



CURRICULUM CHALLENGES AND THE PREPARATION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS AND TRADE LIBERALIZATION

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between curriculum challenges and the preparation of business education students for global competitiveness and trade liberalization in Nigeria. Two research questions were formulated and answered. The hypotheses were tested at 0.5 alpha level of significance. Related literatures were reviewed. The population of the study comprised 500 business educators from institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. Stratified random sampling was adopted to select 250 business educators for the study. A set of structured questionnaire was validated by expert to ensure face and content validation. Cronbach alpha method was used in determining the reliability of the instrument which yielded a coefficient index of 0.79. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship. The findings of the study revealed a positive relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education student for global competitiveness. The recommendations made were based on the findings such as: ¹Business education curriculum developer must be core business educators and the curriculum should be flexible to the technological trend ²globalization issues and business education curriculum should be reviewed in areas of innovation and technology to accommodate other job opportunities for trade liberalization.

Key words: *curriculum, preparation, business education, competitiveness, and trade liberalization*

Introduction

Curriculum is an educational programme of experience offered to the learner under the guidance of a school in order to effect certain changes in the behaviour of the learner. What is curriculum implementation? It provides putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study. The whole process is tailored to help students acquire certain subjects for their study. It is important to understand that curriculum implementation in Nigeria is not possible without students. Students are the central figure of any curriculum



development. Full implementation takes place when learners acquire the planned skills, attitudes and ideas which are aimed to enable them effectively function in the society. Utoware and Chambertain (2013) held that the use and implementation of curriculum in the e-world must be such that its activities must be design to meet the competitiveness of the world. This depends on proper planning for its success. Teachers need to establish very clearly what they want to achieve with their students and then decide how they hope to do it considering the present trend in the global world where everything is moving at the same space and level no matter the environment.

Uga (2005),held that curriculum is intended to bring changes and opportunities in students, and the assessment of the extent to which these changes have taken place is what is referred to as curriculum development. There are four major stages in the process of curriculum development, the selection of aims, goals and objectives; the selection of appropriate learning experiences and content for the achievement of the aims, goals and objectives; organization of learning experience and evaluation of the extent to which the objectives identified. It is evident that curriculum changes with time, and its consideration in the e-world is all about innovation, technologies, new knowledge and practice (Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley,2009).

E-world is an earlier online service from Apple aimed at the consumer market and the competitor. E-world was introduced in mid-1994, but abandoned less than two years and later came up till date. The primary e-world services were email and bulletin board system called community center. Education has a great impact in online learning, distance learning, video conferencing, computer as a tool, information technology as a course and several packages and software used for teaching and learning process of business education. These are as a result of curriculum review to meet the present global competitiveness and trade liberalization. For students to participate effectively in this changing world, they must understand the world.

Bauk, and Jusufranic(2014) opined that, the 21st century student will sell to the world, buy from the world, work for international companies, compete with people from other countries, manage employees from other cultures, collaborate with people all over the world, and solve global problems. Globalization is affecting population, disease management, education, food and water resources, pollution and a host of global issues, hence business education students must be prepared for global competitiveness and trade liberalization.

According to Uga (2005), the curriculum of business education should be such that accommodate global learning programme. There is a new formal education project designed to enhance the global learning that is taking place in schools. It cuts across the primary, post-primary, colleges and universities. The global learning programme enriches the learning process, connects learning and brings an exciting new dimension to subjects of interest. It



develops the individual's understanding of global issues and empowers them as global citizens to take action for a fair and sustainable e-world. The author summarized held that the programme contributes to the achievement of curriculum requirements and the development of a positive attitude, while also encouraging schools to engage with their environment and forge local and international affiliations with other schools. The benefits of global learning programme are: resources and ideas for classroom and school are global learning activities for individuals involved; collaboration learning and practice with teachers should be the same irrespective of schools; developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions that will enable students to make a positive contribution in the e- world, experience, motivation and engaging lessons are paramount to the e- world (Karma, 2012).

In the writings of Hilal (2015), there are 12 pillars in the scope of global competitiveness these are institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic stability, health and primary education, higher education and training, good market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market sophistication, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication and innovation. Although the pillars in the scope of global competitiveness are valid for all countries, they affect each country in a different way. For instance, the way to be followed in Nigeria to increase competitiveness will not be the same in Ghana. Since development level of each country is different, the pillars to create competitiveness will be different. Therefore the curriculum adopted for the preparation of students for global competitiveness and trade liberalization should be project-based, knowledge-based, innovative and skill based.

