



INNOVATIVE BUSINESS EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study considered Innovative Business Education and Sustainable National Development in Nigeria in view of the global connectedness and challenges which business education graduates are likely to face in their modern workplace. Education is seen as an instrument par excellence for sustainable national development and the quality of any nation's education determines the quality of her citizens. Quality education is a functional education which enables the recipients to be self-sufficient and the type of education that fulfils this objective is Business Education. Business education is a multidimensional skill-based programme that equips the learners with knowledge, skills, attitude, orientation, mindset and competence in order to become useful and knowledgeable citizens who are able to contribute their quotas into the development of their nations. Innovative business education, on the other hand, is the application of modern technological knowledge into both the teaching and performance of business education for sustainable national development which is about meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising greater needs of the future generation extensively entrenched in both SDG 1 and 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations of 'No Poverty' and Quality Education. Adopting a very thorough Literature Reviews and without any formal personal one-on-one research/study, the study concludes that there is need for the 21st Century graduates of Business Education to be able to function competently in digital world of work using the modern technological devices speedily and accurately. The paper concluded that the business world needs well-rounded, visionary and capable human leaders who are ready to tackle the tough social, environmental and business challenges they are likely to face by introducing innovative pedagogical strategies and collaborate with the modern business community for transfer of digital knowledge.

Keywords: *Innovative Business Education, Sustainable Development, Quality Education, Technology.*

Introduction

Education is an instrument par excellence for national development and the quality of a nation's education determines her development which is the quality of the citizens of the country. It is not a gainsaying to say that the quality of citizens of a country depends on the quality of education embraced in that country which the researcher calls a functional education. Business education is a functional education because it is a practical based, skilled-based, dynamic and multidimensional. Business education equips students with understanding about and for business, economics, and entrepreneurship which develops in learners basic skills for the future engagements (Onajite, 2016). It equips learners with the knowledge, skills and tools required to succeed in the world of commerce and entrepreneurship. It is a special education that gives the recipients knowledge, skills, attitude, competencies and orientation about and for business in order to be self-reliant, self-sufficient and build up self-esteem in order to become useful and contribute to the economic development of Nigeria. It is designed to be used in business. It is a basic instrument for economic and national development. Those who major in Business education learn fundamentals of business such as business economics, marketing, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, accounting, information technology, business management, computer applications and soft skills that are required by modern organizations. They also study fundamentals of education such as philosophy of education, psychology of education, economics of education and



educational management. This is to prepare the beneficiaries for certification into teaching, office occupation and entrepreneurship.

Concept of Innovation

Njoku (2022) sees innovation as incremental, radical and revolutionary changes in thinking, products, processes or organization which could be linked to performance and growth through improvement in efficiency, productivity, quality, competitive positioning. Innovation is also viewed as the ability to think differently and out of the box by creating something new or rebranding the existing products or services for sustainable progress. It is the generation and application of new ideas that become skills to produce new products, processes and services that improve economic and social prosperity (Godwin-Maduike, 2018). The issues of globalization and technological development have led to a strengthened emphasis on innovation as a key driver to sustainable economic development. Innovation may not be possible without business educators' awareness, involvement and commitment because Innovators' grooming has to start from their training institutions. Business education recipients are catalysts to development, they are change agents, innovators and creators. Hence, there is need for innovative business education which has to be implemented by overhauling the curriculum of business education and the general education system has to be redirected to Technical and Vocational Education and Training which comprises of Business education. It is very difficult for a nation to prosper without serious attention on Business education and TVET in general. Some researchers from Ancient India stated that we were considered to be most prosperous society not just because of our enormous wealth but because of the high quality of our education (Metha & Sharma, 2012). The technological changes are the results of innovation born out of critical thinking such as Information and Communication Technologies in education which has brought lots of changes into education system in Nigeria.

