



EXPLOITING DIGITAL RESOURCES IN BUSINESS EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS FOR STUDENTS' SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The study examined the importance of digital resources in Business education curriculum for students' skill development. The descriptive survey design was used for this study. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study consists of 210 lecturers teaching Business education courses in four tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The stratified sampling technique was used to select 135 lecturers from the population. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire structured in a Likert format titled: Exploiting Digital Resources in Business Education Curriculum in Tertiary Institutions for Students Skill Acquisition (EDRBECTISSA). Only 128 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved among which 8 were not usable while only 120 was used for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used in testing the hypotheses. The findings revealed that digital resources can enhance students' skill development in tertiary institutions. The study recommended that Business education lecturers should endeavor to develop in themselves the ability to use digital resources as to enable them become quality mentors to students in business education and that curriculum planners should include the findings of this study in the curriculum as to enable students achieve salable skills in the world of work.

Keywords: Business Education, Exploiting, Digital Resources, skill Development

Introduction

Business education being regarded as a part of vocational education that provides skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes necessary for effective employment in a specific business occupation emphasizes a lot in teaching of skill acquisition. Skill acquisition is the ability to be trained on a particular task or function until you become an expert on the skill. According to Udo and Babangide (2012) skill acquisition is the capacity to be trained on a particular business occupation and become a proficient professional in it. In the view of Ikpe, (2013). skill acquisition in business education includes communication skill, reading skill, manipulative skill, shorthand skill, keyboarding skill, computer skill book keeping skill etc. Most lecturers involved in Business education are aware that their students need to develop a range of skills in order to cope with and indeed thrive in the business environment. The skills which need to be developed have been identified by many other



writers. List of other identified skills include the following: problem Identification and Problem Solving; oral and written Communication; information gathering; information processing; numeracy, analytical application (of concepts and techniques), creative, social and Inter-personal skill, self-analysis, decision making skills.

The acquisition of these skills is the main focus of business education programme for self reliance and more employable motives. Koko (2010) defined skill acquisition as a systematic and sequential development of skills that promotes efficiency and effectiveness in the performance of a specified job. Skill acquisition is the process of developing capacities through all levels of education and training, occurring in formal, non-formal, and on-the-job settings, which enable individuals in all areas of the economy to be fully and productively engaged in livelihoods and to have the capacity to adapt their skills to meet the changing demands and opportunities of the economy and labour market especially in the digital world. Skill acquisition is the ability to be trained on a particular task or function and become expert in it. Skill acquisition has been described by many as the recipe for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by creating avenue for employment, thereby creating job opportunities and wealth creation. Gumbari in Mshelia (2019) assert that skill acquisition in Nigeria should be perceived as a catalyst to increase the rate of economic growth, create job opportunities, reduce import of manufactured goods and decrease trade deficits that result from such import. While stressing the importance of skill acquisition in the national growth, emphatically contended, "that Nigeria's social and economic problems will be drastically reduced if people are given adequate vocational training in skills, raw materials, machineries and equipment". It is only with skilled men that materials can be harnessed, manipulated and transformed into products with quality skill acquisition programme. Oluwadare (2019) saw skill acquisition as the ability to learn a skill, which can be intellectual such as learning to listen, speak, read and write or manual such as learning to build or make something

Business education is considered as the pedagogical knowledge and business competencies necessary for teaching business attitude, concept, skills and knowledge. This could be for personal or vocational usage or career as an administrator, manager or teacher. Business education is seen as a programme that has promoted skills which enable an individual to function effectively and efficiently, as an employee, or an employer. Business education as a comprehensive discipline whose instructional programme encompasses the knowledge, attitudes and skills is needed by individuals in order to effectively manage their personal business and economic system. These skills are also needed for entry into employment and advancement in a broad range of career. According to Udo (2015), business education is a comprehensive activity-based occupational education programme that is concerned with the acquisition of practical skills, abilities, understanding, attitudes, work habits and competencies that are requisite to success in any chosen business occupation. In order to achieve this objective, the use of technology becomes very important as a means of learning and teaching.

