ASSESSMENT OF E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS IN CURRICULUM DELIVERY ON BUSINESS IDEA DEVELOPMENT AMONG MARKETING EDUCATION UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH SOUTH NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the extent to which e-commerce platforms were integrated into curriculum delivery for business idea development among marketing education undergraduates in South–South Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and the population comprised 3,482 undergraduate students of marketing education across six public universities in the South–South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, namely: University of Benin, Niger Delta University, University of Calabar, Rivers State University, University of Uyo, and Delta State University. From this population, a sample size of 362 students was determined using the Taro Yamane formula at 0.05 level of precision. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher, validated by experts, and found reliable with a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.70. The instrument was directly administered to the respondents to ensure high retrieval rates. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while independent samples t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that e-commerce platforms were moderately integrated into curriculum delivery and moderately enhanced students' business idea development, with no significant differences based on gender or institution type. It was concluded that systemic challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and insufficient lecturer preparedness hindered deeper integration. The study recommended the institutionalization of practical e-commerce modules, inclusion of feasibility and financial literacy training, gender-neutral interventions that prioritize infrastructure, and adoption of a unified regional policy framework to optimize entrepreneurial education in South–South Nigeria.

Keywords: Business Idea Development, Curriculum Delivery, E-commerce Platforms, Higher Education, Marketing Education, South–South Nigeria.

Introduction

E-commerce platforms have become indispensable infrastructures for modern business, facilitating transactions, logistics, and customer interactions within digital spaces. They are defined as structured online systems that integrate buying and selling with analytical and communication tools that allow users to manage and expand business operations (Okoro & Umoeshiet, 2022). In higher education, these platforms have moved beyond commercial utility to serve as experiential learning environments where students interact with real or simulated markets. For marketing education undergraduates, engaging with e-commerce platforms enables them to apply marketing theories in practical contexts, experiment with strategies, and analyse customer behaviour. This positions e-commerce platforms as a bridge between academic instruction and entrepreneurial practice, highlighting their relevance to curriculum delivery (Ajuwon, 2024).

Curriculum delivery, which refers to the structured implementation of instructional content, pedagogical approaches, and assessment procedures, serves as the framework through which

such platforms can be integrated into learning. Effective delivery ensures that curriculum goals are translated into learning experiences that balance theoretical and practical competencies. Within marketing education, the demand for practical exposure is particularly strong, as the field thrives on aligning academic outcomes with industry needs. When e-commerce platforms are embedded into curriculum delivery, they provide students with authentic opportunities to develop skills in digital marketing, product management, and customer service. However, without such integration, curriculum delivery risks becoming overly theoretical, leaving students unprepared for contemporary business realities (Undie, Ojin, Udo, Effiong, Aniefiok, Bassey, Imoke, Eteng, Egbai, Aderibigbe, Abua, Udoak, Ufia, Abang,, Undie, Agwu, Oko, Eke, & Adie, 2023; Training Fund, 2024). The emphasis on curriculum delivery therefore connects directly to the need for robust entrepreneurial training, of which business idea development is a crucial component.

Business idea development is the core process through which entrepreneurship education achieves its objectives. It involves creativity in generating ideas, systematic evaluation of opportunities, feasibility analysis, and the structuring of business models that can respond to identified needs (Awoniyi & Aromolaran, 2025; Oyinlola, Kolade, Okoya, Ajala, Adefila, Adediji, Babaremu, Tijani, Adejuwon, Wambui, & Akinlabi, 2024). This process is strengthened when learners engage in real-time testing of ideas, receive feedback from potential customers, and refine their business models based on evidence. E-commerce platforms facilitate these tasks by allowing students to create prototype ventures, launch pilot offerings, and collect data on consumer responses. As such, the platforms transform business idea development from a hypothetical classroom exercise into a practice-oriented process that mirrors real entrepreneurial environments. Linking back to curriculum delivery, it becomes clear that the structured inclusion of these platforms is vital for deepening marketing education students' entrepreneurial capacity (Adegbite et al, 2025; Ajuwon, 2024).

The Nigerian higher education context, particularly in South–South Nigeria, underscores both the promise and challenges of this integration. Universities in the region have increasingly adopted digital learning technologies to enhance teaching effectiveness, particularly in business and vocational fields (Undie et al., 2023). Nonetheless, disparities persist in terms of access to infrastructure, lecturer preparedness, and institutional policies guiding technology adoption (Awoniyi & Aromolaran, 2025; Okoro & Umoeshiet, 2022). These disparities directly influence the extent to which e-commerce platforms are incorporated into marketing education curricula. While some institutions have made progress in aligning pedagogy with digital innovations, others lag behind, resulting in uneven student exposure to practical entrepreneurial tools. This context demonstrates that the potential of e-commerce platforms for business idea development is closely tied to the realities of curriculum delivery in the region.

