



TEACHERS' ACQUISITION OF DIGITAL SKILLS AND THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Business Education as an aspect of Vocational Education is an essential education intended to provide skills and manpower for industry. Teacher's acquisition of digital skills has so much impact on technology driven because the world today has become a global village. This paper examined Teachers' acquisition of digital skills and the future of business education in Nigeria. The paper further discussed policy formulation and implication, types of Digital skills in enhancing business education, conceptual framework, and objectives of business education, methodologies of business education and features of modern technologies. The paper further elucidates some constraints and gains of teacher's acquisition of digital skills in Nigeria and suggestions and conclusion were made.

Keywords: Teachers' Acquisition, Business Education, Information and Communication Technology, Digital Skills.

Introduction

Business education programme prepares professionals to teach business subjects and other business related subjects globally. Business education subjects are taught at Junior, Senior Secondary Schools and tertiary institution nationwide. Business education is a branch of education that involves teaching the skills and operations of the business industry. This field of education occurs at multiple levels including secondary education and higher education (Wikipedia 2023). Business education is designed for use in business training in subjects (such as accounting, shorthand) useful in developing commercially useful skills. In the same vein, Osuala (2004) define Business education as a programme of instruction which consists of two parts, that is (a) Office education, a vocational education programme for office careers through initial refresher and upgrading of education leading to employability and advancement in the office occupation and (b) General business education programme to provide students with information and competencies which are needed by all in managing personal business affairs and using the services of the business world.



Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in all sphere of life has long become global. Communications are principles of transmitting information and methods by which it is delivered. Technology is the practical application of science or the art or science of applying scientific knowledge to practical problems. Ayelangbe (2005) defined ICT as diverse set of tools and resources used to communicate, create, disseminate, store, and manage information. These technologies includes, computers, the internet, broadcasting technologies (radio and television), and telephone.

Teacher's acquisition of digital skills in business education at the secondary schools and tertiary level is sine – qua-non with the used of modern technologies. Jaduola (2011) noted that 95% of learning process should be practical and remaining 5% theoretical. If this is anything to go by, the students should be taught through the use of ICTs, so that both the teachers and the students can on their own discovers skills that would enhance their appreciation of business education. Nwoso and Ogbona (2012), opined that the use of ICTs in teaching of business education has also paved way for new pedagogical approach where there is unparalleled ability to spread knowledge and disseminate information. With the knowledge of ICTs, students can have access to lessons presented with software, thereby build their own skills, improve their knowledge base, and work with peers and experts and also at their own pace (Sardika & Sader, 2003).

Conceptual Framework

In Nigeria today, technology is the hall mark of any successful business in all ramifications. Business education teacher's acquisition of digital skills knowledge in the discharge of their duties is paramount in technological advancement. In line with the above, Ubulon (2000) in Ojo (2005) considered business education as the pedagogical and business competencies necessary for teaching business attitude, concepts, skills and knowledge. Business education plays a crucial role in economic and social development of a nation. The need for its relevance cannot be overemphasized. The effectiveness and responsibility of business education would be measured by its impact on the economic and social development of the nation.

Policy Formulation and Implementation

The general philosophy behind staff development programmes in educational institutions is to raise the productivity levels of teachers for economic diversification. The issue of policy formulation and implementation is a key factor in innovative approaches to the teaching of business education teacher's knowledge in digital skill utilization. There must be a paradigm shift which gives base to plans, especially academic planning. The most common meaning of implementation is to carry out, to accomplish, to fulfil, to produce or complete an action (Brynard, 2005). According to Omoregie (2013), there are policies necessary for the conduct of education. These policies are curriculum policy, methodological policy, resource policy, distribution policy, and education policy. If these policies are well implemented as discussed below, it would advance the teaching and learning of teachers' knowledge of digital skills in business education and diversification of the economy.

Curriculum Policy: The senior school business programme is designed to provide pre-vocational, vocational, advanced career preparation, and general education experiences for the students. More specifically, this curriculum should,

1. Provide primarily prevocational experiences in the Junior and senior secondary schools level.
2. Provide primarily vocational experiences in the Colleges and University levels.
3. Offer activities and classes that would contribute to each student's becoming an effective citizen capable of making sound economic judgement.
4. Provide foundation for advanced study in business and or a vocational competency.
5. Emphasize decision making, communication, logic, reasoning, and manipulative skills.
6. Offer several career clusters that are designed to provide for a variety of abilities and interests.
7. Provide an opportunity for students to acquire vocational competency in the stenographic and clerical skills.