Innovative Business Education

This is the application of innovative strategies into the teaching of business education with the use of computer and automation devices for integrative learning while producing transformative learning environment. Business educators are to use innovative teaching method which involves the use of digital-based tools or technologies such as technology-driven classroom, cross-curricular connections, smart interactive boards, computer-based assisted instruction, collaborative learning, activity-based learning with laboratories, digitalization in teaching, e-learning, flipped classroom, project based learning (PBL), computer manage instruction (CMI), modelling, simulation and teleconferencing. An innovative business education is vital to breeding of effective and efficient human capital development critical to sustainable development in Nigeria. Key elements of an innovative business education are practical experience, entrepreneurship training, ethical considerations, technological proficiency, global perspective and life-long learning (Ugwuogo, 2017). The business educators' ability to use innovative method for instructional delivery of business education enhances quality performance of the students during and after graduation into digital world of work. New organizations today are digital compliance and the graduates of business education must be compatible in all its ramifications. The followings are the benefits of technologies critical to teaching innovative business education for successful performance of business education graduates:

1. New ICT facilities which allow students and educators to control, manipulate and contribute information to academic environment as interactive books and journals via internet (Oxfam Education Report, 2002).
2. The use of new multimedia technologies and internet for improved quality of instructional delivery in Nigeria and across Africa.
3. It facilitates interaction and collaboration among learners and teachers.
4. It provides opportunity for combination of work and learning simultaneously irrespective of location.
5. It revolutionizes distance learning from just in class to just in time, thus, enhancing easy accessibility to education.
6. It brings flexible user interface because of its attractive and interactive feature.
7. It produces human resources capable of responding to the demands of the new world economy that is supported and driven by ICT.
8. There shall be accessibility, flexibility and collaborative work to the population who might not have the privilege of conventional universities.
9. Encourages business educators to play the role of a midwife in the birth of knowledge rather than a mechanic of knowledge transfer. Students are allowed to actively invent individual meaning from experience (Busson & Cubukcu, 2021).



Characteristics of Innovative Business Educators

- i. Students' engagement: development of 21st century skills such as autonomy, creativity and effective collaboration, active pedagogies, game-based learning, experiential learning and art-based learning.
- ii. Creating personally and professionally transformational learning experiences which are peculiar and unique differentiations.
- iii. Personalization of experiences so that students can maximize their learning according to their own needs. This helps students to have experience, deep reflection, creating and implementing individual professional plans and generating performance data so students can immediately see the results of their digital strategies.
- iv. Integrating environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) topics into their course design.

Challenges to Innovative Business Education in Nigeria

The following are the challenges to Innovative Business Education in Nigeria despite the advantages of the programme:

1. Competent Human Resource: technology is an integral part of business education in this global era. Hence, educators have to continue to update their knowledge so as to be able to teach the ICT subjects.
2. Financial constraints: the use of new technologies is of capital intensive and the financial allocation to education still remain very poor.
3. Infrastructural facilities: there is inadequate provision of ICT devices such as computer hardware and software, multimedia tools for effective instructional delivery of business education as a skill-based course.
4. Unstable power supply: inconsistent power supply in tertiary institutions remains a critical problem as these technologies cannot work without electricity.
5. Rigidity is inability to explore change as a result of critical thinking which is responsible for continuance of the traditional practices in business education.

Sustainable Development

This is a process of meeting the present human needs without compromising the interests of the future generation. Sustainable development is a dynamic concept that encompasses a new vision of business education. Innovative Business education inculcates this mind-set in the students because this course is the bedrock of manpower development and stands to meet the SDG 1. There are seventeen (17) goals of sustainable development and they are all about securing the present needs and preserving the needs of the future generation. Sustainable Development Goal 1 talks about 'No Poverty' while SDG 4 talks about 'Quality Education. This means that quality education produces quality citizens who will contribute to the economic development of the nation and invariably wipes out poverty when there is prosperity, there cannot be poverty. The beneficiaries of Innovative Business Education receive quality education that gives them employability either as executive employees in modern organizations, employers of labour or educators in tertiary institutions. Through the beneficiaries of innovative business education, the Gross National Product (GNP) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will improve tremendously and lead to national prosperity for sustainable development of Nigeria. Business Education plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable development in Nigeria to combat the environmental, social and economic challenges as a positive change driver in these areas:

- ✓ Fostering environmental awareness by educating future leaders on the impact of their decisions on the environment which can be in the development of economic friendliness and sustainable strategies.
- ✓ Encouraging social responsibility through the teaching of the importance of corporate social responsibility. Integration of social and ethical considerations into business practices will help companies to contribute positively to the communities in which they operate, thereby, ensuring inclusive growth and sustainable development.
- ✓ Ethical business practices: business education instils ethical principles in the mind-set of students and as they become entrepreneurs or leaders, the adherence of this training helps them to build trust among their stakeholders, fostering long-term relationships and enhancing the overall reputation of businesses.
- ✓ Entrepreneurship for sustainable solutions: business education helps to nurture a new generation of social entrepreneurs who are driven by a vision of sustainable development.



