



## **BUSINESS EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND SKILLS ACQUISITION IN DIGITAL MARKETING ERA**

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### **Abstract**

*It is obvious that Business Education is dynamic in nature and it is quite relevant for successful living, job creation, employability and efficient participation and contribution to the growth of Nigerian economy as well as global economy. In view of this, this paper examines the current business education curriculum goals and objectives and the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It goes further to highlight the importance of the use of internet in facilitating the success of the entire Business Education programme. It also takes a discursive approach in probing into the potency of entrepreneurial skills acquisition in the digital marketing era. The paper concludes that enriching the Business Education curriculum will foster its continued relevance in skills acquisition and efficiency in marketing goods and services. It recommends, amongst others that with increasing emphasis on digitization and more focused attention on the global market, there is need for policy makers to develop the spirit and techniqueness of digital marketing in the youths. Therefore, greater efforts should be channeled towards providing basic training in digital marketing as part of business education curriculum.*

**Keywords:** *Business Education, Internet, Skills acquisition, Digital Marketing, Curriculum*

### **Introduction**

Business has occupied a strategic place in the history of education in Nigeria and the world at large. It is important to national development as it seeks to develop vocational skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for employment and advancement in a business career. There is no gainsaying that the modes, methods of teaching and the areas of occupation of graduates of Business Education in the past cannot be compared to the present. This is attributable to the fact that Business Education is evolving rapidly, most especially in the developed nations of the world, in the areas of innovation, entrepreneurship, and information technology.



Oyedele (2011) advanced a reason for the new directions of the business education, which is that we live in a world where change is constant and learning never stops. This thus calls for the need to look at what changes have happened so far in Business Education especially in the developed nations of the world. This will significantly motivate developing nations to seek inspiration from the developed nations and follow their steps in moving their economies forward.

Otteweill and Macfarlane (2003) stated that Nigeria has witnessed a lot of developments which have great impact on business education. These developments they stated, are in the areas of curriculum trends, rapid industrialization, and urbanization, economic forces-both national and international, new methodologies in the classrooms and offices, and government influences. Okoli (2013) sees Business Education as an important part of the general education which emphasizes skills and competency acquisition. It is a programme of study which encompasses education for office, occupations, business teaching administration and economic understanding. Abdulkadir (2011) added that one remarkable and important characteristic of business education programme is that its products can function independently as self employed and employers of labour.

It is believed that the country's economic and social development can be accelerated through curriculum development. Curriculum experts and other specialists should therefore, work hand in hand with law-makers and other stakeholders for curriculum improvement. Curriculum development matters a lot in setting the direction of change in an organization, not only at the micro but also at macro levels. As long as the goals and objectives of curriculum development are clear, in the planner's mind, cutting edge achievements in various concerns can be realized (Alvoir, 2014).

It is in the light of the above views that this paper seeks to examine the concept of business Education Curriculum and skills acquisition in digital marketing era by discussing in details these sub-topics under them, namely: Current business education curriculum and the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century; the goals and objectives of business education; the importance of the use of internet in facilitating success of the entire business education programme; potency of entrepreneurship skills acquisition in the digital marketing era; among others. The world has gone digital. It has been reduced to a "global village" where jobs abound and are accessible to any and all who possess the requisite skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century labour market. If business education graduates in Nigeria must avail themselves of these job opportunities, it is imperative to, as a matter of urgency, enrich the business education curriculum and improve the delivery system (Aquah, 2009).

### **Business Education as a Concept**

Business education is a broad and comprehensive discipline whose instructional programme comprises the knowledge, attitude and skills needed by



all citizens in order to effectively manage their personal business and the economic system. Business education also fosters the acquisition of general or basic knowledge and understanding of business, essential for all persons regardless of age, occupation, profession, social or economic status. At the tertiary level, the term Business Education is sometimes considered as synonymous with education in the broad areas of business administration in which the objective is primarily preparatory for professional careers in the management and administration of business enterprises. Business education is also used to designate the preparation of teachers of business and economics both at the secondary and tertiary levels of education (Aquah, 2009).