Curriculum Challenges in the Preparation of Business Education Students

The implementation of a curriculum arises from a wide range of complex decisions to be made about a variety of issues such as selection of goals and learning experiences. According to Ray (2016), the following are some curriculum challenges in Nigeria:

Teachers: the first people to implement their role in the curriculum for their students. They usually select what they need to teach to their students and how it may affect the whole teaching process. Therefore, their curriculum is provided to be alternative that teachers may decide what they want to teach and what they really need to teach. Teachers are usually involved in constructing and implementing the curriculum in Nigeria.

Learners: may also influence curriculum implementation in Nigeria. The teachers are provided to be the arbiters of the learning process, where the learners actually hold the key to the idea of curriculum activity. The official learning process is quite different from the one that is prescribed by the ideas of country.

Resource Materials and Facilities: It is obvious that no meaningful teaching process can be provided without resources and facilities. This factor significantly changes the whole picture of what happens in the class. The Ministry of Education has problems providing



necessary resources to the all educational institutions in Nigeria. In some schools, students have to pay for their books and even supply their schools with necessary equipment. Therefore, the implementation of curriculum is impossible without providing necessary elements for education. Rural areas especially suffer from the lack of resources. How then will students meet the global competitiveness and trade liberalization.

Interest Groups: the interest groups also play major roles in the development and implementation of curriculum in Nigeria. These groups are usually holders of great financial resources and may influence the political structure of the country.

The School Environment: implementation of curriculum is also affected by the school environment. For instance, if a school is located in a quiet and pleasant socioeconomic area, then the school may implement some extracurricular activities that can be suitable for the people of that area. At the same time, if a school is situated in best environment then it is highly possible that the school may change the whole curriculum to support the interest of learners. Therefore, the school environment may decide if they need to follow the curriculum or not.

Culture and Ideology: these may also affect the implementation of curriculum in schools. Culture differences are present in different parts of Nigeria even in the same school. Nigerians respect culture to a great extent. Therefore, culture may provide various interesting decisions in implementing curriculum in Nigeria.

Instructional Supervision: implementation of a curriculum is not possible without supervisory functions provided by the government. Human factor, attitude, decision and policies hinder effective supervision. Some teachers are not supervised.

Assessment/ Examination: some teachers adopt their own method of assessment, but these are meant to provide standards and equal opportunity for all educational institutions. It is subject to change accordingly. The implementation of curriculum is possible in many ways. It is advisable to consider every possible factor that can affect curriculum implementation in order to develop effective curriculum for students' preparation for global competitiveness.

Curriculum Development and Global Competitiveness

The belief of this paper is that the curriculum of business education must be designed to meet global competitiveness else the students will be lacking in skills and competence. The curriculum of business education should be innovative such that it creates opportunity for students to display their talents, knowledge and creativity. According to Sala-I-Martin, Bilbao-Osorio, Di Battista, Hanouz, Galvan, and Geiger(2014), the skills acquired and developed enable students to function in many areas of a diversified economy. A diversified economy is a competitive environment which requires innovation, creativity, intelligence, skills and high level of technology for survival. Therefore business education



curriculum must be flexible so as to enhance students to measure-up the current technological trend for global competitiveness and trade liberalization.

According to Karma (2012), global competitiveness involves extensive knowledge base and technology, a global human network, and Internet technology to succeed against international competition (regionally, nationally, or internationally). With the use of internet, globalization is present right in one's environment. Global competitiveness means that unemployment is up, profits are down, costs are rising, and the future is uncertain. Therefore, business education curriculum should meet global requirement in order to prepare students for global competitiveness in areas of skills and business operations. Curriculum planners need not labour so much or spend much time organizing a knowledge base. All they need do is to adopt a global planned curriculum. Business education students are trained to become entrepreneurs, therefore they should aim at operating globally.

Business owners are interested in becoming globally competitive. Focus is on building good relationships with many people you come in contact with. Even if a contact cannot help one to distribute one's product in their country or region, the contact may know someone who can help. Thus, it is important for business education students to acquire communication and public relation skills for enhancement. Technology has made the world a smaller place with high level of competitiveness in webinars, online learning, conference, interaction, online marketing, and video conferencing. People no longer have to travel to build relationships. Additionally, once the relationships have been built and enterprises and institutions are working together, the businesses can easily collaborate. A business in Ghana can talk to a supplier in Nigeria, and they can order products, carry on investment at different locations, and resolve problems in hours instead of days (Klaus, 2014).

To this end entrepreneurs do not need to travel or invest in physical locations to become globally competitive, as the use of Internet and technology links the entrepreneurs globally within seconds. At the same time, being globally competitive does not mean "Going global" and not focusing on one's local market, nor does it require much work to be outsourced. Instead, a globally competitive enterprise can innovate, operate, and grow in a manner that strengthens a local business within its environment, these will create viable jobs, self-employment, economic diversification, encourage foreign investors, availability of raw materials and technical labour and bring confidence to business owners and the government.