- ✓ Strengthening Policy Advocacy: business education can equip students with the knowledge and skills to engage in policy advocacy for sustainable development.
- ✓ Encouraging Responsible Consumption and Production: business education teaches students to embrace sustainable consumption patterns. This can lead to reduction in wasteful practices and the adoption of more efficient production methods and ultimately reducing the environmental footprint of businesses.
- ✓ Addressing Economic Inequality: business education emphasizes inclusive economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction which are essential components of sustainable development.
- ✓ Supporting Sustainable Innovation: business education encourages researches on new openings and ideas to improve academic excellence. Graduate students are also advised to generate new ideas and proffer solutions to address foreseeing challenges and create sustainable productions.

Innovative Business Education for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Innovative Business Education for Sustainable Development can be implemented in Nigeria if students are exposed to these strategies:

1. Business education standard has to be raised to reflect the needs of the corporate business environment. In order to achieve this, the educators must be trained and retrained on modern corporate governance practices such as transparency, accountability, legal and regulatory environment, appropriate risk management measures, information flows, responsibility of senior management and the board of directors.
2. Work-based Learning is a must for business education students in order to have a feel of what happens in the corporate world of work. The following are identified specific objectives of work-based learning:
 - Acquiring knowledge or skill related to employment in particular occupations or industries;
 - Providing career exploration and planning;
 - Learning all aspects of an industry;
 - Increasing personal and social competence related to work in general; and
 - Enhancing students' motivation and academic achievement.
3. Application of Online Teaching Method: the integration of information and communication technology in teaching and learning of business education programme cannot be overemphasized. Technologies devices are veritable tools for any successful bottom line and hence, business educators must ensure the proper application of these tools in the instructional delivery of business education courses.
4. Encouraging a growth mind-set which is believing that an ability and intelligence can be developed through effort and learning.
5. Interdisciplinary learning is a means of exploring different disciplines and fields of knowledge through cross-pollination of ideas from various domains and having a ground-breaking business models and products.
6. Design thinking helps students to define problems and generate creative solutions through a human-centered approach.
7. Collaborative learning is an environment where students work in teams, share diverse perspectives and build on each other's ideas by fostering a culture of creativity.

Conclusion

Conclusively, business world needs well-rounded, visionary and capable human leaders who are ready to tackle the tough social, environmental and business challenges they and the entire world are likely to face. This is the more reason the business educators should play a critical role for this sustainable development to be accomplished.

Innovative Business Education is the application of modern technologies into the instructional delivery of business education. This is a shift from traditional method to innovative method of teaching learning process. The current global practice is technological innovations in every ramification of world of work in order to meet up with the requirement of sustainable development goals. Tertiary institutions cannot afford not to integrate the teaching with innovative teaching that will equip the business education graduates with what it takes to compete favourably with their counterparts at the work place. The challenges are enormous and the educators must face them squarely by effectively utilizing these technologies in their instructional delivery.



Recommendations

In view of the discussion above, the following recommendations are given:

1. Instructional delivery in business education should be given with innovative methods utilizing modern technologies so that the objectives of sustainable development in Nigeria can be achieved.
2. There should be regular seminars, workshops, conferences and relevant trainings for business educators in order to equip them well to utilize the technological devices.
3. There should be collaboration with corporate organizations to give technology transfer to business education students for effective and efficient handling of the modern technological tools.
4. There should be adequate financial grants to tertiary institutions to enable them provide relevant ICT technologies and other infrastructural facilities for innovative business education programme.
5. Sustainability principles should be integrated into the curriculum and encourage responsible business practices by shaping the mind-set and behaviour of future business leaders, leading to a more sustainable and inclusive economy for the country.
6. Business educators must shape the leaders that the world need so desperately by creating active and transformative learning experiences that prepare students personally and professionally in order to tackle tough social, environmental and business challenges.

Succinctly therefore, the study recommends that among other things, that: instructional delivery in business education should be given with innovative methods utilizing modern technologies so that the objectives of sustainable development in Nigeria can be achieved. There should be regular seminars, workshops, conferences and relevant trainings for business educators in order to equip them well to utilize the technological devices and that there should be collaboration with corporate organizations to give technology transfer to business education students for effective and efficient handling of the modern technological tools.

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