly, Okoli and Wagbara (2016) observe that many of the teachers lack knowledge and skills to use digital technologies and in addition are not enthusiastic about the changes due to inadequate training to meet up with technological flux. There is also the fear of the unknown which leads to resistant behavior (Chukwumerije, 2012). Nwosu and Mbaezue (2016) confirm that there is dearth of business education teachers with adequate skills in digital technologies, with the result that non-specialists are often called upon to teach business education courses.

The problem of this study therefore is to identify the digital technology skills required for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions in Plateau state. This is in view of the seeming incompetence of the lecturers in teaching using digital technologies.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the digital technology skills required for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions in Plateau State.

Research Question

To what extent are digital technology skills required for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions in Plateau State?

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Research Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of highly experienced and less experienced respondents on the digital technology skills required for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions in Plateau State.

Methods

The descriptive survey design was used for the conduct of the study. The population of the study consisted of all lecturers in the departments of business education and office technology and management in tertiary institutions in Plateau state. These institutions include Federal College of Education, Pankshin (24), College of Education, Gindiri (11) and Plateau State Polytechnic, Barkin Ladi (19). The entire study populationof 54 was used for the study since the population was not too large. There was therefore no sampling. The instrument used was the Digital Technology Skills Required for Teaching and Learning Business Education Courses Questionnaire (DTSRTLBECQ). The questionnaire consisted of 20 items based on the purpose of the study and the research question. The instrument was validated by two senior lecturers in the Department of Business Education, Kwara State University Malete. A pilot study was conducted at the College of Education, Akwanga, Nassarawa state. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.73. Each of the items was assigned four response options of High Extent (HE-4 points), Moderate Extent (ME-3 points), Low Extent (LE-2 points) and No Extent (NE-1 point). A total of 54 questionnaires were filled and returned consisting of 37 (68.52%) highly experienced lecturers (10 years and above of service) and 17 (31.48%) less experienced lecturers (1 – 9 years of service). The data collected were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation. The mean was used to answer the research question while the standard deviation was used to determine the closeness or otherwise of the responses from the mean. Positive decision rule for this study was established at a mean of 2.50 and above while any mean less than that was regarded as negative. The null hypothesis stated was tested using the t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted when the observed probability value was greater than or equal to 0.05 level of significance. Where the calculated probability value was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

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Results

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent to which digital technology skills are required for teaching and learning business education courses

S/N	Item Statements	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remark
1.	Ability to use different internet connection options to connect to the web.	3.89	0.37	High Extent
2.	Ability to use interactive multimedia digital technologies for teaching and learning.	3.65	0.70	High Extent
3.	Ability to use the electronic mail (e-mail) or list server to mail teaching contents.	3.87	0.48	High Extent
4.	Ability to use the search engine such as yahoo, google, MSN to access teaching and learning contents.	3.63	0.78	High Extent
5.	Ability to use digital survey tools (SurveyMonkey, Zoomerang, etc.) for online survey and research.	3.20	0.83	Moderate Extent
6.	Ability to upload and download teaching and learning contents through file transfer service.	3.79	0.41	High Extent
7.	Ability to use digital student response systems for instant feedback during teaching and learning.	3.24	0.78	Moderate Extent
8.	Ability to use interactive e-books for educational purposes.	3.26	0.73	Moderate Extent
9.	Ability to use web applications such as web 2.0 tools for interactive teaching and learning.	3.72	0.56	High Extent
10.	Ability to use cloud computing for storing and sharing files.	3.63	0.71	High Extent
11.	Ability to select and guide students on selecting mobile educational apps for teaching and learning.	3.91	0.35	High Extent
12.	Ability to use social networking service to post teaching contents.	3.43	0.77	Moderate Extent
13.	Ability to use the wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi) to gain access to teaching resources via internet.	3.79	0.53	High Extent
14.	Ability to use collaborative services to post teaching contents.	3.31	0.64	Moderate Extent

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15.	Ability to organize online conferences and discussion groups with students on the web.	3.59	0.77	High Extent
16.	Ability to use accessibility features of mobile devices such as voiceover, speak selection, zoom etc to view or listen to teaching contents.	3.48	0.61	Moderate Extent
17.	Knowledge of file systems, data security and cryptography in databases.	3.80	0.56	High Extent
18.	Ability to create hypertext and hypermedia pages for education use.	3.06	0.86	Moderate Extent
19.	Ability to use web database programming using PHP.	3.26	0.78	Moderate Extent
20.	Ability to use web components such as plug-ins, applets or add-on for teaching and learning.	3.02	0.96	Moderate Extent
Weighted average		**3.53**	**0.66**	**High Extent**

Table 1 above shows the responses of lecturers on the digital technology skills required for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions. The result revealed that all the digital technology skills items outlined were required to a high extent for teaching and learning of business education courses in tertiary institutions in Plateau State with a weighted average mean of 3.53. Items 5, 7, 8, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19 and 20 were however required to a moderate extent with mean scores of between 3.02 to 3.48. All the 20 items have standard deviation scores ranging from 0.37 to 0.96. This means that the responses of the respondents are not wide spread as they are close to the mean. This implies that digital technology skills are required to a high extent for teaching and learning of business education courses in tertiary institutions in Plateau State.

Test of Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of highly experienced and less experienced respondents on the digital technology skills required for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions in Plateau State.

Table 2: Summary of t-test of the difference between the mean responses of highly experienced and less experienced lecturers on the digital technology skills required for teaching and learning business education courses

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	p-value	Decision
Highly experienced	37	3.65	0.47				
				0.764	52	0.447	NS

Less experienced	17	3.58	0.20

Source: Field survey, 2020

P>0.05

The data in Table 2 reveals that there are 37 highly experienced lecturers and 17 less experienced lecturers. The response of highly experienced and less experienced lecturers indicated that digital technology skills are required to a high extent for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions ($\overline{X}$ = 3.65; SD = 0.47) and ($\overline{X}$ = 3.58; SD = 0.20). Their responses are close to the mean as the standard deviations are very low. The table reveals that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of highly experienced and less experienced lecturers on the digital technology skills required for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions (t_{52} = 0.764, P>0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of highly experienced and less experienced respondents on the digital technology skills required for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions in Plateau State was not rejected. This implies that highly experienced and less experienced lecturers did not differ in their responses regarding the digital technology skills required for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions.

Discussion of Findings

The study sought to determine the extent to which digital technology skills are required for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions in Plateau State. The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of highly experienced and less experienced respondents on the digital technology skills required for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions in Plateau State. The result showed that ability to use different internet connection options, interactive multimedia digital technologies, electronic mail (e-mail) or list server, search engines and file transfer services were required to a high extent. Other digital skills required to a high extent are ability to use web applications, cloud computing, mobile educational apps, wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi), ability to organize online conferences and knowledge of file systems and data security. Also the finding revealed that ability to use digital survey tools, digital student response systems, interactive e-books, social networking services, collaborative services, accessibility features of mobile devices, ability to create hypertext and hypermedia pages, ability to use web database programming and ability to use web components were required to a moderate extent for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions. The findings further revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of highly experienced and less experienced lecturers on the digital technology skills required for teaching and learning business education courses in tertiary institutions (t_{52} = 0.764, P>0.05).

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This finding corroborates that of Zakka, Bewaran and Moris (2021) who maintain that the knowledge and skills which business education lecturers require at present must reflect the growing use of digital technologies. This will aid in imparting the needed skills to students who can function effectively in a knowledge-driven economy. Heinz (2016) expresses a similar view and maintains that digital competence involves the confident, critical and creative use of digital technologies to achieve goals related to work, employability, learning, leisure, inclusion and/or participation in society. This means that the teacher must make decisions about what kind of digital tools should be used in each teaching situation, how they should be used and why.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the design of effective learning environments and embedding digital technologies are critical. This can serve as catalysts for teachers to experiment new things, explore creative alternatives and reflect on their own practices.

Recommendations

1. The implementation of policies that will propel the adoption, development and deployment of digital technologies for teaching and learning is critical. This can be achieved through regular review of the curriculum, improved funding for the provision of adequate teaching and learning equipment and the necessary infrastructure for teaching using digital technologies.
2. There is need for the systematic re-training of teachers to cope with the trend of digital technologies. Individual teachers should also make efforts towards self-analysis for personal skill development in the use of digital technologies. This can be done through job related re-skilling and up-skilling programmes, so as to help teachers acquire the necessary digital technology skills.
3. Management and heads of departments should ensure that technicians are always at hand to assist students and teachers who may encounter technical difficulties that may hinder and slow-down the teaching and learning process. Similarly, technologists will help the teachers with some difficult applications where necessary, as it may not be possible for an individual lecturer to be an expert in all aspects of digital technology applications.

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EXTENT OF UTILIZATION OF E-MAIL MARKETING TECHNOLOGY BY SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE BUSINESS OPERATORS IN ABIA AND ENUGU STATES, NIGERIA

[1]DR. ENEOGWE VICTORIA NWAMARA
National Open University Of Nigeria, Umudike Study Centre
eneogwev@gmail.com
08030874775

[2]PROF. BASIL O. NWOSU
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki
08033377261

Abstract

This study determined the extent of utilization of e-mail marketing technology by small and medium scale business operators in Abia and Enugu States using descriptive survey research design. One research question and a hypothesis were developed to guide the study. The population for the study consisted of 272 selected registered Small and Medium scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Abia (160) and Enugu (112).The entire population of 272 registered SMEs were studied, hence, there was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was a 10-item structured questionnaire titled: "Extent of Utilization of E-mail marketing Questionnaire (EUETO). The instrument was validated by three experts; the reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha reliability technique which yielded an overall of 0.89. Data for the study were collected by the researcher and research assistants. Out of the 272 copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents, 253 copies were duly completed and retrieved which indicated a high rate of return of 93%. The data collected were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation for answering the research question while the hypothesis was tested using the t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that the level of utilization of e-mail marketing technology for marketing products and services by small and medium scale business operators is low. There was no significant difference in the mean rating of the responses of SMEs operators on the extent of utilization of e-mail marketing technology by small and medium scale business operators in Abia and Enugu States. Based on the findings, the study recommended that federal and state government should adopt the various e-marketing technologies and package them into the training programme of the intending SMEs operators and the existing ones in order to enhance technology adoption for better marketing practice and economic sustainability. Stakeholders such as Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and National University Commission (NUC) in -charge of education reform and development in the country should be provided with the findings of this study to strengthen the curriculum of Business education in tertiary institutions in the country. There should be a collaborative effort of both the body of SMEs with Cooperate Affairs Commission and Ministry of Commerce and Industry to plan a periodic seminar/workshop to create more awareness on the relevance of technology adoption for better e-marketing practice in Nigeria.

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Introduction

The emergence of internet and associated technology-enabled science –to –face interface necessitated a new market era. The new era of marketing has shifted from traditional roots of television, print and radio marketing to electronic marketing "having online focus". Electronic marketing refers to the application of marketing principles and techniques via electronic media and more specifically the internet. According to Rune (2011) E-marketing is defined as a process by which a company is positioned in a specific way to achieve stated marketing objectives. It is a marketing logic by which businesses hope to create customer's value and achieve profitable customer relationship. Rune (2011) posited that the most important step to an effective e-marketing campaign is the proper planning to ensure that all marketing objectives, messages and comprehensive execution plan are clearly defined to deliver the optimal performance results. Rune further buttressed that e-marketing technology is the strategic process of creating, distributing, promoting and pricing goods and services to target market over the internet or through digital tools.

There are various e-marketing technologies identified and used by businesses online such as search engine, social media, interactive online adverts, e-mail, online directories, affiliated marketing, viral marketing websites and others (Small-Bizconnect, 2015). E-mail marketing is one of the components of e-marketing. According to Agomuo (2005), Electronic mail (E-mail) is a form of information interchange in which messages are sent from one personal computer or computer terminal to another via modems and a telecommunication system. In others words, e-mail are a short form for electronic mail, it is information stored on a computer that is exchanged between two users over telecommunication. More plainly, e-mail is messages that contain text, files, images or other attachments sent through a network to a specific individual or group of individuals. E-mail marketing is one of the oldest and the still the most powerful e-marketing strategy that has taken advantage of customer's most prolific touch point with the internet Electronic mail marketing was discovered to be first form of e-marketing that consists of e-mail marketing messages to potential customers modeled after direct e-mail. (Raoofi, 2012). Fariburzi and Zahedifard (2012) averred that e-mail marketing is a powerful marketing channel, a form of direct marketing as well as a digital marketing that uses email to promote individual business's products or service.

Thus, the term e-mail marketing is usually used to refer to the following:

i. Sending e-mail messages with the intention of enhancing the relationship of a business owner with its current or previous customers, to obtain customer loyalty and repeat business
ii. Sending e-mail messages with the aim of acquiring new customer or convincingly make current customer to purchase something immediately.
iii. Integrating advertisement in e-mail messages sent by other companies to their customers (Fariburzi & Zahedifard, 2012). E-mail has become such a popular marketing tool for businesses partly because it forces the user to take some kind of action; an email will sit in the inbox until it's read, deleted or archived. Dehkordi, Rezran, Rahman,Fouladvanda and Jouya (2012) submitted that e-mail marketing is a very important aspect of electronic marketing that offers many practical benefits over traditional direct mail at lower cost which signifies it is possible to send better messages audience as part of the campaign.

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Zorana (2004) stated that there are three major aspects of e-mail strategy which include:

1. **Opt-in-mail:** This happens when an internet user deliberately signs up to receive commercial e-mail about topics of internet. This is an approach to e-mail marketing in which customers confidently request to be included in an email campaign or newsletter. Opt-in mail is widely acceptable type of e-mailing. Utilizing only opt-in e-mail for sending marketing messages as a form of permission marketing.
2. **Opt-out e-mailing:** This happens where customers are automatically added to the mailing list. It is known to be a type of email widely used though not recommended and in some situations are illegal. It is also an approach to email marketing in which customer are included in e-mail newsletters or campaigns until they specifically request not to be subscribed any more.
3. **Spam:** conversely in using opt-in emails enable where the receivers have voluntarily accepted to receive commercial email about a topic of interest, some companies are not appropriately using internet mailing lists to broadcast the same message to large number recipients who do not request for it. This type of unsolicited commercial emailing is called spamming, or spam. It is an unsolicited "junk" e-mail sent to large numbers of people to boast production or services. It is also known as inappropriate promotional or commercial posting to discussion groups or bulletin boards.

Thus e-mail marketing software provides businesses with an e-mail list that has been segmented on the bases of so many factors such as: customers' likes and dislikes, length of time addresses that have been on the list spending behaviours and other important criteria. E-mail are specifically created and then sent out to target members of the e-mail list, providing them with personalized e-mail that provides information with personalized and details which they are interested in or have requested. According to Forostan (2015) this helps in promoting trust and loyalty to a company hence also insures sales.

Furthermore, e-mail marketing campaign for example start with a welcome letter, which not only give valuable information about the company but can also request for key information concerning new clients making it easy to put the individuals in the right categories for future marketing endeavours (Forostan, 2015). Newsletters are e-mail that is sent to provide information and keep customers breasted. It is not necessary for them to carry promotion rather it ensures that a customer is always contacted or pit on the known with the brand. Other e-mail campaign includes sending out announcements on products or services, coupons for future purchasing and lots more (Forostan, 2015).

E –mail marketing is one of the easiest, most effective and affordable ways to grow any business. This is because it keeps the customers and prospects coming back, in terms of more products already bought. Thus the business owner or entrepreneur can make amends as at when due and satisfy its customers more, by using attractive, professional-looking e-mail communications to stay in regular touch with customers and prospects, in order to build strong relationships. Email is the most personal advertising medium in history (Babalola et al, 2014).

Etuk, Etuk and Baghebo (2014) opened that the definitions of SME are usually cleared in each country, based outline role of SME in the economy, policies and programs designed by particular agencies or institution empower to develop SME. For instance, a small business in the developed economic of countries like Japan, Germany and United State of America (USA), may be a medium or large scaled business in developing countries economy like Nigeria. Thus in Nigeria SMEs abound representing about 90 percent of the manufacturing industrial sectors and

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contribute approximately one percent of National Cross Domestic Product (NCDP) (Oyeyinka in Okoli and Ezenwafor, 2015). A proper definition of SMEs is important to distinguish between the different categories of the production units in terms of factor like, number of employees, the value of fixed assets, production capably, basic characteristics of the inputs, level of technology used, capital employed, and management characteristics (Sali, 2014).

Odubanjo (2000) stated the role of SMEs in economic development to include: technological industrial development, employment generation, technology acquisition, capacity building, promotion of economic growth increased standard of living, industrial dispersal or spread, serving of large scale industries expert, promotion, structural transformation of rural areas, flexibility and low take off requirement. Therefore, SMEs in Nigeria context is seen as the source of economic growth, dynamic and flexibility, in fact the backbone of the economy. Small and medium scale enterprise.

The small business sector is recognized as an integral component of economic development and a crucial element in the effort to lift countries out of poverty.

Sauser (2015) affirmed that small and medium scale businesses are during force for economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction in developing countries and the means through which accelerated economic growth and rapid industrialization has been achieved.

Amanda (2016) postulated that marketing has widened its scope as technology has freed small business from the restrictions of products when it comes to reaching new and existing customers, hence internet/ electronic marketing ranges from simple International Websites, to adverting and others.

Amanda (2006) continued that online product sales and email marketing are becoming more effective with low cost method to reach a large group of people with newsletters, coupons or business updates. Though e-marketing appears to be a new concept for firms operating in developing economics, its full adoption by small and medium scale business will be an enablement emerging from e-marketing technologies.

Amanda (2016) concluded that e-marketing is one sure way by which small and medium scale business operates can secure a plane for themselves in the 21st century of commerce and industry.

Statement of Problem

E- Marketing is an Information Communication Technology (ICT) device for facilitating business operations for individual and organization at both local and international levels. E-marketing creates an opportunity for businesses to explore the great benefits that the internet has brought, such as providing pre-sales technical assistance and after sales support service to few customers, collecting market data, promoting their service and products, hasten business operators, better customer relations, facilitative innovation (Kother and Armstrong, 2010). It is surprising however, to note that despite the numerous benefits obtained from the emergence and adoption of e-marketing much small scale business are still unable to effectively utilize the various component of e-marketing strategies in their operations.

James (2013), noted that the knowledge of these benefits is not known to most SMEs hence the small adoption in developing country.

Odgbo (2011), stated that there has been little awareness on the relevance of e-marketing strategies despites the increase fame of the internet. According to Adebeye (2007), SMEs in Nigeria are yet to begin effective utilization of the marketing innovation that would ensure their growth and survival.

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Nwosu and Udemba (2016) submitted that there is widely speculation by social commodities and stakeholders that most SMEs operators in Nigeria hardly embraced the immeasurable advantage of the internet in their business.

Nwachukwu (2010) bland the low productivity and high mortality rate of SMEs to low access to market., poor information, weak business linkage and low level of e-marketing application usage has deprived the SMEs the access to engage in the refined and global economic business. The situation has been of great concern to the government, citizenry, operators, practitioners and the organize private sector groups. It was based on this background that this study was carried to examine the extending utilization of e-marketing by small and medium scale business operators in Abian and Enugu states of Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the extent of utilization of email marketing technology by small and medium scale business operators in Aba and Enugu States.

Research Question

The study answered the research question below:

1. To what extent do small and medium scale business operators in Abia and Enugu States utilize e-mail for marketing their products and services?

The data for answering research question one is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondents on extent to which Small and Medium Scale Business Operators in Abia and Enugu States Utilize E-Mail for Marketing their Products and Services.

S/N	Item Statements	$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks
1	E-mail is used in my company to send commercial messages about product or services to my customers.	2.37	0.89	LU
2	My company utilizes internet mailing lists in broadcasting unsolicited junk messages to a large number of people	2.33	0.77	LU
3	Opt-out e-mail is used in my company where customers are included in e-mail campaign without them registering for it.	2.26	0.92	LU
4	Opt-in e-mail are used in my company where customers are included in e-mail campaign	2.42	0.87	LU
5	e-mail messages are used in my company to facilitate business relations with previous, current and prospective customers	2.23	0.95	LU
6	My company acquires new customers through utilization of e-mail messages.	2.43	0.86	LU
7	My company uses e-mail in marketing sales of products and services.	2.33	0.97	LU
8	Through the use of e-mail my company promotes sales of products and services.	2.51	0.79	MU
9	E-mail helps my company to customize messages for its customers	2.45	0.87	LU
10	E-mails are used in my company for promotional marketing transactions.	2.33	0.99	LU

Note: **X** = Mean, **SD** = Standard Deviation, **MU** = Moderately Utilized; **LU** = Less Utilized; n = 253

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The data presented in Table 1, showed that the mean ratings of the respondents on 9 out of the 10 items in the Table had mean values that ranged from 2.26 to 2.45 which are within the boundary limit of 1.50 – 2.49 on 5-point rating scale. This indicates that the 9 identified items of e-mail are "less utilized" by operators of small and medium scale businesses for marketing their products and services in Abia and Enugu States. The mean value of the remaining item in the table, specifically item is 2.51 which fall within the boundary limit of 2.50 – 3.49 on 5-point rating scale. This signified that item 8 (the use of e-mail my company promotes sales of products and services) is "moderately utilized" by operators of small and medium scale businesses for marketing their products and services in Abia and Enugu States. The standard deviation value of the 10 item range between 0.77 to 0.99 which indicates that the responses of the respondents are close to one another.

Research Hypothesis

In line with the specific purpose of the study the null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the SMEs operators or the extent of utilization of e-mail for marketing their products and services based on educational qualification (Pre-Degree and Degree).

The data for testing hypothesis one are presented in Table 2

Table 2: the t-test Statistics of the Mean Ratings of the responses of SMEs operators on the extent of utilization of E-mail for marketing their products and services based on their educational qualification (pre-degree and degree)

S/N	Item Statements	$\bar{X}_p$	SD_p	$\bar{X}_p$	SD_D	P-value	Rmk
1	E-mail is used in my company to send commercial messages about product or services to my customers.	2.32	0.86	2.42	0.67	0.34	NS
2	My company utilizes internet mailing lists in broadcasting unsolicited junk messages to a large number of people	2.16	0.65	2.49	0.85	0.00	S*
3	Opt-out e-mail is used in my company where customers are included in e-mail campaign without them registering for it.	2.23	0.90	2.29	0.95	0.64	NS
4	Opt-in e-mail are used in my company where customers are included in e-mail campaign	2.31	0.80	2.53	0.71	0.11	NS
5	E-mail messages are used in my company to facilitate business relations with previous, current and prospective customers	2.24	0.99	2.22	0.92	0.83	NS
6	My company acquires new customers through utilization of e-mail messages.	2.30	0.88	2.56	0.72	0.04	S*

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7	My company uses e-mail in marketing sales of products and services.	2.32	0.92	2.34	0.71	0.86	NS
8	Through the use of e-mail my company promotes sales of products and services.	2.40	0.80	2.62	0.97	0.03	S*
9	E-mail helps my company to customize messages for its customers	2.31	0.79	2.60	0.94	0.02	S*
10	E-mails are used in my company for promotional marketing transactions.	2.17	0.98	2.49	0.76	0.03	S*

Note: Level of Sig.= 0.05, **NS** = Not Significant, **S*** = Significant; Pre-degree and Degree

Pre-degree (n1 = 103) **Degree** (n2 = 150)

The data presented in Table 2 above show that the p-value of items 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7 are 0.34, 0.64, 0.11, 0.83 and 0.86 respectively which are all greater than 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there are no significant differences in the mean ratings of the responses of SMEs operators with high and low educational qualification on the extent of utilization of the five items of e-mail for marketing their products and services. Thus, the hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the SMEs operators with high and low educational qualification is not rejected regarding the 5 items. On the other hand, the p-values of the remaining five items, specifically items 2, 6,8,9 and 10 are 0.00, 0.04, 0.03, 0.02 and 0.03 respectively which are in case less than 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there are significant differences in mean ratings of the responses of SMEs operators with high and low educational qualification on extent of utilization of the five items of e-mail for marketing their products and services in the same area. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean ratings of the response of the two groups of respondents is rejected regarding the five items.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted to carry out the study. Survey research design in the opinion of Ali (2006) is a descriptive study, which uses the sample data of an investigation to document, describe and explain what is in extent or non-existent, on the present status of a phenomenon being investigated. Onojetah (2019) in Ponto, (2015) noted that descriptive survey research strategies using questionnaire with numerically rated items and qualitative using open-ended questions or both strategies for data collection. This study was carried out in Abia and Enugu states, Nigeria. The population consisted of 272 selected registered SMEs in Abia (160) and Enugu (112); hence there was no sample. The instrument for data collection for the study was a structured 10 item questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured on a 5- point rating scale of very highly utilize (VHU) Highly Utilized (HU), moderately utilized (MU), Less utilized (LU) and very Less Utilized (VLU) with corresponding values of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The instrument was face –validated by three experts of two Business educators and Measurement and evaluation of Ebonyi State University Abakaliki and Imo State, University, Owerri, Cronbach, Alpha rehability method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded a coefficient of 0.89

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Data for the study were collected with the help of six research assistants through effective monitoring techniques, out of 272 copies of the questionnaire that were administered respondents, 253 copies were duly completed and retrieved which indicate high rate of return 93%. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research question while T-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. To obtain the decision rule thus any item with mean value of 2.50 and above was interpreted as "accepted" while those less than 2.50 were interpreted as "rejected". The hypothesis of no significance difference was accepted when that critical (t-tab) or the value was greater than the t- critical.

Discussion of Findings

The study identify from the research question that items of e-mails are less or lowly utilized by small and medium scale business operators in Abia and Enugu States for marketing their products or services to customers, the use of e-mail in selling commercial messages about products or service to customers, the use of internet, mailing list in broadcasting unsolicited junk messages to a large number of people, opting –out e-mail in company where customers are included in e-mail campaign without their consent; the use of e-mail message in a company to facilitate business relationship with previous, current and prospective customers; acquisition of new customers through utilization of e-mail message, use of company e-mail in marketing sales of products and services the use of e-mail for helping company to customizes messages and the use of e-mails in a company for promotional marketing transactions. The study identified that high utilization of e-mail technology is hampered by lack of answers.

Odigbo (2011) affirmed that has been little awareness on the relevance of e-marketing strategies despite increase frame of the internet. Also supported that Nigeria SMEs are yet to begin effective utilization of the marketing innovation that would ensure the growth and survival. This Iddris (2012) submitted that the most common use of e-mail is for communication and the main reason for having a website is to showcase, basic information about product and service. The study identified the handicaps that hindered the effective e-marketing adoption by small and medium scale business operators; hence all of them fall within moderate utilization level. The test of hypothesis indicated there was no significant difference in the mean rating, of small and medium scale business operators on the extent of utilization of e-mail as an e-marketing technology with high or low educational qualification of the respondents. According to business dictionary (2017) qualification implies the competency of an individual in discharging his /her duties which shows the high or low educational qualification has no effect on utilization of e-mail by SMEs operators in marketing their products and services. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there are no significant differences in the mean ratings of SMEs operators on the extent of utilization of e-mail as an e-marketing technology with high or low educational qualification was not rejected.

Conclusion

The study investigated the extent of utilization of e-mail marketing technology by small and medium scale business operators in Abia and Enugu States, Nigeria, the paper reviewed that despite the numerous benefits emanating from the emergence and adoption of e-marketing, many business organizations, most especially small and medium scale enterprises were still unable to effectively utilize the various components of e-marketing strategies in their operation.

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The paper also review that there has been little awareness or the relevance of e-marketing strategies despites the increasing fame of the internet.
However, it is noted the knowledge of these benefits were not known to most SMEs, hence the low level adoption in the developing countries such as Nigeria, Abia and Enugu states inclusive. The study concluded that the level of utilization of e-mail for marketing of products and service of SMEs operators in Abia and Enugu states is still low.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made that:

1. The federal and state government should adopt the various e-marketing technologies and package into the training programme of the intending SMEs operators and the existing ones in order to enhance technology adoption for better marketing practice and economic development.
2. Stakeholders such as Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and National University Commission (NUC) in-charge of education reform and development in the country should be provided with the findings of this to strengthen the curriculum of business education in tertiary institutions in the country.
3. The operators and staff of small and medium scale enterprises should be subjected to effect information technology (IT) training on their own or by relevant government agencies for an improved marketing performance.
4. Government should guarantee small and medium scale organizations security and reliability trust, and access to capital improved adoption of e-mail system in Nigeria market environment.
5. The firms needs to expire for their collaboration with third-party agents for web-hosting and other e-marketing related support and maintained services to improve e-marketing adoption among Nigerian SMEs.
6. There should be a collaborative effort of both trade union of the body of SMEs with cooperate affairs commission and ministry of commerce and industry to plan a period seminar/ worship to create more awareness on the relevance of technology, adoption for better e-marketing practice in Nigeria.

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USAGE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND ONLINE DATABASE FACILITIES BY BUSINESS EDUCATION LECTURERS FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Hadiza Nuhu Usman
hadiza.nuhu. usman@gmail.com
Department of Business Education,
School of Continuing Education,
Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola
P.M.B, 2146 Yola.
Adamawa State

Abstract

The study investigates the extent to which business education lecturers use ICT and online database resources for both teaching and research in Nigeria's North Eastern Zone schools of education. Two established research questions were answered by the study. A 0.05 alpha level was used to test two hypotheses. The study's research methodology was a descriptive survey. The population for the study was made up of one hundred ten (110) business education instructors from institutions of education that offered business education programs in North Eastern Zone. Since the complete population was used, there was no sampling done. An organized survey titled Level of ICT and Online Database Questionnaire (LUIDQ) was created by the researcher, and a Cronbach reliability coefficient of 0.86 was found. The results of the data collection were analyzed and showed that Business Education lecturers in colleges of education in the north-eastern zone are only minimally aware of ICT and database facilities for teaching and research; Mean rating and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected to answer the research questions; Independent sample t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that, despite the greater accessibility of high-quality electronic content, business education lecturers appear to have relatively negative attitudes toward using information and communication technology and online databases for their research and instructional delivery. According to the findings, the management of colleges of education is advised to seriously pursue the following recommendations, among others: awareness, accessibility, usability, and training. This could be accomplished by making computers available, establishing the required modern facilities, and ensuring internet connectivity, which will give lecturers the chance to stay up to date as well as educational development.

Keyword: *Information and Communication Technology facilities, Online Database, level and usage*

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Introduction

One vital aim of business education is to provide students with knowledge and skills that will make them functional members of the society. The basic way to do this is through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Olakulehin (2017) defines ICT as a collection of technologies used in the process of gathering, storing, modifying, retrieving, and sharing information in different forms. Additionally, the term describes the methodical use of computers and other technologies to gather, organize, process, store, retrieve, and broadcast information in order to facilitate an efficient interchange of information.ICT resources facilitate student learning, excite a variety of scientific phenomena, and generally inspire instructors and students. They also assist students become more adept at solving problems and promote deeper understanding (Selinger, 2014). The facilities comprise computer hardware, specialized software and application packages, peripherals, databases, and data banks. ICTs, electronic mail (e-mail), the World Wide Web (WWW), diskettes, video cameras, microphones, fax machines, audio and video recorders, and players are examples of ICT's (Andural & Ikyumen, 2016).The ICT facilities can be used in the classroom, particularly at the higher level of the educational system. In Nigeria, the Colleges of Education is a branch of higher learning tasked with preparing teachers for non-degree but high-quality professional certificates in education. It was noted that a large number of lecturers lacked ICT training and certification. Following this observation, a recommendation for a broader extension of intermediate education for intermediate lecturers was made with the intention of improving the quality of the current teaching staff (Isyaku, 2017).Computer education is now required in the new curriculum, which was introduced in October 2010 as a result of a review of the NCE curriculum. As part of their pre-service training, all education students are obliged to meet minimal technology criteria.

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) has identified lecturers in colleges of education as the major players in the growth of ICT skills and database use in research and teaching. ICT in the educational system is a vast, in-depth, and rapidly expanding topic of study, and it has the ability to provide users with greater interaction potential to develop their unique, intellectual, and creative abilities. Since the academic year 2004–2005, all lecturers in Nigerian institutes of education are required to be literate and proficient in ICTs and online databases. The right to work as a lecturer in the business education department of various institutions of education is granted legally by an ICT certificate, which serves as documentation of a person's professional qualification.

A vital component of vocational technical education that prepares students for careers in business is business education. To be good members of society, one must have both the business knowledge and the personal responsibility to manage one's affairs (Odunaike & Amoda, 2013).In a nation with few or no job possibilities, business education provides students with marketable skills. Business education is a course of study that provides a variety of management, office technology, and marketing skills (Edokpolor & Owenvbiugie, 2016). At the top institutions, business education has aspirational objectives like producing lecturers who will teach business and related courses in our colleges of education and universities, as well as producing managers who are efficient and effective in management, secretarial, marketing, and accounting. promote the growth of business thought and philosophy in business and management; help people learn how to work for themselves when there are no paid employment opportunities; expose students to the vast world of business through available courses; and help them get ready for jobs as qualified administrators and managers in business organizations; create in the student the necessary abilities and knowledge for managing both public and private businesses, and equip them with the analytical capabilities required to handle the escalating difficulties of the current

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and future environments in Nigeria and beyond;as outlined by Obi and Otamiri (2018), prepare and equip students who complete the program to be able to develop business centers of information and communication technology and online database centers (cafe) or manage their own private business venture as self-employed members of society.

It is crucial to note that a lack of knowledge of ICT and electronic database resources among business education lecturers in colleges of education poses a significant challenge to the teaching and learning of business education program. This is because many lecturers continue to use the traditional method of instruction even in the jet age and computer era, when teaching and understanding are made easier, better, and faster by ICT and database facilities. The research on ICT in business education programs demonstrates that it can play a significant role in the complex of better involving students in the learning process and good future of ICT and databases. One finding of this research is that male lecturers are more adept at using it than female lecturers. Therefore, in the upcoming generations of business education programs, male lecturers will be more master and secure than female lecturers. Electronic resources make research easier and supplement traditional library materials.

In order to integrate the use of ICT and database facilities into the teaching and learning process, it is necessary for both male and female lecturers to have access to ICT facilities. This creates new and additional time for all lecturers to learn how to use new technologies, such as ICT and database facilities, so that business education lecturers can learn to create new things for teaching to keep up with current trends. Business education lecturers need to be trained and retrained in order to confidently integrate information and communication technologies and databases into teaching and learning activities in tertiary institutions. This will promote professional development in integrating ICT and data base into teaching and learning process.

Information and communication technology (ICT) provides resources and services to support the educational, research, and public service missions of all tertiary institutions. Higher education institutions, such as colleges of education, can use these tools to facilitate training, pre-service teachers, and student learning. It improves the creation and application of the policies and practices required to guarantee the efficient, secure, and responsible use of information resources and services.Through the internet, instructors and students can access the pertinent materials they require. These high-quality resources are used to provide students with the tools they need to succeed in their studies, to advance their knowledge in those fields, and to prepare them for use of current ICT infrastructures (Twining et al. 2015). Business education lecturers in colleges of education predict a direct proportional relationship between ICT infrastructures available in the school and teacher preparation whereby there are more and new infrastructures which proven to be a valuable aid to solve problems and accomplish tasks in education, industry, science, and many other human endeavors. In the modern world, ICT offers systems for knowledge acquisition, knowledge incubation, knowledge amplification, and knowledge distribution. Information and communication technology (ICT) is undoubtedly a crucial resource that permeates instruction, learning, research, and publication. (Henry and Twining, 2014).To this end, Okeh and Opone (2016) noted that the use of ICT can perform three main functions in the national educational growth, namely: a. Deliver all or part of the learning experiences to learners; b. Supplement and extend content provided in different forms other than printed (hard copy); and c. Provide a two-way channel of communication for exchange between tutors and students with their peers for feedback or for learning, problem solving, advice, debate and report.

It has been extensively discussed what information and communication technology (ICT) is. ICT, according to Andural and Ikyumen (2016), is the systematic use of computers and other technologies for the collection, organization, processing, archiving, dissemination, and retrieval of information in order to facilitate effective information exchange and communication. ICT was defined as the electronic technologies used for information storage and retrieval (Amassoma et

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al., 2018). According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN (2014), information and communication technologies (ICT) include all apparatuses and tools, from older ones like radio, video, and television to more modern ones like computers and concepts that are used in the conduct of information and communication activities. Facilities and parts of information and communication technology are numerous and diverse. They consist of scanners, computers, satellite television, radio telephony, duplicating machines, photocopiers, and duplicating machines (Dahiru, 2015). Computer gear, specialist software and application packages, databases, and data banks are also included in the facilities. ICT includes electric typewriters, diskettes, video desks, CD ROMs, video cameras, microphones, fax machines, electronic mail (e-mail), the internet, and video desks (Andural and Ikyumen 2016). The performance of students in tertiary institutions tends to increase when these facilities are used efficiently. ICT can be applied in e-learning in a number of different ways. According to Paraton and Creed (2019), from the 1915s and 1920s, direct classroom instruction, school broadcasts, and general educational programming have all made extensive use of radio and television.

However, the strategy comprises educational radio and television programming intended for communal enlightenment. It includes fresh programming, shows, documentaries, cartoons, and quizzes. Teleconferencing is an ICT strategy used in online education. The strategy, according to Rao (2018), entails interactive communication with individuals stationed at two or more locations. There are now four forms of teleconferencing. They are web-based conferencing, audio teleconferencing, video conferencing, and audio graphic conferencing. In audio conferencing, audio messages are exchanged and sent via the phone network. Transmitting text and still images like graphs, diagrams, and photos is known as audio graphic. Voice and image transmission are both a part of video conferencing (Paraton and Creed, 2019). Web-based conferencing, according to Rao (2018), comprises sending voice, text, video, and graphic messages over the internet.

Computer is a necessary piece of equipment for online learning. It can be used to track grades and communicate with students (Ekpenyong, 2018). In computer-assisted instruction (CAI), the computer serves as the teacher (Iwu, 2014).The Jagboro (2003) defined the internet as a rich, multi-layered, complicated, and dynamic textual ecosystem. Amassoma, et al. (2018) referred to the internet as a global library where anyone may access books, journal papers, and other materials from the comfort of their own home. In higher education, researchers and students frequently communicate via computers.

Wikinson et al(2013) .'s analysis revealed that the majority of linkages between university home pages were related to data on education or research. In general, the internet has had a positive impact on lecturers' and students' networking, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Inadequate ICTs infrastructure facilities, such as computer hardware and software, high and medium band, and access to the facilities, are just a few of the problems that have hindered the use of ICTs in schools, (Mac-Ikemenjima 2015).

Online databases, on the other hand, are collections of electronic sources of information from publishers across a range of fields and disciplines that may be printed, searched, and stored and then repeated or consulted in the future (Afolabi, 2017). Through their numerous search engine strategies, database resources are continuously updated, giving users access to current information. They also offer broad links to explore related or supplementary resources. Electronic resources are also regarded as significant resources for training, research, and teaching. The majority of libraries in today's colleges of education offer electronic resources for research in higher education, so in order for lecturers and students to take advantage of the expanding selection of electronic resources, they must develop and hone the skills necessary to do so. According to Angello (2016), the digitization of information has significantly improved the accessibility and availability of information. The amount of literature in libraries that is now

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available in digital form makes it easier for researchers to find the resources they need. This growth has swiftly extended the academics' exposure to a larger range of literature than would otherwise be possible. There are various signs that the electronic information environment has altered how researchers access books for their work (Tenopir 2015). More information is available in greater volumes than ever before, and new information collection methods, information containers, and working tools are now available. Through a range of technologies, researchers can access electronic data. These include Compact Disk Read Only Memory (CD-ROMs), electronic journals, and the internet, which offers a wide variety of resources via search engines like ProQuest, Research Gate, Educational Full Text, and others.

Oiao and Wang (2011) conducted a study titled "An Investigation of Lecturers' Needs in Using ICT for Teaching and Learning." A return rate of 94 percent was achieved by the study, which found 128 legitimate copies of a 28-item structured questionnaire. Analysis of the data showed that the majority of respondents had to learn computer skills for site design tools, learning management systems, and electronic teaching resources. Only a small number of respondents had to master internet and email basics, however, many more respondents expressed a desire to find out how to successfully use ICT into classroom instruction. According to the study's findings, teacher education should give top attention to pedagogy that integrates classroom instruction and online learning.

Miller (2017) conducted a study to ascertain the extent to which technical teachers used 18 specific computer resources. 282 vocational technical instructors were chosen for the study's population from six distinct vocational disciplines: home economics education, agricultural education, business education, industrial education, marketing education, and health occupation education. A scale measuring resource utilization was included of the data collection tool. Respondents were asked to rate how frequently they used each resource connected to computers. The questionnaire's items, which covered the following ICT competency areas—productivity software (word processing, spreadsheets, database administration), graphic applications (graphics presentations, desktop publishing software), and interactive technologies—were graded on a 4-point scale (authority software, multimedia and CD-ROM), Telecommunications tools (Internet, email, paid online services, etc.), as well as computer-assisted instruction (Simulation and games, drilling and practice, tutorials, etc.). To respond to the research questions, mean and standard deviation were used. The hypotheses underwent a multivariate analysis of variance test. Findings showed that business education teachers were not integrating modern technology into their curriculum while using well-known forms of computer resources. The study also discovered that neither the overall nor category use of computers varied significantly between groups.