Methodological Policy: The course is designed to expose students to business education programme and the various methods of teaching it. The goals are

- Help the student to have an understanding of the concepts of business education
- Help the students to acquire skills needed for the teaching of business education.
- Help the students to achieve, through knowledge and practice, effective teaching and learning of business education program.

Resources Policy: The quality and quantity of human resources determines a nation's growth and development. Oni. (2010), opined that there is no time in history that business organisations ever existed with or without individuals being involved in coordinating the activities of such organisation. Human resources in education refer to the lecturers or teachers, academics and the non-academics staffs of an educational institution. Every educational system at every level depends heavily on the human resources for execution of its program.

Distribution Policy: A distribution policy is the strategy applied by a company for the correct shipment of its products from the production chain to its positioning in the market. In the same vein, it's the measures put in place in the teaching field to see that the teachers' or lecturers follows the goals and objectives of every subject or topic before him or her. The rule of engagement is for efficient and effective delivery of the course content.

Educational Policy: The synergy of education, industry, employment and labour policies right from the colonial era has be overwhelming. There were allots of educational policies from 1925 before the Ashby commission of 1959. The British-adopted educational policies failed to meet the local needs and aspirations of Nigeria. In 1968, National Education Conference was held that will meet the needs and aspirations of Nigerians. To further strengthen educational system in Nigeria, the National Policy on Education was held in 1977 to meet the aspirations and needs of Nigerians. The national philosophy of education was deduced based on:

- i. The development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen.
- ii. The full integration of the individual into the community.
- iii. The provision of equal access in educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system (FRN,2004:6)

Meaning of Digital Skills: Digital skills are defined as the ability to find, evaluate, use, share, and create content using digital devices, such as computers and Smartphone's. These are knowledge and skills required by individuals for the optimal use of information and communication technologies. These include digital literacy, data management, collaborative work, communication skills, content generation, security, and the ability to solve problems in virtual environments.

Digital Skills Needed in Enhancing Business Education

The teacher's knowledge and skills required by individuals in course of carrying out digital skills in business education will be discussed under the following headings:

- i. **Social Media:** According to recent study, there are 4.2 billion active social media users worldwide in January 2021 to 4.62 billion in January 2022.(Smart 2023) These 4.62 billion are active users on mobile devices. These figures show a 10.1% increase in the number of global social users in just a year with no sign of slowing down. The ability to understand and use social media effectively is a core and valued skill needed that every professional should have in actualising this goals and objectives.
- ii. **Search Engine Marketing (SEM)** Search engine marketing is one of the most influential disciplines that marketers have come to rely on. Students with SEM experience can increase the visibility of a company's website on a search engine (e.g. Google or Bing) primarily via paid advertising.
- iii. **Data Analytics:** During Covid-19, many marketers reverted to mass communication to target customers rather than using data-driven marketing. Data provides students with a wealth of information that-if used correctly can result in effective marketing campaigns that drive conversions, sales, and revenue.
- iv. **Content Marketing:** Content marketing comes in many forms-blog posts, videos, podcasts, info graphics, even social media status updates. Content is crucial in driving brand awareness and can establish brands or influences as thought leaders. With experience and knowledge in content marketing, students will have a valuable and employable skill that will set them up for a career in any industry.
- v. **Email Marketing:** Email is one of the oldest forms of direct marketing and still packs a punch in customer acquisition and retention from start-ups to multinational corporations, a great email marketing strategy helps launch successful campaigns. People may charge social media accounts or home addresses, but people aren't prone to change their email addresses. That is why professional that understand the power of email marketing to connect directly with consumers are in high demand.

- vi. **Mobile Marketing:** According to We Are social and Hoot suite's Digital 2021 report, mobile connectivity continue to grow, with 97% of the world's population using mobile phones, and 96% of all active connections coming from smart phones. Since Smartphone, traffic now exceeds desktop traffic (64%), mobile-first indexing is now used by Google when crawling pages and prioritizing content.
- vii. **Strategy and Planning:** Businesses that use a digital Marketing Campaign Strategy are mostly likely to see measurable results in the long term. Instead of planning on an ad-hoc basis, digital marketers need to create and implement campaigns based on analytics and quantifiable SEO data. Business educators should take advantage of this skills gap, by teaching students how to plan and execute a digital strategy.
- viii. **Social Selling:** Social selling is proving its worth for sellers that use it-65% rely on it for filling their pipelines and it generate half of the revenue for 14 major industries. Businesses are beginning to understand the importance of social selling by investing in new 'sales stack' technology such as email tracking tools, productivity apps, and sales intelligence software. Above all, social selling tools are seen as very effective in connecting with the modern buyers, one that relies on social platforms for reviews and advice.
- ix. **Pay-Per-Click Marketing (PPC)** PPC is a popular way for brand to get traffic quickly. Companies with big budgets can get their search result to appear on Google first page to drive massive traffic. One popular PPC advertising model is Google's Adwords program and a great way monitor spread is by using a PPC for economic tracker.
- x. **Video:** Video has evolved from being just a form of entertainments to a major social media content driver. YouTube is now a powerful and influential platform while networks like TikTok and instagram have turned video on its head to create wealthy influences. Social media apps like WhatsApp, Weibo and Wechat are becoming the de-facto tools of instant message communication.