Business Education is an aspect of vocational education which has been existing for a very long time in the history of mankind. The acquisition of skills in most trades was not automatic; on the other hand, entry into each guild was highly controlled by the members from the knowledge of trade or craft originated and by initiated members. The only option available to anyone who wanted to learn any craft or trade was to undergo a period of training or apprenticeship. This roughly marked the beginning of vocational education which Business Education fall under. The roles performed by a business educator is so encompassing that the society cannot do without them if truly such society will achieve greatness in training and entrepreneurship of such.

Business Education is also viewed as a course that offers knowledge and competencies required for entering into business occupations of all sorts and prospering in them. Business education, which encompasses several disciplines, enables people to think, speak and behave in ways that support the growth, efficiency and effectiveness of an organization or several organizations (Sulyman & Philo, 2014).

Sam and Joe (2000), see business education as a process of instructing a person on what happens during business transactions in offices, banks, markets and anywhere money changes hands. They further categorize business education into two main components called, "education for business and education about business." In 2004, Osuala gave a definition of business education as a programme of instruction which consists of two parts (1) office education a vocational programme of office careers through initial, refresher and upgrading education and (2) 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. Njoku (2006) gave another definition of business education as an educational programme that equips an individual with functional and suitable skills, knowledge, attitude and value that would enable him/her operate in the environment he/she finds himself/herself.

It can be seen from the foregoing discussions that as the years go by, the definitions of Business education continue to change. This means Business Education is not static. Any worthwhile programme has to move with time.



Indeed, business educators have always accepted that change is a fact of life. From the typewriter to the transistor, business curriculum has continually reshaped itself to meet the needs of business. As a result, the success and survival of business education constantly depends on its ability to adapt and keep pace with the needs of its recipients. These changes present challenges for both the learner and the instructor. Nevertheless, it is the business educator that must be willing to adapt and manage these changes to ensure successful programmes for the future. It is essential that Business Education be a useful and vital component of transformation agenda if the curriculum of business programmes across the country and globe is to continue to meet the needs of its students.

### **Concept of Curriculum**

The word curriculum comes from the Latin word, “Currus” connoting, a “run way” or “running a course”. It is a course of study in schools and colleges. A curriculum is a document which comprises the goals and objectives of a particular course of study, the subject matter, or content, the learning, the learning experiences and evaluation. Also, any comprehensive curriculum usually spells out the materials/resources required to enhance teaching and learning. To this effect, a dynamic curriculum must have definite and dynamic objectives, must be flexible and must have built into the process constant evaluation (Aquah 2014).

It therefore becomes imperative to examine the goals of Business Education in Nigeria. The objectives of Business Education cannot be over-emphasized as business education is generally borne out of the needs of industry, commerce and society. In addition, it is career oriented and aims at preparing people for gainful employment.

### **Goals and Objectives of Business Education Curriculum**

The philosophy of the Business education curriculum include: To lay a foundation and/ or build on the foundation at NCE level in the pedagogy education system; to equip the learner with saleable skills, i.e. skills which will enable them acquire, sustain and grow in their jobs; and to create jobs, be self-employed and be employers of labour, become better and wiser consumers of goods and services. Business education also seeks too prepare the individuals for higher studies in Business Education.

Business Education objectives are designed to direct students’ preparations to be skilled in Pedagogy in Business education; principles and practice of Accounting, Management; marketing; and information and communication technology (ICT); curriculum design and evaluation in business education. Business education also seeks to impart knowledge and skills on development of instructional materials for business education; and supervision and administration of the business education programme in secondary schools.



Thus, at the end of the programme of study the careers are expected to acquire the basic knowledge and skills of business education, relate the knowledge and skills acquired to national development, develop basic skills in office occupations, provide the needed background for teaching business subjects, prepare students for further training/studies and provide orientation for starting a career.

For business education to provide the individual the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to take up readily available jobs or openings in the global job market, it becomes imperative that our educational system must function optimally and the curriculum must encompass the most current topics that will provide the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable the individuals avail themselves with the job openings and opportunities in the global market (Aguah, 2014).