Lawal and Lawal 2015 investigated what made databases accessible to instructors and undergraduate students at the Umaru Musa Yaradua University in Katsina, Nigeria. One study finding was that undergraduate students and lecturers did not have enough knowledge about database accessibility, which has an impact on database accessibility.The study discusses the requirement to make database subscriptions in the university library more widely known. The study asserts that database utilization, whether online or offline, will expand as a result of increased awareness, accessibility, and usage.

Ani and Edem (2012) reported the results of a survey done to determine the extent to which academic employees at the University of Calabar, Nigeria, used internet databases. The study's findings showed that although the great majority of (96.3 percent) The majority of respondents (48.1 percent) indicated that they used these databases "sometimes" when asked how often academic staff members access and use pertinent internet databases in teaching and research. According to the findings, the university library's lack of a subscription to a pertinent online database, the cost of access and usage, the lack of access to the pertinent database, and

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a lack of adequate internet skills for proper access in the university library are the main factors that obstruct academics' access to and use of online databases.

Statement of the Problem

The significance of information and communication technology and electronic databases is based on how well users of academic institutions are aware of, able to access, utilise, and exploit resources. But as stated by Baurer and Kemton (2015), business education instructors in colleges of education have not been able to successfully incorporate ICT and Database facilities into routine instruction. Amassoma, et al. (2018) claimed that the low level of ICT and database usage in the North Eastern Zone of Nigeria, as well as the lecturers' inability to use them in the classroom at tertiary institutions, particularly in colleges of education, is a warning sign that the region will produce students who lack the necessary ICT and database skills to function effectively and efficiently in this technologically advanced society. Because of improper use of electronic resources, business education lecturers in colleges of education confront a serious issue in meeting the new demands of the twenty-first century. The researcher was prompted to speculate as to why this would be the case, including whether it is due to a lack of understanding and utilization of these tools or a lack of awareness of them among educators in universities. In light of this, the study looked at the extent to which ICT and database resources were used for both teaching and research in institutions of education in the North Eastern Zone.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised for the study:

1. To what extent do Business Education lecturers use information and communication technology facilities for teaching in colleges of education?
2. To what extent do Business Education lecturers use online database facilities for research in colleges of education?

Research Hypotheses

For the purpose of this study, two null hypotheses were tested at alpha level of 0.05

H_0^1: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers regarding the level of usage of information and communication technology for teaching in colleges of education.

H_0^2: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on the extent of usage of online database facilities for research in colleges of education.

Methods

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Descriptive survey deal with opinions perceptions and attitudes are being sought (Agboola, 2018). The study was a survey of Business Education lecturers in colleges of education in North Eastern Zone. The population of the study consisted of 110 Business Education lecturers, since the population was neither too large nor too dispersed; no sampling was drawn as the entire population was studied. This is in consonance with the opinion of Agboola, (2018) stated that whenever possible, it is ideal to study the entire population. A structured questionnaire tagged Level of Usage of ICT and Online Database Questionnaire (LUIDQ) was constructed by the researcher, and was dully validated by three experts from Kwara State University, Malete, after which,It was trial tested on 30 respondents outside the study area, and a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.86 was achieved, indicating that the instrument was highly reliable for data collection.

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The confirmation of the outcome is consistent with Sambo's (2017) contention that an instrument is dependable and stable when the stability coefficient is extremely near to one. A two-part survey created by the researcher served as the data collection tool. The first section sought demographic information on the respondents; the second section structured on the 4-point rating scale pattern, comprised of 90 questions designed to elicit responses on the formulated research questions. The items were placed on the 4point rating scale of Very high extent (VHE) = 4, High extent (HE) = 3, moderately extent (ME) = 2 Low extent (LE) = 1. The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher and with the help of four research assistants. All the copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and usable for analysis from eight colleges of education in North-Eastern Zone, namely, 16 from Federal College of Education, Yola, 11 from College of Education Hong, seven from College of Education Zing, 18 from Kashim Ibrahim College of Education Borno, Federal College of Education Potiskum, 20 from Umar Suleiman College of Education Gashua, seven from College of Education Azare, and 10 from Federal College of Education (Tech), Gombe. The research assistants received training in preparation for the exercise; this training was in line with Nwana's (2017) observations that complete training of research assistants was necessary to successfully accomplish the exercise's goals. Respondents were required to tick the option which best described their usage of ICT and database facilities. For the analysis of data collected, mean rating and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the analysis of independent t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. For the research questions, items equal to 2.50 and above were accepted as highly extend while items with 2.49 and below were taken as low extent and used for decision regarding the research questions.If the probability value for the hypothesis test exceeded or was equal to the set probability value (0.05), the hypothesis was rejected; otherwise, the hypothesis was accepted. (2015) Uzoagulu

Results

Research Question one: To what extent do Business Education Lecturers use ICT facilities for teaching in colleges of education?

Table 1 Legend**: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent to which business education lecturers use ICT facilities for teaching in colleges of education**

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Competencies in creating document in Microsoft word	2.21	0.56	Low extent
2.	Editing materials using new modern computers	2.12	0.65	Low extent
3.	Working with menus like file, view and edit	2.21	0.67	Low extent
4.	Using spreadsheet packages	2.68	0.85	High extent
5.	Understand the structure of the spreadsheet	2.67	0.72	High extent
6.	Enter data (Labels and values) in a cell	2.70	0.58	High extent
7.	Format data in a cell e.g. Bold, alignment	2.78	0.65	High extent
8.	Generate appropriate graphs like bar, column and line	3.03	0.68	High extent
9.	Use formula and undertake calculations	2.17	0.62	Low extent
10.	Using spreadsheet packages to make predictions	2.07	0.59	Low extent
11.	Competencies in sorting out data	1.99	0.76	Low extent
12.	Saving and opening of documents	2.88	0.69	High extent
13.	Add and delete records	2.14	0.67	Low extent

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14.	Edits data in an existing record	3.01	0.78	High extent
15.	Filtering data	2.28	0.94	Low extent
16.	Entering data in a base	3.26	0.64	High extent
17.	Setting up a data in a base	3.12	0.72	High extent
18.	Video library	1.96	0.72	Low extent
19.	Creating a basic power point presentation	2.86	0.65	High extent
20.	Introducing animation into slide	2.01	0.65	Low extent
21.	Modification of colours	2.03	0.87	Low extent
22.	Creating an e-mail addresses	1.95	0.92	Low extent
23.	Sending e-mail messages	3.21	0.80	High extent
24.	Mail merging competencies	3.13	0.91	High extent
25.	Receiving e-mail messages	2.75	0.71	High extent
26.	Attaching files to outgoing e-mails	3.12	0.78	High extent
27.	Retrieves and replies to an e-mail	3.09	0.52	High extent
S/N	**Items**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Remark**
28.	Spell checking, thesaurus, proof reading competencies	1.92	0.41	Low extent
29.	Assessing an internet site via its website address	3.05	0.56	High extent
30.	Downloading and uploading files from internet	3.17	0.53	High extent
31	Saving a downloaded file from internet	3.04	0.58	High extent
32	Internet enable phones and hybrid devices	2.21	0.63	Low extent
33	Saving a document in various file format like html	2.04	0.68	Low extent
34	Use of USB drives	3.22	0.58	High extent
35	Use of web authorizing tools	2.20	0.73	Low extent
36	Use of web search engine(Google)	3.11	0.69	High extent
37	Deep web searching using met search engines	1.97	0.59	Low extent
38	Using a liquid crystal display chatting on the internet	1.67	0.47	Low extent
39	Using message tools (yahoo, Skype and MSN)	1.70	0.55	Low extent
40	Online communication with students (through assignment)	2.16	0.48	Low extent
41	Sorting messages in created folders	3.09	0.66	High extent
42	Using digital camera to create a graphic file	1.88	0.75	Low extent
43	Using web camera to communicate on the internet	2.14	0.51	Low extent
44	Teleconferencing competencies	2.16	0.80	Low extent
45	Video conferencing	1.82	0.58	Low extent
46	Using scanner to copy images and capture pictures	1.97	0.70	Low extent
47	Using scanner to convert a picture into a graphic file	2.24	0.85	Low extent
48	Use drawing tools	1.80	0.64	Low extent
49	Use of laser printer	1.91	0.48	Low extent
50	Setting up a liquid crystal display	1.64	0.42	Low extent
51	Using a liquid crystal display chatting on the internet	2.07	0.79	Low extent
52	Setting up a multimedia projector	2.13	0.56	Low extent

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53	Using multimedia projector (power point presentation)	1.76	0.49	Low extent
54	Instructional software (tutorial, drills and practice)	2.18	0.47	Low extent
55	Interactive whiteboard	2.17	0.58	Low extent
	Weighted Average	**2.40**	**0.66**	**Low Extent**

The data in Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent to which Business Education lecturer's used ICT facilities for teaching in colleges of education. The respondents indicated high extent for 21 items with mean ranging from 2.67 to 3.26 and indicated low extent for 34 items with mean ranges from 1.67 to 2.28. All the 55 items have standard deviation ranging from 0.41 to 0.87. This means that the responses of the respondents are not wide spread as they are close to the mean. Table 1 showed a calculated weighted average mean and standard deviation of 2.40 and 0.66, which indicated that all the constructs are used to low extent because both the aggregate/item calculated statistical mean are lower than the criterion mean of 2.50. This implied that business education lecturers in colleges of education in North Eastern zone used ICT facilities for teaching to low extent.

Research Question Two: To what extent do Business Education Lecturers use online database facilities for research in colleges of education?

Table 2 Legend**: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent business education lecturers use online database facilities for research in colleges of education**

S/N	**Items**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Remark**
1.	Research Gate	3.11	0.82	High extent
2.	Educational full tex	3.11	0.82	High extent
3.	Chicago Journals	2.04	0.78	Low extent
4.	Academic Library Online	2.95	0.80	High extent
5.	Sage Online Journal	2.17	0.77	Low extent
6.	Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC)	3.09	0.77	High extent
7.	International Research Journal	3.03	0.79	High extent
8.	BioMed Centre	1.96	0.76	Low extent
9.	Digital Library for Earth System Education Online	2.12	0.79	Low extent
10.	Encyclopaedia of Life Support System	1.89	0.80	Low extent
11.	DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journal)	2.24	0.79	Low extent
12.	National Virtual Library	2.21	0.78	Low extent
13.	Sage OARE	2.11	0.76	Low extent
14.	AJOL (African Journal Online)	2.00	0.72	Low extent
15.	Emerald insight	2.18	0.73	Low extent
16.	Science Direct	1.86	0.71	Low extent
17.	Emerald	1.71	0.74	Low extent
18.	Cambridge Journals	2.25	0.73	Low extent
19.	Ebscohost	1.82	0.72	Low extent
20.	ASCE Journal	1.99	0.73	Low extent
21.	ASME Journal	2.05	0.59	Low extent
22.	ABSCO	2.16	0.81	Low extent
23.	World Bank	1.74	0.77	Low extent
24.	Database of African Thesis and Dissertation (DATAD)	2.05	0.81	Low extent

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25.	Bookboon	1.80	0.77	Low extent
26.	IEEE Explore	1.99	0.76	Low extent
27.	EBSCOHOST	1.59	0.73	Low extent
S/N	**Items**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Remark**
28.	OARE	1.74	0.68	Low extent
29.	AGORA	1.72	0.52	Low extent
30.	JSTOR	2.18	0.47	Low extent
31	Springer	2.12	0.81	Low extent
32	Hinari	2.12	0.81	Low extent
33	TEEAL (The Essential Electronic Agricultural Libraries)	2.16	0.44	Low extent
34	HINARI (Health Internet-Work Access Research Information)	2.01	0.48	Low extent
35	INASP (International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications	2.13	0.51	Low extent
	Weighted Average	**2.15**	**0.72**	**Low Extent**

The data in Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent to which Business Education lecturers use online database facilities for research in colleges of education. The respondents indicated high extent for 5 items with mean ranging from 2.95 to 3.11 and indicated low extent for 30 items with mean ranges from 1.59 to 2.25. All the 35 items have standard deviation ranging from 0.44 to 0.82. This means that the responses of the respondents are not wide spread as they are close to the mean. Table 2 shows a calculated weighted average mean and standard deviation of 2.15 and 0.72, which indicated that all the constructs are used to low extent, it shows that Business Education lecturers used electronic database for research to low extent because both the aggregate/item-calculated statistical mean are lower than the criterion mean of 2.50. This implied that Business Education lecturers in colleges of education utilize electronic database for research to low extent.

Hypotheses:

$H_{01.}$ There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers regarding the extent of usage of Information and Communication Technology for teaching in colleges of education

Table 3 Legend**: Independent Samples t-test result of the difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers regarding the extent of usage of ICT for teaching in colleges of education**

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	Sig (2tailed)	Decision
Male	70	2.32	0.65				
				1.380	108	0.173	Not Rejected
Female	40	2.42	0.70				

The analysis of data in Table 3 reveals that there are 70 male lecturers and 40 female lecturers. The male and female lecturers' responses showed that ICT facilities are used for teaching to low extent ($\bar{X}$ = 2.32; SD = 0.65) and ($\bar{x}$ = 2.42; SD = 0.70) with very low variability. The Table reveals that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers regarding the extent of usage of Information and Communication Technology for teaching in colleges of education (t_{108} = 1.380, P>0.05).

H_{02}. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on the extent of usage of online database facilities for research in colleges of education in North Eastern zone.

Table 4 Legend: **Independent Samples t-test result of the difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers regarding the extent of usage of online database facilities for research**

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	Sig (2tailed)	Decision
Male	70	2.08	0.73				
				0.519	108	0.619	Not Rejected
Female	40	2.22	0.80				

The analysis of data in Table 4 reveals that there are 70 male lecturers and 40 female lecturers. The male and female lecturers' responses showed that online database facilities are used for research to low extent in colleges of education ($\bar{X}$ = 2.08; SD = 0.73) and ($\bar{x}$ = 2.22; SD = 0.80) with very low variability. The Table reveals that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers regarding the extent of usage of online database facilities for research in colleges of education (t_{108} = 0.519, P>0.05).

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study in respect to research question one found that Business Education lecturers in colleges of education in North Eastern zone, the lecturers level of usage of ICT facilities for teaching is low. In agreement with this, Mac-Ikemenjima (2015), pointed out that generally, the use of ICTs facilities in schools has suffered a number of setbacks which include inadequate ICT facilities such as computer hardware and software, high and medium band and access to the facilities.

It was also found that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers regarding the extent of usage of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for teaching in colleges of education (t_{108} = 1.380, P>0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Furthermore, results as regards to research question two revealed that Business Education lecturers in colleges of education used electronic database for research to low extent and this supports the findings of Obuh (2010) who observed that there is a low level of skill fullness in the usage of ICTs and database resources among lecturers and students in tertiary institutions. He further pointed that lecturers and students do not often appreciate the skills required to search electronic sources stating that they are deceptively easy to use this, is in line with the opinion of Lawal and Lawal 2015 who investigated the factors of the accessibility of database among lecturers and students of Umaru Musa Yaradua, University, katsina, Nigeria. One of the findings of his study was that awareness on the accessibility of

database among lecturers and students was inadequate and this affects the accessibility of the usage of electronic database. The finding is also in line with Maharana, Sethi and Panda (2012) who initiated the use of internet and e-resources by the lecturers and students of business management, Sambalpur University and found that majority of management lecturers and students rarely uses e-resources and services in varied forms. The results on table 4 reveals that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers regarding the usage of online database facilities for research in colleges of education (t_{108} = 0.519, P>0.05). The null hypothesis was not rejected. This means that the male and female business education lecturers are comparable in terms of their usage of electronic database in Business Education instructional delivery.

Conclusion

The study looked at how many business education lecturers used ICT and internet databases for instruction and research in North Eastern Zone colleges of education. This is concerning because information and communication technology and electronic databases are currently seen as being crucial tools for effective teaching and research at tertiary institutions. This study found that, despite the rising accessibility of high-quality electronic content, business education lecturers had relatively negative opinions toward using ICT and electronic database resources for their research and instructional delivery. This is a regrettable development, as it was noted that many business education professionals who may have played key roles in implementing these facilities have left the field..

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the study's findings:

1. The management should organize and sponsor conferences, workshops, seminars, and other information-dissemination platforms on information and communication technology facilities for the purpose of training and retraining Business Education lecturers through the authorities of colleges of education.
2. Management of colleges of education is advised to seriously pursue the following recommendations, among others: awareness, accessibility, usability, and training. This could be accomplished by making computers available, establishing the required modern facilities, and ensuring internet connectivity, which will give lecturers the chance to stay up to date as well as educational development..

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DIGITAL SKILLS STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING BUSINESS EDUCATION IN THE NEW NORMAL BY EDUCATORS IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

[1]DR. ANGELA CHEKWUBE EKOH-NWEKE
ekohangela@yahoo.com
Department Of Educational Management
(Business Education Programme)
College Of Education
Michael Okpara University Of Agriculture,
Umudike, Abia State, Nigeria

[2]DR. IJEOMA CHIMERUO EZEABII
Ijeoma.ezeabii@esut.edu.ng
Department Of Business Education
Faculty Of Education
Enugu State University Of Science And Technology
Enugu State, Nigeria

[3]IKPEAMA, FREDNORA UCHENNA
fredikpeama@gmail.com
Department Of Vocational Education
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka

Abstract

This study examined the digital strategies for teaching Business Education in the new normal by educators in Universities in South East Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study is 70 business educators in the Universities under study. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. A 4-point scale questionnaire designed by the researchers containing 20 items was used. Reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha statistics test. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research question, though the standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity of the responses. The t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study showed that digital skills strategies enhance teaching of Business Education to a high extent. Based on the findings, the study concludes that digital skills strategies which compasses online and ICT skills strategies for teaching of Business Education are very crucial and relevant for teaching especially in the new normal era. These skills strategies as x-rayed enhances teaching and learning of Business Education and as well enable the teachers hone their existing skills to function effectively in the digital world. Based on the findings, recommendations were proffered which include among others that Business Educators should avail themselves to online skills strategy; information and communication technology skills strategies for teaching Business Education in universities.

Keywords: *New normal, digital skills, online skills, ICT skills strategies*

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Introduction

A new normal simply means a situation where everything that concerns us changes from what they were due to crisis of any kind. The crisis could be disease, insecurity, pandemic that could cause a drastic change or shift in the way and manner we live and exist in our environment. In line with this, a new normal is a state to which an economy, society, education, health and all that concerns human existence settles following a crisis, when this differs from the situation that prevailed prior to the start of the crisis. We all witnessed and still witnessing the –covid-19 pandemic as it relates to the new normal how it has completely invested and transformed unbeatable pivots of human life such as professional identity, children's education management, economic subsistence, work and family organization, imposing a radical revision of the traditional way, practices, strategies and skills used to manage them (Roziah, Zeinab & Seyedali, 2021). This buttressed the fact that business educators need to adjust in their professional roles to flow along in the new normal. We need to ask ourselves, what will "the new normal mean for us? Has it changed anything in our professional roles, has it changed the way and strategies we adopt in carrying out our teaching activities? Has it made us to acquire new skills to function effectively in teaching our students digitally? Has it made us to move along with other of our counterparts across the globe digitally in attending conferences and academic collaborations of all kinds? The earlier we recognize and come to terms what new normal mean to us the better, so that we can move along with others and compete favourably with our colleagues across the globe digitally. This entails being digitally competent and ability to carry on teaching activities digitally to reach and prepare our students both physically and virtually. Creating an efficient and effective digital classroom requires online teachers', business educators inclusive to develop exceptional communication skills. Twenty-first century teachers need all the skills required to develop lessons plans for traditional classroom instruction, and they must be able to apply them to digital teaching environments. Education delivery is evolving. As the evolution progresses, the overriding challenge for educators and administrators will be funding ways to embrace new technology and teaching environments in a responsible, practical and educationally sound manner.

Digital skills are defined as a range of abilities to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information and carryout teaching activities digitally. This implies that digital skills are any skills related to being digitally literate. They enable people to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, solve problems for effective and creative self-fulfillment in life, teaching and learning, work and social activities at large (UNESCO, 2018). Digital skills are important because they underpin so much of how modern work is conducted especially in teaching and learning in the new normal. For many modern professions, digital skills are simply essential skills, more importantly in the new era. In the modern workplace, it is increasingly impossible to point out which digital skills you may or may not need. There is no hard and fast rule about which jobs you will need to excel for and which jobs you will not. This goes to buttress that digital skills or literacy is a language, the more digital skills you have, the better you can speak digital language (skills you need.com/digital skills). Digital skills are set of skills that allow a person to the strategic use of information through information technology. It is abilities required to use digital technologies. It is the abilities of operating digital media, handle the structures of new media, search, select, process, and evaluate information in digital media and use digital media as a means to reach a particular goal and specifically in teaching and learning of Business Education. Digital skills strategies are very important because they underpin so much of how modern work is conducted especially in teaching and learning and in this new normal era. Digital skills strategy involves online skills strategy, information and communication technology skills strategy and many others.

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Online skills strategy is simply technical skills needed in carrying out teaching and other life activities with technology or rather digitally to achieve predetermined goals. Online skills strategy involves basic technical skills which include the ability to create new documents, use a word processing program, navigate the internet, and download software. Business educators need basic technical skills to succeed in their instructional delivery. They must have the skills to teach students online by using various online tools for teaching. According to Liz (2016) online skills strategy enhances teachers' communication and subject expertise skills and as well enable them in constantly honing their existing skills, and developing new ones on demand. Today, online teaching skills strategy can occur asynchronously or synchronously and may be either fully online, blended with face –to- face or combine elements of campus – based and hybrid forms of instruction. Teachers new to this mode may experience frustration, anxiety and confusion as they embark on a new normal learning journey as e-teachers. This entails going beyond content delivery, teachers must become a "guide on the side" who scaffolds and coaches, and often this demands a change in teachers' skills and pedagogies, with a consequent rethinking or transformation of professional identity and role. This indicates that there are several features of the online environment that require teachers to adopt new practices, to step back from their directive roles and instead become facilitators of learning (Catherine & Maria, 2017). In line with this, Scott (2016) emphasized that it is important that teachers adapt or develop their skills to online learning environment, to make their materials effective and engaging for learners. Scott further highlighted the following strategies to include; engage with your learners online; create a supportive learning environment; use a mix of learning tools for better engagement; provide ongoing feedback; and make e-learning content mobile.

Guach et al. (2010) agreed that virtual teaching spaces require constructivist pedagogy, the development of distinct facilitation skills and new communicative practices. An online teaching and learning environment requires clear concise instruction. Business educators experienced in face-to-face classroom instruction methods may need to develop stronger written communication skills. Skills for using graphics, videos and digital audio files for communication with students are essential. Conversations with students and parents today rely more heavily on texting, email and voice-messaging. Not necessary meeting in person for parent-teacher conferences and student tutoring activities. Online skills strategy implies that teachers have to develop skills and knowledge specific to web-based educational systems. Teachers should be able to demonstrate proficiency in the following areas among others, full knowledge of accessibility requirements for technology in the classroom and online instructions, ability to evaluate internet resources, understanding aspects of copyright privileges and violations, modeling and monitoring proper etiquette and generally accepted online use policies, designing and implementing appropriate lesson plans for online students, and ability to troubleshoot minor technical issues and refer to technical support personnel when necessary. Teachers must be able to evaluate information and update course materials as necessary to ensure students have timely, relevant information. Online teachers must be able to evaluate student performance accurately. Skills in identifying learning difficulties and other factors that affect academic performance are necessary in digital education environment. An effective and efficient online educator must have sufficient skills to develop engaging course curriculum that motivates and encourages students to participate fully (Resilient Educator, 2021).

Similarly, NIK (2021) lamented that many schools have been forced to move to teaching online with little or no preparation for students and teachers and have been in many cases, left to cope with developing online teaching skills with little or no training. NIK further emphasized that in order to make transition from the physical classroom to the virtual teaching environment, teachers need to master the following areas of skills and knowledge; technological, environmental, behavioural, pedagogical and motivational. These changes represent challenges

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that may burden instructional staff in high education who have to keep pace with the innovative paradigms of high education, new approaches to research and accreditation, and new methods of teaching and learning (Siemens & Matheos in Albrahim, 2020). Albrahim further categorized the online skills as follows: Pedagogical skills, content skills, design skills, technological skills, management and institutional skills, and social and communication skills. Albrahim suggested that online educators can use these set of skills to self-evaluate their abilities to teach online and identify their training needs. This includes being aware of who the students are, what they need to learn, how to teach them, as well as the skills that they as instructors, business educators inclusive, need to master in order to effectively execute their role (Palloff & Prath, 2013; Scobey, 2012). Applying online skills strategies in teaching Business Education may not be too easy and even comfortable considering our peculiar public university environment where internet connectivity and accessibility is difficult if not impossible. But that notwithstanding business educators and every instructor must thrive to acquire and be ready to apply online skills strategies in teaching activities. These skills, strategies, tasks and competencies can help in designing and creating professional development opportunities for online educators.

Information and communication technology (ICT) skill is one of the digital skills strategies that educators use in teaching and learning of Business Education in our universities. Information and communication technology (ICT) is an integral concept that signifies or represents three crucial elements for man's survival. These elements are information, communication and technology which man uses for their daily life activities; where these elements are found wanting, it becomes difficult if not impossible for man to function appropriately in any area of their life. This connotes that business educators must equip themselves with ICT skills strategies to enable them function effectively in instructional delivery digitally especially in this new normal period (Ekoh-Nweke & Ezeabii, 2020). ICT is simply set of technology that is applied in various aspects to enhancing teaching and learning processes and even in other human activities by individuals who have the skills. Similarly, Orike, Iyalla and Okereke (2017) asserted that ICT is the range of technology that is applied in the course of collecting, editing, storing, retrieval and transfer of information in several forms. Debon and Zite (2016) opined that ICT is the electronic devices and applications used in the classroom to support effective teaching and learning processes, Business Education inclusive. In line with this, Ikpeama (2019) emphasized that competencies requirements of Business Education lecturers in ICT is the capability of the lecturer to use ICT devices in performing or carrying out academic activities or tasks, aimed at enhancing learning. Ikpeama further lamented that the importance of information and communication technology ICT in teacher education is not in doubt, but the enabling skills, knowledge, tools and infrastructure for its application are not yet adequately put in place. Ovute and Ovute (2015) maintained that ICT skills help lecturers to apply technology wisely, logically and effectively and as well understand the principles underlying the technological tools and materials. ICT skills strategy is required by all business educators in today's world. It has the potential ICT skills for business educators to transform teaching and learning processes in the new normal. It was observed that presently, students are more sophisticated in their use of technology than we teachers; an inherent discrepancy between student knowledge and usage of ICTs with the abilities of teacher to use ICTs.

This buttressed the fact that teacher inexperience and skill deficiencies may often be a fundamental factor which hinders and prevents the effectiveness of ICT use in education. In the new normal, it is accepted that the use of ICTs should aim at completely transforming teacher practices in and of itself and as well enabling and supporting the move from traditional "teacher centric" teaching styles to more learner-centric method, in other words, making each one of the students active and fully engaged. ICT skills strategy is meant to enable business educators with the specific ICT tools, such as smart boards, web conferencing and webinars among others thus,

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creating a learner-centric' classroom. ICT skills strategies for teaching in general and Business Education in particular has undoubted potential, to be influential in changing teaching methodologies. There are many ICT skills strategies that are expected to be used by business educators for teaching in the new normal. They include; word processing skills, spreadsheet skills, database management skills, electronic presentation skills, internet navigation skills, email management skills, networking skills, touch typing skills and many more (Adam, 2017). Similarly, Bryan (2019) stated that if you ask any teacher about ICT skills strategies, they will tell you that it is essential to keep up on skills in order to be at the top of their profession. Bryan further, outlined the following ICT skills for teachers to stay ahead of the curve; create, edit and manage digital audio; social book marking to organize and share web content; produce, edit and share video; create a virtual space for your classroom; check for plagiarism; capture screenshots for visual explanations; edit digital images online, photo caricature and cartoons, info graphics and posters to simplify topics and many more. These buttressed the fact that variety of ICT skills strategies for teaching abound. No wonder Kadel in Enu et al. (2018) noted that regardless of the quantity and quality of technology available in classroom, the key to how ICTs are used is the teacher; therefore, teachers must have the competence and right attitude towards technology in the new normal.

Digital skills strategies are an essential skills strategy that enables educators to utilize various technological devices in discharging their professional duties. Most education institutions, industries, organizations have digitalized their operations and processes. As a result, today's university graduates required specialized skills to help them stand out significantly from the crowd. For this to happen it is expected that business educators should prepare these students in this aspects. While some universities have modified or expanded their curriculum to this growing demand for digital know-how, many educators are struggling to provide the essential skills students need. This happens because teachers or educators are not trained to use new technologies adequately that resulted to non-acquisition of digital skills strategy to carry out teaching and learning of Business Education with confidence and as well not being able to prepare their students with desirable digital skills, hence the study to determine digital skills strategies for teaching and learning of Business Education in the new normal by educators in universities in the south east Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine digital skills strategies for teaching Business Education in the new normal by Educators in Universities in South East Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent;

1. online skills strategy enhances teaching of Business Education in the new normal by Educators in universities.
2. information and communication technology skills strategy enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal by Educators in Universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does online skills strategy enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal by educators in universities?
2. To what extent does information and communication technology skills strategy enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal by educators in universities?

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Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent online skills strategy enhances teaching of Business Education in the new normal in universities.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent ICT skills strategy enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal in universities.

Method

A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The area of the study was South East, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of 75 Business Educators in Universities in South East Nigeria offering Business Education. The entire population was sampled since the population is manageable. The researchers developed instrument titled "Digital strategies for teaching Business Education in the new normal questionnaire (DSTBENNQ) was used for data collection. The questionnaire has two sections; A and B. Section A was on respondent's personal data. Section B has two clusters containing 20 items which sought information on each of the two research questions. The items were structured on a 4-point rating scale response style of very high extent, high extent, low extent, and very low extent weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was face validated by three validates. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha and it yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.88 and 0.86 for clusters one and two respectively and the overall coefficient of the entire instrument was 0.87. The researchers with the help of three briefed research assistants collected data for the study. Seventy-five copies of the questionnaire were administered, 70 collected and used for data analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions. Items that scored 2.50 or above were accepted while those that scored below 2.50 were rejected. T-test was used in testing the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis was accepted where significant p-value was greater than alpha value of 0.05 level of significance otherwise the null hypothesis was rejected.

Result

Research Question 1

To what extent does online skills strategy enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal by educators in universities?

Table 1: Mean ratings of educators on the extent online skills strategy enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal in universities

S/N	Online Skills Strategy	X	SD	Re
1.	Technological skills	3.48	1.03	HE
2.	Environmental skills	2.95	0.79	HE
3.	Pedagogical skills	2.78	0.87	HE
4.	Motivational skills	3.43	0.80	HE
5.	Content skills	2.65	1.21	HE
6.	Design skills	3.09	1.05	HE
7.	Management and institutional skills	3.10	0.90	HE

8. Ability to evaluate internet resources	2.69	0.75	HE
9. Social and Communication skills	2.85	0.94	HE
10. Create virtual space skills	3.38	0.85	HE
11. Edith digital images online skills	3.32	0.65	HE
12. Written and oral communication skills	3.45	0.88	HE
13. Graphics videos and digital audio files skills	2.87	1.27	HE
14. Web-based educational system skills	3.55	0.89	HE
15. Designing and implementing lesson plans Online skills	3.17	1.00	HE
Cluster	**3.12**	**0.92**	HE

Table 1 show that the respondents agreed on the item numbers 1 to 15 as high extent hence, their mean scores ranged from 2.65 to 3.55 respectively. This indicates that online skills strategies enhance teaching of business education in the new normal by educators in universities and the cluster mean of 3.12 concords to that. Also, the table shows the standard deviation ranging from 0.65 to 1.27 signifying the closeness of their opinion to their mean response and the cluster standard deviation of 0.92 supports this assertion.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educator on the extent online skills strategy enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal in universities.

Table 2: t-test analysis of mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent

Online skills strategy enhances teaching of Business Education in the new normal in universities

Status	N	$\bar{x}$	Sd	Df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Male	20	2.69	0.82	68	0.83	1.96	NS
Female	50	3.41	0.81				

Result in Table 2 shows that there was no significant difference on the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent online skills strategy enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal by Business educators. The calculated t-value of 0.83 was less than the p-value of 1.96 at 68 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Research Question 2

To what extent does ICT skills strategy enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal by educators in universities?

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Table 3: Mean ratings of educator on the extent ICT skills strategy enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal in universities.

S/NO	ICT SKILLS STRATEGIES	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remark
16.	Word processing skills	0.38	0.78	VHE
17.	Spreadsheet skills	3.70	0.96	VHE
18.	Database management skills	3.60	0.86	VHE
19.	Electronic presentation skills	3.90	0.54	VHE
20.	Internet navigation skills	3.78	1.03	VHE
21.	Email management skills	3.82	0.48	VHE
22.	Networking skills	3.80	1.06	VHE
23.	Touch typing skills	3.75	0.40	VHE
24.	Create, edit and manage digital audio skills	3.85	0.80	VHE
25.	Social bookmarking skills	3.73	0.85	VHE
26.	File management and window explore skills	3.85	1.00	VHE
27.	Photo caricature and cartoons	3.55	0.90	VHE
28.	Info graphics and posters	3.58	0.81	VHE
29.	Produce, edit and share videos	3.70	0.65	VHE
30.	Check for plagiarism	3.80	1.10	VHE
	Cluster mean	**3.75**	**0.86**	VHE

Table 3 shows that the respondents agreed on the item numbers 16-30 as very high extent hence, their corresponding means ranged from 3.55 to 3.90. This implies that ICT skills strategies enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal by Business Educators in universities and the cluster mean of 3.75 supports that. Also, the table shows the standard deviation ranging from 0.50 to 1.10 indicating the closeness of their opinions. The cluster standard deviation of 0.86 also supports the assertion.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educator on the extent ICT skills strategy enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal in universities.

Table 4: t-test analysis of mean ratings of male and female business educator on the extent ICT skills strategy enhances teaching of Business Education in the new normal in universities.

Status	N	$\bar{x}$	Sd	Df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Male	20	3.66	0.50	68	0.87	1.96	Not significant
Female	50	3.69	0.62				

Result of Table 4 shows that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the extent ICT skills strategy enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal by business educators. The calculated t-value of 0.87

was less than the p-value of 1.96 at 68 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The result in Table 1 showed that all the items as regards to online skills strategy enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal by business educators. They were aware of how important the skill is for teaching especially in the new normal era. This was in agreement with Liz (2016) which stated that online skills strategy enhances teachers' communication and subject expertise skills and as well enable them in constantly honing their existing skills; and developing new ones on demand. In line with this, Guash et. al. (2010) agreed that virtual teaching spaces require constructivist pedagogy, the development of distinct facilitation skills and new communicative practices. The result from the corresponding hypothesis implies that both male and female business educators are aware that online skills strategies are crucial for teaching in this era. This was in line with NIK (2021) which stated that in order to make transition from physical classroom to the virtual teaching environment; teachers need to master the following area of skills and knowledge; technological, environmental, behavioural, Pedagogical and motivational skills.

The findings in relation to research question two in Table 2 showed that all the items on ICT skills strategy enhance teaching of Business Education in the new normal by business educators. This skill is very relevant for teaching especially in Business Education and in the new normal. This is in consonant with Deabon and Zite (2016) which stated that ICT is the electronic devices and applications used in the classroom to support effective teaching and learning processes. The result from the corresponding hypothesis implies that both male and female business educators are aware of the relevant of ICT skills strategy for teaching of Business Education in the new normal. The result is in consonant with Ovute and Ovute (2015) which maintained that ICT skills strategy help lecturers to apply technology wisely, logically and effectively and as well understand the principles underlying the technological tools and materials. Similarly, Bryan (2019) stated that if you ask any teacher about ICT skills strategies, they will tell you that it is essential to keep up on skills in order to be at the top of their profession.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that digital skills strategies which compasses online and ICT skills strategies for teaching of Business Education are very crucial and relevant for teaching especially in the new normal era. These skills strategies as x-rayed enhances teaching and learning of Business Education and as well enable the teachers' horn their existing skills to function effectively in the digital world.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings:

1. Business educators should develop interest in carrying out their teaching activities digitally to enable them horn their existing skills and compete globally with their counterparts; and be ready to marry various digital skills strategies for teaching Business Education in the new normal to make teaching and learning meaningful and as well prepare their students with relevant digital skills.
   .
2. University management should make provision for conducive digital environment to enable effective teaching and learning of Business Education digitally; and as a matter of urgency conduct digital training on both online and ICT skills strategies for their lecturers; to enable them carry on their teaching activities effectively.

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SKILLS-ENHANCED COLLABORATIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICES FOR PREPARING BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS TOWARDS WORKING IN A CHANGING WORLD

[1]OYINLANA, GBENGA OLAWALE
Department of Educational Management & Business Studies,
Federal University Oye-Ekiti
Email: gbenga.oyinlana@fuoye.edu.ng

[2]ADEROJU, JOHN ADEROGBA
Department of Accounting Education,
School of Business Education,
Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka-Yaba, Lagos
Email: aderoju.john@fcet-akoka.edu.ng

[3]FELICIA, K. OLUWALOLA
Department Educational Management,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
Email: oluwaloa.fk@unilorin.edu.ng

Abstract

This study determined skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world. The need for inclusive collaboration on how to impart lifelong functional and interdisciplinary skills, in addition to vocational business skills, for career success in a changing world led to this study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study was carried out in the Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria with a population of 300 respondents (275 business education students and 25 educators). No sampling was done because of the manageable population size. A structured questionnaire with a reliability index of 0.75 was used for data collection. Three research questions were answered using mean, while t-test statistics was used to test three hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that collaborative group problem-solving, project-based learning, web-based learning, research-based learning and interdisciplinary learning communities enhance acquisition of functional skills for business education students to become highly productive citizens in a changing world. The study recommended that business education students should be well motivated to take advantage of the benefits of collaborative teaching and learning practices to develop their social and diversity skills, creative thinking and problem solving skills, among others for successful career in a changing world of work.

Keywords: *Changing world of work, Skills, Collaborative Teaching and Learning Practices, Students*

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Introduction

Today, the need for collaboration to meet modern skills-demand and changing world of work with high emphasis on emerging functional and interdisciplinary skills pose a new challenge of equipping students to become highly productive citizens. This is because emerging 21st century skills to succeed are not only generic but also in constant dynamic variation that collaboration of business educators on skills-enhanced instructional delivery are imperative. Also, collaboration is needed to bridge the gap between the learning experiences acquired by students in the school and the functional and career skills needed in order to achieve the mandate of business education in Nigeria. This study therefore focuses on the skill-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students in Nigeria towards working in a changing world.

Preparing business education students towards working in a changing world in this study implies that in addition to specific vocational business skills in the curriculum, students are able to acquire 21st century social and diversity skills, team spirit engagement and leadership skills, creative thinking and problem solving skills, online engagement, knowledge-sharing and communication skills to mention few. This is in line with the mandate of business education to ensure that students are educated for and about business through carefully planned experiences that offer them the opportunity to master the knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes needed not only to succeed in business but also have equal opportunity succeed in life (Association of Business Educators of Nigeria, ABEN, 2017). This can be achieved by imparting the needed academic and functional skills via skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices to make business education students fit into the changing world of work.

Collaborative teaching and learning is an umbrella term for a variety of joint intellectual efforts and approaches by students and educators for better learning outcomes. Usually, students work in groups of two or more to learn through social interaction and collaboration. According to Rosella (2016), collaborative teaching and learning refers to an instructional method that allows teachers and students work together to create and sustain a learning environment that allows students to investigate problems, provide explanations and generate ideas. Kelly (2017) described collaborative teaching and learning as an approach which enables students relate together in an unbiased way to share ideas and find solution to a given task. In the process, the teacher suggests the steps in completing a task so that learners can focus on achieving the learning objectives rather than surfing aimlessly (Smith, 2018).

As business educators look for ways to meaningfully engage the students for better learning outcomes, Veletsianos and Navarrete (2012) recommended collaborative online learning community for schools to enhance quality instructional delivery and interdisciplinary skill. Also, Dawn (2017) suggested *collaborative teaching and learning* strategies to enrich students' experiences and expose them to viable social, interpersonal and interdisciplinary skills through active interaction, participation and deliberation. Hershey (2012) opined that collaborative instructional delivery is a viable option to make active deliberation and enhance participatory role among students. *Collaborative teaching and learning* enables teachers to share their expertise, and once students understand the expected instructional behaviour, they will be prepared to excel in their roles; and in the process contribute to each other success, develop their creative thinking and problem-solving skills through collective brainstorming efforts (Miriam, 2018 & Rosella, 2016).

Effective collaborative teaching and learning practices for delivering quality education should among others focus on 21st century skills and interdisciplinary themes, knowledge and expertise; and engage students with the real world data, tools and needed skills they will encounter on the job or in life (Halah & Patrick, 2015; Drew, 2013; Partnership for 21st Century

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Skills, 2006). Veletsianos and Navarrete (2012) found out that collaborative web-based teaching and learning facilitates online learning environment and access to multiple perspectives on issues and make use of technologies for students in different locations to share vital information. Barbara, Felder, Brent and Imad (2004) found out that making students work in groups harmonizes diversity of skills and encourages team spirit to achieve a common goal. For example, through group media project students can acquire new knowledge and skills in the course of designing and producing a multimedia product.