In actualising the above digital skills, Business education must be ready for the future, better equipped to solve complex multi-faceted problems, able to bring back fresh perspectives to global challenges, and better developed to become a leader or an active participant in the world of politics, commerce, trade and industry and information and communication technology. This can be achieved through the following:-

1. **Quality Education:** Quality education is one that is pedagogically and developmentally sound and educates the learners to be active and productive members of society. Quality education focuses on the whole child both physical and mental ability in respective of gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status or geographical location. This is actualised with the aids of technologies using professional teachers with technical know-how.
2. **Reinventing the Curriculum:** Nigeria need to reinvent the curriculum to accommodate business education for skills acquisition and technology. A dynamic curriculum which encompasses ICT technology driven will facilitate learning in all ramifications. Curricular for higher education can be crafted in such a way that it will boast the education industry by training professionals or specialists for global competitive services. If a University have curricular

programmes that are innovative and in demand in the local and global markets, many students even from foreign countries will enrol.

3. **Inclusive Learning and Teaching:** Business education teachers should create equal opportunities for teaching and learning to facilitate all students' sense of personal and professional identity and sense of belonging within a field, so that their background can contribute to their services. Business education teachers who utilized ICTs digital skills in the discharged of his or her duties will carry students along and learn better in an inclusive teaching and learning environment which depends on teachers' attitudes, curriculum content, interactive classroom communities and social culture on campus.
4. **Increase Investment in Education:** Nigeria need to increase investment in their education. Without investment, teachers' knowledge of ICTs as digital skills in business education will be minimal, since education without fund is meaningless.
The United Nation Education and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) requirement is 26% of Annual Budget of any Country should be allocated to education have never been met by all successive Governments in Nigeria. This does not promote harmony in the education sector using the ICTs techniques.

Objectives of Business Education

Agbonlahor (2003) in Olumese (2008) opined that objectives of business education are the acquisition of technical skills and knowledge, attitudes, values and ethics which enable individuals to live productive lives and discharge their social duties for the betterment of life in society. In view of the above, business education teachers acquisition of digital skills in business education in Nigeria when employed will helped in reducing poverty, creating wealth and generating employment. These objectives of business education can better be summarized as follows:

1. To provide trained manpower in applied science, technology, commerce, particularly as sub-professional grades: Business education feed the economy with qualified staff competitiveness both on local and international labour market; ensure a match between the fast changing labour market and education technology system.
2. Business education enables young men and women to have intelligence understanding of the increasing complexity of technology: In the same vein, Fafunwa (2002) collaborated that vocational education was the attempt at making education relevant to all socio-economic realities of the nation and immediate community.
3. To provides technical skills necessary for agriculture, industrial, commercial and economic development: Business education give training and improving the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technical and other skill personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliance. It is designed to develop skills, abilities, attitudes and understanding work habits and appreciation, encompassing knowledge and information needed by workers to enter and make progress in employment on a useful and productive basis.



4. Business education ensures professional development of the population minority groups and creates employment opportunities for them: This is done through meeting the education demands of the population, support professional career development and social protection of individuals.

5. Business education foster appropriation of the peoples educational capacities with the new social-economic conditions to support self-employment and entrepreneurship: Government emphasis and recognition of business education, is further strengthened through the assistance rendered to young graduates of business education and entrepreneurship who are faced with the problem of finance and possibly how to set up business.

Meaning of Digital Skills; Unesco's definition of Digital skills is a range of abilities to use digital devices. Digital skills are Communication applications and networks to access and manage information. It 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.