Curriculum Development and Trade Liberalization

Trade liberalization demand that the curriculum of business education should be such that gives the recipient the opportunity to work in various aspects of work career other than, to teach in secondary schools; to hold administrative positions in the public and private sectors of the economy; to be self-employed having been exposed to business knowledge; to undergo higher studies in business education. Because the world is so competitive, it is



changing and full of new technologies and skills. Accordingly, Karma (2012), noted that trade liberalization is needed to realize trade potentials as a driving force for economic growth and development. This can be achieved through skills acquisition. Skills acquired empower the individual economically and give more advantage. Employers need skills and technical manpower. Technical manpower encourages investors to invest a portion of their portfolio into a diversifying economy. If the curriculum of business education is reviewed to accommodate flexibility, then more areas of skill will be introduced for trade liberalization.

Ethier (2009), added that the benefit of trade liberalization is that policies that make an economy open to trade and investment with the rest of the world are needed for sustained economic growth. No country in recent decades has achieved economic success, in terms of substantial increases in living standards for its people, without being open to the rest of the world. In a diversified economy such, as Nigeria there is need for business education students to acquire multi-tasked skills for survival and self-employment. Multitask skill will enable trade liberalization, encourage foreign investors, and open up the economy to the global e-world. These will reduce the number of people in absolute poverty.

Critics of trade liberalization claim that it can cost jobs because cheaper goods flood the domestic market. Critics also suggest that the goods may be of poorer quality and less safe because they are domestic products that may have not undergone different safety checks. Proponents of trade liberalization however, claim that it is ultimately lowers consumer costs, increases efficiency and fosters economic growth protection, the opposite of trade liberalization, is characterized by strict standards and market regulation. The outcome of trade liberalization and the resulting integration among countries is known as globalization competition. If the curriculum of business education is design to prepare students for global competitiveness and trade liberalization then the concept of trade liberalization will be achieved in a diversified economy such as Nigeria.

In furtherance of the above philosophy, Business educators know that it is essential to keep pace with new developments in academic resources, teaching tools, and instructional techniques. It provides business educators with a comprehensive guide to virtual learning, including online course design, delivery, and assessment; collaborative models for effective distance education; analysis of pivotal issues such as ethics and privacy rights; evaluation of e-commerce programme; and practical ideas for online entrepreneurial and international business curriculum. It enables graduates of the programme to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of business. Teachers in the 21st century face the challenge of keeping abreast with the latest methods of teaching, new technology for the classroom, current trends affecting business education programmes, and new learning styles.



Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of was to determine the relationship between curriculum challenges in the preparation of business education students for global competitiveness and trade liberalization in Nigeria. Specifically the study determined:

1. the relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education students for global competitiveness in Nigeria.
2. the relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education students for trade liberalization in Nigeria

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education students for global competitiveness in Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education students for trade liberalization in Nigeria?.

Hypothesis

- H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education students for global competitiveness in Nigeria.
- H₀₂ There is no significant relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education students trade liberalization in Nigeria.

Method

This study adopted a survey design. The population of the study comprised 500 business educators in Institution of higher learning in Nigeria. Stratified random sampling technique was used to obtain 250 business educators as sample for the study. A designed instrument titled: Curriculum challenges in the preparation of business education students for global competitiveness and trade liberalization (CCPBESGCTLQ) was used for data collection. The instrument considered the following parameters: curriculum challenges in the preparation of business education students; curriculum development and global competitiveness, curriculum development and trade liberalization. A four point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SD) = 4 points, Agreed (A) = 3 points, Disagree (DA) = 2 points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. Some of my colleagues and experts in Test and Measurement validated the instrument to ensure face and content validity base on the study. A pilot study was carried out on twenty (20) business educators who were not part of the study group. The reliability index of .79 was obtained using Cronbach's alpha approach The instrument was administered through e-mails and personal contact. Two hundred and fifty-five copies of the questionnaire were sent out through e-mail and personal contacts with business educators. Data collected were processed with the use of statistical packages for



social science (SPSS).The research questions were answered using pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression analysis. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The decision rule was based on the following: correlation co-efficient (r). negligible - 0.00 to 0.09, weak - 0.10 to 0.29, moderate - 0.30 to 0.49, substantial - 0.50 to 0.69.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education students for global competitiveness in Nigeria?

Table 1: Relationship between curriculum development and global competitiveness (N = 250).