Collaborative research-based learning promotes information-seeking skills. Sharing research technologies to access and process relevant information that help students find solution to a given problem (Halah & Patrick, 2015). Students become informed about a topic of inquiry, collaborate to search for solution and sometimes publish findings for others to use. Lombard (2007) suggested use of problem-solving to promote authentic learning and critical thinking skills to help students overcome challenges they may face in the real world. Miriam (2018) stated that skills-based quality education can be achieved through cooperative learning community strategy which divides students into different learning communities with diverse abilities or talents, and uses joint contributions of every member to achieve distinctive results. This may involve students teaching one another, and sometimes, teacher to students relating as colleagues. Social interaction is unavoidable, thus, students are expected to develop interpersonal skills, high sense of social responsibility, adaptability and leadership skills with others for success.

Using best collaborative teaching and learning practices to impart relevant skills and knowledge during curriculum implementation is a key factor for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world. Business education students are learners who undergo formal business education programme that equips them with relevant vocational skill, knowledge and aptitude to gain employment or generate employment. According to the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (2017), Nigeria students need business education to: fit into the world of work and be employable, create jobs and play their role effectively in national development; develop life skills and attitudes for economic success, broaden educational opportunities for acquisition of global business knowledge, encourage creativity and innovation in entrepreneurial thinking to explore career interest. Mere outlining these skills is not enough, there is need for concerted efforts to achieve them through skills-enhance collaborative teaching and learning practices.

Statement of the Problem

The mismatch between the skills required in the labour market and skills acquired by students in the school has become a serious concern because of the rising unemployment rate in Nigeria. The Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that unemployment rate was 18.8% in the last quarter of 2017, up from 14.2% in 2016 to decry many institution graduates lack of required skills to work with modern facilities, and find it difficult to solve complex problems or think creatively to be successfully self-employed (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). This calls for innovative ways of imparting modern work-specific and interdisciplinary skills because students need to acquire generic skills for career success in addition the school subjects to improve the quality of Nigerian system of education in this 21st century. The major challenge is how to deliver both the academic contents and the required functional skills. Thus, the concern of this study is to address the challenges of delivering curriculum contents and functional skills needs of business education students in this changing world of work via skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world?
2. What are the ways of implementing skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world?
3. What are the benefits of skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world?

Hypotheses

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

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on the skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on the ways of implementing skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.

Ho_3: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on the benefits of skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted because it is suitable for collection of public opinions on a phenomenon (Ezeh, 2011). The study was carried out in the Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria with a population of 300 respondents (275 business education students and 25 educators). No sampling was done because the entire targeted respondents were covered due to manageable size. A structured questionnaire made up of 42 items developed from relevant literature was used as instrument for data collection. Each questionnaire item had 5-point rating scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree and undecided with assigned numeric weights 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively to elicit responses from the respondents in line with the research questions.

The instrument was face validated by three experts and Cronbach Alpha technique was used to obtain a reliability index of 0.753 from 25 copies administered outside the institution. The researchers administered 300 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents and were duly collected. The data collected were analyzed using mean based on the combine responses of the lecturers and students to answer the research questions. The results of the combine mean responses on each questionnaire item were interpreted as follows: 4.50-5.00 strongly agree, 3.50-4.49 agree, 2.50-3.49 disagree, 1.50-2.49 strongly disagree and 0.50-1.49 undecided. Three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test. The t-test results were obtained from the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, 26). Any hypothesis with significant value above 0.05 probability level was not rejected otherwise, it was rejected.

Data Analysis and Results

Research Question One: What are the skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Skills-Enhanced Collaborative Teaching and Learning Practices for Preparing Business Education Students towards Working in a Changing World

S/N	Questionnaire Items	$\bar{X}_1$	SD_1	$\bar{X}_2$	SD_2	$\bar{X}_C$	Remark
1.	Group problem solving	4.74	.75	4.72	.83	4.73	SA
2.	Team-based teaching and learning	4.20	.72	4.10	.86	4.15	A
3.	Collaborative inquiry-based learning	4.68	.58	4.56	.60	4.62	SA
4.	Collaborative discovery learning	4.80	.68	4.72	.79	4.76	SA
5.	Collaborative project-based learning	4.68	.76	4.64	.56	4.66	SA
6.	Collaborative web-based learning	4.87	.44	4.81	.52	4.84	SA
7.	Collaborative research-based	4.66	.63	4.54	.78	4.60	SA
8.	ɜarning	4.65	.91	4.87	.82	4.76	SA
9.	Guided group discussion	4.93	.40	4.85	.55	4.89	SA
10.	Interdisciplinary learning ɔommunities Peer-to-peer teaching and learning	3.80	.72	3.56	.81	3.68	A

Keys: $\bar{X}_1$ = Lecturers, $\bar{X}_2$ = Students, SD = Standard Deviation, $\bar{X}_C$ = Combine Mean, SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree

Data analysis in Table 1 shows that the combine mean values for items 1, 3-9 ranging from 4.60 to 4.89 indicated that the respondents strongly agreed on the skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world. While items 2 and 10 with combine mean values of 4.15 and 3.68 respectively also indicated that the respondents agreed. This implies that the all the skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices in items 1-10 for preparing business education students can be used.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of difference in the Mean Responses on the Skills-Enhanced Collaborative Teaching and Learning Practices for Preparing Business Education Students towards Working in a Changing World

S/N	Respondents	N	Mean	SD	Sig Level	t-cal	P-val	Decision
1	Lecturers	25	4.60	.66	.05	.692	.361	NS
2	Students	275	4.54	.71				

Keys: SD = Standard Deviation, n = Population, t-cal = Calculated t-test Value, P-val = 2-tail Significant Value, NS = Not Significant.

Table 2 shows the summary of t-test result for hypothesis one with a t-calculated value of 0.692, and p-value of 0.361 greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, null hypothesis one was upheld since no significant difference existed in the mean responses of the respondents on the skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.

Research Question Two: What are the ways of implementing skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Ways of Implementing Skills-Enhanced Collaborative Teaching and Learning Practices for Preparing Business Education Students towards Working in a Changing World

S/N	Questionnaire Items	$\bar{X}_1$	SD_1	$\bar{X}_2$	SD_2	$\bar{X}_C$	Remark
1.	Establish functional skills to achieve	4.95	.49	4.83	.75	4.89	SA
2.	Keep sizeable group for effectiveness	4.65	.82	4.54	.86	4.60	SA
3.	Create individual and group roles	4.89	.60	4.81	.72	4.85	SA
4.	Establish flexible group norms	4.80	.63	4.74	.78	4.77	SA
5.	Establish procedure for group interactions to avoid distractions	4.66	.76	4.52	.89	4.59	SA
6.	Consider diversity, gender balance and individual intellect or talents	4.97	.41	4.89	.82	4.92	SA
7.	Handle emotional and interpersonal criticism carefully	4.79	.96	4.65	.79	4.72	SA
8.	Consider technologies that can make learning and collaboration very easy	4.97	.32	4.88	.60	4.93	SA
9.	Discourage inferiority feelings as students perform assigned roles	4.79	.78	4.71	.85	4.75	SA
10.	Build confidence and promote open communication amongst students	4.90	.69	4.96	.38	4.93	SA
11.	Engage students to discuss and solve real-world problems	4.88	.26	4.90	.67	4.89	SA
12.	Include different types of learning scenarios and strategies	4.61	.89	4.57	.96	4.59	SA
13.	**Focus on enhancing** creative thinking and problem-solving skills	4.93	.54	4.81	.86	4.87	SA
14.	Give opportunities for all the students to give feedback	4.61	.92	4.52	.88	4.56	SA
15.	Assess the progress of individual student and group performances	4.89	.85	4.71	.97	4.80	SA
16.	Mastering areas of gaps in the needed skills after assessment	4.94	.24	4.89	.71	4.92	SA

Keys: $\bar{X}_1$ = Lecturers, $\bar{X}_2$ = Students, SD = Standard Deviation, $\bar{X}_C$ = Combined Mean, SA = Strongly Agree

Data analysis in Table 3 shows the combine mean values ranging from 4.59 to 4.93 for all the questionnaire items. This implies that the respondents strongly agreed on the ways of implementing skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.

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Table 4: t-test Analysis of difference in the Mean Responses on the Ways of Implementing Skills-Enhanced Collaborative Teaching and Learning Practices for Preparing Business Education Students towards Working in a Changing World

S/N	Respondents	N	Mean	SD	Sig Level	t-cal	P-val	Decision
1	Lecturers	25	4.83	.64				
					.05	.989	.260	NS
2	Students	275	4.75	.83				

Keys: SD = Standard Deviation, n = Population, t-cal = Calculated t-test Value, P-val = 2-tail Significant Value, NS = Not Significant

Table 4 shows the summary of t-test result for hypothesis two with a t-calculated value of 0.989, and p-value of 0.260 greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis two was upheld since no significant difference existed in the mean responses of the respondents on the ways of implementing skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.

Research Question Three: What are the benefits of skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Benefits of Skills-Enhanced Collaborative Teaching and Learning Practices for Preparing Business Education Students towards Working in a Changing World

S/N	Questionnaire Items	$\bar{X}_1$	SD_1	$\bar{X}_2$	SD_2	$\bar{X}_C$	Remark
1.	Promote open communication skill	4.89	.67	4.81	.70	4.85	SA
2.	Foster curiosity, tolerance and team spirit	4.71	.87	4.67	.84	4.69	SA
3.	Active participation and flexible learning	4.78	.65	4.92	.61	4.85	SA
4.	Develop social and interpersonal skills	4.94	.45	4.96	.49	4.95	SA
5.	Harmonize talents and diversity skill	4.91	.83	4.83	.91	4.87	SA
6.	Allow students to construct their own knowledge for creative thinking skill	4.95	.33	4.89	.69	4.92	SA
7.	Enhance interactive learning environment	4.60	.89	4.46	.97	4.53	SA
8.	Reduce learning anxiety by collaboration	4.94	.46	4.82	.75	4.88	SA
9.	Expose students to leadership skill as students perform assigned roles	4.69	.80	4.55	.60	4.62	SA
10.	Enhance cooperation and positive heterogeneous relationship	4.88	.77	4.76	.88	4.82	SA
11.	Reduce real-life inferiority and phobia	4.85	.61	4.69	.97	4.77	SA
12.	Build self esteem, confidence and sense of responsibility in students	4.95	.46	4.84	.77	4.90	SA
13.	Enhance different learning scenarios and instructional strategies	4.71	.84	4.57	.88	4.64	SA
14.	Students engage in problem solving	4.93	.52	4.81	.66	4.87	SA
15.	Promote interdisciplinary functional skills	4.68	.59	4.54	.97	4.61	SA
16.	Foster networking, knowledge-sharing and online ICT skills	4.87	.64	4.71	.75	4.79	SA

Keys: $\bar{X}_1$ = Lecturers, $\bar{X}_2$ = Students, SD = Standard Deviation, $\bar{X}_C$ = Combined Mean, SA = Strongly Agree

Data analysis in Table 5 shows that all the questionnaire items 1-16 had combined mean values ranging from 4.53 to 4.95. This implies that all the respondents strongly agreed on the benefits of skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.

Table 6: t-test Analysis of difference in the Mean Responses on the Benefits of Skills-Enhanced Collaborative Teaching and Learning Practices for Preparing Business Education Students towards Working in a Changing World

S/N	Respondents	N	Mean	SD	Sig Level	t-cal	P-val	Decision
1	Lecturers	25	4.85	.65	.05	.742	.129	NS
2	Students	275	4.73	.79				

Keys: SD = Standard Deviation, n = Population, t-cal = Calculated t-test Value, P-val = 2-tail Significant Value, NS = Not Significant

Table 6 shows the summary of t-test result for hypothesis three with a t-calculated value of 0.742, and p-value of 0.129 greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis three was upheld since no significant difference existed in the mean responses of the respondents on the benefits of skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings on research question one revealed that group problem solving, team-based teaching and learning, peer-to-peer teaching and learning, guided group discussion, collaborative inquiry-based learning, discovery learning, project-based learning, web-based learning, research-based learning and interdisciplinary learning communities can be used for skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world. The findings are similar to the submission of Drew (2013) that there is a significant correlation between problem-solving activities and the critical thinking skills. Similarly, the findings of this study give credence to the reports of Herrington and Kervin (2007) and Dunlosky (2013) that students who work together as a team usually solve problems and create meaningful projects better than those who do not. Also, these findings are in line with the report of Barbara, Felder, Brent and Imad (2004) that students taught in a manner that incorporates small group learning achieve higher grades and acquire greater communication and teamwork skills. The null hypothesis one was not rejected because significant difference did not exist in the mean responses of the respondents. This shows that the respondents had similar views.

The findings on research question two revealed that the ways of implementing skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world include: establish group goal(s) to achieve functional skills, involving students in real-world experience, creative thinking and problem-solving skills, flexible group norms, individual and group roles; promote open communication and so on. The findings are similar to the submission of Hershey (2012), Ebner, Leichardt, Rohs and Meyer (2010) that collaborative instructional delivery makes active deliberation, participation and team spirit across students possible. These findings give more credence to the recent studies of Miriam (2018) and Dawn (2017) that collaborative learning strategies promote inclusive learning environment where learners can freely exchange information, ideas and experiences for

interactive, informative and educational purposes. The result of null hypothesis two was not rejected because significant difference did not exist in the mean responses of the respondents. This shows that the respondents had similar views on the ways of implementing skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices in this study.

The findings on research question three revealed the following benefits of skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices: open communication skill, social and interpersonal skills; positive heterogeneous relationship, cooperation, team spirit engagement and diversity skill; creative thinking, innovation, problem solving and leadership skills; ICT skill through online knowledge-sharing; active participation, self esteem and sense of responsibility in students; inclusive flexible learning environment. The findings are in line with the submission of Kelly (2017), Rosella (2016) and Halah and Patrick (2015), that collaborative learning promotes implementation of 21st century curriculum standards, social and interdisciplinary skills movement. Also, they are in line with the report of Trilling and Fadel (2009) that 21st century learning systems constantly engage students in critical thinking, communication, collaboration and problem solving to improve learning outcomes. These findings further collaborate with the studies Smith (2018) Drew (2013) and Lombardi (2007) that collaborative learning prepares students with authentic experience, creative and innovation skills needed in real life experience. The result of null hypothesis three was not rejected because significant difference did not exist in the mean responses of the respondents. This shows that the respondents had similar views.

Conclusion

This study emphasized skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world in line with the demands for 21st century functional and interdisciplinary workplace skills. The study identified collaborative teaching and learning practices that can enhance acquisition of these skills; ways of implementing them and their benefits. It was upheld that skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning will help business education students to develop their communication skill, social and diversity skills, team spirit engagement and leadership skills, creative thinking and problem solving skills, online knowledge-sharing and information seeking skills through active collaboration between students to students and lecturers to students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended that:

1. Business educators should engage students in collaborative group problem-solving, team-based learning, peer-to-peer learning, guided group discussion, inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, web-based learning, research-based learning and interdisciplinary learning.
2. Business educators should carefully implement skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world and ensure that students are actually well equipped with functional skills to become highly productive citizens upon graduation.
3. Business Education students should be well motivated to take advantage of the benefits of collaborative teaching and learning practices to develop their social and diversity skills, team spirit engagement and leadership skills, creative thinking and problem solving skills, online knowledge-sharing and information seeking skills.

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INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA IN COVID-19 ERA

[1]IDEHEN, FRANK
Abia State University, Uturu
08058056898

[2]EMEASOBA, NNEKA CHARITY (PhD)
Department of Agricultural and Vocational Education
(Business Education Programme)
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike
Abia State – Nigeria
nnekaemeasoba@yahoo.com
08033429094

Abstract

The study assessed the innovative strategies for effective teaching and learning of business education in post COVID-19 era in public universities in South-East, Nigeria. It adopts the descriptive survey design. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Population consisted of 79 Business Educators in public universities in South- East. No sample was used because the population is not large. The instrument was validated by experts in business education and measurement and evaluation from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. Cronbach alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument with coefficients of 0.83. A four- point response type of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed with 24 items were used. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. Findings of the study revealed that business educators agreed on the use of experiential and disagreed on the use of team related and flipped strategies in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in South East Nigeria in post COVID-19 era. The findings further showed no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on experiential, team related, and flipped strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in COVID-19 post era The study concluded that the use of innovative teaching strategy in business education instructional delivery is of vital importance in equipping its graduates with the current skills required in the modern business world for sustainable development .It was recommended among others that Experiential strategies should be implemented by the various department of Business Education in public universities in South East Nigeria in order to develop students' skills through hands-on activities and further stimulate students' interest in the course.

Keywords: *Innovative, Strategies, Teaching and Learning, Business Education, COVID 19 Era.*

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Introduction

On 27 February, Nigeria confirmed its first case in Lagos State, an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria had returned on 25 February from Milan, Italy through the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, fell ill on 26 February and was transferred to Lagos State Bio-security Facilities for isolation and testing. As at 7th May, 2021, Nigeria is having 165,285 confirmed cases of corona virus patients, 7,807 active cases, 155,413 discharged cases and 2,065 deaths (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, NCDC, 2021). In order to contain the spread of the virus in Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education has directed all educational institutions in Nigeria to shut down and allows students to go home as cases of reported COVID-19 increased.

COVID-19 pandemic has affected all levels of the education system (Nicola, Alsafi, Sohrabi, kerwan, Al-Jabir and Losifidis, 2020). Educational institutions around the world (in 192 countries) have either temporarily closed or implemented localized closures affecting about 1.7 billion student populations worldwide (UNESCO, 2020). Many institutions around the world either postponed or canceled all campus activities to minimize gatherings and hence decrease the transmission of the virus. However, these measures lead to higher economical, medical, and social implications on the educational institutions most especially the teaching and learning process (Nicola et al, 2020).

Teaching and learning philosophy is a systematic and critical rationale that focuses on the important components defining effective teaching and their impact on students' learning in the secondary settings (Debra and Michel, 2012). Learning is built upon how individuals internalize and apply what they learn based on how they acquire the knowledge. A teachers' teaching style is directly related to their philosophy of what it means to know and learn. The rationale for making particular teaching choices/skills becomes more apparent most especially in this period of COVID-19 where guidelines and procedures for teaching and learning is still being maintained.

The global technological revolution especially in the areas of business has prompted the need for business education instructional delivery to be technologically based. The recent global technological innovations in the business world have brought about radical change in the educational system. Business education, being a dynamic and a programme for sustainable development should adapt to changes in technology and in the business world. Technology is now a new tool that sharpens the global economy and equips individuals with lifelong learning. Every facet of human endeavours be it in the areas of healthcare delivery, business practices, social interaction, politics, information system, knowledge dissemination, education and others are now revolutionized with information and communication technology.

The traditional pedagogical practices of training in educational institutions are gradually paving way to new technological system of teaching. According to Yusuf (2015), the use of new technologies for pedagogical delivery has undoubtedly affected teaching, learning and research and its integration can help revitalize teachers and students. New technologies can enhance students learning, improve teacher's instruction, help students reduce the amount of direct instruction given to them by the teacher and also enable the teacher cater for individual needs of the students. Ramsden (2013) identified the following ICTs that are used in teaching and learning to include; multimedia technology, radio and TV broadcasting, teleconferencing, audio conferencing, computer and internet, internet and web-based initiatives and tele-collaboration. These new technologies have the prospect of contributing immensely in business education for sustainable development. These innovative approaches are used for delivering electronically mediated, well designed, learner-centered and interactive learning environments to anyone, anywhere and anytime by utilizing the internet and digital technologies in connection with instructional design principles (Hedges and Hayward, 2014).

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Therefore, the use of innovative teaching strategy in business education instructional delivery is of vital importance in equipping its graduates with the current skills required in the modern business world for sustainable development. Business education emphasizes use of the products of the programme to create, maintain and harness the resources of natural business environment for a long-term benefit of the entire populace and for the nation's economic growth. For any business educator to impact the relevant business skills, knowledge and digital skills required of a Business education graduate to be saleable or a successful entrepreneur, there is a need for the utilization of innovative strategies in the teaching and learning of Business Education courses in the public universities.

Innovative strategies are the techniques or methods that a teacher adopt to meet various learning objectives. These innovative strategies help students to walk on the path of independent learning and become strategic learners. They equip teachers to make learning fun and help students to awaken their desire to learn. Innovative strategies focus on not only the educational content but also on the methods and environment of the teaching and learning process. Students` development level, interests and experience are considered while choosing a particular teaching strategy so that they can self-accomplish their goals (Richa, 2014). Innovative strategies enable students to focus their attention, organize their learning material for better understanding and help teachers to provide a suitable platform for strategic learning. Such innovative strategies are: Cross over teaching, Smart board, Collaborative teaching, Cloud computing, Flipped class, Project based learning, Activity based learning, Jigsaw, experiential teaching, team-teaching and so many others (Adesoji, Omilani and Nyinebi, 2015). But for the purpose of this study, the following innovative strategy would be considered; experiential strategies, team related strategies and flipped strategies

Experiential related strategy is seen as learner-centered and activity oriented. These strategies involve personal and practical experience of the learner. Examples are field trips, office visits, workshops and laboratory exposure. Experiential education takes many forms in the graduate and undergraduate computer information system (CIS) curricula. They include strategies such as simulations, case study, project-based course works and presentation. Specifically, these are important element of the Computer Information System curriculum because they enhance students understanding of the topic beyond abstract conceptualization. Ahumaraeze(2020) described experiential strategies as any learning activity that is carried on by the students as a group outside the classroom under the guidance of the teacher. Ahumaraeze further noted that these strategies are effective in exposing students to a particular skill or experience where learning is by seeing and doing, and when subject matter requires observation, analyzing, generalizing and application It thus provides the experiences that cannot be brought into the classroom when properly planned.

Team related strategy can be defined as a group of two or more teachers working together to plan conduct and evaluate learning activities for the same group of learners. Team teaching in an online environment promotes effective and efficient instruction to meet the needs of students. Prepared and aligned instructors can provide timely feedback, different perspectives about topics and promptly returned emails or phone communication (Scribner-Maclean and Miller, 2011). The instructors collaborates on how to effectively provide meaningful learning in the online environment taking note of the following components like enhancing the discussion in the forum, providing timely feedback, adding stimulating questions, returning emails, facilitating course management among others. Team teaching can therefore be viewed, as team work between two or more qualified instructors who, together, make presentations on an audience (the learners) (Chia, 2012). Team- teaching consists of two or more teachers sharing, to some degree, responsibility for a group of students. Teachers set goals together for a course, design a syllabus,

prepare individual lesson plans, teach students, and evaluate the results of the teaching and learning process.

Similarly, another strategy is flipped related strategy. Flipped Learning Network (2014) defines "Flipped Learning as a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic and interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter". It means that the learners initially acquire learning resources outside of class, mainly through lecture videos, and then use the face-to-face session to do in-depth discussion, problem-solving, or debates. Flipped classroom increases students' engagement, provides teacher freedom, teachers establish personal communication with students regarding the subject, homework and any other progress, reduces time spent answering basic and repetitive questions — due to students' ability to review lectures online; increases adaptation of lecture content to respond to new learning needs (Millard, 2012).

Following this, it is important to note that these innovative strategies cut across all programmes including Business Education. This is why Emeasoba and Igwe (2018) view Business Education as a tripartite program of instruction which prepares the recipient or the learner with skills, competencies, knowledge, attitudes, values to be a business education teacher, an office worker or to be an entrepreneur. According to Okoli (2013), Business Education is also that aspect of the total educational programme that provides the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes needed to perform effectively in the business world as a producer and/or consumer of goods and services that business offers. Operationally, Business Education is an important part of general education which emphasizes skill acquisition for office use consisting of a programme of vocation for office careers, and general Business Education.

For effective teaching of business education, the lecturers need to adopt innovative strategies that will significantly impact business knowledge and skills to the students. Succinctly, universities in Nigeria are regulated by the National University Commission (NUC) and are mainly classified by ownership. There are specifically, three classes of universities in Nigeria; the federal, state and private universities. The private universities are owned and run by individuals, corporate organizations or faith based organizations. The federal and state universities are owned and run by the federal and state government respectively. There are male and female lecturers in all the universities both public and private.

Essentially, Kangahi, Indoshi, Okwach and Osodo (2012) observed that the innovative approach to teaching and learning of business education in universities is a major missing link especially in the post COVID-19 era. To buttress this fact, the authors contended that the solution does not lie only with the availability of qualified teachers and modern teaching facilities, but also the use of innovative strategies applied in teaching and learning business education. This is because Business Education is not one of the subjects that can be mastered by mere memorization of the basic rules but requires total determination, sound theoretical knowledge and intensive practice. The crucial role of teachers in every teaching situation makes it imperative to seek innovative strategies for teaching and learning of business education in universities in South East Nigeria in Post COVID-19 Era.

Statement of the Problem

In post COVID-19 era, it has become so difficult for most universities to meet up with COVID-19 protocols. This has become a source of worry to stakeholders, curriculum planners, parents, students among others. Classroom that are supposed to take 20 persons are now taking 200 persons and the federal and state government have not been able to do anything about it. More so, Business educators in the universities to a greater number has maintained the traditional teaching strategies instead of adopting innovative strategies in the teaching and

learning of business education in this post COVID-19 era (Adesoji et al., 2015). It could be that business education lecturers are poorly equipped with the necessary innovative strategies or lack adequate knowledge in using these innovative strategies in teaching and learning of business education and manage the students to fruition. Against this, preliminary investigations with some business education lecturers in some universities revealed that business educators (lectures) who are gainfully employed seems not to be able use these innovative strategies in teaching and learning of business education. It is therefore against this backdrop that the researcher seeks to ascertain the innovative strategies for teaching and learning of Business education in universities in the South east Nigeria in post COVID 19 era.

Research Questions

1. What are the experiential strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era?
2. What are the team related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era?
3. What are the flipped related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on experiential strategies in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on team-related strategies in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on flipped strategies in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era.

Method

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population for the study consisted of 79 business educators in eight universities in South East Nigeria offering business education programme. The entire population of 79 business educators in the eight universities in South East Nigeria offering business education programme will be used as sample for this study. Therefore, there is no sampling for the study since the population is of a manageable number. A validated structured questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on Innovative Strategies in Teaching and Learning of Business Education Programme” (QISTLBEP). The instrument consists of two sections A and B. Section A contains two items on demographical data of respondent while section B contains 24 items in two clusters. Section B1 contains 10 items on experiential strategies; section B2 contains 7 items on team-related strategies; and section B3 contains 7 items on flipped strategies.The instrument is a four point rating scale of: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD) with values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Cronbach Coefficient Alpha to measure the internal consistency of the instrument and co-efficient of 0.88, 0.84 and 0.79 were obtained for the three clusters respectively. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while t-test of independence was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The decision was based on the cluster mean score in relation to the boundary mean score of 2.50. A cluster with mean score equal to or above 2.50 was agreed while the one with mean score less than 2.50 was disagreed. The null hypothesis

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was not rejected where the calculated value is less than the significant level of 0.05 and rejected if the calculated value is equal to or greater than the significant level of 0.05.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the experiential related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era?

Table 1: Respondents' Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on Experiential Related Strategies used in the Teaching and Learning of Business Education Courses

S/N	Items on experiential related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses	X	SD	Remarks
1	Demonstrate specific skills for business education students in classroom	4.69	0.60	Strongly Agree
2	Motivate business education students by stimulating their interest	4.78	0.79	Strongly Agree
3	Develop expertise through regular practice exercises	4.37	0.88	Agree
4	Encourage business education students to manipulate objects and devices during instruction	2.45	1.26	Disagree
5	Engage business education students in practical application of business education concepts	4.28	0.73	Agree
6	Develop students' skills through hands-on activities	4.36	0.81	Agree
7	Involve business education students in the use of multimedia like projector	2.19	1.29	Disagree
8	Engage business education students to learn how to use videophone systems in the class	2.30	1.11	Disagree
9	Involve business education students in finding solution to practical problems	4.38	1.17	Agree
10	Encourage students to acquire basic skills in spreadsheets, and database packages	3.56	0.89	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**3.74**		**Agree**

Data in Table 1 reveal the item by item analysis on experiential related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era. The analysis revealed that items 1 and 2 with mean scores 4.69 and 4.78 were rated strongly agreed while items 3, 5, 6, 9 and 10 were rated agreed. On the other hand, items 4, 7 and 8 with mean scores 2.45, 2.19 and 2.30 were rated disagreed. However, the cluster mean of 3.74 summarized that business educators agreed on the use of experiential related strategies in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in South East Nigeria in post COVID-19 era. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.60 – 1.29 show that teachers do not vary too much in their ratings on experiential related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses.

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Research Question 2: What are the team related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era?

Table 2: Respondents' Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on Team Related Strategies used in the Teaching and Learning of Business Education Courses

S/N	Items on team-related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses	X	SD	Remarks
11	share the topics and plan students' lesson in line with the objectives of the course with co-lecturer	2.08	1.02	Disagree
12	phrase questions and statements with co-lecturers and involve business education students	1.07	0.97	Strongly disagree
13	use language ("we", "our") that demonstrates true collaboration	2.09	0.95	Disagree
14	Partition the content of work to demonstrate shared responsibility.	2.56	1.07	Agree
15	use variety of instructional approaches like regrouping, debate	4.59	0.98	Strongly Agree
16	Ensure that the class moves smoothly with evidence of co-planning and communication between co-lecturers	1.99	1.01	Disagree
17	pay attention to students having difficulties in some aspects of business education at different levels.	3.12	0.68	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**2.49**		**Disagree**

Data in Table 2 reveal the item by item analysis on team related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era. The analysis revealed that item 15 with a mean score of 4.59 was rated strongly agreed, this means that most business educators use variety of instructional approaches like regrouping, debate etc. The analysis revealed that items 14 and 17 with mean scores 2.56 and 3.12 were rated agreed while items 11, 13 and 16 with mean scores 2.08, 2.09 and 1.99 were rated disagreed. More so, the result revealed that item 12 with a mean score 1.07 was rated strongly disagreed, this means that business educators do not phrase questions and statements with co-lecturers and involve business education students. Summarily, the cluster mean of 2.49 indicated that business educators disagreed on the use of team related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.68 – 1.02 show that teachers do not vary too much in their ratings on team related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses.

Research Question 3

What are the flipped related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era?

Table 3: Respondents' Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on Flipped Related Strategies used in the Teaching and Learning of Business Education Courses

S/N	Items on flipped related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses	X	SD	Remarks
18	Describe business education concepts using videos	1.73	1.04	Disagree
19	Teach calculations involved in business education using instructional videos	1.51	0.94	Disagree
20	Teach students at their pace	3.16	0.97	Agree
21	Teach business education through personalized learning	1.94	0.87	Disagree
22	Teach business education through simulation	2.68	1.03	Agree
23	Improve business education students' competency skill through zoom and telegram	3.06	0.84	Agree
24	Teach basic learning skill in business education through video display	2.04	0.96	Disagree
	Cluster Mean	**2.30**		**Disagree**

Data in Table 3 revealed the item by item analysis on flipped related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era. The analysis revealed that item 20, 22 and 23 with mean scores 3.16, 2.68 and 3.06 were rated agreed while items 18, 19, 21 and 24 with mean scores 1.73, 1.51, 1.94 and 2.04 were rated disagreed. Summarily, the cluster mean of 2.30 means that business educators disagreed on the use of flipped related strategies used in teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.84 – 1.04 show that teachers do not vary too much in their ratings on flipped related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses.

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on experiential strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era.

Table 4: t-Test analysis significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on experiential strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	p-value	α-level	Remark
Male	25	25.44	4.57	77	0.371	0.05	Not Significant
Female	54	24.46	4.45				

Data presented in Table 4 showed the significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on experiential strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses. The result showed a p-value of 0.371 with 77 degree of freedom and α—level of 0.05 (0.371 > 0.05), the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is

no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on experiential strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on team-related strategies in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era.

Table 5: t-Test analysis on significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on team-related strategies in the teaching and learning of business education courses

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	p-value	α-level	Remark
Male	25	21.68	3.12				
				77	0.225	0.05	Not Significant
Female	54	20.44	4.58				

Data presented in Table 5 showed the significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on team strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses. The result showed a p-value of 0.225 with 77 degree of freedom and α—level of 0.05 (0.225 > 0.05), the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on team related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on flipped strategies in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era.

Table 6: t-Test analysis on significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on flipped strategies in the teaching and learning of business education courses

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Df	p-value	α-level	Remark
Male	25	20.52	3.16				
				77	0.441	0.05	Not Significant
Female	54	19.81	4.01				

Data presented in Table 6 showed the significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on flipped strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses. The result showed a p-value of 0.441 with 77 degree of freedom and α—level of 0.05 (0.441 > 0.05), the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on flipped strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era.

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Discussion of Findings

The findings in research questions revealed that business educators agreed on the use of experiential related strategies in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in South East Nigeria in post COVID-19 era. This means that business educators constantly use the following experiential strategies; demonstrates specific skills for business education students in classroom; motivates business education students by stimulating their interest; develops expertise through regular practice exercises; engages business education students in practical application of business education concepts; develop students' skills through hands-on activities among others. This finding supported the finding of Ogwunte and Okolocha (2016) that experiential strategies are very effective for teaching business subject as the secondary school level. On the other hand, this finding opposed the finding of Okoli (2013) that heads of business education departments observed that secondary school business teachers were ineffective in the use of experiential strategy. The difference in both findings could be as a result of varying opinions of respondents because of change in location.

The result revealed in hypothesis one showed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on experiential strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era. This finding agreed with the finding of Okoli (2013) that there was no significant difference between male and female heads of business educators on the effectiveness of business teaches' effectiveness in using experiential teaching strategy in secondary schools in Anamabra State.

The finding in research question two revealed that business educators disagreed on the use of team related strategies used in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era. This means that business educators hardly share the topics and plan students' lesson in line with the objectives of the course with co-lecturer; phrase questions and statements with co-lecturers and involve business education students; use language ("we", "our") that demonstrates true collaboration; and ensure that the class moves smoothly with evidence of co-planning and communication between co-lecturers. This finding disagreed with the finding of Olowodun (2014) that out of 14 team strategies, eight strategies were perceived by the respondents as important for organization of learning activities. Thirteen strategies were found to be effective for effective teaching and learning of business education in secondary schools. The difference in both findings could be as a result of varying opinions of respondents because of change in location.

The finding in hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on team-related strategies in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era. This finding agreed with the finding of Olowodun (2012) that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on team-teaching strategies for effective teaching and learning of Business education in secondary schools in Kaduna State.

The finding in research question three revealed that business educators disagreed on the use of flipped related strategies used in teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID-19 era. This finding implies that flipped strategies were hardly used in teaching and learning of business education courses. Most of these strategies include; describe business education concepts using videos; teach calculations involved in business education using instructional videos; teach business education through personalized learning; and teach basic learning skill in business education through video display. This finding was in tandem with the finding of Abeysekera and Dawnson (2014) flipped

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learning is a better innovative teaching strategy but hardly practiced in teaching of financial accounting.

The finding in hypothesis three revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on direct strategies in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria in post COVID 19 era. This finding opposed the finding of Ahumaraeze (2020) that there was significant difference between male and female physics teachers on the effectiveness of flipped learning in physics classroom. This means that flipped classroom teaching model is one of the effective teaching approaches' to teach concepts in Physics and other Sciences especially in higher education because students are responsible for their own learning, learning at their own pace and it increases collaborative learning.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the study concluded that business educators agreed on the use of experiential strategies in the teaching and learning of business education courses while they disagreed on the use of team related and flipped strategies in the teaching and learning of business education courses in public universities in South East Nigeria in post COVID-19 era.However the use of innovative teaching strategy in business education instructional delivery is of vital importance in equipping its graduates with the current skills required in the modern business world for sustainable development .

Recommendations

1. Experiential strategies should be implemented by the various department of Business Education in public universities in South East Nigeria in order to develop students' skills through hands-on activities and further stimulate students' interest in the course.
2. On-the-job training and conferences should be organized at intervals for business education courses in public universities in order to update their knowledge on team-related strategies that can allow students to be at the centre of learning and also improve cordial relationship amongst co-lecturers.
3. Teachers should be trained in the use of direct instructional strategy to improve intellectual functioning of the students and ensure better performance in their studies especially in business education courses.

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DIGITAL SKILLS NEEDED BY BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATE FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN EBONYI STATE

[1]Oko Maryvivian Chinyere
Department of Business Education,
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.
e-mail: okomaryvivian@gmail.com,
Phone: 08030512592

[2]Dr. Sampson Owazuaka Wagbara
Department of Business Education,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni,
Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
sampsonwagbara@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examined the digital skills needed by business education graduate for global competitiveness in entrepreneurship development in Ebonyi State. The study was guided by two research questions{which} guided the study. The population of the study consisted Of 150 graduates of business education from three higher institutions in Ebonyi state (Ebonyi state university Abakaliki, Ebonyi State Collage of Education Ikwo and Alex-Ekwueme Federal University, Ikwo). The entire population was used for the study, as the population Was small and manageable size. A structured questionnaire containing 12 items was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The study found amongst others that graduates of business education needed all the digital skills in accounting and communication as listed in order to excel in entrepreneurship globally. The study therefore recommended that Education and career system should be made proactive and responsive by educational stakeholders to the present needs and problems of the future, through the provision of required skill-sets for the 21st century.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship education involves learning varieties of business related competencies for business development and management. Such learning includes; improved decision-making skills, identification and utilization of business opportunities, setting up and properly running an enterprise and recently, skills to access information and use different Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools to create better working space (Duruamaku-Dim and Duruamaku-Dim 2014). Information and Communication Technology is an umbrella term that covers various technologies that provide access to information through telecommunication tools. It is similar to Information Technology (IT) but focuses primarily on communication technologies. Components of ICT includes the internet and intranet networks, wireless networks, cell phones and other communication media.

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ICT as a major driver in today's global economy has become one of the most sought after skill-sets of the 21st century. Digital skills are the key to unlocking the potentials in the new market place (the internet). The global market system of today needs new sets of skills for marketing, advertising and business promotional activities necessary for setting-up, growing and effective management of businesses. Students need full range of new skills in order to meaningfully participate in the 21st century global economy (Barbara, 2017).

Students' success today is largely dependent on how effectively they are able to acquire salable skills they are exposed in their educational programme. Acquisition of adequate skills enabled them fit into the society and the world of work. In this twenty-first century, technological skills are very important for human survival and entrepreneurial development. One of the veritable skills required by students is digital skill. Digital skills are broadly defined as those needed capacity and ability to "use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information. According to Olu and Izuchukwu (2019), digital skills refers to a set of skills, tools, and knowledge necessary to use networks, digital devices and different applications on online mediums that facilitate the management of information according to specific requirements of working environment, learning environment, and problems solving situations.

The usefulness of digital literacy as an important skill-sets for entrepreneurial development lies on the perception, productive function and usage frequency. A study by Anireh, (2017) showed that e-learning courses, market research data bases and business plan software are among the tools that can be used for the development of entrepreneurial competencies. Young students of today (21st century) are considered digital natives and arrive various institutions bringing with them certain educational expectations (Ibelegbu, 2013). The concept of 21st century learning and skill development involves learning motivated by practice of teaching students the most relevant, useful, current and globally applied skills. According to the European Union (2006), learning in the 21st century prepares people for four things,- learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. Appropriate competencies are therefore required in achieving these goals.

The 21st century business education students must be taught different skills from those of 20th century. The skills to be taught in this century should reflect the specific demands placed on today's students by the complex, competitive, knowledge-based, information-age, technology-driven economy and society (Barbara, 2017). Some of the skills especially in digital technologies include in the areas of digital skills in accounting, communication, marketing and recording and filing. These skills are very important as it help to equip the students with veritable skill for entrepreneurial development and global competitiveness after graduation.

Global competitiveness refers to ability of a product or service to compete with their counterparts internationally. Global competitiveness requires excellence in production of goods and services (Ike and Madu, 2016). In the context of this paper, global competitiveness refers to the ability of a graduate to develop competent digital skills that will enable him/her to develop and manage business ideas that can meet up the international standard.

The capacity for achieving these educational skills and standards requires literacy in ICT. Information and communication technology compliance is expected to deliver three forms of literacy namely; information communication literacy- an act of using digital technology, communication tools and/or networks to access, manage, integrate, evaluate and create information in order to function in a knowledge society; media literacy, the ability to identify different types of media and messages they are sending, and technology literacy – the ability to use, manage, understand and assess technology. Once mastered, these forms of literacy help in the mastery of other skill need (Oduma, 2012). Today these competencies (digital skills) may seem modern. They are not entirely new, but just newly important (Olu, 2015).). Acquiring skills

has become a lot easier these days as the need has been seen and hence provisions made in the education system. This becomes advantageous to ICT skill compliant students.