Integrating Digital Skills in Business Education

There are different ways teachers in business education carried out their tasks of imparting knowledge to students. Such as teach, implement and assess their courses which can be attributed to three main developments. First, the possibilities of ICT for business education are expanding on a daily basis. For example, ICT tools like online assessment, discussion forums, wikis, web-video conferencing or virtual worlds are available to everyone who wishes to use them. Research has highlighted that ICT tools can provide a rich and valuable learning experience for business students (e.g Belei, Noteborn & De Ruyter, 2009). The second development is characterised by changes in society in general, such as an increase in globalisation and individualism (Rienties & Tempelaar, 2009; Van der Wende, 2003) and the increased pressure on business schools to deliver high quality education to larger numbers of students with less public funding. Thirdly, research and evidence in business education has shown that traditional forms of education do not provide optimal learning experiences for business students. In the past, the transfer of teacher's knowledge to students was considered as a primary method of learning (Van den Bossche, Segers, Gijbels, & Dochy, 2004). Since the traditional methods leads to ill-equipped business graduates, an active approach to learning in education has become more important, whereby a teacher centred approach is replaced by a student-centred approach (Pence & Wulf, 2009). The role of the business education changes from a more product-oriented role (focusing on knowledge transfer learning outcomes, e.g examination) to a more process-oriented role (facilitating the development of the student's knowledge building during the course). Teachers in business education are challenged to understand and apply digital methods as well as to create a powerful learning environment where teachers and students take responsibility for their learning (Mishra & Kaehler, 2006).

Strategies Employed in Digital Skills in Business Education

After integrating the digital skills in Business education as a course of study, the teacher's required some strategies to carry out the programme in Nigeria education. These strategies, as

adopted from citizenship education (2003) will be discussed under the following headings. These include: (i) Formal Education (ii) Non-Formal Education (iii) Informal Education.

- (i) **Formal Education:** This aspect involved preparing people for the demanding role of business education in self-governing society. It is mandatory for all secondary schools in Nigeria curriculum to offered courses in business studies for the acquisition of skills for the world of work.
- (ii) **Non-Formal Education:** Business education can also be inculcated in our societies today, using Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and enlightens programmes.
- (iii) **Informal Education:** The different agents of socialization such as the home, church, peer group, school, community and mass media can help to impact business education.

In actualizing the above, the ICTs tools such as computers, teleconference, video conferencing, electronic mail, cyberspace and internet are used in carrying out these aforementioned programmes. Others are hypertext, video text, communication satellite; interactive cable television must be made available at all times.

Constraints of Using Digital Skills with Information Communication Technology (ICT)

In the actual sense of life, there are always short coming in one way or the other and ICT is not an exception. In this vein, Aylaagbe et al (2005) opined that constraints faced by teachers in attaining high level of competencies can be attributed to:

- (i) Inadequate or inappropriate training by teachers
- (ii) Lack of sufficient confidence to make use of technology in and out of classroom.
- (iii) Lack of hardware and inappropriate software.
- (iv) Lack of teachers and instructors.
- (v) Poor organisation of resources.

Above all, for the training to be effective, some issued need to be addressed such as pedagogical training, skills training on ICT, focus in initial teacher training. Also, teachers have no time to experiment with the technology, share their experiences with colleagues, and attend technology conferences, seminars and in-service training programmes.

Conclusion

In order to successfully implement teacher's acquisition of digital skills and the future of business education programmes, it is important to adjust the content of the business education in line with the technology selected and pedagogical approach used. This is confirmed by Isyaku, (2003) as opined that the approach to business education in educational institutions is not geared towards encouraging self-employment due to some structural inadequacies, lack of practical experiences and insensitivity to technological advancement. This is collaborated by Okebukola (2002), opined that the facilities required for teaching in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria are inadequate. Even the most basic of these are classrooms, academic programmes that required additional facilities like laboratories and workshops are grossly inadequate. The scenario before us is that these short



comings will obviously affects the coverage of course content and reduced the intensity of skills acquisition, both of which result in poor quality of students turn-out.

Suggestions:

In view of the constraints of teachers' acquisition of digital skills and the future of business education in Nigeria, the following suggestions are made:

- (i) Government through curriculum planners should amend and re-design the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education curricula to accommodate the use of digital skills in teaching and learning programmes.
- (ii) Business education teachers and students should be compulsorily provided with the needed infrastructure for teaching and learning to meet the global standards on the use of digital skills.
- (iii) Government should provide digital skills tools for teachers and encourage in-service training for teachers at all levels of education for them to eradicate the syndrome of "no time and no teachers" to replace those that actually need this knowledge while on training.
- (iv) Skilled technologists are needed to install and maintain Information Technology equipment. Vocational and Technical Education should be improved upon in the areas of curriculum development, provision of infrastructure and means of increasing peoples 'interest in VTE

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