### **Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Emerging Global Issues**

In this global age, it is not sufficient to be knowledgeable in just any one discipline or profession. What matters today is knowledge about a variety of issues and problems or challenges plaguing mankind today. These issues have great negative impact on the society. The issues do not emerge in isolation as they are usually inter-related. They emerge gradually and end up into states of emergency or knowledge explosion. These include: diseases, all kinds of economic down-turns, unemployment, Poverty, climate change, political affairs, environment pollution or disasters, population/family life issue, reproductive health issues, gender issues, STD/HIV/AIDS education, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, global warming and a host of others. The question then arises as to how one could as expert business educators, enrich our business education curriculum to offer solution to these ever challenging global issues. Thus, it is imperative that the curriculum we offer must ensure satisfactory output/results that can function effectively in the global market and that will meet the current global needs. This calls for enriching the Business Education Curriculum.

### **Enriching the Business Education Curriculum**

It is of note that Business education prepares individuals for initial office or selling jobs, and for managing of individually owned controlled and operated business enterprises. It also provides general knowledge and understanding for all persons regardless of age, occupations, professions, social or economic status. The curriculum offerings, especially at the tertiary levels cater for some of the requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills. This is achieved through core and elective courses taken in other departments such as sociology, psychology, law and others. In spite of these, graduates from these programmes join the rank of files in unemployment due to inability for those employed to carry out their assigned duties without further training. This thus creates doubt as to the



relevance, functionality and adequacy of the Curriculum and its delivery system in meeting the demands of employability.

This therefore calls for the enrichment of business education curriculum in several ways. These include organizing periodic review of the curriculum, highlighting the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and globally relevant courses which are germane for gainful employment in the global workplace; and making conscious efforts to match theory with practice by providing adequate time-tabling for classroom teaching and learning. Furthermore, adequate provision should be made for instructional technology in order to meet enrolment needs.

All stake holders in the curriculum should also participate effectively in the planning and review process. The stakeholders should include experts in curriculum design and evaluation, members of the society, prospective employers of labour, the teachers and the learners themselves. Teachers, learners and employers should take advantage of the field trips, Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) to expose learners to work methods and provide needed experience in handling equipment and machinery that may not be available in the educational institutions. Learning environment should be made learner friendly. Finally, business education programme should be mainstreamed as a general studies course in our tertiary institutions in Nigeria. (Aquah, 2014).

### **How Internet has helped the Development of Business Education**

One of the basic requirements for education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to prepare learners for participation in a networked, knowledge-based economy in which knowledge will be the most critical resource for social and economic development. The internet is a valuable tool that is tremendously useful to teachers. Through the use of the internet, teachers can allow their students access to new information, points of view and experiences that they would otherwise not have been able to encounter. There are several tools that have proved particularly useful in teaching and learning of Business Education in the developed countries. Some of the ways the internet has helped teachers in the development of business education are these, according to Olumide and Olaitan (2017):

**Webquests:** Teachers can improve students' ability to locate information independently by sending them on a digital treasure hunt through cyberspace. Webquests promote independent learning and help students develop problem – solving skills.

**Lesson Planning;** With the assistance of the internet teachers have instant access to tested lesson plans that have worked for others in the past. This saves them time and increases their effectiveness.

**Stream Videos:** Through the internet, teachers can access useful sites that feature videos designed for use in the classroom. Discovery Education's



stream could be made use of by teachers to enable them search for topics relevant to their lessons.

Test Preparation: There are now a number of websites aimed at helping students improve their scores on standardized tests that offer subscription services to schools. Study Island is one most popular test preparation sites that provide services to schools across the globe.

### **Acquisition of Entrepreneurial & Business Studies Skills**

Skills do not depend solely upon a person's fundamental, innate capacities, but must be developed through training, practice and experience an individual acquired. Skills, according to Belt-Lee and Foster (2003) are the arts of possessing the abilities to power, authority, or competency to do the task required of an individual on the job. Two fundamental issues are important when a skill is to be acquired. According to Okoro and Ursula (2012), the first is the conditions which promote acquisition and the second is the change that will occur when the skill is acquired. However, when an individual sets out to learn a new skill he usually starts with a communicable programme of instructions. Good learners do not jump into an operation without first receiving the necessary verbal instruction. Thus, instruction given in bits, units, modules, in stages, perhaps must be fused together to form a skilled performance.