According to MindTools (2017) and Kutzhanova (2009) various categories of entrepreneurship skills such as personal characteristics,-attributes or personality trait of an individual, interpersonal skills – qualities and behaviours we exhibit while interacting with other people, critical and creative thinking–thinking deeply using skills, behaviours and dispositions like reason, logic, resourcefulness, imaginations, etc., and practical skill- skills performed by hand or with human intervention using equipment, tools or technology requiring guidance, force or movement, can be acquired using digital tools provided by government to be used in schools. Individual skill practices (competency level) can also be effectively measured using three competency level like involving people in doing the work, communicating effectively, and applying the relevant skill competencies. Gregor, (2015), can also be effectively measured three competency framework: involving people in doing the work; communicating effectively and applying the relevant skill competencies.

Statement of the Problem

In the current phase of technological changes in the business world, students should be properly equipped with the necessary ICT (digital) skills to enable them to be successful future entrepreneurs. These new skills are in the areas of computer and internet connectivity, teleconferencing, multimedia technology, webCT, formatting tools, webbased initiatives etc. Unfortunately, these skills are lacking among most of the graduates today. This could be the reason for high rate of unemployment and unemployable graduates roaming the streets in search job. To buttress this further, Okolocha (2016) noted that businesses established by Business education graduation goes into extinction within 5 years of establishment as a result of good digital skills needed to run that business.

Furthermore, Business Education as an aspect of entrepreneurial education focuses on three major areas that require digital skills. These include; accounting, recording keeping and filing as well as communication skills. It is however worrisome that these skills are found lacking among business education graduates in Ebonyi State. This paper therefore assesses the digital skills needed by business education graduate for global competitiveness in entrepreneurship in Ebonyi State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the digital accounting/recordkeeping skills needed by business education graduate for global competitiveness in entrepreneurship in Ebonyi State?
2. What are the digital communication skills needed by business education graduate for global competitiveness in entrepreneurship in Ebonyi State?

Methodology

A survey research design was adopted for the study as the study sought the opinions of the respondents on the digital skills needed by business education graduate for global competitiveness in entrepreneurship using questionnaire. The study was conducted in three tertiary institutions in Ebonyi State offering business education. The institutions include: Ebonyi State University Abakaliki, Ebonyi State Collaged of Education Ikwo and Alex Ekwueme Federal University,Ikwo

The population of this study comprised 150 business education graduates residing within EbonyiState. Since the 150 business education graduates were manageable, there was no

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sampling therefore, the entire population was used for the study. The instrument used to collect data was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instrument has 15 items each in two clusters generated from the research questions designed to elicit responses on the subject matter.

The instrument was administered to the business education graduates in their business areas. One hundred and fifty copies of the instrument was administered but at the point of collection, (136) were retrieved and used for the study. The research questions were analyzed descriptively using mean and standard deviation based on a 4-point Likert-type scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was subjected to face validation to determine its adequacy and appropriateness for the study. This was done by presenting it to three experts, one from Measurement and Evaluation and the other two from Business Education all in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Based on their comments and suggestions, the instrument was modified to suit the study. A mean score below 2.5 was interpreted as rejected and above 2.5 as accepted for the research questions.

Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings of digital accounting/recordkeeping skills needed by business education graduate for global competitiveness in entrepreneurship in Ebonyi State?

S/N	Items	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
1	Electronic file creation skills	4.0	0.60	Needed
	Skills in the use of accounting excel software	4.0	0.94	Needed
2	Skills in the use of accounting SPSS software	3.1	1.21	needed
3	Digital record keeping skills	3.9	1.26	Needed
4	Digital record retrieval skills	4.0	0.94	Needed
5	Digital filing skills	4.1	0.84	Needed
6	Audio recording and management skills	3.5	1.15	Needed
7	Skills in the recoding of virtual meeting	3.2	1.27	needed
	Grand mean	3.8		

Table 1 shows the mean score of digital accounting/recordkeeping skills needed by business education graduate for global competitiveness in entrepreneurship in Ebonyi State. The table indicated that all the items were accepted by the respondents as digital accounting/recordkeeping skills needed by business education graduate for global competitiveness in entrepreneurship in Ebonyi State.

Table 2: Respondents' mean ratings of digital communication skillsneeded by business education graduate for global competitiveness in entrepreneurship in Ebonyi State.

S/N	Items	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
8	social media management skills	3.4	0.48	Needed
9	E-mail management skills	3.3	0.68	Needed
10	Teleconferencing application skill	3.3	0.59	Needed
11	Web conferencing application	3.1	0.83	Needed
12	Facsimile (Fax) skill	3.3	0.53	Needed

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13	Telex machine operation	3.1	0.84	Needed
14	Office intercom operation skill	3.5	1.15	Needed
15	Skills in the utilization of virtual events and webinars	3.2	1.27	Needed
16	Desktop conferencing application	4.3	0.84	Needed
	Grand mean	3.8		

Table 2 shows the mean score of digital communication skills needed by business education graduate for global competitiveness in entrepreneurship in Ebonyi State. The table indicated that all the items were accepted as the needed by the respondents digital communication skillsneeded by business education graduate for global competitiveness in entrepreneurship in Ebonyi State.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from table 1 revealed the digital accounting/recordkeeping skills needed by business education graduate for global competitiveness in entrepreneurship in Ebonyi State. Result from the table showed that business education graduate need skills in Electronic file creation skills, Skills in the use of accounting excel software, Skills in the use of accounting SPSS software, Digital record keeping skills, digital record retrieval skills, digital filing skills, audio recording and management skills and skills in the recoding of virtual meeting. These findings were in line with Okoye (2017) who noted that use of accounting software like Microsoft excel, SPSS, E-view are very important in the modern accounting world.

The findings of the study further revealed that for effective entrepreneurship practice, business education graduates should be properly equipped with the following ICT communication skills: such as e-mail management, teleconferencing, web conferencing, facsimile, telex machine, office intercom, video conferencing and desktop conferencing. Emejulu (2014) contended that global business environment has been taken over by the internet. Through the combination of e-mail, video conferencing, telephone and web conferencing, there is maximum potentials to communicate with world wide audience. The need to accurately exchange information in a fast moving world using a variety of ICT communication skills cannot be over-emphasized. The use of ICT communication skills in entrepreneurship education will adequately equip students with the necessary ICT skills needed to be able to attract much development in their future business venture.

Conclusion

Business education graduates stands the chance of competing globally in entrepreneurial activities if they acquire the digital kills needed in the changing world of work in the 2l century business world. Nigeria today is undergoing large changes in technology, lifestyle and ecosystems built around digital transformation and global economic system hence, the need to train graduates who can fit into the same changes. It is worthy to note that the natures educational system needs changes to prepare her graduates to meet the challenges of the century as education happens to be the bedrock of every society.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Education and career system should be made proactive and responsive by the government and educational stakeholders to the present needs and problems of the future, through the provision of required skill-sets for the 2l century.

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2. Business education students needs varieties of skills and knowledge in the globalized and economically transformed digital system.

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DIGITAL SKILLS GAP AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN ANAMBRA STATE: IMPLICATION FOR PROGRAMME RE-ADJUSTMENT

[1]AKUDOLU, CHIKERENMA ADANMA
Department of Technology and Vocational Education
Nnamdi Azikiwe Universsity, Awka
Anambra State
chikerebeauty1@gmail.com
08035213597

[2]Onyeneke Euphemia Nkiruka
Department of Technology and Vocational Education
Nnamdi Azikiwe Universcity Awka
Anambra State
en.onyeneke@unizik,edu,ng
0806599546

Abstract

The study investigated digital skills gap among business education graduates of tertiary institutions in Anambra State: Implication for programme re-adjustment. The study adopted three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. Two hundred and sixty six employers formed the population of this study. There was no sampling since the population was manageable. A structured questionnaire which was validated by three experts in the field of business education and measurement and evaluation unit was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established using pilot study and analysis carried out using Cronbach alpha statistics which yielded correlation coefficients of .84, .79 and .87 respectively for clusters B1 to B3 and overall reliability coefficient of 0.83. Mean was used to answer the research questions, standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity of respondents' mean ratings, and t-test used to test the hypotheses. Findings showed that business education graduates possess digital foundation skills to a moderate extent while they possess digital communication skills and cloud computing skills to a low extent. Findings also revealed that years of working experience was not a significant factor influencing the opinions of employers regarding the extent the three digital skills covered are possessed by business education graduates. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that business education graduates should embark on digital skills acquisition programmes to up-date themselves to remain relevant in the digital economy. This will help them to perform effectively in modern offices.

Key Words: *Digital Skills, Digital Skills Gap, Business education graduates*

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Introduction

The issue of digital skills gap is a global challenge facing both developed and developing countries. Even the world's most technologically advanced countries such as USA, Canada, Germany and Japan among others are struggling with the digital skills gap (International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 2020). As technological innovation gains momentum, digital skills gap have widen and if not addressed, could hinder economic growth as well as slow innovation of many countries. In Nigeria, digital skills gap affect different sectors of the economy such as Banking, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Health and Education. The gap can lead to unfilled positions in the 21st century work places as the workforce needed to step into job roles lack the required digital skills.

Digital skills refer to those skills needed by individuals to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2018). They enable individuals to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate with others, and solve problems for effective and creative self-fulfillment in life, learning, work, and social activities at large. According to Okeji, Nwankwo, Anene and Olorunfemi (2020), digital skills represent set of skills needed to effectively and efficiently perform office tasks using new technologies in the digital environment. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2019) stated that any definition of digital skills should involve the ability to confidently, critically and responsibly use and engage digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in 21st century society. In view of this, the European Council view digital skills as encompassing information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cyber security), intellectual property related questions, problem solving and critical thinking. This dimension is the social, emotional and interpersonal effects of using technology alone and with other people. Soft skills are very important when it comes to digital technologies. You cannot just focus on the technology - you have to see the full picture

Digital technologies include computers (desktop and laptop), smart phones, scanners, digital photocopiers, internet, and audio/video conferencing facilities among others. Offili (2017) stated that a digitally skilled employee should have the skills to use computer desktop and laptop computers and other electronic devices to complete office tasks. The employee should also be able to objectively analyze facts to form accurate judgment, think critically, develop the ability to engage in online community meetings and social networks and should possess the capacity to understand the emerging societal issues caused by the evolution of digital technologies.

Presently, many organizations are recognizing the importance of digital skills for graduates to fit into the modern offices. Burton (2021) stated that digital skills make an organization a freer and simpler place to work. A lot of organizations' work can now be done from home. The consumers now expect more from an organization knowing that technology has made everything so much faster. It is more important than ever for graduates of tertiary institutions to possess range of digital skills which will enhance their employment potentials. In support of this view, Berger and Frey (2016) pointed out that the kind of digital skills required of graduates of higher institutions change over time in line with changes in technologies. Berger and Frey asserted that as new technologies emerge, narrow technical skills become insufficient for many emerging jobs while the demand for higher level digital skills increases. Digital skills needed by graduates of tertiary institutions in the modern workplace can include information and data skills, digital safety skills, cloud computing skills, word processing skills, spreadsheet skills, and internet skills. Round (2018) listed types of digital skills as basic digital skills, digital skills for the general labour force and digital skills for ICT professionals. Similarly, Department of Education (2018) enumerated digital foundation skills, communication skills, information and content handling skills

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and problem-solving skills as major types of digital skills. Additionally, International Telecommunication Union(ITU) (2018) stated that digital skills are divided into three levels namely, basic digital skills, intermediate digital skills and advanced digital skills. This study covered digital foundation skills, communication skills and cloud computing skills gap of business education graduates.

Digital foundation skills are important skills for all aspects of 21st century works. Digital foundational skills are skills that are needed regardless of employment aspirations. They are also essential for further learning, productive employment and civic engagement (UNICEF 2018). Digital foundation skills include abilities to; turn on a electronic devices, use the keyboard, mouse to perform operations, open and connect to the internet, create passwords and keep login details safe (Dixon, 2019). Digital foundation skills (Hecker and Loprest, 2019) ability to; create and write an email, make a résumé, or search for specific information on the internet. These skills according to Hecker and Loprest make it easier for graduates to start up small scale businesses and manage them successfully. Heckerand Loprest (2019) however, regretted that many graduates lack foundational digital skills to fit into modern work environment.

Digital communication skills are important to every graduate for survival in the digital age. Graduates must acquire coding and comprehension skills plus a base of knowledge from which they can interpret new company ideas (Hobbs, 2010). Similarly, graduates should be able to use digital devices to exchange messages or share content among colleagues. To this end, graduates need the ability to; respond to materials created and shared by others online, share with others the knowledge and content found or created, and be proactive in spreading information, content and resources (Ferrari, 2013). Other digital communication skills expected of graduates to possess for effective job performance are ability to; interact and collaborate online, participate in online communities and networks, and critically assess the information to be consumed and distributed, (Van Dijk and Van Deursen, 2014).

Cloud computing is a new technology that has been widely accepted as evolution of technologies such as client server architecture, World Wide Web and networking (Biasutti, 2011). Cloud computing skill involve the use of internet and central remote servers to maintain shared documents, files, software, knowledge, and applications through a cloud-based service that computers or mobile devices can access on demand. Cloud computing skills enhance timely completion of job and effective record keeping for proper documentation and effective job performance. Mell and Grance (2011) stated that cloud computing skills allow employees to apply appropriate techniques needed to identify information to aid timely completion of jobs.

In this digital economy, jobs now demand the acquisition of digital skills from graduates (business education graduates inclusive). Some jobs have been transformed entirely, and jobs now exist that had not been thought of before (World Economic Forum, 2016). Additionally, digital skills are recognized by the United Nation as key elements of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In view of this, graduates of tertiary institutions are expected to possess different digital skills for gainful employment or self-employment (Berger and Frey, 2016). However, European Commission (2016) observed that digital skills gap existed among graduates both in developed and developing countries. The OECD (2018) regretted that there exist digital skill gap among graduates at both secondary and higher education levels hence fueling youth unemployment.

Skill gap represent as gap between the current capability of organization and skills it needs to achieve its goal (Manjunath, Shravan and Dechakka, 2019). It is perceived as mismatch between employers' skill need and the available workforces' skills. Some researchers often refer to the skills gap as a compensation gap where employers are not willing to pay sufficiently to bring in the skill required. Digital skills gap on the other hand reflect the level of digital proficiency of graduates and the degree of ICT skill requirements to fit into the labour markets. According to

Andriole (2018), digital skills gap is the difference between supply and demand for graduates with digital skills in the labour market. In the context of this study, digital skill gaps is the deference in digital skills possess by business education graduates and those required by employers for effective job performance.

Business education programme was established right from the secondary school level to equip recipients with skills and knowledge to enable them fit into the ever-changing society. As the job market is constantly changing bringing with it renewed demand for digital skills, business education programme is required to be dynamic and responsive in its service delivery. In order words, much is required from the programme in terms of standard of educational delivery as the teaching and learning outcomes emerging at all levels have continued to suffer from poor funding and deteriorating infrastructures. According to the report of World Economic Forum (2020), the quality of the Nigerian education system ranks among the lowest on the African continent at 2.8 over 7, and below the world average of 3.8. In view of this report, business education in Nigeria is greatly challenged to equip students with digital skills to enable them function in today's changing world upon graduation. Owing to its mission statement, it is expected of graduates of the programme to possess digital skills such as digital foundation, digital communication skills, cloud computing skills, and digital problem-solving skills among others.

Currently, the youths are described as digital natives (Okolocha and Nwaukwa, 2020). However, digital skills gap can exclude them from harnessing the opportunities that the digital economy presents. Employers, IT experts and Policymakers in Nigeria are worried about the level of digital skills possessed by business education graduates. These concerns have been given renewed focus in the face of dwindling job openings and current climate of changing labour market. High rate of unemployment among graduates can be curbed through digital economy. However, to fully harness the sector's potentials, there is need for the business education programme to play a key role in equipping students with digital skills. Nwafor (2021) made the assertion that there is high digital skills gap among graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The World Bank report showed that about 2-4% of tertiary education graduates are employable while 18-20% of graduates will require training interventions for about 1-4 years to become employable (Nwafor, 2021). Furthermore, digital skills gap has been described as the bane of Nigerian unemployment by Sunday (2021). Sunday stated that there are digital jobs opportunities in Nigeria, but graduates lack the requisite digital skills to harness these jobs. Additionally, the World Economic Forum (2020) disclosed that Key indicators on measure of ICT adoption rank Nigeria low with 143rd out of 176 countries while Nigeria is ranked 122nd out of 140 countries in digital skills development.

In Anambra state, the Covid-19 pandemic has dramatically pushed organizations of every size to digitalize their operations. This pandemic has ushered in a shift in mindset on digital skills business education graduates should possess to have competitive advantage in the digital economy. The assessment of digital skills gap by employers of labour may be influenced by their years of working experience. Experienced employers (above 5 years) may differ with less experienced ones (1-5 years) on the digital skills gap of business education graduates. This could be attributed to differences in training and other experiences which may lead to the acquisition of different digital skills. This is supported by Gude (2012) who asserted that as employees work continuously for a long time on a particular task, they develop relevant skills towards high performance. Similarly, Genty, Idris, Wahat and Kadir (2015) asserted that years of experience and training are significant factors on skills managers (employers) need from graduates for effective performance. Based on this background, the study sought to find out digital skills gaps of business education graduates of tertiary institutions in Anambra State with a view for readjustment of the programme.

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Statement of the Problem

Business education programme is well packaged with a number of courses which have been seen as capable of providing graduates with digital skills to fit into today's ever dynamic workplace and business environment. Currently, change in the nature of work, technological changes and globalization brought about by the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic have increased the pressure on business education programme to equip students with digital skills to reduce structural unemployment (unemployment due to the fact that graduates do not respond quickly or completely to the new nature of job opportunities due to lack of skills). However, employers, parents and government are worried that graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria do not possess adequate and appropriate digital skills to harness huge digital job opportunities that abound. Digital skills gap among business education graduates has severe consequences for the individuals, firms, and government as it increases recruitment costs of firms, and leads to business education graduates facing unemployment which could lead to social vices such as arm robbery, kidnapping, militancy and cybercrimes among others. In Anambra State, there seems to be limited research on digital skills gap of business education graduates of tertiary institutions. Specifically, the study ascertained the extent; (1) digital foundation skills are possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State, (2) digital communication skills are possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State, (3) cloud competing skills are possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The folowing research questions guided the study;

1. To what extent are digital foundation skills possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State?
2. To what extent are digital communication skills possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State?
3. To what extent is cloud computing skills possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

1. There is not significance difference in the mean ratings of employers of labour on the extent digital foundation skills are possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State based on years of working experience.
2. Employers of labour do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent digital communication skills are possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State based on years of working experience.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of employers of labour on the extent cloud computing skills are possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State based on years of working experience.

Methods

The design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey design. This study was carried out in Anambra State Nigeria. The population for this study consisted of managers of 268 (174 private and 94 public) business organizations in Anambra State. The managers of business organizations were chosen for this study because the researcher believed that they employ graduates of business education who perform different job functions requiring the application of digital skills. The researcher employed census sampling technique without sampling because the population was manageable. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Digital Skills Gap among Business Education Graduates (DSGBEGs)". The questionnaire

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was divided into two parts: A and B. Part A is designed to elicit demographic information of the respondents such as years of experience while Part B is broken down into three clusters of B1 to B3 according to the research questions with 19 questionnaire items. Cluster B1 contains 7 items on digital foundation skills, B2 has 6 items on digital communication skills, B3 contains 6 items on cloud computing skills. The instrument is structured on a five point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) – 5, High Extent (HE) – 4, Moderate Extent (ME) – 3, Low Extent (LE) – 2 and Very Low Extent (VLE) -1.

The face validity of the instrument was established based on the opinions of three experts in the field of Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation. The instrument was trial tested on a representative sample of 20 managers of private and public business organizations in Enugu State who are not part of the study population. Data obtained from their responses were subjected to reliability analysis using Cronbach Alpha reliability co-efficient which yielded co-efficient values of .84, .79 and .87 respectively for clusters B1 to B3. An overall reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained. The researcher and three research assistants administered copies of the questionnaire to the managers of public and private business organizations in the area of the study in their offices. On the spot distribution and collection of questionnaire was adopted. Out of 268 copies of questionnaire administered, 260 were correctly filled and used for data analysis. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at.05 level of significance. The decision rule is that a null hypothesis was rejected where the p-value is less than the level of significance; otherwise the null hypothesis was accepted.

Results

Research question 1:

To what extent are digital foundation skills possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State?

Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings on the extent they possess digital foundation skills

S/N	Digital Foundation Skills	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to turn on electronic devices (computer, scanners, printers)	4.57	.78	Very High Extent
2	Ability to use the keyboard, mouse, and touch screen of computers to carry out operations,	3.61	.71	High Extent
3	Ability to open and connect to the internet,	2.67	.66	Moderate Extent
4	Ability to create passwords and keep login details safe	2.43	.68	Low Extent
5	Ability to create and write an email	3.49	.57	Moderate Extent
6	Ability to create a quality résumé using word processing	1.59	.89	Low Extent
7	Ability to search for specific information on the internet	2.44	.69	Low extent
	Cluster Mean	**2.67**		**Low Extent**

Data in table 1 shows that items 1 has mean score of 4.57 meaning that business education graduate possess the ability to turn on electronic devices at very high extent, item 2 is possessed at high extent with mean score of 3.61. Items 3 and 5 are possessed at moderate extent with mean scores of 2.67 and 3.49 while the remaining three items with mean scores

ranging from 1.59 to 2.44 are possessed to a low extent. The cluster mean score of 2.67 shows that on the whole, employers of labour indicated thatbusiness education graduates possess digital foundation skills at a moderate extent. The standard deviation scores for all the items are within the same range showing that there is homogeneity amongst responses indicating a greater consensus of opinion.

Research Question 2

To what extent are digital communication skills possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State?

Table 2: Respondents' mean ratings on the extent they possess digital communication skills for employability

S/N	Digital Communication Skills	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
8	Ability to use communicate securely using audio and visual conference devices	1.57	.54	Low Extent
9	Ability to use digital devices to exchange messages or share content among colleagues	2.61	.54	Moderate Extent
10	Ability to communicate with others digitally using email and other messaging Apps	1.67	.49	Low Extent
11	Ability to Understand and apply the principles of marketing	2.43	.78	Low Extent
12	Ability to analyze information or data	2.49	.63	Low Extent
13	Ability to comply with organizations' security protocols when accessing email or working remotely	2.49	.30	Low Extent
	Cluster Mean	**2.21**		**Low Extent**

Data in table 2 reveal that items 9 with mean score of 2.61 is possessed by business education graduates to a moderate extent, while the remaining five items (items 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13) with mean scores ranging from 1.57 to 2.49 are possessed to a low extent. The cluster mean score of 2.21 shows that on the whole, business education graduates possessed digital communication skills to a low extent. The standard deviation scores for all the items are within the same range showing that there is homogeneity in the mean responses of the respondents.

Research Question 3

To what extent is cloud computing skills possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State?

Table 3: Respondents' mean ratings on the extent of possession of cloud computing skills

S/N	Cloud Computing Skills	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
14	Ability to use of internet and central remote servers to maintain shared documents	1.81	.71	Low Extent
15	Ability to store files or documents using Google docs,	2.31	.65	Low Extent
16	Ability to share files using instant messaging services	2.17	.58	Low Extent

17	Ability to store files using dropBox and Google drive	1.43	.68	Very Extent	Low
18	Ability to mark files for destruction in the cloud	1.47	.93	Very Extent	Low
19	Ability to use cloud archiving applications such as Mimecast cloud	1.59	.81	Low	Extent
	Cluster Mean	**1.80**		**Low Extent**	

Data in table 3 shows that items14, 15, 16, and 19 with mean scores ranging from1.59 to 2.31 are possessed at low extent while the remaining two items with mean score ranging from 1.43 to 1.47 are possessed by business education graduates to a very low extent. The cluster mean score of 1.80 shows that on the whole, employers indicated that business education graduates possess cloud computing skills to a very low extent. The standard deviation scores for all the items are within the same range showing that there is homogeneity in the mean responses of the respondents.

Hypothesis 1

There is not significance difference in the mean ratings of employers of labour on the extent digital foundation skills are possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State based on years of working experience.

Table 4:Summary of t-test comparison of the mean ratings of respondents on the extent business education graduates possess digital foundation skills for employability based on years of working experience

Years of Experience	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
1-5 years	89	37.20	6.06				
	258	.17	.22	Not Significant			
Above 5 years	171	38.45	5.50				

Table 4 shows a t-value of .17 at 258 degree of freedom with a p-value of .22. Since the p-value of .22 is greater than the criterion value of .05 (P > .05), the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significance difference in the mean ratings of employers of labour on the extent digital foundation skills are possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State based on years of working experience.

Hypothesis 2

Employers of labour do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent digital communication skills are possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State based on years of working experience.

Table 5:Summary of t-test comparison of the mean ratings of respondents on the extent business education graduates possess digital communication skills based on years of working experience

Years of Experience	N	X	SD	df	T-value	P-value	Decision
1-5 years	89	38.28	5.14				
	258	.13	.06	Not Significant			
Above 5 years	171	38.50	4.93				

Table 5 shows a t - value of .13 at 258 degree of freedom with a p-value of .06. Since the p-value of .06 is greater than the criterion value of.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. This

means that employers of labour do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent digital communication skills are possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State based on years of working experience.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of employers of labour on the extent cloud computing skills are possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State based on years of working experience.

Table 6: Summary of t-test comparison of the mean ratings of respondents on the extent business education graduates possess cloud computing skills for employability based on years of working experience.

Years of Experience	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
1-5 years	8936.12	5.24					
	258	.18	.13	Significant			
Above 5 years	171	37.31	5.41				

Table 6 shows t - value of .18 at 258 degree of freedom with a p-value of .13. Since the p-value of.13 is greater than the criterion value of.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of employers of labour on the extent cloud computing skills are possessed by business education graduates in Anambra State based on years of working experience

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study revealed that employers of labour indicated that business education graduates possess digital foundation skills for employability at a moderate extent. The findings of this study could be attributed to the fact that business education programme has incorporated ICT curses in its curriculum, and business education lecturers are teaching some of these digital skills to its students. However, despite this assumption by the researcher, the fact that business education graduates possess digital foundation skills to a moderate extent means that there are still digital foundation skills gap among business education graduates which affect their employment potentials. In agreement, Kamalu (2021) states that high rate of unemployment in Nigeria can be attributed to digital skills gap among its graduates. Nwafor (2021) reported that there were high digital skills gap among graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. These findings are in line with the earlier findings of European Commission (2016) which revealed that digital skills gap existed among graduates both in developed and developing countries. The findings of the study further showed that there was no significance difference in the mean ratings of employers of labour on the extent digital foundation skills are possessed by business education graduates for employability in Anambra State based on years of working experience. It could be that both experienced and inexperienced employers are aware of digital foundation skills gap among graduates of business education. This could be the reason for their consensus on the moderate extent digital foundation skills are possessed by business education graduates for employability.

Findings of the study revealed that business education graduates possessed digital communication skills for employability to a low extent The findings of this study concur with the findings of The OECD (2015) which showed that there existed digital skills gap among graduates at higher education levels which are fueling youth unemployment. In agreement, Nwazor and Nwaukwa (2015) reported that business education do not adequately equip their students with ICT skills for self-reliance. This could be the reason for the digital communication skills gap

among them. Nwafor (2021) found that there is high digital skills gap among graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This could be due to the quality of trainings graduates of business education underwent while in school. The World Bank report showed that about 2-4% of tertiary education graduates are employable while 18-20% of graduates will require training interventions for about 1-4 years to become employable (Nwafor, 2021). Sunday (2021) admitted that there are digital jobs opportunities in Nigeria, but graduates (Business education graduates inclusive) lack the requisite digital skills to harness these jobs. The findings of this study also indicated that employers of labour do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent digital communication skills are possessed by business education graduates for employability in Anambra State based on years of working experience. Ezenwafor and Olaniyi (2016) stated that employers of labour are worried about the digital skill level of graduates of business education. This implies that employers of labour irrespective of their years of experience agreed that business education graduates lack digital communication skills for gainful employment.

The findings of the study further showed that business education graduates possess cloud computing skills for employability to a low extent. It could be that cloud computing technology has not been incorporated into the curriculum of business education and the skills are not adequately taught to students thus the skills gap among graduates. It could also be that business educators may not possess cloud computing skills to effective train students on them. Yordanov, Yordanova and Yordanova (2015) disclosed that secretaries are not familiar with the use of cloud computing technology. Yordanov et al. asserted that secretary education students' ICT competences need to be extended into direction of cloud computing skills. In addition, Kibe (2016) stated that despite the fact that cloud-based technology has the potential of increasing efficiency and effectiveness of job functions, the level of application of cloud-based skills by graduate workers is low. The findings of the study also revealed that years of experience were not significant factor on the opinion of employers regarding the extent business education graduates possess cloud computing skills.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that business education programme are not adequately equipping their graduates with digital foundation skills, digital communication skills and cloud computing skills.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. Business education graduates should embark on digital information skills acquisition training programmes to up-date themselves to remain relevant in the digital economy.
2. Business education lecturers should emphasize the teaching of digital communication skills to enable students acquire these skills for gainful employment upon graduation.
3. Cloud computing skills should be taught to business education students in Anambra state to prepared them for high-tech workplace upon graduation.

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THE SECRETARIAL PROFESSION: A THREATENED FUTURE

[1]ARIKWANDU, SYMPATHY OGECHUKWU (Mrs.)
08025257818 / soarikwandu@fptb.edu.ng

[2]ASOGWA, SYLVESTER O.
08060668233 /*chodoziejude@gmail.com*
Department of Office Technology and Management
The Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi, Bauchi

Abstract

Once it was when the secretarial profession and its practitioners were highly revered. Regrettably, such is not the case today. This position paper posits that the future of this once respected profession is under threat. It examines five areas affecting the profession to include inconsistent government policies regarding its career progression, technological development, and attitude of practitioners, issues related to curriculum and training, and absence of a professional/standardization body. Solutions were equally proffered to include that government should give this profession its rightful recognition by making consistent policies regarding career progression and employment of practitioners. Again, NBTE and NUC together should come up with appropriate curriculum and incorporate the study of the profession in University system up to the PhD. It further canvassed for support for the APSSON's CIPSSON Bill, amongst other suggestions.

Keywords: Future of, Secretarial Profession, Threatened, Technology, APSSON, ABEN

Introduction

There is no doubt that the secretarial profession is a very pivotal one. It cuts across every sphere of human endeavour, no matter the nature of the organization . In fact, the secretarial role is so significant that even down to family units when family meetings are to be held, the need for secretarial services come into play, because a member of the family is appointed to act as the secretary. Also, no matter the nature of the organization , trained personnel is there to fit the role. No wonder such titles as Medical Secretary, Legal Secretary, etc exists. As a matter of fact, one of the most recognized International organizations is headed and administered by one who bears the nomenclature of Secretary or Under-Secretary, for example the United Nations Organisation and a number of its agencies; and the location of the hub of activity of many such organisations is referred to as the Secretariat. Despite these, it is regrettable to note that the profession seems to be passing through a hard time. A number of factors threaten its existence and future, including government factor, practitioners' roles, effect of advancing technology, curriculum and training related issues, etc. The paper attempts to proffer suggestions to the identified problems.

First it is necessary to highlight some key concepts in the topic, as well as pinpoint the importance and roles of the Secretarial Profession.

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Concept Mapping

According to the Collins dictionary, the term future of (someone or something) refers to what will happen to them or what they will do after the present time. Synonyms for this expression include prospect, expectation, and outlook. Again, if it is said that someone or something has a future, it means that they are likely to be successful or survive. Going by these definitions therefore, within the context of this paper the term 'future' is looking at what will likely happen to the secretarial profession later, expectations, prospects and outlook in the days ahead. Also, its chance of survival or success is a matter of concern to this study.

Definitions from Oxford Languages gives one meaning of threaten as 'to cause (someone or something) to be vulnerable or at risk; endanger'. Thus, the secretarial profession seems vulnerable, at risk or endangered by certain factors which this work intends to discuss.

The importance of the Secretarial profession is seen in the roles or functions of its practitioners. They go hand in glove. As has been previously hinted the secretarial profession is indispensable, a pivotal one indeed, and hence the secretary is equally indispensable (Ohiwerei & Okosun, 2021). No wonder Amiaya (2012) observes that the place of secretarial skills in human capital development is no doubt invaluable. Adebayo and Akinyele sums it up in Ohiwerei and Okosun (2021) when they opine that the secretary coordinates the daily routines of an office and organizes office schedules and paper work which includes analysis of prevailing situation, judgement, technical knowledge and creativity. In short, the Secretarial profession is the heart and soul of the organization .

Issues threatening the secretarial profession

A number of issues bedevil the secretarial profession. These issues are trying hard to snuff or choke the life out of the profession. Some of these issues are discussed below:

Another area of problem is government's policies on career progression. Inconsistent Government policies and actions do not seem to be helping the profession and its practitioners. A situation where the government placed an embargo on the employment of secretaries left much to be desired. This has made the profession to be an endangered species. As the older generation retired, they were being replaced by data processors or whatever names they go by to carry out secretarial duties. This in every sense is an aberration because such individuals lack the finesse and expertise of professional secretaries. Round pegs should by all means be put in round holes. One advert slogan says that 'if it is not panadol, it is not the same thing as panadol.' This is besides other inconsistencies existing where it seems that each Ministry, parastatal and establishment treated secretaries as they pleased. Some establishments paid certain types of allowances, e.g. Responsibility allowances, while others did not. Most organisations have pegged the grade level secretaries could rise up to, and a myriad of other issues.

Another problem threatening the Secretarial profession is technological development. Santos (2021) acknowledges that technology has affected society and its surroundings in a number of ways. Technology is said to be the application of scientific knowledge to the practical aims of human life or, as it is sometimes phrased, to the change and manipulation of the human environment (Britannica.com). Technology has revolutionised the world and the various spheres of activities. The world of work has not been left out for it has experienced marked changes. Equipment used at work has drastically changed. This has resulted in work being done by a number of persons are now done by a single person. As it pertains to the secretarial field, for instance, the introduction of the computer has made it possible for most everybody to produce their own documents themselves. Thus, this gave room to what Lanre (2021) referred to as individuals who have become 'jobnappers' who now kidnap as it where, secretarial jobs to the detriment of the profession. Already, in Nigeria, some establishments, like banks no longer offer

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positions for Secretaries, since computer literate staff mostly handles their own correspondence, as if the Secretary's job begins and ends with typing of documents. Despite that though, these 'jobnappers' can hardly offer secretarial jobs with the same finesse as professionally trained secretaries. The difference is always clear.

Hence, even though modern technology is regarded as important and of high value in ensuring quality work output in an office, as well as bringing about productivity. It is equally believed that these machines can cause job displacement. This is the fear that many employees suffer from when new machines are being purchased for use by their organization (Santos, 2021).

Feintzeig (2020) noted that Technology has replaced much of the administrative tedium—the memos to be typed, the boxes of files to be pulled from storage—that marked the "Mad Men" days when secretaries kept the workplace humming. Technology and automation have chipped away at duties like papers to be filed and landlines to be answered

Another area that critically affects the secretarial profession is paucity of university training opportunities for the profession. This is not talking of Business Education, which is aimed at training the trainer. This is referring to universities that train Secretaries from the first degree level up to the, third degree level, the PhD level. Thus, while training in the polytechnics stop at Higher National Diploma (HND) level, thereafter, vacuum largely exists. Hence, a lot of polytechnic graduates express concern by asking, after HND what next? Why must they switch careers after this level? Why can't they grow to be directors as well, since by their training they make superb administrators? The result becomes that, after the National Diploma (ND) level, many purchase direct entry forms into the universities and change course. In the long run, a dearth of secretarial practitioners would ensue. In fact, the secretaries and secretarial profession are gradually becoming an endangered species.

Absence of a standardisation body is another challenge of the secretarial profession. A regulatory body is different from a standardisation, professional body. While the National Board for Technical Education regulates Polytechnics, National Universities Commission regulates universities, etc, these are not professional bodies. The regulatory bodies are government parastatals concerned mainly with the curriculum and staff issues, the professional bodies protect the interests of the profession.

According to Science Council (n.d), a professional body is an organization with individual members practicing a profession or occupation in which the organization maintains an oversight of the knowledge, skills, conduct and practice of that profession or occupation. Green (2015) on his part states that professional bodies are dedicated to the advancement of the knowledge and practice of professionals through developing, supporting, regulating and promoting professional standards for technical and ethical competence.

The Secretarial profession suffers lack of core professional body. Some existing bodies that included the word secretary as part of their name do not seem to cater for the core professionals and the profession generally. In the views of Kabir, Danlami & Abubakar (2021),'most of these bodies are not pure Secretarial Institutions and as such are not fully committed toward achieving the utmost professionalism of this profession rather than just hiding and making money at the detriment of this noble profession and its members. These attitudes of some among the registered professional bodies are no doubt among the reasons some employers of labour refused to recognize and honour the Secretarial profession. This is how most of these bodies operate thereby making this noble profession a second option.

One such professional body struggling for standardisation of the profession is the Association of Professional Secretarial Staff of Nigeria (APSSON), possible the body with the highest numerical strength of Secretaries. Its Bill for a Chartered Institute of Professional

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Secretarial Staff Nigeria (CIPSSON) has already been concurred by the upper chamber, the senate and is awaiting the President's assent. It is believed that once life is breathed into that Bill and make it an Act, the travails of the Secretarial Profession would be greatly reduced. All friends of the profession and other stakeholders are called upon to support this Bill and help it come alive.

Attitude of practitioners in the profession is another area of concern. As far back as 1984 Jodie Berlin Morrow, co-author with Myrna Lebov of a book called "Not Just a Secretary" in Churchman (1984) remarked that a lack of esteem is indigenous to the profession. "A secretary doesn't get much respect today," she said. "Society underrates her job, her boss underrates it, her company underrates it, and, yes, she underrates it." The situation is not any less today. This researcher believes that secretaries suffer from a high dose of low self-esteem. Ohiwerei and Okosun (2021) worriedly asked 'if we all agree that the secretary is the chief organiser of meetings, and scheduling of appointments for or on behalf of the boss and these attributes have placed the secretary at the centre of playing very important roles in the efficient management of the office, why then are secretarial staff relegating themselves in the office? This is a question begging for answer indeed.

Lanre (2021) lent voice to this issue when he observed that the Secretarial profession is well abused and misused by the society because everyone in the profession looks down on himself/herself as a result of the fact that the society thinks the professionals are meant to be subordinates in their entire professional life. This ought not to be so. We are not second class but world class. The situation is so bad that practitioners of the profession never wish their children to train as secretaries. Reasons for this might not be unconnected with the myriads of issues bedeviling the profession, some of which have been raised in this paper.

Since Nigeria is not an island State, global trends equally impact on this profession, and unfortunately, views globally paint a dreary and sometimes conflicting picture. For instance, Morrow cited previously in Churchman (1984) noted that demands for secretarial skills increased in the 1980s. The field was expected to leap from 3.8 million positions in 1980 to 5.4 million in 1990, says the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Already thousands of jobs are going begging. "This is a fabulous field to be in right now," says Morrow, "because you can write your own ticket. Employers are particularly looking for secretaries with knowledge of the new office equipment, but all secretaries are in great demand," she says. What is the projection today? Fretzeig (2020) noted that more than 1.6 million secretarial and administrative-assistant jobs have vanished since 2000, according to federal data, an almost 40% decline. The number of executive-secretary and executive-administrative-assistant jobs fell 23% over the last five years. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects those jobs—which it says numbered 622,500 in 2018—will drop another 20% to below 500,000 by 2028.

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Career Planner (2007-2021) provides quick statistics for the job as follows: Job Outlook for: Secretaries and Administrative Assistants:

Secretaries and Administrative Assistants Quick Stats	
Total Jobs in 2016	3,990,400
Expected Growth	-5% (Decline)
New Jobs To Be Added from 2016 to 2026	-191,900
Median Pay	$35,000 to $54,999

It adds that overall employment of secretaries and administrative assistants is projected to decline 5 percent from 2016 to 2026. Not a beautiful picture, indeed. However, it must be stated that such decline is a general trend with the downturn in world economy not because of relevance of the profession. Practitioners should be techno-savvy and work to keep in trend and thus remain relevant in the scheme of things.

What are the prospects for the profession? In an article published by Princeton Review (2021) it offers the following prospects in form of a timeline when it projects:

Five years out

Thousands of secretaries move on to other jobs in this period, often getting hired on the basis of their achievements as office professionals. Secretaries who stay on have found a means of coping with a tremendous volume of work and derive satisfaction from helping to make a business run smoothly. At this point, many secretaries train new secretaries, often in a training program of their own devising.

Ten years out

For those who have made the most of a secretarial career, the rewards are palpable. It is hard to last in a profession that demands organizational skill, meticulous attention to detail, efficiency, and patience. Secretaries who posses these qualities know how rare they are and can expect to reap the rewards they deserve, including a pension and benefits.

Way Forward

This beauty of a profession should be protected by all means in some of these ways:

1. Government should be consistent in its policies and remove all barriers to career progression of secretaries both in terms of grade levels and height of attainment. Secretaries should be allowed to reach whatever is the peak or pinnacle in the Civil Service. Also, employment embargo on the employment of professional secretaries should be lifted. Only professionally trained secretaries should practise as such.

2. Secretarial practitioners should embrace technology and become techno-savvy. They should view it as friend and not a foe. Doing this will surely enhance their self-esteem.