The use of digital resources as a means of improving the efficiency and effectiveness in business education curriculum is not in doubt. With the introduction of digital processes, there will be changes in pedagogical delivery system. The advent of information communication technology has given rise to the formulation of new educational objectives which requires innovation and modification in the content, method and evaluation strategies. According to Omolade (2003) in Olumese (2008) the three methods that can be used in teaching business education are through formal education, non-formal education and informal education. These three methods can utilize information communication technology (ICT) such as micro computers, teleconference, video conferencing, electronic mail, cyber space and internet, computer, teleconferencing and audio conferencing. Others include hyper text, video text, communication satellite, interactive cable television technique.

According to World Bank (2002), tertiary education is seen as the capstone of the traditional education pyramid. As the apex of educational structure, it is a critical pillar of human development which provides a life-long learning framework for training high-level skilled human capital resources in



all spheres of life namely, teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanities, entrepreneurs, scientist and myriad of personnel. Improved tertiary education is necessary for sustainable progress in basic education. With the advent of globalization and information revolution, education is expected to create intellectual capacity on which knowledge production and utilization depends on. It is also expected to play a key role in promoting life-long learning practices that is necessary for updating people's knowledge and skills. To achieve this, tertiary institutions need to change their instruction modes of operation and delivery by taking advantage of digital resources in teaching, which is an integral part of information communication technology (ICT).

Curriculum refers to the means and materials with which students will interact for the purpose of achieving identified educational outcomes. To determine what constitutes those means and materials, educators must decide what we want the curriculum to yield. We must also ask what will constitute the "educated" individual in our society (Corwin, 2011). The body of a curriculum is principally meant to enable students to meet the needs of the society and encourage positive change and growth. As Corwin (2011) observed, the curriculum categories employed by most educational institutions include: explicit, implicit, null, and extra/co-curricular. Business education aptly employs the explicit curriculum because its subjects promote the skills and knowledge that students are expected to acquire. Because this is the core purpose of running the programme, it is expected that sufficient attention and resources will be devoted to the programme.

The implication of this is that digital knowledge acquisition now places different demands on education in general and business education in particular. Therefore, the concern on how business education curriculum is delivered in Nigerian tertiary institutions in contemporary society becomes important if our educational system is to be relevant to serve the societal needs in the present age of information. This can be done by utilizing Digital resources in teaching and learning situation to improve and enhance business education students learning, academic proficiency, effectiveness and efficiency in the modern day world of work. The integration of digital resources in teaching is a crucial matter in ensuring quality of business education courses. There are two equally important reasons for integrating digital resources into the teaching and learning curriculum of business education. Firstly, students would become familiar with the use of these digital resources, since all jobs in the society today are dependent on digital resources. Secondly, the teaching of business education courses utilizing digital resources will improve the quality of business education graduates thereby making them more effective and entrepreneurially efficient (Okolocha&Nwadiani, 2015).

Since business education provides students with requisites skills which are needed for increasing their productive power on any nation, the work force is accordingly motivated to initiate independent productive ventures and carry out skilled works of divergent nature. The positive utilization of digital resources in teaching Business Education therefore becomes imperative to business education students. Digital resources are new developments in science and technology and their utilization can equally stimulate relevance of the Nigerian educational sector in general. Digital resources are considered as one part of education technology that pays attention to the concepts, utilization and application in the educational process. This in turn requires rethinking and pedagogical re-engineering of classroom environment or the application of out-of-classroom environment and its components as prescribed by Ordu (2020).

It is inevitable for business educators to integrate digital resources into subjects to assist in students' learning with teaching materials, teaching methods, and diversified teaching media. It is the common responsibility for educators to make teaching become more efficient, enable students to be creative in learning, and cultivate the new generation with innovative and critical thinking with technologies and network information in the new era. Digital teaching aims to have students actively participate in learning activity to achieve the set learning outcome (Paxson, 2010). The design of teaching activity and the flexible application of technological tools therefore become the primary issues



for current information technology integrated in education. The advancement, in which digital resources offer in higher education, can be evident through accessibility to available quality digital resources. This can only be attained when it is drastically integrated into the instructional process in the teacher education system.