Variables	ΣX Σy	Σx^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	r
Curriculum Development (X)	11034	124001	1103401	0.79*
Global Competitiveness (Y)	20101	120101		

Sources: Data Collection

Data in Table 1 shows a calculated r value of 0.79, for global competitiveness, therefore the relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education student for global competitiveness is very strong and positive. This means that business education curriculum should be review to global standard so that the recipient may be get enough to compete globally.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education students for trade liberalization in Nigeria?.

Table 2: Relationship between curriculum development and trade liberalization (N = 250).

Variables	ΣX Σy	Σx^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	r
Curriculum Development (X)	11034	124001	2111211	.81*
Global Competitiveness (Y)	17001	130001		

Sources: Data Collection

Data in Table 2shows a calculated r-value of 0.81 for trade liberalization, therefore the relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education student for trade liberalization positive. This means that business education curriculum



should be flexible to enable student have a wide range of trade choose, this will empower students economically and also challenge them to develop and acquire more skills that will enhance them in a diversified economy .

Hypothesis

H0₁ There is no significant relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education students for global competitiveness in Nigeria.

Table 3: Relationship between curriculum development and global competitiveness (N = 250).

Variables	ΣX Σy	Σx^2 Σy^2	ΣXY	r
Curriculum Development (X)	11034	124001	1194407	0.652*
Global Competitiveness (Y)	21750	124001		

Significant at .05 alpha level.

Table 3 shows a calculated coefficient of correlation $r = 0.652$. This implies that curriculum development and preparation of business education student has a significant relationship with global competitiveness in Nigeria.

H0₂ There is no significant relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education students trade liberalization in Nigeria.

Table 4: Relationship between curriculum development and trade liberalization (N = 250)

Variables	ΣX Σy	Σx^2 Σy^2	ΣXY	r
Curriculum Development (X)	11034	124001	2710214	0.551*
Trade Liberalization (Y)	15738	138682		

Source: Data Collection

Table 4 shows a calculated coefficient of correlation $r = 0.551$, this means that curriculum development and preparation of business education student has a significant relationship with trade liberalization.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education students for global competitiveness in Nigeria. The significance was in area of developing the right skills that will enhance students for global competitiveness. Therefore the curriculum should be such



that it is flexible to accommodate current innovations and modern method of teaching business education. The modern method includes modern gadgets and facilities that meet the 21st century teaching and learning. The study is in consonant with Sala-Martin, Bilbao-Osorio, Di Battista, Hanouz, Galvan and Geiger (2014), who noted that skills acquired and developed enables student to function in many areas in a diversified economy. A diversified economy is a competitive environment which requires innovation, creativity, intelligence, skills and high level of technology for survival. Therefore, the curriculum of business education must be flexible so as to enhance students to measure-up the current technological trend for global competitiveness and trade liberalization.

The result of the study also showed that there were significant relationship between curriculum development and the preparation of business education students for trade liberalization. Therefore, the curriculum of business education must be reviewed to accommodate more skills acquisition which will position the students on a platform to engage themselves in other aspect of jobs and career out side the teaching profession, office job, small scale business operations and being an entrepreneur. These can be achieved through the process of developing and acquiring multitask skill. The study is in line with Karma (2012), who noted that trade liberalization is needed to realize trade potentials as driving force for economic growth and development; these can be achieved through skills acquisition. Skill acquisition empowers the individual economically and adds more advantage. Employers need skill and technical manpower. Technical manpower encourages investors to invest a portion of their portfolio into a diversified economy. If the curriculum of business education is reviewed to accommodate flexibility then more areas of skills will be introduced for trade liberalization.

Conclusion

In conclusion, developing and acquiring diverse skills will place business education recipient on a platform of various job opportunities in the e-world. It is important to compliment the teaching methods with other learning approach that gives the students opportunity to develop skills through practical application of knowledge in the technological world. Therefore the curriculum of business education should provide the student with a more balanced education to survive in the e-world that is all about innovation, technology, skills and competitiveness.

Educational Implication

The study has implication on the current use of curriculum and learning approaches to business education training, skill development and acquisition. It also has implication on the availability and utilization of modern facilities in teaching learning of business education and the preparation of student for a competitive e-world. It also has implication on the professionalism of business education curriculum developers in Nigeria.



Recommendation

Base on the result of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Business education curriculum developers must be core business educators and the curriculum should be flexible to the technological trend and globalization issues.
2. Business education curriculum should be reviewed in areas of innovation and technology to accommodate other job opportunities for trade liberalization.
3. Entrepreneurial skills should be taught; practiced and encouraged because of the diversification of Nigeria's economy.
4. Modern gadgets and facilities that equate globalization should be provided for effective teaching and learning of business education.

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