There are many processes of acquisition and development in achieving entrepreneurial skills. Okoro and Ursula (2012) outlined four main stages of acquisition and development of entrepreneurial business skills to include: Analyze and identify the internet and foreseeable skill needs to business, in terms of management, administrative and technical skills and relative importance of these; and identify the entrepreneur's own personal goals, objectives and analyze and evaluate his/her skills and resources in relation to these. Others are to produce a realistic personal development plan for the potential entrepreneur and to monitor on-going performance of follow-up of the entrepreneurs once the business has started and progress made towards developing the skills that had been previously identified as necessary for success of the business.

Baret (2005) also identified the following as skills required in entrepreneurship:

Technical skills: These skills include: writing oral communication, monitoring environment, technical business management, technology, interpersonal, listening, ability to recognize, network, building, management style, coaching and being a team player.

Business Management skills: These skills include: planning and goal setting, decision making, human relationship, marketing, finance, accounting, management, negotiation, venture, and managing growth, and

Personal Entrepreneurship skills, which include: inner control discipline, risk taking, innovative, change oriented, persistent visionary leader and ability to manage change. However, this involves the personal needs of the entrepreneurs



as well as helping employees in new skills development which will be of immense benefit to the business.

### **The Concept and Relevance of Digital Marketing**

Digital marketing is a globalized and current development in business strategy, and a departure from the traditional method of connecting and reaching a diversified audience through conventional media like radio, television, newspaper, and magazines. Digital marketing as explained by Barne (2020) is the use of internet, mobile devices, search engines, and other channel, to reach consumers.

Dawada (2019) gave reasons why digital marketing is important in today's business which include higher conversion rates, increase of trust in brands, creation of longer growth options for any business, cost effective marketing, targeting and getting connected to mobile consumers. Online marketing has opened up new avenues for business opportunities to both the seller and buyer. Companies, organizations, including individuals are leveraging the opportunities to attract potential markets to their goods and services. The benefit of digital media marketing are numerous, and interesting, the business outlets are growing rapidly. Online advertisements, sales, purchases and e-payment make interactions less cumbersome for the business community.

Describing the relevance of digital marketing Matta (2019) explained that the role of digital marketing is spreading beyond brand awareness and hard cost advertising and those companies; businesses have realized its importance in the present scenario. Most businesses around the world are becoming more conscious and moving towards sustainable means of marketing and advertising. Moreover, the skills are used for a better connect with the markets; boost online relation and preserve and help stay ahead of competition.

Unemployed people who have acquired entrepreneurial skills stand the opportunity to show case their products and services to potential customers and consequently grow their businesses through such platforms. Digital media marketing has a high success rate because they have the potential to create a quick and secure channel to contract with the customers. Also, a larger audience can be reached at a less cost. Again it offers the opportunity to build trust and relationship with customers, creates forum to question and make recommendations.

### **Conclusion**

It is quite glaring from all discussed thus far that Business education curriculum needs to expand or extend its content to cater for the current topics that will provide the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable individuals avail themselves with the job openings and opportunities in the global market. The enriched Business Education. Curriculum would thus foster its



further relevance in skills acquisition and efficacy in marketing goods and services.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the drawn conclusion presented above, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. The curriculum of business education programme should constantly be reviewed to reflect the current development and technological changes in the country.
2. With increasing emphasis on digitization and more focused attention on the global market, there is need for policy makers to inculcate the spirit of digital marketing on the youths who are mostly affected. Therefore efforts should be made towards providing basic training in digital marketing as part of school curriculum.
3. The higher institutions should focus on curriculum that is aimed at a growing job market and expanding the production of qualified professionals most required by industries.
4. There should be provision for periodic retraining of the teachers to update their knowledge in the various areas of entrepreneurship and in the use of information and communication technology across the globe and enhance effective teaching.

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