This study is based on digital instructional material theories which emphasizes that there is a direct link between the digital materials that the teachers use, and the students' learning outcomes. These outcomes include higher abilities to learn, quality strategies to learn and perform classroom activities and positive attitude towards learning. Further, these theories assume that digital instructional materials have the capacity to develop into students the highest order of intellectual skills as they illustrate clearly, step by step how to follow the rules/principles and elaborate on the concepts, all of which have positive impact on solving new problems by analyzing the situation and formulating a plan (Gagné, 2005). According to Gagne (2005), digital instructional material can be used to develop higher learning abilities to the learners through self-teaching or guided learning. This implies that the instructional materials mainly comprise "eliciting performance" and "providing feedback on performance correctness," in addition to "providing learning guidance" for guided discovery learning.

Productive instructional delivery enhances learners' creative and innovative development through the use of digital resources, as we can find in the use of multimedia images, graphics, audio, text and motion for high quality learning. Despite the importance of digital resources in the acquisition of employability skill by graduates in Nigerian labour market, it is unfortunate that responses of employers of labour reaching competencies of the use of modern technology by recent graduates reveal that these skills are lacking. Therefore, the focus of this research is on exploiting digital resources in Business education curriculum in tertiary institutions for students' skill development.

Statement of the Problem

Business education and the utilization of digital resources in teaching have been acknowledged as potent and viable tools for skill development, self-empowerment, job creation and economic survival. The objective of Business education on one hand is focused at turning out those who can teach in our schools. On the other hand, it is prepared to turn out producer-graduates into the society who would contribute meaningfully to the economic activities of their communities. It is surprising that many of Business education graduates still join the queue of unemployed graduates because they left the university as consumer-graduates who lack productive skills for self-employment. The world is technologically getting advanced. It is sometimes referred to as a global village. The reason for this assertion is attributed to the influence of information and communication technology. Digital resources as a matter of fact are fast becoming popular in Business education instructional delivery method.

Utilization of digital resources enhances motivation, help recall previous learning, and provide new instructional stimulus for the learners. However, many teachers and students do not have the required skills and competency in the utilization of digital resources for impacting business education courses. The above observations stimulated the researcher's interest to investigate on how digital resources can be utilized in Business education curriculum for students' skill development in Nigeria tertiary institutions. In addition to the above, is the rising dissatisfaction among employers of labour on the poor performance and competencies, skills of business education graduates in the use of digital processes in the new world of work. The implication of this is that business education graduates become unemployable and unfit either in a paid job or self employment and sustainability.

This study therefore examined the extent to which the utilization of digital resources in teaching Business Education courses can enhance students' skill development in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Objectively, the study tends to:

1. Determine the digital resources needed in the business education curriculum for students' skill development.



2. Ascertain the extent to which the identified digital resources are suitable for students skill development.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the digital resources needed in the business education curriculum for students' skill development?
2. To what extent are the identified digital resources suitable for students' skill development?

Hypotheses

H01: Business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital resources needed by business education students for skill development

H02: Business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital resources suitable for business education students' skill acquisition development

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used for this study. The stratified sampling techniques was used to select 135 lecturers from about 210 lecturers teaching business and entrepreneurship related courses in four tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire structured in a Likert format which consists of three parts and was titled: Exploiting Digital Resources in Business Education Curriculum in Tertiary Institutions for Students Skill Acquisition (EDRBECTISSA). The instrument was divided into two parts, A and B. part A was designed to elicit demographic information from the respondents. The instruments that was arranged in a Likert format a 4-point rating scale was weighted as "Highly Needed" (HN) – 4 points, "Needed" (N) – 3 points, "Fairly Needed" (FN) – 2 points, Not Needed (NN) – 1 point and Very High Extent" (VHE) – 4 points, "High Extent" (HE) – 3 points, "Low Extent" (D) – 2 points and "Very low extent" (VLE) – 1 point. To establish the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by two experts from the department of Business education in Federal College of Education Technical Omoku and the department of Business education in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt. The data analysis was done using the mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The mean was obtained by the summation of all responses as assigned to a rating scale in an item divided by the total number of responses: $4+3+2+1/4 = 2.50$. The mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted, while those below 2.50 were rejected. Also, the decision rules for the hypotheses was that any hypothesis which t-calculated value is less than the t-critical table value of 1.96 is considered accepted whereas if it is more than the critical table value is considered rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the digital resources needed in the business education curriculum for students' skill acquisitions