3. NBTE and NUC should synergize to have more Universities offering core secretarial training up to PhD level to attract new students and retain those already in the practice.

4. All friends of the profession and other stake holders should heartily support APSSON's CIPSSON Bill to help standardize the profession fully.

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GAPS IN TRAINING AND PRACTICE: OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT (OTM) STUDENTS IN PERSPECTIVE

[1]ACHARU FAITH TONY-OKEME, Ph.D
acharu4real@gmail.com

[3]MARY OIZA JACOB
divinemiracle83@gmail.com
Department of Office Technology and Management,
Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja.

[2]OFULUE JUSTINA IFEANYI
justinaieofulue@gmail.com
Department of Office Technology and Management,
Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku.

Abstract

The existing gap between educational institutions and the workplace has become a source of concern in view of the rising unemployment issue among graduates of tertiary institutions. The main purpose of the study was to ascertain the extent to which office technology and management students are trained in the use of modern office technologies and to find out the extent to which the training acquired by Office Technology and Management students has impacted on their ICT competencies. Two research questions were raised to guide the study. The descriptive research design was used. Two sets of questionnaires were used in collecting data for the study. Twenty managers of private business organizations and twenty supervisors in government agencies in Kogi State were randomly selected for the study. On the other hand, the entire twenty-two lecturers and One hundred and seven final year students of the Department of Office Technology and Management in the two Polytechnics in Kogi State constituted the population for the study out of which 33 students were purposively sampled. Findings showed that respondents indicated that there was a gap between training acquired in school and the actual practice of the profession in the world of work. More so, the study highlighted that adequate funding, steady power supply and availability of competent educators amongst others were key factors to the achievement of the programme objectives. Finally, it was recommended among others things that lecturers should be offered periodic training and retraining to gain competencies in ICT skills in order to impart it effectively to the students.

***(Keywords:** gaps, training, Practice, OTM)*

Introduction

There is a great concern on the gap that exists between the educational institutions and the workplace. Graduates have so much difficulty making transition from academic life to work even though the educational institutions are supposed to provide the experiences and trainings which will help an individual make intelligent occupational choices that will advance him/her in his/her career path (Ifejika, 2015). Previous studies have revealed that the level of skill

possessed by job seekers do not match the needs and demands of employers (Oduwole, 2015). Soludo (2012), describing the Nigerian situation said, unemployment is not a problem in Nigeria rather Nigerian graduates are not employable and they are misfit for today's workplace. It is however pertinent to know that, the adequacy and worth of the educational programmes of study is measured not only in terms of how far it can assist graduates to secure employment but also to the extent that it can enable them perform effectively and efficiently on the job.

The modern business office is rapidly changing as a result of new technologies which have brought about new methods in carrying out functions performed by employees in organizations and at the centre of these new trends in organizations are office managers (secretaries). Olise (2014) observed that secretaries in organizations of yester-years were dealing with papers, worked with manual machines, relied on postal services for external communication and kept records in files placed in cabinets. Today an office manager does not deal with paper or carry out office duties manually because virtually all office tasks are handled with electronic and telecommunication gadgets.

Training involves providing employees with directed experience that enables them to be more effective in performing the various tasks that constitute their jobs (Olufunwa, 2010). When training is adequate, the experiences gained result in changes in employee's attitudes, work habits, and performance. It is crucial to bear in mind that Office Technology and Management, like any other technology based programme thrives on quality of relevance and usefulness. What is important is the extent to which the training provided assists students to enter and succeed in the work place.

Office Technology and Management Programme is an office oriented field designed to train professional secretaries/office managers to function efficiently in the world of work. Many offices have gone through several changes since establishments. These include changes in equipment, task procedures and processes basically resulting from technological developments. These changes have indeed been quite dramatic in the last two decades such that within the space of a decade several computer applications and office technologies have become outdated. In view if this trend, it has become necessary for office managers to keep abreast of new technologies in order to enhance about competence in their professional practice. Similarly, the curriculum developers and implementer are expected to be prompt in responding to these changes. To this end, Office Technology and Management programme has a responsibility to train students with the skills and competencies required to make them saleable so that diplomate of the programme do not graduate into the world of work with obsolete and irrelevant skills.

A professional secretary should be acquainted with all the competencies required in modern offices and be able to apply such knowledge in the performance of office duties (Iro, 2016). The duties of secretaries are no longer limited to typing, taking shorthand dictations, answering of telephone calls and processing of mails, but are now required to be skilled in usage of more sophisticated modern office technologies that make work easier.

It is however disheartening to know that in spite of its lofty objectives, OTM is still bedeviled by several challenges like inadequate funding; this has always been a major issue in OTM programme. The quantity and quality of equipment and machines like computers, scanners, printers among others needed for effective implementation of the programme is affected by inadequate funding (Fadare, 2014; Akarahu, 2010). Large class size is another issue bedeviling the programme**.** Laboratories and classes in many public polytechnics in Nigeria are overcrowded with too many students. This makes it impossible for teachers to give students individual attention needed in teaching and learning process. The high student-teacher ratio affects quality delivery of practical courses like Microsoft office applications (Agboola, 2015).

Lack of prompt review of the curriculum. Today's office is an evolving place, thus, students who are being prepared to work in offices should be adequate trained to effectively use

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the emerging modern office technologies. Unfortunately, in this part of the world, curriculum are hardly promptly reviewed and even when they are eventually reviewed it takes a considerable long time for institutions to adopt them for used. Consequently, graduates are churned into the labour market grossly unprepared and unfit for the modern workplace. Lack of constant electricity supply is another problem confronting the Programme in the country. Electricity is required to power office technologies, unfortunately it is hardly available and where it is, it is epileptic in nature. Thus, the theoretical content of the curriculum is often taught leaving out the practical aspect, a situation that leave students half-baked diplomates (Nwaokolo, 2014).

Inadequate competent educators is another issue militating against the programme. It is often said that no one can give what he does not have. According to Ugoji, in Akpotohwo (2018), most of the OTM lecturers in the polytechnics were trained without modern office equipment and facilities. He opined that they were trained over twenty years ago with rickety manual typewriters as the best equipment they had access to. Unfortunately, some of these lecturers have neither been trained nor retrained with modern ICT facilities. In view of that, Onyesom and Ashibgwu (2018) asserted that no matter how properly designed an educational programme is, it cannot succeed without an adequate crop of teachers (Folorunso and Taiwo 2018).

Going by these observable scenario in most public polytechnics in Nigeria, it can be justifiably said that, students are still being trained for the office of yesteryears as contemporary modern office technologies such as; projector, scanner, computer, printer, facsimile machine, flash drive, recorder, modem, multimedia projector, paper shredder, dictating machine among others which are stipulated in the curriculum are lacking in most institutions and where these are available, they are grossly inadequate (Bongotons & Onyenwe, 2010).

The efficiency of Office Technology and Management programme could be measured and determined by the adequacy of qualitative, competence and job performance of the diplomates of the programme. It is on this note that this study attempts to assess the gap between the training of OTM students and their practice in the world of work with the view to proffering solutions to it.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

i. To what extent are office technology and management students trained in the use of modern office technologies?
ii. How much has the training acquired by Office Technology and Management students impacted on their ICT competencies?

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used for the study. It was considered appropriate because according to Otache (2016), descriptive studies are undertaken to describe the elements or subjects being studied. The population of the study was 95 respondents comprising of 9 HND II students of Federal Polytechnic, Idah, 24 HND II students of Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, 12 lecturers in Federal Polytechnic, Idah, 10 Lecturers in the Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, 20 private business managers and 20 supervisors in government agencies namely; National Inland Waterways Authority, Kogi State Board of Internal Revenue, National social Insurance Trust Fund, Kogi State Environmental Protection Board, Kogi State Civil Service Commission and Kogi State Radio Corporation.

The researcher purposively sampled only 33 final year students in the two institutions. This was necessary because the study was targeted at students with experiences in the world of work and only 33 of them were on in-service training.

Ninety-five (95) copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researcher and two trained research assistants. All the copies of the questionnaire were duly completed and

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retrieved. The data for the study was collected using a structured questionnaire titled: Questionnaire in Divergence in Training and Practice of Office Technology and Management (OTM) Students (QDPTOTMS). The questionnaire items were structured in a five point Likert rating scale of Very High Extent (5 points) High Extent (4 points) Moderate Extent (3 points). Low Extent (2 points) Very Low Extent (1 point). A mean score of 3.00 and above was considered as high while a mean score below it was considered as low.

The questionnaire items were validated by two experts who are Chief Lecturers in the School of Management, Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja. The instrument which contains thirty (30) and ten (10) questionnaire items respectively were designed from the relevant literature reviewed and used to collect data. With the use of Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test (CART), the reliability co-efficient calculated for the study was found to be 0.83 which indicated that the instrument for the study was reliable. The mean was used to analyse the research questions.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This section presented and analysed the data generated in the study.

Research question one: To what extent are office technology and management students trained in the use of modern office technologies?

Table 1: Mean ratings on the opinions of students and lecturers on the extent to which office technology and management students are adequately trained on modern office technologies in Polytechnics in Kogi State.

		Students N=33		Lecturers N=22	
S/NO	**ITEMS**	**X**	**Decision**	**X**	**Decision**
1	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the Computer	4.12	High	4.82	High
2	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the Printer	3.33	High	4.32	High
3	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the Scanner	2.83	Low	2.86	Low
4	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the Facsimile machine	2.25	Low	1.45	Low
5	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the Photocopier	2.48	Low	3.48	High
6	Adequately trained on the effective use of the flash drive	4.43	High	3.82	High
7	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the Voice recorder	3.01	High	2.81	Low
8	Adequately trained on the effective use of the modem	2.52	Low	4.31	High
9	Adequately trained on the	2.13	Low	2.52	Low

	effective operation of the multimedia projector				
10	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the paper shredder	3.94	High	4.87	High
11	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the dictation machine	3.21	High	2.86	Low
12	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the teleconferencing gadget	2.16	Low	2.67	Low
13	Adequately trained on the effective operation of video-conferencing gadgets	2.37	Low	2.84	Low
14	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the manual typewriter	4.82	Agree	5.00	High
15	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the electric typewriter	4.43	High	4.85	High
16	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the electronic typewriter	4.81	High	4.42	High
17	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the cassette recorder4.5	4.64	High	4.97	High
18	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the Dictaphone	4.52	High	4.93	High
19	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the ink duplicating machine	2.41	Low	3.38	High
20	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the adding machine	4.87	High	5.00	High
21	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the punching machine	5.00	High	5.00	High
22	Adequately trained on the effective operation of the franking machine	2.33	Low	3.84	High
23	Adequately trained to utilise Word processing applications	3.83	High	4.24	High
24	Adequately trained to utilise Presentation applications	2.81	Low	3.83	High
25	Adequately trained to utilise Spreadsheet applications	2.62	Low	3.26	High
26	Adequately trained to utilise Database applications	2.83	Low	3.12	High

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27	Adequately trained to utilise Publishing application	2.50	Low	3.27	High
28	Adequately trained to utilise Webpage design application	1.72	Low	2.85	Low
29	Adequately trained on how to send e-mails	3.76	High	4.43	High
30	Adequately trained on how to manage files and folders	3.32	High	3.94	High
N =55	**Grand Mean**	**3.33**		**3.79**	

Source: (Field Survey, 2021)

The result in Table 1: student-respondents indicated that they were not adequately trained in items: 3,4,5,8,9,12,13,19,22,24,25,26,27,28 with a maximum mean score of 5.00 and a grand mean score of 3.33 while the lecturer-respondents indicated "Low" in 3,4,7.9,11,12,13 and 28 with a minimum mean score of 1.45 grand mean of 3.79. From the above, it is clear that the students are not adequately trained in modern office technologies.

Research Question Two: How much has the training acquired by Office Technology and Management students impacted on their ICT competencies?

Table 2: Mean ratings on the opinions of employers on how the training received by Office Technology and Management students had impacted on their ICT competencies in Kogi state.

S/NO	ITEMS	X	Decision
1	Ability to use Microsoft word for word production and processing	3.98	High
2	Ability to prepare a slideshow using Microsoft Powerpoint	2.93	Low
3	Ability to use Microsoft Excel to analyse information, do basic calculations and view data . Microsoft Excel	2.81	Low
4	Ability to make simple design of flyers, memos etc on Microsoft Publisher	2.73	Low
5	Ability to organize data using Microsoft Access	2.76	Low
6	Ability to upload document on to the internet	2.23	Low
7	Ability to setup an online video conferencing using Skype, Google hangout, Yahoo messenger etc	1.72	Low
8	Ability to download material and save effectively on my computer or external storage device	3.22	High
9	Ability to use search engines to search gather information	3.86	High
10	Ability to manipulate computer peripherals like printer and scanners etc	2.34	Low
N= 40	**GRAND MEAN**	**2.85**	**Low**

Source: (Field Survey, 2021)

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The result in Table 2: Employer-respondents indicated "high" only to items 1, 8 and 9 with a maximum mean score of 3.98 while they indicated "low" in the rest 4 items with a minimum mean score of 1.72 and a grand mean of 2.85. From the above, it shows that the respondents disagree on the ability of OTM diplomates to adequately use modern office technologies.

Discussion of findings

Table 1 showed a grand mean of 3.33 signifying that students were not adequately trained on the use of the modern office technologies. Out of the 21 listed modern office technologies, student-respondents indicated that they were not adequately trained in 12. The findings is in line with Ugwuanyi (2012), who observed that most graduates of OTM could not secure paid employment because they were not taught with new technologies and therefore lack the necessary skills and competencies needed for today's E-office. In the same vein, Utoware, Kren-Ikidi and Apreala (2016), found out that new office technology equipment were lacking in polytechnics and that more theoretical concepts were being taught than practical work in emerging office technologies.

The data presented in table 2 revealed that employers opined that graduates of the programme lacked the ability to manipulate the listed modern office technologies. These findings are in line with Rasul and Mansor (2013), who reported that graduates of OTM programme who were employed have had to be retrained by their employers to fit adequately into modern work place. Similarly, Udo (2014) stated that most employers of labour in Nigeria consider the products of OTM as half-baked and unusable without further training.

Conclusion

The current Office Technology and Management curriculum is duly designed to take into cognizance the various technological changes that had taken place in the world of work over the years. However, findings have shown that students seem not to be adequately trained for contemporary professional practice. Rather, they are still being trained for the office of yesteryears as they are more proficient in the use of outdated office machines than they are in modern office technologies. This situation can be attributed to challenges like; poor funding of the programme, epileptic power supply, inadequately trained lecturers and students over population amongst others. It is therefore expedient for stakeholders to take urgent steps to address these problems in order to make them attractive in the modern workplace.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Periodic workshops, training and regular retraining should be organized for OTM educators to gain competence in current ICT skills in order to impart it effectively on the students.
2. OTM departments should admit students into the programme based on what the available facilities can accommodate effectively to ensure effective teaching and learning.

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BUSINESS EDUCATORS' UTILIZATION OF ASYNCHRONOUS AND SYNCHRONOUS TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES AS THE NEW NORMAL FOR INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN RIVERS STATE

[1]Onyemekara Mary Ifeoma (MABEN)
[2]Danagogo Tamunonengiyeofori Ere
Department of Accounting Education
School of Secondary Education (Business)
Federal College of Education (Technical)
Omoku, Rivers State, Nigeria
ifyreg@gmail.comdanagogonengi@gmail.com

Abstract

This study assessed Business educators' utilization of asynchronous and synchronous teaching and learning approaches as the new normal for Instructional delivery in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Descriptive survey research was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of 137 Business educators from four tertiary institutions in Rivers State namely: Rivers State University, University of Port-Harcourt. Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, and Federal College of Education (Tech.), Omoku. Convenient sampling technique used to select only those available to respond to the research instrument. Therefore, only the 67 Business educators who were available and willing to answer the research instrument made up the sample of the study. The researchers' developed structured questionnaire which was validated by two experts, one of Measurement and Evaluation, and one of Business Education all from Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt was used for the study. Cronbach alpha reliability computed yielded reliability indexes of 0.85, 0.72, and 0.81 for the three clusters and an average index of 0.79. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed Business educators to a moderate extent utilize asynchronous teaching and learning approaches and to a low extent utilize synchronous teaching and learning approaches as the new normal for instructional delivery in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The findings showed that the challenges affecting Business educators' utilization of asynchronous and synchronous teaching and learning approaches as the new normal for instructional delivery are inadequate facilities supporting technologies usage, poor electricity supply; poor digital skills for preparing digital contents and lack of motivation and incentives for those using these approaches. Based on the findings, it was recommended among that, Business education administrators should train and retrain Business educators on the use of synchronous approaches to teaching and learning.

Keywords: *asynchronous, synchronous, electronic learning and Business education*

Introduction

The sporadic transmission of Corona Virus popularly referred to as COVID-19 across the globe and its subsequent emergence in Nigeria with the first case of an infected Italian on

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February 27, 2020, led to the lockdown of every sector of the nation's economy, education inclusive. This response was meant to avert the continuous transmission of the deadly disease and safeguard the life of citizens. Consequently, Nigerians witnessed the closure of all schools from kindergarten to tertiary institutions irrespective of whether they are publicly and privately owned in many States (Anifowoshe, Aborode, Ayodele, Iretiayo & David, 2020).

It is important to recall that the closure of schools and institutions of higher learning resulted to stoppage of all educational programmes for almost a year (Business Education inclusive). This affected all schools' calendars and has resulted to crashed semesters with adverse consequences on the depth of content coverage especially in Business Education where both theory and practical teachings are required. This situation is absolutely unfortunate considering the fact that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2020), recommended in its guidance note on education systems, the use of distance learning facilities such as online or electronic instructions (asynchronous and synchronous) in order to minimize disruption of educational programmes and promote continuous learning.

Asynchronous approaches to teaching and learning allow learners to work at their own convenient time by downloading learning materials and studying them later. Khe, Chengyuan, Donn and Shurui (2020) noted that this approach was used by many educators during the COVID-19 crises including uploading PowerPoint slides or papers onto a learning management system such as Moodle and asking students to read them on their own. Students were encouraged to ask questions asynchronously on the Moodle forum. Ordu and Abdulkarim (2020) noted that asynchronous technologies are readily available and accessible to Business educators in Nigeria. With regards synchronous approaches to learning, Bastable, Gramet, Jacobs, and Sopczyk (2010) opined that these allow students to learn through online platforms that empower both teachers and learners to interact on real-time basis. Zahir (2020) also opined that using synchronous approach educators can connect with students virtually irrespective of their distance at an agreed time. Zahir also reported that schools adopted this approach to ensure continuation of learning and compliance to physical distancing. In same vein, Neendoor (2020) noted that using synchronous approach there is a specific time both educators and learners must hookup to the interactive section at their convenient places. Neendoor also noted that this approach to teaching and learning eliminates the barrier of distance, space and place of learning. Consequently, the use of any of these two recommended approaches is meant to promote physical or social distancing amongst students and helps to stop the spread of the viral diseases in the case of infected person.

It is important to note that when the need to reopen institutions for learning arose, the Federal Ministry of Education did not ignore the need for the safety of citizens' lives as it rolled out a 'safe school and quality learning strategy' (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2020). The strategy recommended and encouraged the use of safe distancing procedures and creative delivery approaches in all educational institutions in line with the UNESCO recommendation. The aim is to ensure the safety of citizens seeking for knowledge within the educational sector in Nigeria. This recommendation is meant to encourage a new standard for instructional delivery in each educational institution, hence the new normal. This is based on the fact that the 'new normal' defines a position taken to be the ideal by organization, society, nation or any other group of people after exposure to certain unanticipated crisis such as war, pandemic and natural disasters (Porter, 2019). This state differs from the prevailed situation of things prior to the crisis.

Business Educators adherence to this new normal simply means upholding the recommendations for 'safe school and quality learning strategy' and contextualizing them to their institutions of primary assignment. Thus, this connotes utilizing asynchronous and synchronous technological approaches to deliver instructions in Business Education programme. Asynchronous and synchronous technological approaches can either be online or offline

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electronic means capable of promoting physical/social distancing as well as learning in addition to non-academic activities such as regular washing of hands, neatness, healthy style of living, good sanitation system that have become the new normal (Chibuike & Bashar, 2020). Buheji and Ahmed (2020) opined that using asynchronous and synchronous technological approaches in the new normal to deliver instruction is synonymous to using electronic learning (e-learning) facilities as approach to teaching and learning. Ordu and Abdulkarim (2020) opined that using e-learning facilities as the new normal simply means adjusting to either web-based learning, online instruction, and multimedia instruction (such as CD, DVD, and YouTube videos to provide instructions) in order to eliminate the barrier of time, place and minimize close physical contact of persons during teaching and learning Business Education courses.

The issues surrounding the use of e-learning facilities are not new in Business Education. Many researches for been conducted and recommendations made. Therefore, it is expected that prior to the reality created by the advent of COVID-19 which lead to the establishment of a new normal within the educational system, Business Educators should have been prepared and engaged with asynchronous and synchronous technological approaches in instructional delivery. Nevertheless, extant literature related to instruction during the pandemic reported mixed results. Ordu and Abdulkarim (2020) reported low extent of e-learning technologies integration by Business Educators during the lockdown. Adelakun (2020) reported interruptions in students' final phase of their studies due to lockdown of educational institutions. Edeh, Nwafor, Obafemi, Shuvro, Fyneface, Aabha and Alhuseen (2020) reported that many educators and students relied on technology to ensure continued learning during the Coronavirus pandemic and online education was hindered by poor infrastructures including, network, power, inaccessibility and unavailability issues and poor digital skills. Ebohon, Obienu, Irabor, Amadin, & Omoregie (2021) reported difficult with paradigm shift from traditional approaches to instruction as teachers and students across universities had difficulty with internet connection. Consequently, the researchers are not sure whether Business Educators were able to use asynchronous and synchronous technological approaches as the new normal for instructional delivery in Business education in tertiary institutions in Rivers State, despite the challenges of poor infrastructures such as internet network, epileptic power supply, poor integration of e-learning facilities, and inadequate digital skills which can hinder the use of these new normal approaches. It is in view of the foresaid background that present study was conceived.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

i. To what extent do Business educators utilize asynchronous teaching and learning approaches as the new normal for instructional delivery?
ii. To what extent do Business educators utilize synchronous teaching and learning approaches as the new normal for instructional delivery?
iii. What are the challenges affecting Business Educators utilization of asynchronous and synchronous teaching and learning approaches in the new normal for instructional delivery?

Methods

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The survey research design was adopted because it attempted to elicit the opinions of respondents. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) posited that when individual's views or perceptions are to be collected on subject matter, survey research design is the most appropriate to be used.

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The population for this study is made up of 137 Business educators from four tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The tertiary institutions are Rivers State University - 19, University of Port-Harcourt - 32, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education – 54 and Federal College of Education (Tech.), Omoku – 32. Convenient sampling technique was used to select only those available to answer the research instrument. Consequently, only 67 Business educators who were available and willing to answer the research instrument made up the sample of the study.

The researchers developed instrument titled "Business Educators' Utilization of Asynchronous and Synchronous Teaching and Learning Approaches as the New Normal for Instructional Delivery in Tertiary Institutions (APARPSSM)". The instrument contains 15 items. The instrument is structured based on 4 points rating scale of: Very High Extent (VHE – 4marks), High Extent (HE – 3marks), Moderate Extent (ME – 2marks) and Low Extent (LE – 1mark) were used to answer research question 1 & 2, while Strongly Agree (SA - 4), Agree (A - 3), Disagreed (D - 2), and Strongly Disagree (SD - 1). The instrument was subjected to validation by two experts, one expert of Measurement and Evaluation, and one expert of Business Education all from Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt. The experts' comments and input were used for the modification of the final copy of the instrument, to ensure that it measures the intended attributes. Cronbach alpha reliability statistics was used to test for the reliability. The computation due with the responses of 15 Business Educators from Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State, gave reliability indexes of 0.85, 0.72, and 0.81 for the three clusters and an average index of 0.79.
Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. For decision making 3.50 points and above is regarded as VHE or SA, 2.50 to 3.49 as HE or A, 1.5 to 2.49 as ME or D, and below 1.5 as LE or SD.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do Business educators utilize asynchronous teaching and learning approaches as the new normal for instructional delivery?

Table 1: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Extent to which Business Educators utilize asynchronous teaching and learning approaches as the new normal for instructional delivery

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Uses CD/DVD to records lectures for students to play and learn at their own places and pace.	67	1.64	0.52	ME
2	Refers students to YouTube for video download to argument physical lecture	67	1.97	0.62	ME
3	Uploads PowerPoint slides for students to download and learn at their own places and pace	67	1.30	0.85	LE
4	Uses campus radio to teach students	67	1.17	0.72	LE
5	Refers students to scholars sites to download reading materials	67	1.53	0.52	ME
6	Uploads lecture materials on the institution's website for students download and personal studies	67	1.64	0.62	ME
	Cluster mean	**67**	**1.54**	**0.68**	**ME**

Source: Field Survey, 2021

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Table 1 shows that the Business educators for tertiary institutions in Rivers State are of the opinion that to a moderate extent they use CD/DVD to records lectures for students to play and learn at their own places and pace, refer students to YouTube for video download to argument physical lecture, refer students to scholars sites to download reading materials, and upload lecture materials on the institution's website for students download and personal studies with mean scores of 1.64, 1.97, 1.53, 1.64 and standard deviation of 0.52, 0.62, 0.52, and 0.62 respectively. The respondents also opined that to a low extent they upload PowerPoint slides for students to download and learn at their own places and pace and use campus radio to teach students with mean scores of 1.30, 1.17 and standard deviation of 0.85 and 0.72 respectively. However, when the cluster mean is considered, it can be concluded that Business educators opined that to a moderate extent they use utilize asynchronous teaching and learning approaches as the new normal for instructional delivery in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: To what extent do Business educators utilize synchronous teaching and learning approaches as the new normal for instructional delivery?

Table 2: Summary of Mean Scores and Standard Deviation on the Extent to which Business Educators Utilize Synchronous Teaching and Learning Approaches as New Normal for Instructional Delivery.

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Uses web-based teaching and learning platforms for course delivery	67	1.08	0.71	LE
2	Uses online interaction platforms for course delivery	67	1.19	0.81	LE
3	Uses virtual learning platforms for course delivery	67	1.48	0.67	LE
	Cluster Mean	**67**	**1.25**	**0.73**	**LE**

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2 shows that the respondents opined that to a low extent the use web-based teaching and learning platforms, use online interactive platforms and use virtual learning platforms for course delivery as new normal for instructional delivery with mean scores of 1.08, 1.19, 1.48, and standard deviation of 0.71, 0.81, and 0.67 respectively. In same vein, when the cluster mean for all the items is considered, it can be concluded that the respondents are of the opinion that to a low extent they utilize synchronous teaching and learning approaches as the new normal for instructional delivery.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges affecting Business Educators utilization of asynchronous and synchronous teaching and learning approaches in the new normal for instructional delivery?

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Table 3: Summary of Mean Scores and Standard Deviation on the Challenges Affecting Business Educators Utilization of Asynchronous and Synchronous Teaching and Learning Approaches as the New Normal for Instructional Delivery

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Inadequate infrastructure facilities supporting technologies usage.	67	3.54	0.60	SA
2	Poor electric supply	67	2.54	0.63	A
3	Poor digital skills for preparing digital content	67	2.63	0.64	A
4	Poor internet network	67	1.35	0.40	SD
5	Lack of policy supporting the use of asynchronous and synchronous approaches	67	2.35	0.53	D
6	Lack of motivation and incentives for those using these approaches	67	2.56	0.63	A

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 3 shows that the respondents strongly agreed that inadequate infrastructure facilities supporting technologies usage is a challenge affecting their utilization of asynchronous and synchronous teaching and learning approaches as the new normal for instructional delivery with mean of 3.54 and standard deviation of 0.60. The respondents also agreed that poor electricity supply; poor digital skills for preparing digital contents and lack of motivation and incentives for those using these approaches constitute challenges affecting their utilization with mean scores of 2.54, 2.63, 2.56 and standard deviation of 0.63, 0.53 and 0.63 respectively. The respondents also disagreed that lack of policy supporting the use of asynchronous and synchronous approaches is a challenge with mean score of 2.35 and standard deviation of 0.53. The respondents also strongly disagreed that poor internet network is a challenge affecting the use of asynchronous and synchronous approaches to teaching and learning as new normal for instructional delivery in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The results relating to this specific purpose shows that Business educators opined that to a moderate extent they are utilizing asynchronous teaching and learning approaches as the new normal for instructional delivery in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. This finding is based on the fact that Business educators opined that to a moderate extent they use CD/DVD to records lectures for students to play and learn at their own places and pace, refer students to YouTube for video download to argument physical lecture, refer students to scholars sites to download reading materials, and upload lecture materials on the institution's website for students download. The findings are supported by the findings of Khe, Chengyuan, Donn and Shurui (2020) who reported that this approach was used by many educators during the COVID-19 crises. The findings are also supported by the discovery of Edeh, Nwafor, Obafemi, Shuvro, Fyneface, Aabha and Alhuseen (2020) when they reported that many educators and students relied on technology to ensure continued learning during the Coronavirus pandemic.

The results related to this specific purpose shows that to a low extent Business Educators utilize synchronous teaching and learning approaches as the new normal for instructional delivery in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. This finding emanated from the fact that Business educators opined that to a low extent they are using web-based teaching and learning platforms, use online interactive platforms and use virtual learning platforms for course delivery as new normal for instructional delivery. The findings are supported by the findings of

Zahir (2020) who reported that schools adopted this approach to ensure continuation of learning and compliance to physical distancing. The findings is also supported by the findings of Ordu and Abdulkarim (2020) when they found out that to low extent of e-learning technologies were integrated by Business Educators during the lockdown.

The results related to this specific purpose shows that the challenges affecting Business educators utilization of asynchronous and synchronous teaching and learning approaches as the new normal for instructional delivery are inadequate infrastructure facilities supporting technologies usage, poor electricity supply; poor digital skills for preparing digital contents and lack of motivation and incentives for those using these approaches. The findings are also supported by the discovery of Edeh, Nwafor, Obafemi, Shuvro, Fyneface, Aabha and Alhuseen (2020) when they reported that online education was hindered by poor infrastructures including, network, power, inaccessibility and unavailability issues and poor digital skills. The findings are also contrary to the findings of Ebohon, Obienu, Irabor, Amadin, & Omoregie (2021) when they reported that teachers and students across universities had difficulty with internet connection.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Business educators to a moderate extent utilize asynchronous approach in teaching and learning as new normal for instructional delivery in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. It can also be concluded that Business educators to a low extent utilize synchronous approach in teaching and learning as new normal for instructional delivery in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. It can also be concluded that the challenges affecting Business educators utilizing asynchronous and synchronous approaches to a very high extent in teaching and learning Business education courses as new normal for instructional delivery are: inadequate infrastructure facilities supporting technologies usage, poor electricity supply; poor digital skills for preparing digital contents and lack of motivation and incentives for those using these approaches. Consequently, it can be concluded that physical and social distancing which are meant to be ensure through adopting these approaches are not adhered to in Business education programme in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were put forward for implementation:

i. Business educators should be encouraged by their administrators to utilize asynchronous approach to teaching and learning to a very high extent as the new normal for instructional delivery as well as ensuring physical/social distancing.
ii. Business education administrators should train and retrain Business educators on the use of synchronous approaches to teaching and learning as the new normal for instructional delivery in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
iii. Tertiary institutions' administrators in Rivers State should canvass and ensure the provision of basic infrastructural facilities, improved electricity supply, academic staff training in digital skills for developing digital content and motivate Business educators willing to use approaches promoting physical/social distance as the new normal for instructional delivery.

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ENHANCING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY-BASED INSTRUCTION FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN THE NEW NORMAL: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

[1]UTOWARE, JUDE DANIEL AMAKAINO *PhD*
Dept. of Educational Management and Business Studies
Federal University Oye-Ekiti

[2]ENWERE IFEOMA-MEZIEM VICTORIA
Dept. Of Office Technology and Management
Federal Polytechnic Nekede

[3]MGBONYEBI, C. DICKSON
Department of Office Technology and Management,
Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro

Abstract

The study examined strategic measures for enhancing ICT-based instruction for sustainability of Business Education programme in the New Normal using tertiary institutions in Delta State as case study. The study answered three research questions and tested three null hypotheses using descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was 128 Business Educators (Lecturers and Instructors) in four public tertiary institutions in Delta State. The entire 128 Business Educators were involved as respondents for the study; hence, there was no sampling. Structured questionnaire was developed by the researchers for data collection. The questionnaire was face-validated by three experts. Reliability of the questionnaire was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha reliability technique which yielded a coefficient of 0.884. Data were collected with the help of four research assistants from the four tertiary institutions used for the study. The data collected were analysed using mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics. The result of the study established 12 justifications for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal, 11 strategic measures for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal, and identified nine current challenges undermining effective use of ICT-based instruction in the new normal. The results of hypotheses tested showed no significant ($p<0.05$) differences in the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on justifications, strategic measures and current challenges in enhancing ICT-based instruction for sustainability of Business Education programmes in the new normal in Delta State. The study therefore recommended improved training and capacity building of personnel, adequate provision of ICT learning resources, improved supervision and funding of Business Education programmes by state

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and federal government for sustainability of Business Education instruction in the new normal.

Keywords: *Business Education, Instruction, ICTs, New normal, Delta State.*

Introduction

The world is fast moving towards education for skill acquisition and self-employment which can be offered through quality technical and vocational education. Business Education is an aspect of vocational education in Nigeria with the mandate of training recipients for self and paid jobs in contemporary business world. According to Ugwuogo (2013), Business Education is an aspect of vocational education that provides instruction and preparation for office occupations such as secretary, shorthand-typist or stenographer, bookkeeper, data processor, word processor, computer analyst and accountant. Business Education is a course that prepares students for entry into and advancement in jobs within business and it is equally important because it prepares students to handle their own business affairs and to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy (Inegbedion, Njoku, Ekpenyong, Umoru & Hakeem, 2015). In the opinion of Nwuzoh (2016), Business Education is the type of education that gives individual the needed skills and knowledge to succeed in small, medium or large scale businesses. Sherif (2021) stated that Business Education provides individuals with the knowledge, skills, and competence they need to carry on their businesses both small, medium, and large scale businesses. Okifo and Ayo (2015) noted that the goals of Business Education is the production of manpower who possesses the requisite knowledge, skill and attitude for harnessing other resources and bringing them into a cooperative relationship yielding the goods and services demand by society for the satisfaction of their wants and needs.

Business Education is an indispensable vocational education subject that inculcates in the learners, the knowledge of understanding business problems, and how to overcome them in the long run. Osuala (2004) reported that Business Education is a programme of instruction which consists of two parts (i) Office education, a vocational programme of office careers through initial, refresher and upgrading education and (ii) General business education a programme to provide students with information and competences which are needed by all in managing personal business affairs and in using the services of the business. Business Education programmes all over the world like other aspects of education have been devastated and truncated by the outbreak of COVID-19 as schools and training centres were shutdown to curtail the spread of the deadly virus.

COVID-19 is an infectious virus that was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei, in China. As of the end of September 2020, more than 33 million cases had been reported across 188 countries including Nigeria with more than 1 million deaths.COVID-19 is highly contagious and so any residual contamination, no matter how small, can pose a threat to healthcare workers and patients (Armellino, *et al,* 2020). The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic created the largest disruption of education systems in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents. Closures of schools and other learning spaces impacted about 94 per cent of the world's student population, up to 99 per cent in low and lower-middle income countries of the world (United Nations, 2020).

The effect of the COVID-19 panic had caused massive changes to our daily lives, changes that have often happened rapidly and abruptly with a wide range of experiences and emotions (Purdue University, 2021).COVID-19 had changed the very basis of what we do and how we do it. It had forced a radical look at how we assemble, our social patterns, and way of life,

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with most governments imposing laws and rules ranging from the closure of public events and institutions to the wearing of masks in public, number of people allowed in gatherings among other new normal protocols. *Clopton, Skaar and Schmitz (2021) affirmed that a*dapting to the new normal associated with COVID-19 was difficult for actors in all sectors including education sector. The new normal is continuing to change and there is no clear timeline for when we can expect our lives to return to the "old normal" many of us long for. Fana (2021) stated that since outbreak of COVID-19, there had been surge in adoption in information and communication technology-based teaching and learning with global educational technology investments reaching more than $18 billion as expenses on apps, virtual tutoring, video conferencing, and online learning in order to minimize human contacts to suppress the spread of the COVID-19.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools are important in training, educating and for capacity building programs which play key role in educational process (Nwosu, John & Akorede, 2018). According to Nwabueze (2011), ICTs as a broad-based technology which uses equipment, applications, methods and management that support the creation, storage, manipulation and communication of information. Federal Ministry of Education (2010) described ICTs as encompassing all equipment and tools (inclusive of traditional technologies of radio, video and television to the newer technologies of computers, hardware, firmware and so on), as well as the methods, practices, processes, procedures, concepts and principles that come into play in the conduct of the information and communication activities. Technological advancements in this pandemic era have revolutionized every field of life; teaching is no exception. UNESCO (2019) affirmed that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has played a crucial role in the development of education across the globe. ICT-based instructional materials cover five different types which include: print, audio/video, radio and TV, computers and the internet for presentation, demonstration, drill and practice, interaction, and collaboration to add value to teaching and learning. Maharaj-Sharma, Sharma and Sharma (2017) stated that governments all over the world have in recent times made policies on information and communication technology in education and have made enormous investments in initiatives aimed at integrating information and communication technologies in schools. For instance, educational organizations in countries like Australia, India, Finland, the UK, the USA, South Korea, and others are intensely utilizing the ICT curriculum and development to resolve the communication and technological differences.

With the technology revolution, it seems that there are deliberate intentions, almost at the global level, to encourage teachers to include ICTs and ICT-based activities in the range of instructional technologies they adopt in their classroom teaching (Morris, 2012). ICT-based learning has progressed to become an integral part of the education system (Edu, 2020). For instance, Kim, Pak and Cho (2021) stated that to scale up pedagogical innovation using information and communications technology (ICT), educators have shifted the focus of professional development from primarily an individualist endeavour to a collective approach in teachers' social networks and intensified ICT-based teaching and learning, which is more eminent in the new normal era of the pandemic. It is imperative to state that despite the pandemic, teaching and learning in Nigerian education system must continue to take place un-impeded in order to catch up with other countries that are building education capacities through the new normal. Hence, this study examined Information and Communication Technology-based instruction for sustainability of Business Education programmes in the new normal using empirical evidence from Delta State, Nigeria

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Research Questions

In line with the specific purposes, the study answered three research questions which are:

1. What are the justifications for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State?
2. What are the strategic measures for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State?
3. What are the current challenges undermining effective use of ICT-based instruction in Business Education in the new normal in Delta State?

Research Hypotheses

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on the justifications for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on the strategic measures for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State.

$H0_3$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on the current challenges undermining effective use of ICT-based instruction in Business Education in the new normal in Delta State.

Methodology

The study was carried out to investigate information and communication technology-based instruction for sustainability of Business Education programmes in the New Normal using empirical evidence from Delta State, Nigeria. To carry out the study, three research questions were answered while three null hypotheses were tested. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey design was found appropriate for this study because copies of well structured questionnaire were administered to collect data from the respondents (Business Education lecturers and Instructors) to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses.

The population for the study was 142 Business Educators (125 Business Education Lecturers and 17 Business Education Instructors) from four tertiary institution offering Business Education programmes in Delta State which are: Delta State Univeristy, Abraka, Federal College of Education Asaba, Delta State College of Education, Agbor and Delta State College of Education, Warri. The entire population of 142 Business Educators were used as respondents for the study due to the manageable size, hence, there was no sampling. Data were collected using a well structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured into four sections A, B, C and D. Section A was designed to collect personal data of the respondents such as their official status as Lecturers or Instructors, their institutions among others. Sections B, C and D were structured in line with the three specific purposes of the study. The response options for the three sections of the respondents were: Strongly Agreed (SA); Agreed (A); Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

The instrument was face-validated by three experts who were Business Education lecturers from University of Benin, Edo State. All corrections suggested by the experts were properly incorporated into the final draft of the questionnaire used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha reliability methods which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.873. Data for the study were collected with the help of four

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research assistants from the four tertiary institutions for the study. With effective monitoring, all the 142 copies of questionnaire administered were retrieved and properly completed indicating 100% return rate.

Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions while t-test statistics were used for testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Using 2.50 as cut-off point, any item with mean value of 2.50 and above was interpreted as "Agreed" while items with mean values less than 2.50 were interpreted as "Disagreed". The hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted when the t-calculated (t-cal) value was less than the t-critical (t-tab) value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance while hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected when the t-calculated (t-cal) value was greater than the t-critical (t-tab) value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question One

What are the justifications for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State?