Table 3: Mean ratings and standard deviation of lecturers on the digital resources needed in the business education curriculum for students’ skill acquisitions

| S/N | digital resources needed for students’ skill acquisitions | Female Lecturers | ST.D | Male Lecturers | ST.D | Remarks |
|---|---|------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| | | \bar{X} | | \bar{X} | | |
| Software/Hardware | | | | | | |
| 1. | Browsers | 2.76 | 0.76 | 2.85 | 0.61 | N |
| 2. | Laptops | 3.70 | 0.71 | 3.43 | 0.59 | HN |
| 3. | Multimedia Software, etc. | 3.00 | 0.67 | 3.00 | 0.67 | HN |
| 4. | Interactive Whiteboard | 3.20 | 0.98 | 3.10 | 1.94 | HN |
| 1.0 Content Websites and Application | | | | | | |
| 5. | Search engines | 3.30 | 0.90 | 2.90 | 1.74 | N |
| 6. | Online Reference Materials | 3.50 | 0.50 | 3.45 | 1.57 | HN |
| 7. | Games | 3.00 | 1.76 | 3.23 | 1.08 | HN |
| Social Media | | | | | | |
| 8. | Virtual Communities | 3.50 | 0.96 | 3.00 | 0.67 | HN |
| 9. | Social Networks | 3.13 | 1.11 | 3.13 | 1.05 | HN |
| 2.0 Content Website and application | | | | | | |
| 10. | Blogs | 3.10 | 0.94 | 3.03 | 0.82 | HN |
| 11. | Video Shearing Sites | 3.10 | 0.83 | 2.70 | 1.10 | HN |
| 12. | Message Boards | 2.90 | 0.80 | 2.90 | 0.83 | N |
| 13. | Wikis | 2.80 | 0.87 | 2.74 | 1.08 | N |
| Communication Services | | | | | | |
| 14. | Video Conferencing | 3.30 | 1.03 | 2.80 | 0.84 | HN |
| 15. | E-mailing | 3.53 | 0.83 | 2.83 | 0.54 | HN |
| Grand Mean/SD | | 3.16 | 0.84 | 3.06 | 0.83 | HN |

Source: Field work, (2022)

The data presented in Table 3 show that items 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14 and 15 are highly needed with a mean of 3.11 and a standard deviation of 0.83 while items 1, 5, 12, and 13 are needed. Thus, the grand mean score of 3.16 shows that the respondents strongly agreed that the identified digital resources are seriously needed for business education students’ skill acquisition

Research Question 2: To what extent are the identified digital resources suitable for students’ skill development?



Table 4: Mean ratings and standard deviation of lecturers on the extent to which the identified digital resources are suitable for students' skill development

| S/N | digital resources are suitable for students' skill development | Female Lecturers \bar{X} | ST.D | Male Lecturers \bar{X} | ST.D | Remarks |
|-----|--|-------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|
| 1. | Software/Hardware | 3.62 | 1.90 | 3.56 | 1.88 | VHE |
| 2. | 1.0 Content Websites and Application | 3.82 | 1.95 | 3.57 | 1.88 | VHE |
| 3. | Social Media | 3.84 | 1.95 | 3.69 | 1.91 | VHE |
| 4. | 2.0 Content Website and application | 3.78 | 1.94 | 3.71 | 1.92 | VHE |
| 5. | Communication Services | 3.23 | 1.88 | 3.09 | 1.75 | VHE |
| 6. | Grand Mean/SD | 3.66 | 1.92 | 3.52 | 1.79 | VHE |

Source: *Field work, (2022)*

The data presented in Table 4 with a grand mean of 3.59 and standard deviation of 1.59 indicates that the identified digital resources are very suitable for Business education students' skill development.

Hypothesis 1: Business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital resources needed by business education students for skill development

Table 4: t-test analysis of the mean ratings of male and female Business education lecturers on the digital resources needed by business education students for skill development

| Gender | N | X | Std Dev | Df | T-cal | T-tab |
|--------|----|------|---------|-----|-------|-------|
| Female | 40 | 3.16 | 0.84 | 118 | 1.32 | 1.68 |
| Male | 80 | 3.06 | 0.83 | | | |

Result in table 4 shows that the t-tabulated, 1.09 is less than the t-calculated 1.96 thus we accept the null hypothesis. This implies that at 0.05 level of significance there's no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Business education lecturers on the digital resources needed by business education students for skill development.

Hypothesis 2: Business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital resources suitable for business education students' skill development

Table 4: t-test analysis of the mean ratings of male and female Business education lecturers on the digital resources suitable for business education students' skill development

| Gender | N | X | Std Dev | Df | T-cal | T-tab |
|--------|----|------|---------|-----|-------|-------|
| Female | 40 | 3.66 | 1.92 | 118 | 1.96 | 1.09 |
| Male | 80 | 3.52 | 1.79 | | | |

Result in table 4 shows that the t-tabulated, 1.09 is less than the t-calculated 1.96 thus we accept the null hypothesis. This implies that at 0.05 level of significance there's no significant



difference between the mean ratings of male and female Business education lecturers on the digital resources suitable for business education students' skill development.

Discussion

The results of this study discovered that digital resources are highly needed in business education programme in tertiary institutions for digital economy development. This is in consonance with Okolocha&Nwadiani, (2015) who stated that the integration of digital resources in teaching is a crucial matter in ensuring quality of business education courses. and gave two equally important reasons for integrating digital resources into the teaching and learning curriculum of business education that students would become familiar with the use of these digital resources, since all jobs in the society today are dependent on digital resources. Again that teaching of business education courses utilizing digital resources will improve the quality of business education graduates thereby making them more effective and entrepreneurially efficient.

Moreso, business education as a skilled programme is expected to produce graduates that have the capacity of becoming self reliant upon graduation. In support of the above, Ordu (2020) stated that it is inevitable for business educators to integrate digital resources into subjects to assist in students' learning with teaching materials, teaching methods, and diversified teaching media. The identified digital resources in this study are to a very large extent needed to enhance students' skill development in tertiary institutions. Digital literacy helps to boost students' engagement in technology education and as well helps students stand out from their competition in the job market.

Therefore, business educators should equip themselves with the new technological resources needed to train students to fit into the demands of modern and digital business world. In agreement, Paxson, (2010). presented that it is the common responsibility for educators to make teaching become more efficient, enable students to be creative in learning, and cultivate the new generation with innovative and critical thinking with technologies and network information in the new era. Using digital teaching aims to have students actively participate in learning activity to achieve the set learning outcome.

Conclusion

This study examined how digital resources can enhance skill development among Business education students in tertiary institutions. Digital resources can help graduates to become self-employed as digital entrepreneurs and as well for creation of employment for others. Employers of labour expect certain skills from every prospective graduate employees for effective job performance and efficiency. In setting out the objectives of the study, some digital resources which could determine skill development like: Software/Hardware, 1.0 Content Websites and Application, **Social Media, 2.0 Content Website and application and Communication Services** were identified The findings of this study reveal that digital resources when enshrined in the curriculum and implemented can be a sure partway for enhancing skill development among Business education students.

Recommendations

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

1. Business education lecturers are hereby encouraged to develop in themselves how to use these digital resources as to enable them become quality mentors to students in Business Education
2. Students should be encouraged by lecturers to improve their use of **Social Media especially in the development of useful contents through which they can identify their skills and abilities**



3. Curriculum planners are encouraged to include the findings of this study in the curriculum as to enable students achieve the needed skills in digital activities
4. Government should gear its interest towards providing computers and other software/hardware machines in its schools to enable students undergo these developmental processes easily

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