Table 1: Justifications for Enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the New Normal in Delta State (n = 142)

SN	Justification for enhancing ICT-based instruction include:	$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks
1	ICTs enhances the modes of communication to reduce risk of spread of COVID-19	3.46	0.49	**Agree**
2	ICTs offers better teaching and learning methods in the COVID new normal era.	3.68	0.60	**Agree**
3	ICTs instructional materials stimulate students for learning in COVID-19 era and beyond	3.56	0.44	**Agree**
4	ICT-based instruction enhances students assimilation and retention of learning.	3.37	0.81	**Agree**
5	The use of ICTs provides opportunities to enhance experiential learning for students in COVID-19 era	3.53	0.49	**Agree**
6	It eliminates distance barrier between teacher and learners in COVID new normal era.	3.50	0.56	**Agree**
7	ICT-based instruction offer students opportunities to play back audio and video of interactions for better understanding	3.33	0.47	**Agree**
8	The use of ICTs makes research more easier during COVID-19 with less risk of spread of the virus.	3.71	0.57	**Agree**
9	ICT-based instruction provides automatic solutions to manual paper-based process and procedures.	3.45	0.49	**Agree**
10	The use of ICTs enhances information sharing among students for academic excellence during COVID-19 new normal without risk	3.76	0.84	**Agree**
11	ICTs make educators create engaging, interesting and well-designed classroom activities in COVID-19 pandemic and new normal era.	3.54	0.49	**Agree**

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12	ICT-based instruction promote and improve the digital culture in schools in COVID-19 pandemic	3.67	0.55	**Agree**
	Pooled Mean	**3.54**	**0.57**	**Agree**

Note: $\bar{X}$ *= Mean;* ***SD*** *= Standard Deviation;* ***n*** *= number of respondents.*

The mean ratings of the responses of the respondents in Table 1 ranged from 3.33 to 3.76 which are all greater than the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicates that the 12 identified items in the table are agreed by the Business education lecturers and instructors to be justifications for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State. The standard deviation values of the 12 items in the table ranged from 0.44 to 0.84 which indicated that the responses of the respondents are close to the mean and one another.

Hypothesis One

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on the justifications for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State.

Table 2: Test of Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on the justifications for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	Std. Error	t-cal	t-tab	Level of sig.	Rmks
Bus. Edu. Lecturers	125	3.69	0.52						
				140	0.072	2.18	1.96	0.05	**Sig.**
Bus. Edu. Instructors	17	3.40	0.64						

Note: Sig. = Significant at 0.05.

The data presented on the t-test statistics in Table 2 shows that the t-calculated (t-cal) value of 2.18 was greater than the t-table (t-tab) value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 140 degree of freedom. This indicates that there was significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on justifications for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors is rejected on hypothesis one.

Research Question Two

What are the strategic measures for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State?

Table 3: Strategic measures for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State (n = 142)

SN	Strategic measures for enhancing ICT-based instruction include:	$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks

1	ICT-based learning help to minimize human to human contacts in the new normal	3.46	0.60	**Agree**
2	Adopt online conferences, workshops and meetings to curtail spread of COVID-19 cases among learners and teachers.	3.50	0.56	**Agree**
3	Adequate provision of ICT-based instructional resources to facilitate learning activities in COVID-19 and new normal era.	3.73	0.60	**Agree**
4	Steady access to internet connectivity for uninterrupted ICT usage for learning in COVID-19 and new normal era.	3.66	0.47	**Agree**
5	Subsidized internet connection to alleviate high cost of internet services for online teaching and learning in the new normal era.	3.53	0.83	**Agree**
6	Regular disinfestations of classroom, laboratories and libraries within school environment.	3.49	0.61	**Agree**
7	Uninterrupted power supply to schools for effective ICT-based instruction in the COVID-19 and new normal era.	3.24	0.87	**Agree**
8	Improved funding for adequate provision of required ICT facilities for digital instruction in the new normal.	3.62	0.48	**Agree**
9	Improved training of teachers and students in effective ICT-based instruction in the new normal era.	3.54	0.61	**Agree**
10	Policy framework for ICT-based instruction and assessment in Nigeria schools in the new normal era.	3.70	0.45	**Agree**
11	Collaborations with developed nations for information transfer through online learning in the new normal era.	3.63	0.49	**Agree**
	Pooled Mean	**3.55**	**0.60**	**Agree**

Note: $\bar{X}$ *= Mean;* ***SD*** *= Standard Deviation;* ***n*** *= number of respondents.*

The mean ratings of the responses of the respondents in Table 3 ranged from 3.24 to 3.73 which are all greater than the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This implies that the 11 identified items in the table are agreed by the Business education lecturers and instructors to be strategic measures for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State. The standard deviation values of the 11 items in the table ranged from 0.45 to 0.87 which indicated that the responses of the respondents are close to the mean and one another.

Hypothesis Two

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on the strategic measures for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State.

Table 4: Test of Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on the strategic measures for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	Std. Error	t-cal	t-tab	Level of sig.	Rmks
Bus. Edu. Lecturers	125	3.56	0.47						

				140	0.023	0.38	1.96	0.05	**NS**
Bus. Edu. Instructors	17	3.54	0.49						

Note: NS = Not Significant at 0.05.

The data presented on the t-test statistics in Table 4 reveals that the t-calculated (t-cal) value of 0.38 was less than the t-table (t-tab) value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 140 degree of freedom. This indicates that there was no significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on the strategic measures for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal in Delta State. Consequently, the null hypothesis of no significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors is accepted on hypothesis two.

Research Question Three

What are the current challenges undermining effective use of ICT-based instruction in Business Education in the new normal in Delta State?

Table 5: Current challenges undermining effective use of ICT-based instruction in Business Education in the new normal in Delta State (n = 142)

SN	Challenges undermining the use of ICT-based instructions include:	$\overline{X}$	SD	Rmks
1	Poor funding of Nigerian public school system including technical and vocational training schools.	3.74	0.60	**Agree**
2	Poor maintenance culture of available ICT facilities in Nigerian public schools.	3.50	0.50	**Agree**
3	Poor internet coverage and connectivity for effective online teaching and learning in the new normal era.	3.35	0.57	**Agree**
4	High cost of procuring and maintaining ICT facilities for teaching and learning in the new normal era.	3.47	0.49	**Agree**
5	Poor ICT-based instructional skills among most Business educators in Nigerian schools and colleges.	3.32	0.47	**Agree**
6	Unstable electricity supply to power ICT facilities for online teaching and learning in the new normal era.	3.73	0.54	**Agree**
7	High cost of data subscription for internet services where available for online teaching and learning in the new normal era.	3.57	0.55	**Agree**
8	Theft and threats to ICT facilities installations in Nigerian schools by thieves.	3.36	0.59	**Agree**
9	Lack of policy framework for effective provision of ICT facilities in schools.	3.21	0.48	**Agree**
	Pooled Mean	**3.47**	**0.53**	**Agree**

Note: $\overline{X}$ *= Mean;* ***SD*** *= Standard Deviation;* ***n*** *= number of respondents.*

The mean ratings of the responses of the respondents in Table 5 ranged from 3.21 to 3.74 which are all greater than the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This shows that the 9 identified items in the table are agreed by the Business education lecturers and

instructors to be current challenges undermining effective use of ICT-based instruction in Business Education in the new normal in Delta State. The standard deviation values of the 9 items in the table ranged from 0.47 to 0.60 which indicated that the responses of the respondents are close to the mean and one another.

Hypothesis Three

$H0_3$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on the current challenges undermining effective use of ICT-based instruction in Business Education in the new normal in Delta State.

Table 6: Test of Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on the current challenges undermining effective use of ICT-based instruction in Business Education in the new normal in Delta State

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	DF	Std. Error	t-cal	t-tab	Level of sig.	Rmks
Bus. Edu. Lecturers	125	3.46	0.71						
				140	0.027	0.45	1.96	0.05	**NS**
Bus. Edu. Instructors	17	3.49	0.68						

Note: NS = Not Significant at 0.05.

The data presented on the t-test statistics in Table 6 shows that the t-calculated (t-cal) value of 0.45 was less than the t-table (t-tab) value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 140 degree of freedom. This signifies that there was no significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on the current challenges undermining effective use of ICT-based instruction in Business Education in the new normal in Delta State. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors is accepted on hypothesis three.

Discussion of Findings

This study identified justifications for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction to include the fact that ICT-based instructions enhance modes of communication to reduce risk of spread of COVID-19, offer better teaching and learning methods in the COVID new normal era, stimulate students for learning in COVID-19 era and beyond, enhances students assimilation and retention of learning, provides opportunities to enhance experiential learning for students in COVID-19 era, eliminates distance barrier between teacher and learners in COVID new normal era and offer students opportunities to play back audio and video of interactions for better understanding among others. In agreement with this finding, Mukhtar, Javed, Arooi and Sethi (2020) found that online learning during the pandemic helped to ensure remote learning as students could conveniently access teachers and teaching materials easily without location barrier. Online teaching and learning also reduced use of travelling resources and ease administrative tasks such as recording of lectures and marking attendance, encouraged student-

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centeredness and students had become self-directed learners. Khan (2020) highlighted the six major benefits of online or ICT-based learning during Covid-19 Pandemic to include: increased efficiency of teaching and learning, flexibility of instruction, enhanced learning experience, useful to develop future skills and affordability of learning in the new normal era.

This study identified strategic measures for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction to include: enhanced ICT-based learning to minimize human to human contacts in the new normal, adoption of online conferences, workshops and meetings to curtail spread of COVID-19 cases among learners and teachers, adequate provision of ICT-based instructional resources to facilitate learning activities in COVID-19 and new normal era, steady access to internet connectivity for uninterrupted ICT usage for learning in COVID-19 and new normal era, subsidized internet connection to alleviate high cost of internet services for online teaching and learning in the new normal era, regular disinfestations of classroom, laboratories and libraries within school environment and uninterrupted power supply to schools for effective ICT-based instruction in the COVID-19 and new normal era among others. The findings of the study agreed with that of Dhawan (2020) who found that learning needs during pandemic were met through prerecording video lectures, testing the content, and always keeping Plan B ready so that the teaching and learning process cannot be hampered. Online courses during the lockdown made learning dynamic, interesting, and interactive.Partlow and Gibbs (2003) reported that the online learning programmes are creative, interactive, relevant, student-centered, and group-based. In addition, Snelling and Fingal (2020) identified ten strategies for online learning during a coronavirus outbreak to include: digital equity, establish daily schedules, provision of robust learning, designing of independent learning, choosing the right tools and stick with them and provision of clear expectations to teachers and learners. .

This study identified current challenges undermining effective use of ICT-based instruction to include: poor funding of Nigerian public school system including technical and vocational training schools, poor maintenance culture of available ICT facilities in Nigerian public schools, poor internet coverage and connectivity for effective online teaching and learning in the new normal era, high cost of procuring and maintaining ICT facilities for teaching and learning in the new normal era, poor ICT-based instructional skills among most Business educators in Nigerian schools and colleges and unstable electricity supply to power ICT facilities for online teaching and learning in the new normal era among others. Mukhtar, Javed, Arooi and Sethi (2020) in a study identified some of the challenges of ICT-based learning during the pandemic to include lack of immediate feedback, teachers were unable to assess students' understanding during online lecturing and that learners also reported limited attention span and resource intensive nature of online learning as major limitation and set back. Li and Lalani (2020) identified some of the challenges of online instruction during pandemic as unreliable internet access to participate in digital learning most especially in developing countries like Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study examined strategic measures for enhancing ICT-based instruction for sustainability of Business Education programme in the New Normal using tertiary institutions in Delta State as case study. Using descriptive survey research design, the findings of the study identified 12 justifications for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal, 11 strategic measures for enhancing ICT-based Business Education instruction in the new normal, and 9 current challenges undermining effective use of ICT-based instruction in the new normal. The results of hypotheses tested revealed that significant ($p<0.05$) difference in the

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mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on justifications for using ICT-based instruction but no significant ($p<0.05$) differences in the mean ratings of Business Education Lecturers and Instructors on strategic measures and current challenges in enhancing ICT-based instruction for sustainability of Business Education programmes in the new normal in Delta State.

Recommendations

The study therefore recommended:

i. Improved training and capacity building of Business Education lecturers and instructors for effective engagement in online learning in the pandemic era.
ii. Adequate provision of ICT learning resources to support ICT-based learning and online instruction in Business Education and aspect of Nigerian education.
iii. Improved supervision and funding of Business Education programmes by state and federal government for sustainability of Business Education instruction in the new normal.
iv. Development of robust policy framework for implementation of ICT-based curriculum and instruction in the pandemic era and beyond.

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INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING BUSINESS EDUCATION COURSES IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA IN THE NEW NORMAL

[1]EZEABII I. C.
Department Of Business Education, Enugu
State University of Science and
Technology (ESUT), Enugu
ljeoma.ezeabii@esut.edu.ng

[2] EKOH-NWEKE A.C.
Department of Educational Management (Business Education Programme),
College of Education, Micheal Okpara University
Of Agriculture Umudike, Abia State
ekohangela@yahoo.com

[3]AGBO ROSELINE
Department of Business Education
Faculty of Education, Abia State
University, Abia, Nigeria
Agboreseline7@gmail.com

Abstract

The study focused on Innovative strategies for teaching business education courses in public universities in South East, Nigeria in the new normal. The area of the study was South East Nigeria. The population for the study consist of 75 Business Educators from Federal and State universities in South East Nigeria. Due to the manageable size of the population, there was no sampling. Four research questions and four hypotheses guided the study. The instrument for data collection was researchers self-structured questionnaire titled Innovative strategies for teaching business education courses in the new normal (ISTBECNN). The instrument was validated by three experts. Reliability of the instrument was done through test re-test method using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient and a coefficient of 0.79 was obtained. Mean and standard deviations were used to analyze the research questions while hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Generally, it was found out from the research that utilization of innovative strategies for teaching Business Education courses in public universities in South East Nigeria is to a Great Extent. However, there are some lapses. Based on the findings, recommendations include: ICT hub should be established in all departments of business education in public universities in South East Nigeria, there should be compulsory workshops, seminars and in-

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service training to update Business Educators on current innovative teaching strategies.

Key words: Innovative strategies, Business Education, New Normal

Introduction

Business education concerns the teaching of necessary business skills and knowledge that will enable a student to stand out in the business world and the society. Impartation of such business skills and knowledge will make the individual to be an employer of labour or employable. Akpomi (2011) viewed Business Education as "the sum total of information, skills and attitude that are required for effective stimulation and running of business enterprises. The author further stressed that, business education means education for and about business. It is for when the educative processes prepares one for career in business. It is about business when it involves the offering of business related courses to all students irrespective of their career aspirations. Business Education according to Ezeabii (2017) is an aspect of vocational education which equips individuals with the necessary skills and theoretical knowledge needed for performing in the business world either for job occupations or self employment. Business education content is an all-encompassing programme in which the course content is derived from business management, business administration, secretarial administration information and communication technology or information management system, secretarial education, purchase/supply education, accountancy education, communication skills, English language, distributive education, management/marketing education, Psychology, philosophy, sociology of education, business law among others. It is an education that theoretically and practically prepares the learner with the required skills needed at global workplaces.

Business education is studied as a programme in public universities in the South East, Nigeria. One of the major thrust for classification of Universities in the country is by ownership. There are federal owned universities, state owned universities and other universities owned by individuals, corporate bodies and faith based organizations. All federal and state owned universities are entirely run by the government and are classified as public universities. There are public universities in the South East, Nigeria. South East is one of the six geopolitical zones in the country and consists of five states – Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. Each of these states has one federal and one state university. The South East zone is predominantly Igbo speaking zone and their vocation permeates virtually all human endeavors ranging from trading, farming, education etc. Business education programme in these universities need to be done well in this era of ICT for the students to master the course well, be productive, self-reliant and employable. For the above to take place, we need the utilization of innovative strategies especially in the new normal.

When a society adapts to changes occurring as a result of some uncontrollable factors in it in which she has no curative measures at the moment but devices strategies to contain it, the situation is referred to as 'new normal'. YLM (2020) defined 'new normal' as a new way of living and going about our lives, work and interactions with other people. Before the covid-19 pandemic, our lives were normal. People were going to mall with family members, eating in restaurants, going for burials in groups, travelling to places, and pupils/students going to school. However, when the covid-19 pandemic struck the world, our lives had to change, even our educational system.

Covid-19 is an acronym. 'Co' stands for Corona. 'Vi' stands for virus and 'D' for disease. Covid-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus causing severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). WHO (2020) observed that the symptoms of the disease include fever, cough and shortness of breath. In more severe cases, infection can cause Pneumonia or breathing

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difficulties. The symptoms are similar to flu and common cold. This disease originated from Wuhan China in the year 2019 and from there spread to the whole world. As at date it has no cure but very infectious.

The covid-19 virus according to World Health Organization (WHO) (2020) is transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person (generated through coughing and sneezing, individuals can also be infected from and touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and touching their faces (e.g eyes, nose, mouth). The covid-19 may survive on surfaces for several hours, but simple disinfectant can kill it. Sequel to the above WHO (2020) outlined some precautionary measures known as covid-19 protocols to contain the virus and for people to adapt to the new situation (New normal). These include: Physical distancing, wearing of nose mask, keeping room well ventilated, avoiding crowds, cleaning your hands and coughing into a bent elbow or tissue. Due to the high infections nature of the disease and the underlying consequences, there was a total lockdown of many countries of the world in the year 2020. Nigeria was forced to lockdown from March, 2020 till November, 2020. This affected all facets of Nigerian system including the educational system. Nevertheless, the educational community made concerted efforts to maintain learning continuity during the lockdown and subsequently, students had to rely more on their own resources to continue learning remotely through internet, television or radio. Teachers on their own part had to adapt to new pedagogical concepts and modes of instructional delivery taking note of the covid-19 protocols. All these led to innovative strategies in teaching and learning.

Innovative strategies are the techniques or methods that a teacher adopt to meet various learning objectives. These innovative strategies help students to walk on the path of independent learning and become strategic learners. They equip teachers to make learning fun and help students to awaken their desire to learn. Innovative strategies focus on not only the educational content but also on the methods and environment of the teaching and learning process. Students` developmental level, interests and experience are considered while choosing a particular teaching strategy so that they can self-accomplish their goals (Richa, 2014). Innovative strategies enable students to focus their attention, organize their learning material for better understanding and help teachers to provide a suitable platform for strategic learning. The innovative strategies are needed more in the new normal considering the covid-19 menace. Some innovative strategies could be a combination of Inquiry based learning, Quick response codes, Project based learning, Jigsaws and Wisely managed classroom technology.

Inquiry based learning: This is an innovative strategy where students on their own develop questions or inquires on the topic being taught and discover the answers or solutions. The teachers act as resource persons and guides. This mode of teaching makes the students active participants, encourage independent development of solutions to problems. It helps them to be analytic and critical thinkers. According to Avsec, Rihtarisic, and Kocijancic, (2014) Inquiry-based learning (IBL) is a student-centered instructional approach that makes use of meaningful tasks such as cases, projects, and research to situate learning. Students are expected to work collaboratively to identify how to solve a problem, gain research skills, and trade-off capacity. This strategy makes sure students are well equipped with the necessary tools to face the demands and expectations of the future. Davis (2020) observed that the basic characteristics of Inquiry-based teaching are: students generating or thinking out questions of their own, trying to get evidences to answer the question(s), having the ability to explain the evidence collected, linking the explanation to the knowledge obtained from the investigative process and creating an argument and justification for the explanation.

Quick response codes: QR (Quick Response) codes are mobile technologies used in teaching. The square codes are embedded with cryptic codes for teaching and learning. According to Pons,

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(2011), QR Codes consist of black modules arranged in a square pattern on a white background. They are designed to decode the data quickly. It is quite easy to create and use these codes. Using QR Codes for education is another way of using the Internet. Quick Response (QR) codes are versatile. QR Codes can connect users to the information quickly and easily. It is easy to create and have multiple uses in classrooms. QR codes can lead students to information just by scanning the code on a student's digital device (Davis, 2020). Students can use the QR code in various ways like to check for results or answers, retrieve information on lecture materials or textbook, participate in survey information, Link students directly to Google maps and get video tutorials for lectures. A QR code facilitates access and extension of information and lecture material anywhere they are.

Project-Based Learning: This involves the use of different scenarios and challenges in the teaching and learning. Davis (2020) opined that Project-Based learning engage the students in critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and self-management. Once students solve the problem or challenge, they present their solutions. The necessary skills required or needed to be developed are collaboration, digital tools, and problem solving skills to come up with a solution to the problem presented. This strategy is relevant in that it is more engaging for students, improves learning, provides opportunities for students to use technology, makes teaching more enjoyable and rewarding and connects students and schools with communities and the real world.

Jigsaws: Cooperative learning strategy is the jigsaw technique. It helps students create their own learning. Students are usually put in groups and assigned a different topic. In each group, students learn the topic well enough to be able to teach it to another group of students. This technique enable students become experts on the learning as they teach their colleagues. When one session is done, students are reassigned to different groups and the new topics. The students share knowledge gained in their group. This technique brings lessons to life and challenges students to create their own learning. Garcia, Abrego and Robert (2017) affirmed that the outcomes of Jigsaw method are: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotion of peer interaction and development of social skills.

There is every need for the use of innovative strategies in the teaching of business education courses in universities. Innovative teaching method involves also the use of digital and ICT based tools in teaching. Krishna (2013) and Noor (2014) identified the following innovative teaching technologies that are used in education delivery (business education inclusive) to include: technology-driven classroom, cross-curricular connections, smart interactive boards, computer-based assisted instruction, collaborative learning, activity-based learning and learning labs, digitalization in teaching, e-learning, flipped classroom, computer managed instruction (CMI), modeling and simulation and teleconferencing. All these innovative strategies encourage critical thinking in the students, improve problem solving abilities, encourage team work and self management. Nevertheless, this study was delimited to determining the extent inquiry based learning, quick response codes, Project based learning and Jigsaws are utilized in teaching business education courses.

These innovative teaching strategies promote learning and meaningful social interactions with peers and their instructors. The strategies also help in the educational system to contain Covid-19 and avoid viral infections due to crowded classrooms. Despite all these lendable benefits of innovative strategies, students still miss lessons in the universities due to fear of getting infected of the virus and some perform below expectations in examinations. Also, some business education graduates roam the streets of the country seeking for employment due to lack of employability skills. Ezeabii (2017) observed that some business education graduates join other graduates in roaming about the streets looking for paid employment. Does it mean that

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innovative strategies are not being utilized? The situation needs to be addressed in order to bring about positive turn hence, the study.

This study is anchored on Experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984) which sees learning as a process of knowledge creation through the transformation of experience (innovative strategies). It is a theory in which educators purposefully engage students in direct experience and focus reflection in order to increase students 'knowledge, develop their skills and clarify their values. Experiential learning is also referred to as learning through discovery and exploration. The key element of this theory is the student, and that learning takes place (the knowledge gained) as a result of being personally involved in the pedagogical approach. Unlike the traditional classroom situations where students compete with one another or remain uninvolved or unmotivated, and where the instruction is highly structured, students in experiential learning classrooms cooperate and learn from one another in a more semi- structured approach. Instruction is designed to engage students in direct experiences tied to real world problems and situations in which the instructor facilitates rather than directs students' progress (Davis, 2011). This implies innovative strategies in instructional delivery.

Statement of the Problem

Business education focuses on teaching the students skills, knowledge and competencies required for performance in the business world and the society at large. However, with Covi|d-19 menace, the conventional teaching method is not acceptable by World Health Organization in order to contain the virus. Covid-19 protocols are to be observed in the educational system in the new normal. Hence, the need for innovative teaching strategies. Also, despite all the benefits of innovative strategies, student seems to be failing their courses and graduates still roam about the streets in search of paid employment due to lack of required skills. Does it mean that innovative strategies are not utilized in this era of ICT, globalization and the new normal? Therefore this study sought to determine the innovative strategies utilized in teaching of Business Education courses in public universities in South East, Nigeria in the new normal.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the extent innovative strategies are utilized in teaching of business education courses in public universities in the South East Nigeria in the new normal. Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent:

1. Inquiry based learning is utilized in teaching of business education courses in public universities in the South East, Nigeria.
2. Quick response codes are utilized in teaching of business education courses in public universities in South East, Nigeria.
3. Project based learning is utilized in teaching of business education courses in public universities in South East, Nigeria.
4. Jigsaws are utilized in teaching of business education courses in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

1. To what extent is Inquiry based learning utilized in teaching of business education courses in public universities in South East, Nigeria?
2. To what extent are Quick response codes utilized in teaching of business education courses in public universities in South East, Nigeria?
3. To what extent is Project based learning utilized in teaching of business education courses in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

4. To what extent are Jigsaws utilized in teaching of business education courses in public universities in South East, Nigeria?

Research Null Hypothesis:

The following hypotheses formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities in South East, Nigeria with respect to utilization of Inquiry based learning in teaching of business education courses.
2. A significant difference does not exist between the mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities in South East, Nigeria with respect to utilization of Quick response codes in teaching of business education courses.
3. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities in South East, Nigeria with respect to utilization of Project based learning in teaching of business education courses.
4. A significant difference does not exist between the mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities in south east, Nigeria with respect to utilization of Jigsaws in teaching of business education courses.

Method

The research design for the study was descriptive survey research. The population of the study consists of 75 Business educators from the federal and state universities in South East Nigeria. Due to the manageable size of the population, there was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was researcher's self-structured questionnaire titled Innovative Strategies for teaching business education courses in the new normal (ISTBECNN). It has two parts (1 and 2). Part 1 dealt with biodata while Part 2 has three sections with a total of 20 items. Each of the sections addressed a research question. A four point response scale was adopted: Very Great Extent, Great Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent. The instrument was validated by three experts from Enugu State University of Science and Technology. To determine the reliability of the instrument, 20 copies of it was administered to Business Educators in Universities in South South, Nigeria. The data was analyzed using test re-test method. The Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient used it gave an overall value of 0.79.Two research assistants helped in the data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions. Decision rule with respect to research questions was based on the principle of upper and lower limits of the mean. Thus:

3.50 – 4.00 = Very Great Extent
2.50 – 3.49 = Great Extent
1.50 – 2.49 = Low Extent
1.00– 1.49 = Very low Extent

A mean value of 2.50 and above was regarded as great extent. Any mean below 2.50 was regarded as Low extent. For decision rule on null hypotheses, t-test of no significant difference was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance and at appropriate degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was significant where the probability value was less than the .05 significant level at appropriate degree of freedom, otherwise the null hypothesis was not significant.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent is Inquiry based learning utilized in teaching of business education courses in Public universities in the South East, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on extent of utilization of inquiry based learning strategy in teaching business education courses.

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Decision
	Business educators utilize inquiry based teaching strategy in teaching of business education courses in the following ways:			
1	Students are allowed to generate or think out questions of their own in business education classes.	3.29	0.83	GE
2	Students are allowed to explain observations and the evidence collected	3.24	0.86	GE
3	Students are allowed justifications for the explanations	3.29	0.83	GE
4	Students are given opportunities to proffer solution to problems	2.44	0.87	LE
5	Business educators act only as resources and guide in such a class	1.99	0.87	LE
	Grand/ cluster Mean & SD =	**2.85**	**0.85**	**GE**

From Table 1, it is deduced with a cluster mean of 2.85 that the extent of utilization of Inquiry based learning strategy is to a great extent. All the items were to a great extent except items 4 and 5 with were to a low extent. The cluster standard deviation of 0.85 indicate consensus in their opinions.

Hypothesis 1

Table 2: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities on extent of utilization of Inquiry based learning in teaching of business education courses.

Paired Samples Test

Pair	N	Mean	Sd	Df	t cal	t crit	Decision
Federal	33	3.2475	0.49865	98	1.218	1.654	Not significant
State	42	2.9413					

From table 2.1, the t calculated value (1.218) < t critical value (1.654), the null hypothesis is not rejected. This indicates that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of business educators in federal and state universities in south east, Nigeria with respect to utilization of Inquiry based learning in teaching of business education courses.

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Research Question 2: To what extent are Quick response codes utilized in teaching of business education courses in Public universities in the south east, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean ratings and standard deviations of respondents on extent of utilization of Quick response codes in teaching of business education courses.

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Decision
	Business educators utilize Quick Response Code strategy in teaching of business education courses in the following ways:			
6	Students are taught how to generate answers using QR codes for specific problems in business education classes	3.24	0.86	GE
7	Students are taught how to use QR codes to link users to the information quickly in business education classes	2.29	0.83	LE
8	Students are taught how to vote on answers during class discussion	3.24	0.86	GE
9	Students are given opportunities to use QR code to locate Google maps etc.	2.96	1.01	GE
10	Business educators use QR code for information extension in business education.	3.29	0.83	GE
Gland/Cluster Mean & SD	**=**	**3.16**	**0.90**	**GE**

From table 3, it is clear with a cluster mean of 3.16 that the extent of utilization of Quick Response code strategy is to a great extent. All the items were to a great extent. The cluster standard deviation of 0.90 indicates homogeneity in their responses.

Null Hypotheses 2

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of business educators in federal and state universities in South East, Nigeria with respect to utilization of Quick response codes in teaching of business education courses.

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis of business educators in federal and state universities on utilization of Quick Response Code in teaching of business education courses.

Paired Samples Test

Pair	N	Mean	Sd	Df	t cal	t crit	Decision
Federal	33	3.0975	0.91865	118	1.041	1.654	Not significant
State	42	2.1362					

From table 4, the t calculated value (1.041) < t critical value (1.654), the null hypotheses is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of business educators in federal and state universities in south east, Nigeria with respect to utilization of Quick response codes in teaching of business education courses.

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Research Question 3: To what extent is Project based learning utilized in teaching of business education courses in Public universities in the south east, Nigeria.

Table 5: Mean ratings and standard deviations of respondents on extent of utilization of project based learning in teaching of business education courses.

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Decision
	Business educators utilize Project based learning strategy in teaching of business education courses in the following ways:			
11	Project using several real world scenarios are given to the students in business education classes.	3.29	0.83	GE
12	Team projects are used periodically for specific problems in business education classes	2.01	0.88	LE
13	Application of digital tools in problem solving are taught in business education classes	2.99	0.88	GE
14	Timed projects are always applied in business education class etc	3.24	0.86	GE
15	Projects on digital navigation for problem solving are taught in business education.	3.29	0.83	GE
	Gland/ cluster Mean & SD =	**2.79**	**0.86**	**GE**

From table 3, it is clear with a cluster mean of 2.79 that the extent of utilization of Project Based Learning strategy is to a great extent. All the items were to a great extent except item 12 showing a low extent. The cluster standard deviation of 0.86 indicates that their opinions are the same.

Null Hypotheses 3:

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of business educators in federal and state universities in south east, Nigeria with respect to utilization of Project based learning in teaching of business education courses.

Table 6: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities on utilization of Project based learning in teaching of business education courses.

Paired Samples Test

Pair	N	Mean	Sd	Df	t cal	t crit	Decision
Federal	33	3.7512	0.9985	118	1.311	1.654	Not significant
State	42	3.6932					

From table 6, the t calculated value (1.311) < t critical value (1.654), the null hypothesis is not rejected indicating that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of business educators in federal and state universities in south east, Nigeria with respect to utilization of Project based learning in teaching of business education courses.

Research Question 4: To what extent are Jigsaws utilized in teaching of business education courses in Public universities in the South East Nigeria?

Table 7: Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on extent of utilization of Jigsaws in teaching of business education courses.

S/N	ITEMS Business educators utilize Jigsaws teaching strategy in teaching of business education courses in the following ways:	Mean	SD	Decision
16	Students are put in groups and topic assigned to them in business education classes.	2.01	0.888	LE
17	Students are allowed to learn and teach topics assigned to their group in business education classes	3.29	0.883	GE
18	For new topics/sessions, the students are reassigned to another new group comprising of new members in business education classes	3.24	0.886	GE
19	Students are given opportunities to develop their teaching methods with each group freely.	3.29	0.883	GE
20	Business educators monitor and supervise the progress of the students in each of the sessions in business education.	2.96	1.001	GE
	Gland/ cluster Mean & SD =	**2.96**	**0.888**	**GE**

From table 7, it is clear with a cluster mean of 2.96 that the extent of utilization of Jigsaws strategy is to a great extent. All the items were to a great extent except item 16indicating low extent. The standard deviation of 0.88 indicates consensus of opinions.

Null Hypotheses 4:
There is no significant difference between the mean responses of business educators in federal and state universities in South East, Nigeria with respect to utilization of Jigsaws in teaching of business education courses.

Table 8: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities on utilization of Jigsaws in teaching of business education courses.
Paired Samples Test

Pair	N	Mean	Sd	Df	t cal	t crit	Decision
Federal	33	3.5291	0.81297	98	1.094	1.654	Not significant
State	42	3.9215					

From the result on table 8, the t calculated value (1.094) < t critical value (1.654), the null hypotheses is not rejected. This indicates that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of business educators in federal and state universities in south east, Nigeria with respect to utilization of Jigsaws in teaching of business education courses.

Discussion of Findings

From the study, it was found out that the respondents agreed to a great extent with three out of five items on utilization of inquiring based strategy in teaching. These include: Students are allowed to generate or think out questions on their own in business education classes; students are allowed to explain observations and evidence collected; students are allowed justifications for their explanations. The other two items are to a low extent and they are: students are given opportunity to proffer solution to problem; business educators act only as resource and guide in the class. However, the overall responses were to a great extent indicating that business educators utilize inquiring based learning to a great extent. This is in agreement with Avsec, Rihtarisic and Kocijanic (2014) who noted that inquiry based learning is a student-centred approach that makes use of meaningful tasks such as projects and research to situate learning.

Further, the findings of the study indicate that the respondents agreed to a great extent with the five items on utilization of quick response (QR) codes strategy in teaching. These include: students are taught how to generate answers using QR codes; students are taught how to use QR codes to link users to the information quickly, students are taught how to vote on answers during class discussions etc.

This is in agreement with Davis (2020) who opined that student can use QR codes in various ways like to check for results or answers, retrieve information on lecture materials or textbooks, participate in survey information, link students directly to Google map and get video tutorials for lecture.

In addition, the findings of the study indicated that four out of the five items on utilization of project learning in teaching were to a great extent. Generally, the responses were to a great extent. These include: using project to depict real world scenarios; application of digital tools in problem solving; timed projects are always applied in business education class etc. This is in line with Davis (2020) who observed that in project based strategy, the necessary skills required or needed to be developed are collaboration, digital tools and problem solving skills to come up with a solution to the problem presented.

Moreover, the findings of the study revealed that four out of five items on extent of utilization of Jigsaws in teaching are to a great extent. These include: Students are allowed to teach topics assigned to their group; students are giving opportunity to develop their own teaching method etc. This is in agreement with Gracia, Abrego and Robert (2017) who affirmed that the outcomes of Jigsaw method are: positive independence, individual accountability, promotion of peer interaction and development of social skills.

On hypotheses testing, the findings revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of business educators in federal and state universities with respect to utilization of inquiry based, QR codes, project based and Jigsaws strategies in teaching. Therefore, the hypotheses were not rejected.

Conclusion

From the findings, it is seen generally that extent of utilization of innovative strategies in the teaching of business Education courses in Public universities in the South East, Nigeria is to a Great extent. However, there are some lapses due to some items that are to a low extent. This indicates gap in the use of innovative strategies in the teaching of Business Education courses.

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There is need for remedial actions to be taking in order to give qualitative training to Business Education students in the Public universities in the South East, Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby made:

1. ICT hub should be established in all departments of business education in public universities in South East, Nigeria.
2. There should be regular and compulsory workshops, seminars and in-service training to update business educators on current innovative teaching strategies in public universities in South East, Nigeria.
3. Business education departments should adopt compulsory use of ICT facilities in the teaching and learning of business education for professionalism in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

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ORGANIZATIONS' WORKPLACE HOUSEKEEPING IN OFFICE OF SELECTED ORGANIZATIONS IN IMO STATE.

[1]MRS. CHINWE C. EBENEZER-NWOKEJI,
chinezerdove@yahoo.com
08030800855

[2]DR. CHARLES A. EJEKA
ejekaca@yahoo.com
08037744779
Department Of Office Technology And Management
Imo State Polytechnic. Umuagwo- Ohaji
Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria

Abstract

This study attempted to investigate issues on organizations workplace housekeeping in office of selected organizations in Imo State. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The entire population of 100 secretaries from some selected organizations in Imo State were used for study. Three research questions were formulated and the instrument used for data collection was a structured and validated questionnaire on the respondents. Test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Data which was collected was analyzed, using mean and standard deviation. The result of this study revealed benefits of good housekeeping including: standard office layout, reduction and elimination of office accidents, space management. Based on the findings, it was recommended that organizations should implement a clear plan for office housekeeping, training on housekeeping for office managers need a strategic position in the preparatory programmes in school and as a new employee.

Key words: *Housekeeping, Workplace, Organization.*

Introduction

Workplace Housekeeping can be referred to as keeping workplace clean, orderly and free of obstruction in a way that work can go on safely and properly. Everyday new technologies evolve which influence the world of work with both positive and negative effects. Office managers have their share in the use of such gadgets by their stay in the office environment. Hence, a pragmatic approach is needful to accommodate workers and materials with minimal hazards.

The Workers become possible victims to housekeeping challenges due to accidents, injuries, suffocation and even death. Noise generated from the use of some equipment like generators can lead to deafness and hearing impairment (Kerk and Rhodes, 2011). Explaining further, Saptare (2013) view that tactile sensation, object shapes and sizes in design can cause the prevalence of accidents affecting finger injuries and musculoskeletal disorders. Each office equipment has directions on usage which office managers are to communicate prolonged exposure to the radiation of computer which is the most common may cause nervous system cancer and leukemia (Barroso and Wilson, 2010).

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Turnbull, Deuter and Bradbery (2015) defines Housekeeping as cleaning and running a house. However workplace housekeeping is beyond cleanliness but extends to reducing hazards by controlling it with the right equipment, training and staff supervision.

Inadvertently a good housekeeping programme plans on human and materials, space, management from entry to exit. The traffic control and flow plan facilitates effective movement and handling of materials. Good housekeeping requires paying attention to details embracing the entire work layout as marking the aisle, adequacy of waste and storage facilities and maintenance as contributed by (Tarina 2019).

Similarly Gibson (2014) maintained that housekeeping is an ongoing operation and not a one-time or hit-and-miss cleaning done occasionally. Periodic clean-ups would only decrease the volume of workplace accidents.

Canadian centre for occupational Health and Safety (2019) identified some elements of housekeeping and cleanliness practices at a workplace as mentioned below:

(i) Dust and dirt removal, (ii) Adequate provision of cleaning facilities materials, (iii) Floor, wall and surfaces maintenance, (iv) Lightning, (v) Aisle and stair ways, (vi) Spill control (vii) Waste disposal, (viii) Tools and equipment (ix) Maintenance (x) Storage (xi) Clutter control (xii) Individual workspace.

Workplace housekeeping is a share responsibility between the employer, manager and other workers in tandem to this point, Nigeria safety standards manual identified the roles to be played by each party. Hence the employer provide a safe workplace establishes and maintains a written policy support supervisors who (i) train workers (ii) assign duties (iii) ensure the right use of equipment (iv) correct and advice where necessary. Workers have the obligations of (i) adhering to organizational culture (ii) correct or report incidents (iii) use their initiative in matters that arise. Generally, policies of the organization are the major concern that create conducive atmosphere to operate housekeeping rules. An office manager by training is capable of knowing the right positions of office equipment which may not constitute a nuisance to health or obstruction. He/she is equally professional competent to instruct and supervise subordinates to comply with office friendly matters.

Growing tendencies in new technologies and office techniques put pressure on both the employer and office managers to update housekeeping rules.

However orientation programs for new employees requires to contain:

(i) Basic safety information in the environment
(ii) Company polices and work rules
(iii) Right proactive procedures
(iv) Right procedures to report in case of accident
(v) System and facilities usage
(vi) Safe methods of handling hazardous materials.

Methods and information of orientation programs can be reviewed and updated with a checklist of accidents and sickness recorded in the organization.

There is so much that can accrue to the profitability of an office manager and the organization by implementing a good housekeeping order. Roy (2019) identified them as follows: Good housekeeping and cleanliness normally results into (i) a workplace which is cleaner, safer, well organized and more pleasant for work, (ii) improved utilization of floor space, (iii) smoother and systematic workflow with substantial reduction in non-value added activities, (iv) better inventory control of tools and materials, (v) reduced handling to ease the flow of materials, (vi)reduction in wastages of materials, (vii) more efficient equipment clean-up and maintenance leading to lower break-downs, (viii) minimization of errors leading to better products, (ix) safe environment for work and lower exposure of employees to hazardous substances (such as dusts,

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and vapours etc.), (x) more hygienic workplace conditions which lead to improved health of the employees, (xi) improved overall look and feel of the work environment, and (xii) improved morale of the employees. Poor housekeeping and cleanliness, on the contrary, creates workplace hazards which lead to various accidents such as (i) slips, trips and falls, (ii) caught in-between objects, (iii) struck by falling objects, (iv) struck by moving objects, (v) Cut/stabbed by objects, and (vi) struck against object. Furthermore, poor housekeeping and cleanliness also create fire hazards which inevitably lead to increased fire risk.

Poor housekeeping practices can be worrisome to the services of an office manager in the sense that frequent accidents can discourage subordinates and intending qualified job seekers. An attractive, well ordered work environment sets the right tone of work habits for all.

Statement of the Problem

Productivity is a core target of any well-established organization. There are multiple factors attached to this. Okoli and Mbaegbu (2020) summarized the statement of Okoro and Dajur (2011) that the success of an organizational management relies on their ability to coordinate human and material resources. It cannot be achieved without good housekeeping. Organizational housekeeping is not just cleanliness but creating a corporate culture which drives safety for both materials, employees and in turn enables them realize organizational goals (Roy 2015). Workplace accidents as simple as falls and as fatal as choking or fire incidents are very costly and can be avoided. A consciousness of danger by the management starts from workplace layout. Whereas, arrangement of materials, distractions from closely placed equipment are not considered.

Housekeeping structures are scarcely embedded in the orientation of new employers and makes office managers vulnerable because school curriculum does not adequately prepare them to look out for it following the backup, the study on Workplace Housekeeping.

Research Questions

1. What are the benefits of good Housekeeping?
2. What are the methods of improving housekeeping in organizations?
3. What are the poor housekeeping processes?

Method

The research design used for this study is descriptive survey design.

The population of the study comprised 100 secretaries from some selected organizations in Imo State and covered the organizations as stated: Ogwa Ventures Limited- Garden Park Business Centre - 40, First Bank PLC Owerri - 10, Access Bank PLC Owerri – 10 and Imo State polytechnic Umuagwo - 40. There was no sampling because the entire population was used for the study. The instrument used was a 30 point structured questionnaire on 4 point scale of Strongly agree =4, Agree =3, Disagree=2 and Strongly disagree =1. The instrument was validated by three expects. Two lecturers from the field of Office Technology and Management and one from measurement and evaluation. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the data generated from the answer to the research questions. The decision rule were based on a cut-off point of 2.5 and above for Agree and below 2.5 point for Disagree, t-test was used to test the null hypothesis. The hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected where the calculated t-value was equal to or greater than the table t-value for a given degree of freedom at P = 0.0.5 level of significance. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was applied where the calculated t-value was less than the table t-value of 0.0.5 level of significance.

Research Question 1

What are the benefits of good housekeeping in an organization.

Table1 : Mean and standard Deviation ratings of the respondents on benefits of good Housekeeping.

S/No	Items	X	SD	Decision
1.	Good office layout.	3.70	0.44	Agreed
2.	Proper space management.	3.68	0.52	Agreed
3.	Good management of work way traffic.	3.47	0.80	Agreed
4.	Improved hygienic conditions.	3.41	0.77	Agreed
5.	Safety of workers.	3.59	0.51	Agreed
6.	Reduction in medical costs.	3.42	0.72	Agreed
7.	Reduction I trips, slip accidents.	3.32	0.53	Agreed
8.	Reduction or elimination of fire accidents.	3.49	0.58	Agreed
9.	Longevity of office equipment.	3.27	0.58	Agreed
10.	Boosting of office managers morale.	3.56	0.51	Agreed
	Total	**34.91**	**5.96**	**Agreed**

Table 1 shows that all the items in the table are benefits which can be maximized from developing a good housekeeping culture in any organization. The mean ranging from 3.00 to 3.78 and standard deviation of 0.44 to 0.80

Research Question 2

What are the ways on how to achieve good housekeeping?

Table 2: Mean and standard Deviation ratings of the Respondents on methods of improving housekeeping in organizations.

S/No	Items	X	SD	Decision
11	Periodic housekeeping trainings.	3.48	0.63	Agreed
12	Creating new staff orientation exercise.	3.59	0.51	Agreed
13	Expanding the content of housekeeping in office education.	3.27	0.58	Agreed
14	Apply safety rules in office layouts.	3.37	0.58	Agreed
15	Encourage housekeeping by placing directional signs and safety cautions.	3.42	0.72	Agreed
16	Make organizational budgets should be elastic on hygiene and safety management.	3.0	0.87	Agreed
17	Office managers will assume supervisory roles over housekeeping.	3.47	0.80	Agreed
18	Training on use of new equipment.	3.57	0.68	Agreed
19	Keep checklist of injuries and accidents.	3.27	0.58	Agreed
20	Repairs on broken facilities.	3.64	0.52	Agreed
	Total	**34.08**	**6.47**	**Agreed**

Table 2 above indicates that all the discovered ways in attaining good housekeeping were agreed upon by the respondents. The mean response ranging from 3.00 to 3.80 indicate agreement with standard deviation of 0.51 to 0.87

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Research Question 3

What are the poor housekeeping processes?

Table 3: Mean rating of poor housekeeping processes.

S/No	Items	X	SD	Decision
21	Poor ventilation will impede health of workers.	3.60	0.55	Agreed
22	Trips over objects on floors or walking	3.32	0.53	Agreed
23	Slips on wet, dirty or greasy floors.	3.41	0.77	Agreed
24	Industrial injuries from badly arrange equipment (smoke, cuts on the body, wire straps).	3.53	0.64	Agreed
25	Litigation matters on damaged products.	3.47	0.80	Agreed
26	Litigation matters arise from staff affected by industrial accident.	3.59	0.52	Agreed
27	Slow service delivery process.	3.37	0.58	Agreed
28	Staff downtime is high and productivity lower.	3.41	0.77	Agreed
29	Electrical hazards, fire explosion, Toxic gases and fumes.	3.48	0.63	Agreed
30	Poor or no orientation program.	3.58	0.57	Agreed
	Total	**34.76**	**6.36**	**Agreed**

The table 3 reveals that all the identified effects of poor housekeeping processes in organizations were agreed upon by the respondents. The mean response ranging from 3.00 to 3.86 reveals agreement with standard deviation of 0.52 to 0.80

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male secretaries and female secretaries on their view as regards methods of improving office housekeeping.

Table 4: T-test Analysis of male and female secretaries on the methods of improving office housekeeping.

Ownership of Institution	N	X	SD	Df	p-value	Decision
Female	61	43.71	2.91			
				96	0.05	Not significant
Male	39	44.38	2.81			

Data in table 4 shows that the p-value of 0.06 at 96 degree of freedom is greater than the criterion value of 0.05 (p-value=0.06> 0.05). This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of secretaries on their view as regards methods of improving office housekeeping in some selected organizations in Imo State. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion of findings

Findings of this study indicate that housekeeping and cleanliness are beneficial activities and clear indicators of the general standard of quality at the workplace. This also agrees with the

assertion of Kaiser (2016) that housekeeping and cleanliness promotes efficient production and good environment in a workplace. Austin (2013) noted the benefits like: (i) Health challenges are reduced, (ii) Office managers and employees work with greater satisfaction, workers are more consistent, company profile and reputation keeps accelerating.

It was again revealed that there are practices which may hasten workplace housekeeping. It is a culture determined by the organizational management. Austin (2013) agrees that these housekeeping practices are to be safe and simple so that employees are motivated to implement it. According to National Health and Safety Commission (NHSC) manual however stipulates that employers are better poised to create an acceptable working environment. Organizational management also has the responsibility to determine standards of operating facilities. Poor position of equipment, lack repairs and maintenance, blind intersections, are situations that management can change.

Organizational management need to create supervisory roles on housekeeping for implementation, and inspection. Office managers can fit into these roles. Ndinechi and Gude (2014) firmly categories their competence to perform professional office roles. This is so because the new curriculum for National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) (2004) was enriched with the intention to equip students with office and secretarial Skills.

In addition, the study dictated the possible outcomes of not maintaining a profitable housekeeping program.

Stacked items spilling over may piece the skin, cause trips. Similarly Trotto 2015 supports the view that poor standards maintained in these areas influence also employees perception of work in their respective units. (Barroso and Wilson, 2010) dictated that brief exposure to high intensity sounds from office technology or equipment can produce a transient impairment in hearing while a long exposure may lead to permanent hearing damage. An example is noise from power generating sets placed close to the office.

Conclusion

Through healthy housekeeping and cleanliness practices, the organization not only keeping the workplace neat and clean, but also save on a whole lot of resources which in turn helps in improvement of the profitability of the organization. All the employees of the organization play an integral role in housekeeping and cleanliness. It is important to establish a housekeeping schedule. At a minimum, housekeeping is required to be done at the end of each shift. Good housekeeping and cleanliness practices are normally difficult to maintain since there are pervasive problem. Additionally, a few individual employees who are not committed to housekeeping and cleanliness practices can make a significant difference. Hence, continuous, unrelenting management attention to this issue is necessary to achieve and maintain the desired level of housekeeping and cleanliness in the organization.

Recommendations

Base on the discussion above, the following recommendation are made to ensure effectiveness in housekeeping in business and institutional organization.

1. Organization should ensure they have a clear plan of progression for office and housekeeping staff. Understanding where you are heading and achieving milestone along the way can be highly motivational to people.
2. Organization should invest in training their staff regularly and providing new training relevant to that progression is important. Staff turnover can be high so ensuring staff feel valued and have pride in their work will help in the retention of staff. A provision for a positive team working environment where staff understand their value and importance within the whole organization is recommendable.

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DUE DILIGENCE: ESSENTIAL STRATEGY IN CLASSROOM DELIVERY IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

[1]AMA, FAITH NNENNA (Ph. D)
Department of Office Technology and Management
Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana
Afikpo –Ebonyi State
Amafaithnne@Gmail.Com

[2]AZIH, NONYE (Ph.D)
Department of Business Education
Ebonyi State University Abakaliki
Ebonyi State
nonyeazih@yahoo.com

Abstract

The paper examined the place of due diligence in realizing the educational goal of business education. It saw due diligence as the process of carrying out a home work before performing an activity which aids in taking the right step. The paper argued that due diligence is required in the teaching and learning of business education because the goal is not just to teach but to make skilled businessmen or women and educators out of students, moreover the innovative nature of the programme calls for thorough analysis of resources and recipients if goal must be achieved. It maintained that a teacher's effectiveness could be seen in his ability to properly assess teaching methods, skills, activities and materials that will promote learning in specific situations. It went further to discuss the issue of academic performance and the factors that affect it pointing out that teacher's knowledge, skill, and strategy are critical to academic achievement of students. The concept of strategic teaching which involves making a good match between students' learning preferences and instructor's teaching style was discussed. The peculiarities of business education which makes it imperative that due diligence must be taken for effective classroom delivery was also discussed. It was concluded that due diligence will enable a teacher establish positive relationship with his students. This builds in them a sense of belongingness characterized by trust, connection and understanding which affects learning positively. Finally the paper recommended among others that business educators should constantly engage in continuous professional development considering the innovative nature of the programme and the changes being experienced in the educational industry in the last few decades.

Introduction

Education is of essence as it brings sustainable development to any nation. This is because it transmits knowledge, develops skills and attitudes, beliefs and practices in individuals

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for self development which transcends to national development. Therefore, assessment of students' attitude to learning, prior knowledge, learning preferences and instructional materials that will promote learning in relation to teaching methods, skills, technique of classroom control, ways of involving students in exercise and activities, ways of supervising and managing exercises and activities, instructional procedures (lesson presentation) and methods of evaluating outcomes of educational endeavours is of essence if the objective of any educational policy must be achieved. Due diligence as a measure or exercise of care a prudent and rational individual puts in the performance of his duties could be a strategy for teachers to ensure that the nation's educational standard is improved and maintained.

Nigeria as a nation is battling with falling educational standard though the educational system is geared towards maintaining a high standard as contained in the National Policy in Education. Ezembu (2011) believes that the standard and quality of Nigeria educational system can be measured by the efficiency and functionality of the products turned out by our schools. This has implication for teachers. Hence, Ukeje in (2011) stated that the quality of education provided in any society and the nature of the change effected by that education are both dependent on the quality of teachers and the effectiveness of their teaching in the schools.

The quality and effectiveness of teachers can be determined by proper assessment of teaching methods, skills, activities and materials that will promote learning in specific situations. When these factors are well articulated the teacher comes up with a customized strategy that will improve instructional delivery which is the primary assignment of every teacher. With a well structured instructional delivery strategy, accomplishment of defined goals which is the target of every educational programme is achieved. Moreover, in business education where the goal is not just to teach but to make "skilled businessmen or women and educators" out of students, a teacher must not assume that the goal will be achieved when strategies are randomly or arbitrarily applied. Thorough assessment of components of teaching in relation to students' preparedness, preferences, readiness, and attitude; materials on ground (physical or electronic) and the innovative nature of the programme must be made. Hence, Nwazor and Udegbunam (2016) explained that strategies are activities that are implemented or required to be implemented towards the achievement of stated measurable objectives. Strategies describe the plans, actions, specific ways that can be adopted in order to achieve an objective. A business teacher is therefore expected to perform due diligence in every instructional process if the mandate of business education must be achieved.

Concept of Due Diligence

In the submission of Arslan, (2009) "Due diligence is the investigative process of collecting and analyzing adequate, relevant data before making a decision, with the aim of understanding advantages, disadvantages and risks associated with such decision." It is a measure or exercise of care by a prudent rational individual or entity under a given circumstance. Ipaye (2021) describes due diligence as a reasonable step taken by a person to avoid committing a civil wrong or injury. It encompasses carrying out a home work before an activity is performed; obtaining all necessary information that will enable one perform an activity; critically evaluating issues before embarking on an action and examining situations in order to obtain facts, information, direction that will aid taking the right step. It exposes one to the fact that no two situations or transactions are the same and therefore should be handled in consideration of their peculiarities. It calls for diligent search, examination, questioning to obtain facts/truth and secrets before embarking on a transaction. Due diligence, is the extra care taken; the effort put to get all needed information in order to achieve a desired goal.

As a legal term, it is a way of ensuring that the terms and conditions outlined in any contractual deal are legally favourable to the concerned party. Whether it is a real estate deal,

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hiring contracts, employment contracts, or tenders and bids by private parties, due diligence is done to protect oneself from the legal troubles that can ensue if the contract is unfavourable to a particular party (Novikov, Dubinina & Kuzoma, 2018). Thus, due diligence includes a set of measures to conduct a comprehensive examination of an investment agreement within the framework of making a decision on effective capital investment, which involves significant economic risks. In the submission of Savovic and Pokrajc (2017), the need for due diligence is due primarily to the fact that in today's market relations, the requirements of investors, banking institutions, and buyers are increased to the transparency of information about the object of investment, lending or purchase.

Due diligence as a research tool allows you to get a realistic assessment of your business, to determine the financial position and business development trends, as a result of obtaining information that will have a qualitative impact on effective management decisions (Silichieva, 2011).The procedure of due diligence will help to create a complete picture of the actual financial condition of an enterprise and of all the risks that may have a negative impact. Kasych (2015) emphasized that under due diligence, we propose to understand the procedure for carrying out a comprehensive examination of an investment agreement in the framework of making a decision on effective investment of capital by minimizing risks in order to preserve the capital and its potential future increase. The main purpose of due diligence procedure is to provide an investor with a complete picture of the real financial situation of an investment object and minimize the existing risks of transactions when making a decision on investing capital.

In teaching and learning, due diligence could be described as the basic steps which will involve inquiry, analysis and evaluation of the peculiarities of learners and materials which will enable a teacher to devise the right or combination of teaching strategies for mastery learning and goal achievement. It describes teacher preparation which according to Adekunle (2020) determines the extent of skill acquisition by students. Due diligence in educational process ensures that a teacher, besides gaining mastery of his subject matter, ascertains students level of preparedness, or readiness and attitude. It also ensures that the state of materials for teaching and learning is ascertained. Such knowledge will enable the teacher apply the right teaching skills, method, processes, technologies, and tools, that will correctly address the peculiar learning needs of a student or set of students. Due diligence in education does not assume that teaching strategies should be randomly chosen even though there might have been marked success in their usage. Due diligence search enables a teacher to find out the students disposition and the condition of the environment which will enable such teacher devise a customized teaching strategy that will emphasize critical thinking, flexibility, effective communication, innovation and creativity (Adekunlu, 2020). It enables a teacher understand students' level of knowledge so as to design lessons to suit students' abilities; structure lesson activities to suit students' level of experience; pace instruction to allow students time needed for internalization of learning; know the type of learning aids needed by a particular student or set of students; use visuals like graphic organizers, maps, word webs, drawings, pictures etc and also know how to break concepts for easy understanding (Bagudu & Dibbari, 2020). Due diligence in teaching provides the teacher with a complete picture of the students' actual academic level and minimizes the existing risks of ineffective implementation of curriculum content which results in students' poor academic performance.

Students Academic Performance

Although there has been considerable debate about the determinants of academic performance among educators, policymakers, academics, and other stakeholders, it is generally agreed that the impact of these determinants vary (in terms of extent and direction) in a particular context, for example, culture, institution, course of study, teacher's knowledge or skill and so on.

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However, not all factors are relevant for a particular context. Therefore each situation must be analysed to identify the context-specific determinants for sound decision making that will enable a teacher achieve educational goal.

According to Nchungo (2013) a number of studies have been carried out to identify and analyze the numerous factors that affect the academic performance of students in various centres of learning. The findings identify students' efforts, previous schooling (Siegfried & Fels, 1979; Anderson and Benjamin, 1994); parents' education, family income (Devadoss & Foltz, 1996); self motivation, age of student, learning preferences (Aripin, Mahmood, Rohaizad, Yeop & Anuar, 2008); class attendance and entry qualification (Romer, 1993); prior knowledge, course prerequisites and course combinations (Pashler and Bjork, 2008); poor facilities for learning (Roeser, 1996) as factors that have significant effect on the students' academic performance in various settings. The usefulness of these studies lies on the need to undertake measures that will improve the academic performance of students.

Studies have also shown that poor teaching facilities have profound effect on academic performance. Therefore a teacher engages due diligence on facilities to assess the availability, accessibility, applicability and determine ways to effectively utilize such facilities. In the opinion of Akapan and Eminue (2020) well planned use of facilities facilitates effective teaching and learning process and enhances better learning outcomes of the students.

An effective teacher's action can cover for any other deficiency in learning since the teacher manipulates every other variable to facilitate learning. The teacher as a major component of the curriculum process motivates, facilitates and guides learning. He can handle the limit to which every other factor can mar the achievement of educational objective. In the submission of Ibrahim and John (2020) the teacher has the autonomy to plan, arrange and manage all that are involved in instructional delivery in order to provide opportunity for learning. They further stated that the effect of the teacher's action on the achievement of their students is twice of the effect of other factors.

Strategic Teaching

Strategic teaching is a way of making decisions about a course, an individual class, or even an entire curriculum, beginning with an analysis of key variables in the teaching situation. These variables include the characteristics of the learners, the learning objectives, and the instructional preferences of the teacher. Once these variables have been analyzed, informed decisions can be made about course content, structure, methods of assessment, and other key components (Oyekan in Amiaya and Ovbiagele, 2015). In the light of the above assertion, one can only conclude that strategic teaching is the aftermath of due diligence process. Classroom delivery in business education must involve strategic teaching if the mandate of the programme must be achieved.

Harb and El Shaarawi (2006) stated that, a good match between students' learning preferences and instructor's teaching style has been demonstrated to have positive effect on student's performance. Reid (1995) defines learning preference as a person's "natural, habitual and preferred way" of assimilating new information. This implies that individuals differ in regard to what mode of instruction or study is most effective for them. Scholars, who promote the learning preferences approach to learning, agree that effective instruction can only be undertaken if the learner's learning preferences are diagnosed and the instruction is tailored accordingly (Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer & Bjork, 2008). "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand," (Confucius 551-479 BC) is a quote that provides evidence that, even in early times, there was recognition of the existence of different learning preferences among people. Indeed, Omrod (2008) reports that some students seem to learn better when information is presented

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through words (verbal learners), whereas others seem to learn better when it is presented in the form of pictures (visual learners).

In the light of the above, it is conspicuous that in a class where only one instructional method is employed, there is a strong possibility that a number of students will find the learning environment less optimal and this could affect their academic performance. Felder (1993) established that alignment between students' learning preferences and an instructor's teaching style leads to better recall and understanding. Such effective alignment could only be achieved when a teacher carries out due diligence procedures that will enable him determine the preferred or combination of methods or processes.

In line with that, studies have established a number of methods used to assess the learning preference or styles of students. One of these approaches being used widely is the Visual/Aural/Read and Write/Kinaesthetic (VARKR) questionnaire, pioneered by Neil Fleming in 1987, which categorizes learners into four major learning preference classes. Neil Fleming (2001-2011) described these four major learning preferences as follows: Firstly is a class of visual learners who prefer information to be presented on the whiteboard, flip charts, walls, graphics, pictures, and colour. The creative among them may use different colours and diagrammes in their notebooks. Failure to do this, their academic performance would be poorly affected. Secondly is a class of Aural (or oral) or auditory learners which are students who prefer to sit back and listen. They do not make a lot of notes. More often than not, they find it useful to record lectures for later playbacks and reference. This helps them improve their academic performance. Thirdly is a class of read/write learners who prefer to read the information on their own and take a lot of notes. These learners benefit more when given access to additional relevant information through handouts and guided readings from their teachers or lecturers. Failure to avail to them such facilities may impede their academic performance. The fourth class according to Fleming is the class of Kinaesthetic (or tactile) learners; these kind of learners cannot sit still for long and like to fiddle with things. They prefer to be actively involved in their learning and thus would benefit from active learning strategies in class.

Moreover, students' prior knowledge, course prerequisites and course combinations have profound influence on their academic performance. This is justified by the fact that, learning is a cumulative process, thus a student admitted with matching courses to the career of their choice will be well prepared for the course material compared to a student with a mismatch of course combinations. It is important for teachers to have an idea of how well the courses correspond to each student in order to complement learning. Such an analysis would be helpful in the choice of teaching method and skills to apply. Also important to the teachers are the analysis of the students' attitude to learning and the activities that motivate their learning process.

Business Education Programme

Business education like any other educational programme holds the key to individual and national development. It is a programme targeted at developing in students, life skills for economic success; provide information and communication technology skills; broaden educational opportunities; help students develop skills and attitudes for career success, help learner acquire global business knowledge; encourage creativity and innovation in entrepreneurial thinking (ABEN, 2020). This suggests that the programme is expected to make its recipients resourceful and self-confident. As a vocational course it is expected that its products are equipped to qualify for gainful employment in business and office occupations. In the submission of Amesi and Allison (2020) business education in Nigeria is designed to serve as a platform for producing skilled business teachers, office administrators and business men and women that can effectively compete in the world of work and in enterprises as employees, entrepreneurs and as employers. This explanation corroborates Calhoun and Finch's opinion

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expressed in ABEN (2020) which described Business Education as education that equips the students with skills necessary to perform particular functions in an office and will provide them with the understanding and knowledge needed for conducting personal affairs and for using the services of the business world.

Business education students receive education for (vocational education) and about (consumer education) business by being guided through planned experiences that offer them the opportunity to gain the knowledge, competencies, and attitude not only for them to be successful in business activities but also for success in life generally. The curriculum reflects currency in terms of technology and therefore incorporates information and communication technology courses like database management, information management systems, desktop publishing, ICT office applications, multimedia, webpage design and others. No wonder Umoru (2015) described Business Education as an academic programme which has the aim of equipping the learners with an understanding of value, knowledge, business and technical skills which are required in the world of work and teaching students business related subjects. It is not therefore an overstatement that the programme is designed in a way that it should be able to inculcate core skills, knowledge and values needed for gainful employment and productivity and therefore stands to correct the impression that Nigerian students graduate without core skills, knowledge and values.

Business education has three basic components which are: Accounting, Office and Distributive education and each of these components has been affected by continuous technology innovations. These innovations have brought a paradigm change in everything including classroom delivery of instructions. It therefore calls for innovative teaching where teachers are expected to first examine, analyze the students' preferences, prior knowledge and so on viza viz their teaching methods, skills, strategies, tools, technologies, processes in order to customize the teaching process.

Due Diligence and Instructional Delivery in Business Education

Instructional delivery is the interaction among the student, the teacher, the content, and the knowledge or skills or dispositions for learning and collaboration with others in a diverse society and rapidly changing world. Wokochakelechi and Appah (2020) submit that instructional delivery is the process employed in the transfer of knowledge from the instructor to the learner which involves the use of several strategies and facilities. It involves the interactive skills and activities used by the teacher to promote and enhance learning. Ogwu and Ogwu in Wokochakelechi and Appah (2020) added that instructional strategy facilitates learning in order to bring about change in behaviour which is the aim of education.

Besides the conventional teaching methods which are identified by Nzewi, Okpara and Akudolu (2005) as follows: lecture method, discussion method, project method, discovery method, problem solving method and discovery method; Bagudu and Dibbari (2020) also itemized teaching techniques as counselling approach, focusing on understanding and mutual solving of problem to behaviour modification or ignoring inappropriate and reinforcing appropriate behaviour. Odah also recognised computer aided instruction business plan development instruction, industrial collaboration; teacher guided case analysis instructional strategy and others as customized strategies in business education. Vin-Mbah in Ama, Oko and Eze-Desy (2017) identified the following strategies as appropriate for teaching and learning in Business Education.

Computer Aided Instructional Strategy: The computer aided instructional strategy will enable the students to learn and acquire the knowledge, skills, ability and attitude necessary to function successfully in the global business and economic environments. In the opinion of Adelakin (2009) this is done by integrating the appropriate technology to support practices that link learning objectives and high levels of achievement. Consequently, for this strategy to be effective the

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institution must provide the technological environment, based on the curricular and students must be mindfully engaged in the teaching/learning process.

Concept Mapping Instructional Strategy: Concept mapping is a learning strategy that many students find useful in understanding complex ideas and clarifying ambiguous relationships. According to Ajaja (2009), concept mapping instructional strategy is creating a graphic representation of a topic to help the students visualize the key concepts and organize their knowledge more clearly than other strategies of study. A concept map is a two-dimensional representation of the relationship between key ideas. It shows how we think and suggest affinities and associations that might not otherwise be obvious. At first glance, a concept map looks like a flow chart in which key terms are placed in boxes connected by directional arrows. These boxes and directional arrows are meta-cognitive tools that empower the learner to take charge of learning in a highly organized and meaningful manner. ICT skills with regard to webpage design and e-commerce administration can be enhanced through this strategy.

Industrial Collaboration Instructional Strategy: According to Oduma (2008), industrial collaboration instructional strategy is the means of partnership with other bodies on something for mutual benefit. Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education and industrial collaboration are an effective way of technology transfer and it is of mutual benefit to the school and industry. This strategy can only facilitate instructional delivery where the learning environment is a replica of office environment (Nwosu (2006). He further noted that technologies in learning environment should be the same in the office environment.

Laboratory-Centred Instructional Strategy: Laboratory-centred strategy according to Oduma (2008) connotes that all instructions requiring the acquisitions of skills and use of instructional facilities should, of necessity, be taught in a well-equipped laboratory. A well-equipped laboratory will facilitate teaching and learning of Business Education.

Simulation Instructional Strategy: Simulation instructional strategy in the teaching and learning of Business Education is a role play strategy. Individual acts a part to express his/her own perception of the roles or functions workers perform while discharging their duties. According to Farrant in Vin-Mbah (2012), role-play can be regarded as the experimenting stage of learning where the students tries out his newly acquired knowledge and skills with the activities of people and things. Hence, role-play encourages the student to stimulate creative imagination, provide opportunity for experimentation beyond the real level of development, exercise learning competencies, engage in independent learning and gain experience and express himself freely with confidence. Simulation strategy is fundamental in Business Education because it enables the students to play the role of an office manager, accountant, marketer, teacher and director as if he is in real working environment during teaching-learning process.

Besides analysing students to enable a business teacher apply the right technique, method, strategy in teaching; there are other due diligence strategies that could be applied to make instructional delivery of business education effective. This is in line with the assertion of Bagudu and Dabbari, (2020) that business teachers in order to achieve the objectives of the programme must:

- ✓ Bank time with students
- ✓ Encourage student-led activities
- ✓ Develop caring and supportive relationship with students
- ✓ Encourage students engagement in academic tasks
- ✓ Promote development of students social skills and self-regulation
- ✓ Use appropriate interventions to assist students with behaviour problems

These are necessary because Business Education programme curriculum requires practical demonstration of skills. The programme is skill driven and needs the concentrated use of the hand, brain, and the eye at the same time. Learning in Business Education is critical,

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because it is a skill driven programme that requires the attention of students to understand the gradual process, scientific knowledge and its concepts. It is technologically driven and is expected to put the students in limelight and make them employable in almost every facet of the world of work. It is therefore designed to equip students in various aspects of different fields of endeavour. Learning in Business Education involves problem solving and according to Elom (2016) problem solving learning is a higher order learning process that requires the use of cognitive abilities such as thinking, reasoning and observation (Ama & Azih, 2020)

More so, the target of any educational programme is to use teaching strategies to accomplish defined goal. The way a teacher plans and organizes activities in order to engage students properly is the strategy however such strategy is expected to answer to students needs. Since the usefulness or effectiveness of teaching strategy vary as course contents and students need vary, the strategy used to achieve a particular task or for a particular student or set of students may not necessarily be used to accomplish another task or for another student or set of students. (Abdullahi, 2012)

The position of this paper is that as wonderful as these methods, strategies, skills and techniques are, their application in Business Education must vary in relation to the nature of the student or set of students. A Business Education teacher must therefore be adoptive, assess the needs of learners and be a life learner and researcher who is bent on finding ways of making students study acquisitively, that is studying to retain and not just to receive; studying to possess not just to perceive. Learners must be made to understand concepts, possess them and apply them and not just studying for certification.

Conclusion

The goals of business education cannot be achieved without due diligence on the side of the teachers because the programme is highly dynamic, work focused, skill based, result oriented and technologically driven. Due diligence will enable a teacher establish positive relationship with his students; making students have sense of belongingness characterized by trust, connection and understanding. Positive relationship helps students to stay focused on learning. Due diligence also lends itself as a solution to the age long issue of how best to help learners especially learners in skill-oriented programmes like business education to acquire knowledge, skills and values.

Recommendations

1. Business Education teachers should engage in constant trainings and retraining to enable them make appropriate considerations, analysis and evaluations before choice of methods, skills and strategies with instructional facilities to impart desirable knowledge to student or set of students based on their peculiarity. Continuous professional development (CDP) should be engaged on by the business teacher considering that education industry is dynamic and is experiencing a lot of changes in the last few decades. Such professional training could come in the form of traditional school training or e-learning.
2. Association of Business Educators in Nigeria (ABEN) should weld into this matter of making the teaching of business subjects effective through constant seminars and workshops.
3. The production of the Mandate for Business Education is already a way forward; however it is also recommended that ABEN should sensitize business educators on the need for thorough analysis of students' characteristics and materials available in each setting which will enable such teacher device an effective strategy. This is in line with the assertion in the Mandate of Business Education in Nigeria that 'Business Education

courses are designed to solve the problem of Nigerian students graduating without core skills, knowledge and value needed for gainful employment.

4. Business education teacher should be adoptive, learn to assess needs of learners, advocate for the profession and be a lifelong learner.
5. ABEN should seize the opportunity of social media and group chats to discuss and elaborate on these issues that boarder on effective instructional delivery.

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PERCEIVED PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES NEEDED FOR STUDENTS' ADAPTABILITY BY BUSINESS EDUCATORS IN A NEW NORMAL

[1]ENENDU, CHIMAOBIM IJEOMA
jayenendu@gmail.com

[2]NWOSU-CHUKWUDI EUNICE CHIOMA
Department of Business Education, Faculty of Education
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni
Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract

The study investigated the perceived pedagogical approaches needed by business educators for the adaptability of their students' to a new normal. The study was necessitated by the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were posed to guide the study and one hypothesis was raised and tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study consist of 60 business education lecturers from the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. A purposive sample design was adopted for the study. The instrument for data collection was a researcher's structured questionnaire titled: Perceived Business Educators Pedagogical Approaches Needed for Students' Adaptability Questionnaire (PBEPANSAQ). The instrument was validated by two experts in business education from Rivers State University (RSU). The instrument was subjected to test-retest and the result yielded 82% coefficient index, which revealed that the instrument was reliable. Findings revealed that the emerging 'new normal' should not compromise the quality assurance mechanisms developed over time as Lecturers should be equipped with the necessary skills to aid in quality instruction using modern strategies that aid students' adaptability.

Keywords: *Business Educators; Pedagogy; Approaches; Adaptability; New normal*

Introduction

Change is one element that pervades all aspects of human endeavour and education as a medium of exchange of knowledge, skills and attitudes is not left out in that chain. Wagbara and Ulisan (2021) observed that at the present universities and other institutions of teaching and learning all over the globe are faced with the problem of sharing resources due to pandemic and such situations requires a pragmatic shift from the traditional approach to a newer updated system of instructions. The position of Wagbara and Ulisan (2021), as observed seems not abated, even with the new Delta variant otherwise known as the third wave of the coronavirus which is very dreadful and the human race is concerned about its contagiousness. This has continued to put humankind in fear and has stiffened academic exercise at one time or the other. The ugly situation has necessitated academia opting for possible opportunities (new normal) to explore and turn around pedagogical approaches in a bit to keep steering the wheel of education

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in the right direction. Suffice it to say that the carriage of these approaches is in a new normal with reference to the Covid-19 pandemic; Habibi (2020) defined new normal as a new way of life or a new way of living life activities. New normal could be said to be a current situation, social custom, etc., that is different from what has been experienced or done before but is expected to become usual or typical. Buheji (2020) stated that during the new normal many types of challenges are expected in every sector. This should raise the prospect of inspiration that come as a result of opportunities that come with the challenges, and resilience, as it is a needed spirit for survival during times of change.

Choosing the right teaching method in a Covid-19 pandemic will definitely affect the changes that are expected to occur not only in the students but in the entire process after learning is complete, conversely, the mistakes in choosing and applying appropriate teaching methods will have a negative impact on student achievements (Wagbara, 2019). The effectiveness of learning is very dependent on the learning method or approach used by educators. In achieving good learning outcomes, a teacher needs to know, learn several teaching methods, and practice them when teaching, (Nasution, 2017).

Researchers have proven that educators sometimes are not right in choosing the method for handling students in a learning situation which is one of the determinants of success in teaching and learning (Dolong, 2016). This implies that Business Educators need to consider carefully the selection of teaching methods that are appropriate to the characteristics of students more in particular in this pandemic era. Rogers and Sabarwal (2020) stated that the emergency shift to remote learning requires teachers to learn and possess digital skills to operate technologies and to adapt the teaching-learning materials into a synchronous or asynchronous mode.

Therefore, learning requires the ability of teachers to apply learning methods that are appropriate to the characteristics of their students (Nasution, 2017). It is a fact that the outbreak of Covid-19 calls for a paradigm shift from the traditional methods of teaching and learning to a more digitalized system such that learning can be made easy for both the learner and the teacher without any fear of being infected by the deadly virus, so business educators need to be more proactive in adjusting accordingly to the requirements of the time which is online learning.

Online classes and interaction have been there, although many public institutions haven't fully adapted to its usage due to some inadequacies in their system which do not support online environment opportunities for more engaging practice. For example, a more problem-based curriculum, with students being involved in 'real-life', mentored projects. This develops student creativity, adaptability and very importantly, resilience. Assessment formats and protocols also required creative re-thinking. Teaching business education through digital means during this COVID-19 pandemic had many scholars teaching in unfamiliar situations.

Perhaps a silver lining has been the widespread practice of synchronous instruction, a potential remedy for the connection students and faculty often miss in traditional online classes. The exponential growth of synchronous sessions will likely shape a "new normal" for online learning, long after the pandemic has passed. Education pathways that help students explore interests and careers in the process of progressing through school. Academic subject matter taught with relevance to the real world (contextual learning) Employability skills, from job-related skills to workplace ethics.

The ability to adapt is central to coping and problem-solving with adaptability being related to but distinguishable from resilience. Favale, Soro, Trevisan, Drag and Mellia (2020) observed that one of the most significant changes imposed on students is the focus of this article. Specifically, many students who typically engage in face-to-face learning formats have now had to make a sudden transition to online learning. Active learning involves anything that students do in a classroom other than merely passively listening to an instructor's lecture.

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Research shows that active learning improves students' understanding and retention of information and can be very effective in developing higher-order cognitive skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking. Collaborative/cooperative learning is an instructional approach in which students work together in small groups to accomplish a common learning goal. They need to be carefully planned and executed, but they do not require permanently formed groups. Critical thinking, is a collection of mental activities that include the ability to perceive, clarify, reflect, connect, infer, and judge. It brings these activities together and enables the student to question what knowledge exists. Currently, instruction cannot be isolated from technological enhancement whether both online and offline and so it is important that ICT infusion is the core of teaching and learning in the new normal.

Statement of the Problem

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic has placed the entire globe into a near confused state such that the modes of operations of many business concerns have drastically changed. Given the abruptness of the situation, many schools and colleges were forced to close down temporarily as teachers and administrations were unprepared. Due to the fact that it was uncertain to return to the classroom soon and the fear of losing the education industry, there was an immediate need for emergency remote learning systems. This fear called for a digital approach to teaching and learning; what has been experienced or done before but is expected to become usual (New Normal).

It is apparent that online teaching and learning is no longer an option but a necessity. Consequent to the above obvious fact, it becomes expedient for faculty members to adopt this all-important means of teaching and learning as an escape route in a pandemic era. In support of this, Divya and Prakasam (2015) observed that the main goal of e-learning is to meet the needs of the students such as clarifying the doubts about trained teachers' competence in accessing materials required for their academic purpose. Also, Pedro (2009) maintained that extensive improvements have been made in the area of online collaborative learning, constraining teachers to reevaluate how they approach learning, directions, and the conditions made to cultivate these. In the same vein, Selwyn (2010) expressed that sensational advances in instructive innovation have roused incredible new ways for students to learn with a wide range of improvised instructional media and exercises to promote self-study. The juxtaposition of these situations made an exceptionally intriguing test and prospect a command to rethink and re-imagine learning methodologies ready to get ready and exceed the expectations of every person (learners) for long-life learning in particular in this era of social distancing.

Suffice it to say that the business teacher quality is hinged on the content knowledge, the pedagogical knowledge and the pedagogical/content knowledge (Okebukola, 2008). The onus now in this pandemic era lies in the deliverables of the lectures and this put to test the capability of the Business education teachers programme to provide high-quality and relevant training. Furthermore, some scholars have spoken aloud on the unsatisfactory quality of business education and their lecture delivery. Hence this study seeks to establish the perceived business educators' pedagogical approaches needed for students' adaptability to a new normal via the use of the Zoom App and WhatsApp platform.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and guided the study

1. To what extent does the use of the Zoom App instructional approach affect students 'adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-Owned Universities?
2. To what extent does the use of the WhatsApp platform instructional approach affect students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-Owned Universities?

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Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on their perceived effectiveness of the zoom instructional approach on students' adaptability in Rivers State-Owned Universities.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on their perceived effectiveness of the WhatsApp instructional approach on students' adaptability in Rivers State-owned universities.

Method

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design as it involved eliciting a response from the respondents. The population of the study comprised 30 business education lecturers in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions that offer business education, namely Rivers University Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt. Nigeria. The entire population of 30 business education lecturers was studied. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. The instrument is the Perceived Business Educators Pedagogical Approaches Needed for Students' Adaptability Questionnaire (**PBEPANSAQ**).''.

Copies of the instrument were given to one expert in Computer Science, one in business education and one in science education for face and content validity. The instrument was divided into two parts part "A" focused on the participant's personal data, while part "B" contained 20 items covering the research questions. Part B was designed on a 4-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE – 4 Points), High Extent (HE – 3 Points), Moderate Extent (ME – 2 Points) and Low Extent (LE – 1 Point) respectively. The administration recorded a 100% response rate as all respondents responded accordingly. The data collected to answer the research questions were analyzed using mean rating and standard deviation. A mean rating of 2.50 was used for the decision regarding the research question. This was calculated based on the 4point rating interval used in the study. Items with mean values of 2.50 and above were considered a high extent, while items with mean values below 2.50 were considered a low extent. The hypotheses were tested using t-test inferential statistics at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1:To what extent does the use of the Zoom App instructional approach affect students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-Owned Universities?

S/No	Zoom Instructional Approach	x	SD	Decision
1.	Students had no problem switching to zoom classes	1.73	0.91	Low extent
2.	Zoom application media is popular with my students	3.07	0.94	High Extent
3.	Zoom classes aid collaboration among my students	2.03	1.07	Low Extent
4.	My students feel classes are planned better on zoom than other teaching tools/ applications	1.23	0.57	Low Extent
5.	Lecture sessions seemed fluid due to ease of operation on both audio and video meetings	1.93	0.74	Low Extent
6.	Zoom serves as the easiest and fastest medium to cater information in this time of a pandemic	2.73	0 .74	High Extent

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7.	Students can freely use the zoom apps and learn how to solve at the same.	3.07	1.17	High Extent
8.	My students had to undergo zoom training on areas that are relevant to business education to be able to attend classes	1.90	1.55	Low Extent
9.	Zoom aids the incorporating of both Synchronous and Asynchronous learning method	1.47	0 .73	Low Extent

Following the results in the table above, it shows that the various items responses were more to a low extent and showed inconsistency in the results received. The mean scores varied from below 2.5 and above 2.5 which represents an outcome of low to a high extent. The standard deviation also varied highly as seen in the table above (between 0.5 and 1.5). This, therefore, shows that most business educators perceive that the zoom instructional approach affects students' adaptability to the new normal to a low extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does the use of the WhatsApp platform instructional approach affect students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-Owned Universities?

S/No	WhatsApp Instructional Approach	x	SD	Decision
11.	Students can easily refer to past lecture notes on Whatsapp better than other applications	2.73	1.08	High Extent
12.	delivery mode via WhatsApp seems a lot easier for my students to deal with	3.37	0.89	High Extent
13.	Using the WhatsApp lecture medium shows that my students are well equipped for the 21st century pedagogy	3.50	0.73	High Extent
14.	Students were conversant with the WhatsApp lectures	2.67	1.09	High Extent
15.	WhatsApp enabled students to connect with any device from anywhere via audio/video	3.80	0.48	High Extent
16.	WhatsApp is the most accessible way of delivering			
17.	lessons to learners	3.53	0.78	High Extent
18.	Ease of access made WhatsApp a better option for lectures for my students	3.50	0.90	High Extent
19.	WhatsApp aids Team building and idea sharing in business education classrooms	3.03	1.16	High Extent
20.	I find it easier to share messages and cite case studies via WhatsApp in an interesting way.	3.23	1.19	High Extent
21.	Attendance on WhatsApp classes is more impressive than other apps	3.40	0.67	High Extent

Following the result in the table above, it is revealed that the respondent's responses are undivided as they all agree to a high and very high extent. This is seen in the mean scores which Are all above 2.50. This was also indicated in the results of the standard deviation which ranged from 0.7 to 1.19. This, therefore, suggests that the business educators perceive that WhatsApp instructional approach affects students' adaptability to the new normal to a very high extent.

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Hypotheses One: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on their perceived influence of the zoom instructional approach in the new normal in Rivers State-Owned Universities.

Table 3: T-test Analysis of the business educators on their perceived influence of zoom instructional approach on students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-Owned Universities.

Institution	N	Mean	S.D	Difference	df	t-value	p-value
IAUE	10	20.70	2.45	0.75	28	-0.64	0.53
RSU	20	21.45	3.27				

As presented in Table 3 above, a t-test analysis was carried out to determine if there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on their perceived influence of the Zoom instructional approach on students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-owned universities. The result of the table was df *(28) = -0.64*, *p > 0.05*. This result is not significant as the p-value of 0.53 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance This suggests that the respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the perceived influence of the zoom instructional approach on students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers state-owned universities.

Hypotheses Two: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on their perceived influence of the WhatsApp instructional approach in the new normal in Rivers State-owned universities.

Table 4.0: T-test Analysis of the business educators on their perceived influence of WhatsApp instructional approach on students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-Owned Universities

Institution	N	Mean	S.D	Difference	df	t-value	p-value
IAUE	10	32.10	4.25	1.00	28	-0.87	0.39
RSU	20	33.10	2.10				

As presented in Table 4 above, a t-test analysis was carried out to determine if there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on their perceived influence of the WhatsApp instructional approach on students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-owned universities. The result of the table was df *(28) = -0.87*, *p > 0.05*. This result is not significant as the p-value of 0.39 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance This suggests that the respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the perceived influence of the WhatsApp instructional approach on students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers state-owned universities.

Discussion of Findings

The result of research question one revealed that the zoom application serves as the easiest and fastest medium to cater for information in this pandemic era and also allowed students to learn and solve at the same time. The results also showed that the zoom application is popular with the students. This finding aligns with the results in Ogwunte (2020) which revealed that zoom cloud technology has positively influenced instructional delivery in business education programs in Universities in Rivers State. Also, the results revealed that the zoom application does not affect students' adaptability to the new normal. This is in support of Wang

and Hall (2018) who indicated that students liked the flexibility and convenience of attending lessons via Zoom at remote sites.

The result of research question two revealed that the WhatsApp application affected students' adaptability to a high extent. The findings of this study corroborate with the results of Ogwunte (2020) that cloud technology have positively influenced instructional delivery in business education program in Universities in Rivers State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is therefore concluded that both the zoom and WhatsApp instructional approaches affect students' adaptability to the new normal and therefore impact the business education classroom in a pandemic era to a high and fairly high extent in Rivers State-owned Universities. The findings of this study also indicated that students were not fully satisfied to some extent with the use of the zoom application learning approach as they were with the WhatsApp approach during this transition period as perceived by the instructors.

Recommendations

Since the online pedagogical teaching approaches have been found to aid students' adaptability to the new normal, it is therefore recommended that

1. Higher Education administrators should adopt and regularly organize computer literacy programs to allow for improved technological involvement of lecturers and students in order to be abreast with the different learning ICT platforms.
2. Business educators should constantly find innovative ways through the electronic platform to engage students in assignments, projects and discussions that could enhance learning in this pandemic era and not only rely on the traditional mode of teaching.

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BUSINESS EDUCATOR'S STRATEGIES FOR ACQUISITION OF DIGITAL SKILLS AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES FOR SELF RELIANCE IN A CHANGING WORLD

[1]AKITI Ndidi
Phone No: 08037863848
Email: nemmanuelakiti@gmail.com

ONYEMAH, LIZZY NKEM
Phone No: 08037910623
Email: onyemahlizzy@yahoo.com

Department of Office Technology and Management Education,
School of Secondary Education (Business)
Federal College of Education (Technical),
Asaba, Delta State.

Abstract

This study examined business educator's strategies for acquisition of digital skills among Business Education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world. Two research questions and hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The area of the study was Delta State. The population of the study comprised 113 Business educators in three (3) Colleges of Education in Delta State. Since the population was sizeable, there was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by two experts. Spearman's rank order correlation was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78. The researchers with the help of two research assistants administered 113 copies of the instrument and retrieved 108 copies. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency distribution, mean scores and standard deviation while the T-test statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study reveals that business educators posses the digital communication skills such ability to to use email, internet, projector among other. The study further reveals that business educators employ problem solving strategies that will enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world. The study recommended among other things that business educators should create an enabling environment that will ensure the use of innovative and motivational strategies in enhancing Business Education graduates acquisition of digital skills for self-reliance in a changing world.

Keywords: *Business Education, Strategies, Digital Skill, Self-Reliance, Changing world*

Introduction

The concept of business education has evolved. This is evident in the different definitions offered by various authors and researchers in trying to make clear the meaning of business education. Atakpa (2015) remarked that business education is an embodiment of vocational

knowledge and skills needed for employment and advancement in a broad range of business careers. In other words, business education means education for business or training skills which is required in business offices, clerical occupation, and business policy analysis. In his view, Okoye (2013) extensively defined business education as an education program that orientates students in: the art of business making (marketing), typing and shorthand skills (currently competing with computer appreciation and operation), service delivery, secretarial jobs, stenography, accounts clerking, office information system and management. Igboke in Obiete, Nwazor and Vin-Mbah (2015) on the other hand saw business education as a dynamic field of study geared towards preparing youths and adults for and about business. It is a preparation for a business career when instruction is designed to prepare youths and adults for actual practice in the world of business. On the other hand, education about business involves the preparation of youths and adults for intelligent and effective consumption of economic goods and services offered to society in our free enterprise economy. Business Education which is offered at the Universities and Colleges of Education is concerned mainly with the development of relevant and saleable skills and knowledge that would enable an individual to function effectively in the ever-changing world of work (Onojetah, 2012).

Business education therefore, is a programme designed to equip the learner with viable skills that enable for self-reliance. Ezenwafor, (2016), emphasized that Business Education is a programme of instruction that consists of two parts, namely office education - a programme of vocation for office careers, and general Business Education - a programme which provides the recipients with competencies and skills needed in managing personal business affairs and using the services of the business world. In this era of digitalization, business education students are expected to acquire particularly digital skills and competencies so they will be able to fit into the ever-changing and dynamic digital world (Emesini, 2009). This indicates that business education is innovative and progressive. Digital skills refer to a set of knowledge, competencies, and attitudes that allow an individual to achieve different life goals through digital technologies. Digital skills such as devices and software operation, information and data literacy, digital content creation, safety measures, digital problem solving, among others once acquired and developed by business education, would most likely bring about self-reliance in a changing world as well as the development of the nation's economy. The burden now falls on the shoulders of business educators as facilitators of learning in students to deploy innovative and effective teaching strategies to enhance business education graduates' acquisition of digital skills (Ajisafe, Bolarinwa & Edeh, 2015).

Skill acquisition is a gradual developmental process that requires the individual's cognitive processes to work with his/her physical abilities to learn how to perform business tasks that were previously unfamiliar with. In contemporary times, questions about the effectiveness of teacher strategies on student learning and acquisition of skills have consistently generated considerable interest and attention especially in the particular field of educational research thereby, making research on teaching and learning constantly endeavor to examine the extent to which different teaching strategies can enhance growth in student performance. Therefore, it could be argued that the poor performance of most students in business education programme like other academic programmes, is basically associated to the application of ineffective strategies by business educators to impart knowledge and skills to the students for better performance (Ganyaupfu, 2016). Based on this, knowledge acquired is determined by its impartation and application of various strategies as well as learner's interest.

Teaching strategies are all those methods available to a teacher during the teaching process for communicating ideas, knowledge, skills, attitudes, etc., to the students so that at the end of instruction, the students can behave in the manner stated in the objective for the lesson. There are several teaching strategies in use in classrooms the world over. Some of them in use

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are based on philosophical principles; others are based on psychological principles derived from experiments (Awotua-Efebo in Ohaka, 2014). Be that as it may, while some of these teaching strategies may still be popular and consistent with contemporary society, others have become unpopular, inconsistent, and crude. Thus, crude teaching strategies are those anachronistic, ineffective, and inconsistent instructional patterns or methods used by teachers, trainers, or instructors to deliver ideas or instructions to their target audience. One thing is unequivocal about a crude teaching strategy. A crude teaching strategy sometimes may appear to be adequate and effective depending on the situation leading to its usage or the environment. It does not tend to serve the purpose in which it is meant to serve at all times. Although, crude teaching strategies may appear too simple, not all business educators either prefer to use them or even know how to use them. But despite its inadequacy in our contemporary setting, some business educators still prefer to use them (Ohaka, 2017).

Some of the strategies used by business educators tend to consider students empty vessels to be filled (teacher-centered or lecture method), under the firm direction of the teacher, other strategies regard students as active participants learning through inquiry and problem-solving skills (students-centered), while others said learners are social organisms and learning should be through dialogue and interaction with others (social learning method). The term strategy is a deliberate act of choosing a different set of activities to deliver a unique blend of value. Amesi (2015) pointed out that strategy is all about competitive position, about differentiating oneself in the eyes of the students, about adding value through a combination of relevant activities different from those used by others. In the view of Akpomi (2017) strategy is a combination of the ends (goals) for which the teacher is striving and the goals and objectives by which it is seeking to achieve. Strategy can then be seen to consist of the important actions taken by the teacher which is a necessary key to realize set goals and objectives.

Business educators often use positive and negative reinforcement strategies to motivate students learning and acquisition of digital skills. Positive reinforcements include praise, group activities, and grades, whereas negative reinforcement is another way to strengthen student's behavior through reinforcements that would cause them to escape from an unpleasant situation or a way of preventing something unpleasant from occurring (Slavin, 2018). Within the class of positive reinforcements implemented in the teaching and learning process is praise. Praise on one hand is an expression of admiring words used to appreciate individual performance and appropriate behavior. Praise is the frequent, intermittent, and occasional comments that affect favorable action. It entails recognizing a student's orientation that can answer the need for belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization.

Business educators also make use of audiovisuals aids to motivate students learning outcomes, particularly in skills acquisition. Audio-visual aids according to Adepoju (2018) are tools in the teaching-learning process, used to improve the performance and learning process and more especially to motivate students towards participating actively in-class activities. Different audio-visual aids are being used in the teaching-learning process as a motivational strategy to arouse the students' interest in the learning process. There are various types of audiovisual aids; each aid has its specific functions and its advantages and limitations. The business educator has to know these functions to understand their relevance in the different teaching-learning situations. Adepoju further posited that teaching aids cannot be applied arbitrarily; it has to be applied at the proper place, at the proper time and in the proper manner. Their applicability depends upon their availability and the business educators long term planning. Hence knowledge about instructional aides is a must for every business educator. It is against this background that this study sought to examine business educators' strategies for the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world.

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Statement of the Problem

Functional education involves training youths in such a way that they would be self-reliant while contributing positively to national development. As a result, one of the major concerns of business educationists has been how to make not only teaching and learning more effective but also, how to enhance student's acquisition of digital skills. Unfortunately, the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates is not encouraging due to ineffective teaching strategies employed by business educators in various tertiary institutions. The teaching and learning of business education have been theoretical rather than practical in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Supporting this view, Nwaiwu (2016) reveals that as a result of ineffective instructional strategies, business education students tend to perform poorly in ICT practical courses and most business education graduates are not competent in digital skills. This can negatively affect entrepreneurial ventures since they lack digital skills to run businesses successfully. The problem of the study, therefore, was to examine business educators' strategies for the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine business educator's strategies for the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world. The study specifically sought to;

1. Examine the communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates.
2. find out how effective are the problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What are the communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates?
2. How effective are the problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are stated for this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers on the communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates based on gender.
2. There is no significant relationship in the mean ratings of business education lecturers on the effectiveness of problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates based on location.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design which sought to examine business educator's perceived strategies for acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world. The population of the study comprised 113 business educators in three (3) Colleges of Education in Delta State. Since the population was sizeable, there was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured on a four point rating scale. The numerical value for the scale points include; Strongly Agreed = SA (4 points), Agree = A (3 points), Disagree = D

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(2 points) and Strongly Disagree = (1 point). Any item with mean score less than or equal to 2.49 was considered as disagreed while any item with mean score equal to or more than 2.50 was considered as Agreed. The instrument was validated by two experts from business education department, FCE(T), Asaba. Spearman's rank order correlation was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78. The researcher with the help of two research assistants administered 113 copies of the instrument and retrieved 108 copies which were used for analysis. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency distribution, mean scores and standard deviation while the T-test statistical tool was used to test the two hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What are the communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates?

Table 1: Mean Scores and standard deviation of Responses on the communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates.

S/N	STATEMENTS	$\bar{x}$	SD	REMARK
1.	Ability to use email and instant messenger apps such as Whatsapp and Facebook to help in the individualization of instruction.	2.94	0.94	Agreed
2.	Ability to use CD-ROM, flash drives containing prepared lessons materials for teaching.	3.00	1.04	Agree
3.	Ability to use internet for academic research purposes.	3.45	1.0	Agree
4.	Ability to use computer projector effectively which tend to reduce time wasted by writing on chalkboard.	3.44	1.0	Agree
5.	Ability to use power point package for lecture presentation.	3.32	0.9	Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.23**	**0.98**	**Agree**

Source: Researcher's field survey data, 2021.

Analyses on Table 1 reveal that the mean scores range from 2.94 – 3.45. This indicates that the respondents agreed to the statements in items 1-5. Data in Table 1 further shows that the grand mean for the entire item is 3.23, which falls within the response option of agreed. This indicates that the statements in table 1 are the communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world.

Research Question 2: How effective is the problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates?

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Responses on the effectiveness of problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates.

S/N	STATEMENTS	$\bar{x}$	SD	REMARK
6.	Student centered strategy used by business educators is effective in enhancing the acquisition of digital skill among business education graduates.	3.23	0.6	Agree
7.	Demonstration method used by business educators is effective in enhancing the acquisition of digital skill among business education graduates.	3.53	0.7	Agree
8.	Inquiry and observing strategies used by business educators is effective in enhancing the acquisition of digital skill among business education graduates.	3.90	0.5	Agree
9.	Business education graduates are advised to carry out a real task with actual equipment and other facilities that apply to digital skill acquisition and this is effective in enhancing the acquisition of digital skill among business education graduates.	3.99	0.1	Agree
10.	Regular excursion strategy used by business educators is effective in enhancing student's practical skills acquisition of digital skills.	3.76	0.6	Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.68**	**0.50**	Agree

Source: Researcher's field survey data, 2021.

Analyses on Table 2 reveal that the mean scores range from 3.23 – 3.99. This indicates that the respondents agreed to the statements in items 6-10. Data in Table 2 further shows that the grand mean for the entire item is 3.68, which falls within the response option of agreed. This reveals that the strategies employed by business educators that will enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world are effective.

Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers on communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates based on gender.

Table 3: Analysis of t-test on the mean and standard deviation responses of male and female business education lecturers on communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates based on gender.

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	S^2	Df	t.cal	t.crit	α	Remark
Male	79	1.35	0.71	106	0.07	1.98	.05	**Retain Ho**
Female	31	1.34	0.60					

From the t-test table, since t-cal (0.07) < t-crit (1.98), we retain Ho. The null hypothesis is hereby retained that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers on communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates based on gender.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship in the mean ratings of business education lecturers on the problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates based on location.

Table 4: Analysis of t-test on the mean and standard deviation responses of business education lecturers on the effectiveness of the problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates.

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	S^2	Df	t.cal	t.crit	α	Remark
Urban	103	1.35	0.71	106	0.03	1.98	.05	**Retain Ho**
Rural	5	1.34	0.60					

From the t-test table, since t-cal (0.03) < t-crit (1.98), we retain Ho. The null hypothesis is hereby retained that there is no significant relationship in the mean ratings of business education lecturers on the problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates based on location.

Discussion

Research question 1 sought to ascertain the communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates. The findings of the study reveal that business educators possess the ability to use email and instant messenger apps such as Whatsapp and Facebook to help in the individualization of instructions; make use CD-ROM, flash drives containing prepared lessons materials for teaching; use internet facilities such as modern for academic research purposes; use computer projector effectively which tend to reduce time wasted by writing on chalkboard; and they also make use of power point packages for lecture presentation.

Research question 2 revealed that the problem solving strategies used by business educators which will enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates are effective. This is true because student centered strategy, demonstration method, inquiry and observing strategies, regular excursion as well as encouraging students to carry out a real task with actual equipment and other facilities that apply to digital skill acquisition is effective in enhancing the acquisition of digital skill among business education graduates.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to determine business educator's perceived strategies for acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world. Digital technology is an indispensable tool that could enhance effective teaching and learning in Business Education programme. Therefore, it is important that all business educators and students should be acquainted with relevant skills and competencies that digital technology provides to the recipient. The study concludes that business educators employ problem solving strategies that will enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world and they also possess the ability to make use of digital communication tools.

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Recommendations

The following recommendations are made from the findings of the study.

- The Federal and State Governments should make adequate budgetary allocation for the provision of digital communication facilities such as hardware, software, internet and projectors in the Colleges of Education for the improvement of teaching process.
- Business educators should create an enabling environment that will ensure the use of innovative and motivational strategies in enhancing Business Education graduates acquisition of digital skills for self-reliance in a changing world.
- Business educators in colleges of education and other tertiary institutions should be given the lucrative opportunity to be armed with more effective contemporary teaching strategies through regular conferences, workshops, seminars, lectures and symposium. This will enable them to be more knowledgeable and at home with those innovative and effective strategies that are potent enough to improve business education students acquisition of digital skills.

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INVESTIGATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND CHALLENGES CONFRONTING BUSINESS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

[1]MUHAMMED MODIBBO BUBA (PhD)
[2]SARKI RHODA AWAK (PhD), BARKINDO MARYAM HUSSAINA
Vocational Education Department,
Modibbo Adama University, Yola.
Adamawa State, Nigeria, mnbuba2020@gmail.com.
08032233004 and 08027344461.

[3]ZAILANI AHMED
Department of General Studies Education, School of Education,
Federal College of Education Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria.

Abstract

The primary objective of the study was aimed to investigate the contributions and challenges confronting business education for sustainable national development in Nigeria. The study had two specific objectives from where two research questions were raised. The study adopted descriptive survey design and the population constitutes 60 business educators which were drawn from two universities and three colleges of education in Adamawa and Bauchi States, ,Nigeria. There was no sample since the population size was small and manageable. The instrument for data collection was 30 items structured questionnaire titled: Contributions and Challenges Confronting Business Education for Sustainable National Development Questionnaire (CCCBESNDQ) and was validated by two experts from the Department of Vocational Education, Faculty of Education, Modibbo Adama University, Yola and one expert from Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Faculty' of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. In order to determine the reliability, the instrument was administered to 20 business educators, who were not part of the research study. Their responses were analyzed using the Cronbach alpha method, which yielded the coefficient alpha value of 0.77. The instrument was further administered to respondents by the researchers, with the help of two trained research assistants. The major findings of the research include the following: Business education contribute positively in promoting and sustaining national development in Nigeria, business education is confronted with many challenges in achieving a sustainable national development in Nigeria and adequate provisions of facilities and proper funding are among the major possible solutions for overcoming the challenges confronting business education in promoting sustainable national development in Nigeria. It was concluded that business education contributes tremendously in promoting a sustainable national development in Nigeria. Despite the contributions of the programme it is however confronted with many challenges in achieving sustainable national development in Nigeria. In line with the findings and conclusion, the study recommended among others that business educators should intensified their efforts in educating people and government on the contributions of business education in developing human capacity in Nigeria through seminars, workshops, national/international conferences among others.

Key Word: Contributions, Challenges, Business Education and Sustainable National Development.

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Introduction

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is commonly understood as education that encourages changes in knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to enable a more sustainable and just society for all. ESD aims to empower and equip current and future generations to meet their needs using a balanced and integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The concept of ESD was born from the need for education to address the growing environmental challenges facing the planet. In order to do this, education must change to provide the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower learners to contribute to sustainable development. At the same time, education must be strengthened in all agendas, programmes and activities that promote sustainable development. In short, sustainable development must be integrated into education and education must be integrated into sustainable development. ESD is holistic and transformational education and concerns learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment (UNESCO, 2014).

With regards to learning content such as curricula, the complex sustainability challenges facing societies cut across boundaries and multiple thematic areas. Education must therefore address key issues such as climate change, poverty and sustainable production. ESD promotes the integration of these critical sustainability issues in local and global contexts into the curriculum to prepare learners to understand and respond to the changing world. ESD aims to produce learning outcomes that include core competencies such as critical and systemic thinking, collaborative decision-making, and taking responsibility for present and future generations. In order to deliver such diverse and evolving issues, ESD uses innovative pedagogy, encouraging teaching and learning in an interactive, learner-centered way that enables exploratory, action oriented and transformative learning. Business education enables learners to think critically and systematically develop values and attitudes for a sustainable future.

Business Education is an integral part of vocational and technical education. It is a form of vocational education that enables the students or the learners the opportunities to be self-reliant. Amoor (2015), noted that business education plays a significant role in the economic development by providing knowledge and skills to the learners thereby enabling them to adequately impart knowledge into others, and handle sophisticated office technologies and information systems. The goal of business education is primarily to produce competent, skillful and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work (Odunaike & Amoda, 2008).

Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) had stipulated that the actual goals of business education shall be to:

1. Prepare students for specific career in office occupations;
2. Equip students with the requisite skills for job creation and entrepreneurship; and
3. Expose students with knowledge about business, including a good blend of computer technology, which incorporates Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

The contributions of business education for sustainable national development are tremendous. This is because the programme helps in providing basic foundation upon which the students build an awareness and understanding of business concept (Modibbo, 2019). Nzekwe (2010) suggested that business education is an enterprise of education directed at the study and research in the field of business. It is the sum total of knowledge, skill, attitude that are required for the successful promotion and administering of business enterprise (Ango, 2016). It is also a branch of vocational education that provides the students with information and competences which are needed in managing private business and working in public office (Iwu, 2016). Business education prepares students for entering into and/or advancement in job within business and prepares them to handle their own business affairs and function intelligently

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(Akhere, 2013). Business education strives to achieve the three inter-related domains of the taxonomy of education objectives namely; cognitive, psycho-motor and affective domains. These domains develop individual's intellect, enable individuals acquire vocational skills and work habit (Bloom, 2009). Richard and Eric in Nzekwe (2010) stated that the objectives of business education include; provision of manpower, possession of the requisite knowledge and skills for harnessing other resources and bringing them into cooperative relationship, turning out the right caliber of workforce in the business and entrepreneurial ability for positions in various sectors of the economy, educating individuals for and about business, provide desired sound growth for the firm and its profits etc. Thus, business education standard is based on a vision and set of competences designed to prepare students to become knowledgeable and ethical decision makers as they fulfill their roles as consumers, workers and citizens (National Standard for business education, 2013).

Development of every nation depends largely on the successful performance of business education. Nwobi (2007) viewed development as a process of sustaining total structural transformation and modernization of the socio economic environment of a country. According to Tadaro and Smith (2013) development must be conceived as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, positive attitudes, acceleration of economic growth, reduction of in equality and the eradication of poverty. Development in its sense must represent the whole gamut of change by which an entire social system turns to the diverse basic needs.

National development therefore is defined as a process of integrating all sectors of the economy into development for increased production, improve standard of living, employment, modernization of technology, industrialization etc. Ofe (2005) observed that national development encompasses all the aspect of national life which includes the social, political, religions and ideological citizens and government. Economic development according to Molokwu and Molokwu (1999) is a process whereby the real per capita income of a country increases over a long period of time provided an absolute poverty line does not increase and that the distribution of income does not become more equal. To balance development in any nation there is great need for business education. Schweitzer (2006) was of the opinion that business education equips individuals with tools and techniques of successful handling of various businesses and contributing to global economy. Tominsion (2006) and Schwertze (2006) outlined the followings as the functions of Business Education; development of mental and physical skill of an individual's, provision of goods and services, information acquisition etc. Hallak in Nzekwe (2010) also included ecological development, socio cultural change; improve nutrition and health, individual creativity etc. These functions lead to national development. Oziengbe (2009) suggested self-employment, technological improvement high standard of living, self-reliance, consumer economic efficiency, man-power skill development and so on as benefits of business education.

Despite all these benefits of business education, the programme continually faces a lot of challenges confronting it effectiveness in the society such as: problem of unemployment, poor condition of service, poor planning and implementation, poor government appreciation, poor curriculum content, non-functional libraries, epileptic power supply and so on. Moses (2014) identified the challenges of business education which include; lack of adequate qualified and committed personnel, high rate of teacher turns over, poor condition of services, lack of adequate funds, poor planning and implementation, poor government appreciation of programme of the study, poor curriculum content etc. In addition to above, inadequate provision of financial resources has been identified as greatest challenge facing education in Nigeria (Asiyai, 2015). However, in view of the contending demands for financial resources by various sectors of the Nigerian economy, business education has been finding it difficult to employ manpower in terms of quality and quantity, develop or renew curriculum, and offer a wide-range of modern

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infrastructure and facilities, such as the state-of-the-art lecture halls, workshops, studios ,libraries, entrepreneurial research centres, and Information Technology (IT) services.

The existence of all these identified issues and challenges are mere pointer to the fact that business education programme is currently delivered theoretically, and as such not capable of equipping recipients with the requisite attributes (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) for gainful employment and further education. Commenting on this unpleasant situation, Obunadike (2015) argued that the practical courses that are supposed to expose individual students to real-practical training in order to strike a balance with or match the theory learnt in the classroom have become a myriad.

Business education is also faced with the problem of inadequate provision of infrastructural facilities. Presently, in virtually all institutions involved in the teaching of business education, there is an acute shortage of laboratories, libraries, studios and entrepreneurship research centres. In support of this, Aworanti (2015) observed that the basic infrastructural facilities have declined both in quality and quantity. Even where these infrastructural facilities are available, they are not only in bad and non-functional state but also very obsolete. According to Abassah (2011), the federal and state governments have not been providing proper financial resources to address this critical area. Abassah claim that all we are getting is just lip-service to vocational education. Abassah also lamented that even when the teachers are ready to improvise instructional materials, the little amount of funds needed could still not be received from the school authorities. This situation has hindered the proper application of instructional delivery of business education. In spite of all the aforementioned challenges, adequate provision of teaching and learning facilities would motivate both the lecturers and students to achieve the goals of business education.

Oziengbe (2009) Suggested solutions of handling Business Education challenges include: provision of instructional materials and enlightenment campaign, provision of information communication technology (ICT) facilities to Business Education department, encouraging of Federal Teacher Training Program to enable Business Education teachers further their studies and so on. The World Bank Policy paper on Business Education (2019) also suggested that to get the maximum benefit of national development from Business Education certain factors must be considered: well-timed modern courses linked and global demand, relevant and up-to-date Business Education Courses need to be developed and proper justification in respect of individual country that at which level of schooling is best in offering Business Education courses and wider range of Business Education courses need to be developed terms of demand and cost effective (not only for offering various courses but also for duration of the courses for student classification in terms of their merit, ages, job market etc.).

Aworanti (2015) also suggested some basic solutions to the challenges confronting business education in Nigeria to include: adequate provision of funds at all levels of education, reviewing the curriculum from time to time to reflect the current trend in the society, business educators should strive hard to gain public interest. This issue seems to have contributed to limitation faced by business education today. Others are adequate provision of qualified manpower in teaching the course and adequate provision of modern facilities for teaching and learning.

It is on the basis of this background that the study seeks to investigate the contributions and challenges confronting business education for sustainable national development in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Despite of the laudable contributions of business education in promoting national development in Nigeria, the programme continued to suffer many challenges. As observed by Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) that the inadequate optimization of resources for the effective

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delivery of business education in Nigeria is receiving a growing attention. This is because vocational education in general has been considered as a viable programme that helps to promote sustainable economic growth and development (Agrawal, 2013). It is believed that for any nation to help in promoting sustainable economic growth or development, effort shall be made to invest sufficient amount of financial resources on business education programme. Nigeria is characterized with abject poverty, poor standard of living, mal-nutrition, sickness and diseases, poor infrastructure, unemployment, poor technology etc. The government, public organization and other private bodies have made tremendous effort to tackle these problems but the impact is not yet felt. Fortunately, many Vocational and Technical Education Institutions were established to help alleviates these problems by turning out the right caliber of workforce of both gender with business and entrepreneurial ability and skills for various positions in various sectors for national development. According to Nnabude (2017) Business education helps in creating job opportunities for teeming graduates for national development.

Business education has been constantly starved by proper funding, qualified staff, modern facilities, and quality curriculum, coupled with proper attention. This situation has devalued the image and reputation of business education both in the education and labour market, and has contributed to the high rate of unemployment and poverty among business education graduates. Thus, there were no enough teaching and learning facilities for preparing students to become a job provider not a job seeker and increasing the number of unemployed graduates of business education. The high rate of insecurity has also contributed to the under-development of Nigerian economy such as; terrorist attacks, kidnappings, suicide bombing, high crime rate, vandalism, thuggery, and break down of law and order.

Research Questions

The study was guided by these research questions: -

1. In what ways does business education contribute to promote sustainable national development in Nigeria?
2. What are the challenges confronting business education in achieving sustainable national development in Nigeria?
3. What are the possible solutions for overcoming the challenges confronting business education in promoting sustainable national development in Nigeria?

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey design. It involves structured collection of data using questionnaire from a sizable population (Bryman, cited in Al-Mubaraki and Busler, 2017). The total population of the research study comprised of 60 business educators from two universities and three colleges of education in Adamawa and Bauchi States and there was no sample since the population size was small and manageable. The instrument for data collection was a 30-items structured questionnaire titled: Contributions and Challenges Confronting Business Education for Sustainable National Development Questionnaire (CCCBESNDQ) and was validated by two experts from the Department of Vocational Education, Faculty of Education in Modibbo Adama University, Yola and one expert from Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. In order to determine the reliability, the instrument was administered to 20 business educators, who were not part of the research study. Their responses were analyzed using the Cronbach alpha method, which yielded the coefficient alpha value of 0.77. The instrument was further administered to respondents by the researchers, with the help of two trained research assistants. The questionnaire was retrieved as soon as they were completed. A total number of 60, out of 59 business educators responded to the instrument. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using

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mean and standard deviation statistics. The mean and standard deviation was used to the answer research questions. In the questionnaire, the items were based on 5-Likert scale, and weighed on the following scale: Strongly Agreed (SA) 5 points, Agreed (A) 4 points, Undecided (U) 3 points, Disagreed (D) 2 points, Strongly Disagreed (SD) 1 point (5+4+3+2+1) 15. 15/5 = 3.00. Cut off point for decision rule as to agreed or disagreed. A weighted mean of 3.00 and above was considered as agreed, while a weighted mean of 2.99 and below was regarded as disagreed.

Results

Research Question One: In what ways does business education contribute in promoting sustainable national development in Nigeria?

To answer research question one, the responses obtained from respondents were analysed using mean and standard deviation as shown herein;

Table 1: **Presents the Means and Standard Deviations of Responses on Contributions of Business Education in Promoting Sustainable National Development.**

S/N	Items/Statements	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	Business education helps in providing basic foundation upon which the students build an awareness and understanding of business concept in Nigeria.	4.00	1.00	Agreed
2	Business education helps in developing skills and attitude that are required for the successful promotion and administering of business enterprise in Nigeria.	3.50	0.93	Agreed
3	Business education helps in producing competent businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work in Nigeria.	3.01	0.86	Agreed
4	Business education helps to provide the students with information and competences which are needed in managing private business and working in public office in Nigeria.	3.82	0.97	Agreed
5	Business education helps in provision of manpower and possession of the requisite knowledge for harnessing other resources in Nigeria.	3.87	0.98	Agreed
6	Business education helps in improving the chances of economic development in Nigeria.	3.93	0.99	Agreed
7	Business education helps in improving participation in the economic and cultural roles in the society in Nigeria.	3.55	0.94	Agreed
8	Business education helps in improving participation in the economic and cultural roles in the society in Nigeria.	3.03	0.87	Agreed
9	Business education helps in development of mental and physical skill of an individual's, provision of goods and services in Nigeria.	2.90	0.85	Agreed
10	Business education helps in developing human capacity in Nigeria.	2.58	0.80	Agreed
	Grand Weighted Mean	**3.41**	**0.92**	**Agreed**

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

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Table 1 data revealed the respondents mean rating and standard deviation of the contributions of business education in promoting sustainable national development in Nigeria. The responses of item one to ten in the questionnaire were analysed and the study revealed that business education helps in promoting a sustainable national development in Nigeria. (The grand weighted mean was 3.41, and the SD stood at 0.92).

Research Question Two: What are the challenges confronting business education in achieving sustainable national development in Nigeria?

To answer research question two, the scores collected were summarize in Table 2.

Table 2:Presents the Means and Standard Deviations of Responses on Challenges Confronting Business Education in Promoting Sustainable National Development in Nigeria.

S/N	Items/Statements	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
11	Business education suffers from challenges of proper provision of instructional materials in Nigeria.	3.41	0.92	Agreed
12	Business education suffers from challenges of lack of development of well-timed modern courses linked of local and global demand in Nigeria.	2.65	0.81	Agreed
13	Business education suffers from lack of adequate qualified teachers in our schools in Nigeria.	3.49	0.93	Agreed
14	Business education is not considered as compulsory subjects at lower basic education, upper basic education and secondary schools in Nigeria.	3.73	0.96	Agreed
15	Business education suffers from challenges of poor government appreciation in Nigeria.	3.11	0.88	Agreed
16	Business education suffers from challenges of epileptic power supply in Nigeria.	3.36	0.91	Agreed
17	Business education suffers from challenges of poor curriculum content in Nigeria.	2.92	0.85	Agreed
18	Business education suffers from challenges of non-functional libraries in Nigeria.	3.62	0.95	Agreed
19	Business education suffers from challenges of poor planning in Nigeria.	3.23	0.89	Agreed
20	Business educators in Nigeria suffer from poor condition of service.	3.55	0.94	Agreed
	Grand Weighted Mean	**3.30**	**0.90**	**Agreed**

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 2 data revealed the respondents mean rating and standard deviation of the challenges confronting business education in achieving sustainable national development in Nigeria. The responses of item 11 to 20 in the questionnaire were analysed and the study revealed the major challenges confronting business education in achieving sustainable national development in Nigeria. (The grand weighted mean was 3.30, and the SD stood at 0.90).

Research Question Three: What are the possible solutions for overcoming the challenges confronting business education in promoting sustainable national development in Nigeria?
To answer research question two, the scores collected were summarize in Table 3.

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Table 3: Presents the Means and Standard Deviations of Responses on Possible Solutions for Overcoming the Challenges Confronting Business Education in Promoting Sustainable National Development in Nigeria.

S/N	Items/Statements	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
21	There should be adequate provision of teaching aids and infrastructural facilities to facilitate teaching and learning process in Nigeria.	4.12	1.01	Agreed
22	There should be adequate provision and development of well-timed modern courses linked of local and global demand in Nigeria.	3.97	0.99	Agreed
23	Only professionals and experienced teachers should be employed to teach business education subjects and should be well remunerated and motivated in Nigeria.	4.03	1.00	Agreed
24	Business education should be considered as compulsory subjects at lower basic education, upper basic education and secondary schools in Nigeria.	3.89	0.98	Agreed
25	The government at all levels should introduce vocational teacher's allowances to appreciate the contributions of the few available business educators in Nigeria.	4.11	1.01	Agreed
26	There should adequate provision of uninterrupted power and generators to ensure a steady power supply in all the institutions that offers business education in Nigeria.	3.79	0.97	Agreed
27	The curriculum content of business education should be harmonize and written by business educators in Nigeria.	3.92	0.98	Agreed
28	There should be adequate provision of functional libraries and fully equipped with business education and related disciplined in Nigeria.	3.77	0.98	Agreed
29	Students without academic ability and interest in business education should not be admitted into business education at higher level in Nigeria.	3.18	0.89	Agreed
30	Seminars, conferences, workshop and in-service training should be encouraged and made available to all Business educators at all level of education in Nigeria.	3.84	0.94	Agreed
	Grand Weighted Mean	**3.84**	**0.94**	**Agreed**

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 3 data revealed the respondents mean rating and standard deviation of the possible solutions for overcoming the challenges confronting business education in promoting sustainable national development in Nigeria. The responses of item 21 to 30 in the questionnaire were analysed and the study provided proper and possible solutions for overcoming the challenges confronting business education in promoting sustainable national development in Nigeria. (The grand weighted mean was 3.84, and the SD stood at 0.97).

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Findings of the Study

The study established that:

1. Business education helps in promoting a sustainable national development in Nigeria.
2. Business education is confronted with many challenges in achieving sustainable national development in Nigeria.
3. Adequate provisions of facilities and proper funding are among the major possible solutions for overcoming the challenges confronting business education in promoting sustainable national development in Nigeria

Discussion of Findings

The study determines: the contribution of business education for sustainable national development in Nigeria, the challenges confronting business education programme for sustainable national development in Nigeria and possible solution for overcoming the challenges confronting business education in promoting sustainable national development in Nigeria. In achieving these, the result of the study in table 1 indicated that business education contributes in achieving national development through provisions of basic foundation upon which the students build an awareness and understanding of business concept in Nigeria. This finding agreed with what (Modibbo, 2019) stated that business education is a programme that helps in providing basic foundation upon which the students build an awareness and understanding of business concept. Business education 'helps in developing skills and attitude that are required for the successful promotion and administering of business enterprise in Nigeria. This results synchronized with the viewed of (Ango, 2016) who opined that business education is the sum total of knowledge, skill, attitude that are required for the successful promotion and administering of business enterprise. In same vein, the findings of this study which reveals that business education helps to provide the students with information and competences which are needed in managing private business and working in public office in Nigeria was in conformity with what Iwu (2016) noted on business education as a branch of vocational education that provides the students with information and competences which are needed in managing private business and working in public office.

Business education is confronted with many challenges in achieving sustainable national development in Nigeria as reveled in table 2. The findings are in conformity with what Moses (2014) discovered is his study where he stated that some of the challenges of business education include; lack of adequate qualified and committed personnel, high rate of teacher turn over, poor condition of services, lack of adequate funds, poor planning and implementation, poor government appreciation of programme of the study, poor curriculum content etc. Similarly, the result of the study is in line with what Asiyai (2015) opined that inadequate provision of financial resources has been identified as greatest challenge facing education in Nigeria.

However, there many possible solutions for overcoming the challenges confronting business education in promoting sustainable national development in Nigeria as reveals in table 3 such as adequate provision of teaching aids and infrastructural facilities to facilitate teaching and learning process. This result synchronized with the views of Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) who established that adequate provision of teaching aids and infrastructural facilities enhances students' interest and learning of business education in Nigeria. Coupled with, Aworanti (2015) also suggested some basic solutions in overcoming the major challenges confronting business education in Nigeria to include: adequate provision of funds at all levels of education, reviewing the curriculum from time to time to reflect the current trend in the society, business educators should strive hard to gain public interest. This issue seems to have contributed to limitation faced by business education today, adequate provision of qualified manpower in teaching the course and adequate provision of modern facilities for teaching and learning.

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Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that business education contributes tremendously in promoting a sustainable national development in Nigeria. Despite the contributions of business education, the programme however are confronted with many challenges in achieving sustainable national development in Nigeria such as; inadequate instructional materials, lack of development of well-timed modern courses linked of local and global demand, lack of adequate qualified teachers in our schools, non-functional libraries to mention but few. These can be adequately addressed with adequate provisions of facilities and proper funding are among the major possible solutions for overcoming the challenges confronting business education in promoting sustainable national development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

In line with the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Business educators should intensify their efforts in educating, people and government on the contributions of business education in understanding of business concept, developing skills and attitude that are required for the successful promotion and administering of business enterprise, improving participation in the economic and cultural roles in the society and developing human capacity in Nigeria through seminars, workshops, national/international conferences among others.
2. The government at all levels should provide adequate financial supports in provision of instructional materials, well-timed modern courses linked of local and global demand, employment of only qualified teachers and functional libraries equipped with business education and related disciplined at all levels of education.
3. In other to ensure a sustainable national development in Nigeria, government at all levels of education should introduce vocational teacher's allowances to appreciate the contributions of the few available business educators as well as sponsoring them to attend seminars, conferences, workshops and in service training. These will encourage the few available business educators to update their knowledge and motivate them in putting in their best in achieving the goals of business education in Nigeria.

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