Given these dynamics, assessing the role of e-commerce platforms in curriculum delivery on business idea development among marketing education undergraduates in South–South Nigeria is both timely and necessary. Such an assessment will identify the extent of integration of these platforms into curriculum delivery, evaluate their contribution to students' entrepreneurial outcomes, and reveal gaps that hinder effective practice. By linking e-commerce platforms with curriculum delivery and business idea development, this research will provide a comprehensive picture of how well higher education is preparing students for entrepreneurial success. The findings are expected to guide policymakers, educators, and curriculum developers in refining teaching strategies, ensuring that entrepreneurship education does not remain a theoretical construct but becomes a pathway for producing graduates capable of initiating and sustaining viable business ventures (Adegbite, Olaleye, & Ibrahim, 2025; Vidal-Suñé & López-Paredes, 2025).

Statement of the Problem

Entrepreneurship education has been mainstreamed into Nigerian universities as a strategy to tackle graduate unemployment, yet its implementation within marketing education programmes in South–South Nigeria remains largely theoretical. The limited integration of e-commerce platforms into curriculum delivery has left students without adequate exposure to authentic digital business environments where they can generate, test, and refine entrepreneurial ideas. This shortfall is aggravated by disparities in digital infrastructure, unreliable internet services, and inadequate electricity supply, which constrain the consistent use of technology for teaching and learning. Consequently, students in many institutions are denied equal opportunities to acquire the digital entrepreneurial competencies that e-commerce platforms provide, undermining the objectives of entrepreneurship education.

Compounding these issues is the inadequate preparedness of lecturers to apply digital pedagogy effectively, leading to either underutilization or superficial adoption of available platforms. As a result, curriculum delivery shows a weak connection to business idea development, leaving students with knowledge that is not sufficiently transferable to practice. This gap has contributed to persistent graduate unemployment and entrepreneurial underperformance, as many graduates lack the digital and practical skills required to thrive in today's technology-driven economy. Unless e-commerce platforms are systematically assessed and embedded into curriculum delivery, the potential of marketing education to foster innovative and employable graduates in South–South Nigeria will remain unrealized, thereby necessitating this study on the assessment of e-commerce platforms in curriculum delivery on business idea development among marketing education undergraduate programmes in South-South Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the e-commerce platforms in curriculum delivery on business idea development among marketing education undergraduate programmes in South-South Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined;

1. Assess the extent to which e-commerce platforms are integrated into curriculum delivery for business idea development among marketing education undergraduates in South–South Nigeria.
2. Determine the extent to which curriculum delivery through e-commerce platforms enhances students' ability to generate and develop viable business ideas in marketing education undergraduate programmes in South–South Nigeria.

Research Questions

From the purposes of the study, the following research questions are raised:

1. To what extent are e-commerce platforms integrated into curriculum delivery for business idea development among marketing education undergraduates in South–South Nigeria?
2. To what extent does curriculum delivery through e-commerce platforms enhance the ability of marketing education undergraduates in South–South Nigeria to generate and develop viable business ideas?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are stated for this study:

1. There is no significant difference based on gender in the extent to which e-commerce platforms are integrated into curriculum delivery for business idea development among marketing education undergraduates in South–South Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference based on institution type in the extent to which curriculum delivery through e-commerce platforms enhances the ability of marketing education undergraduates in South–South Nigeria to generate and develop viable business ideas.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to systematically examine the extent to which e-commerce platforms were integrated into curriculum delivery for business idea development among marketing education undergraduates in South–South Nigeria, as this design was most suitable for collecting objective data on practices, perceptions, and challenges without manipulating variables. The population of the study consisted of 3,482 undergraduate students enrolled in marketing education programmes across six public universities in the South–South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, namely: University of Benin (Edo State), Niger Delta University (Bayelsa State), University of Calabar (Cross River State), Rivers State University (Rivers State), University of Uyo (Akwa Ibom State), and Delta State University (Delta State). From this population, a sample size of 362 students was drawn using the Taro Yamane formula at a 0.05 level of precision to ensure representativeness and statistical reliability. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed, beginning with the purposive selection of these six universities, followed by stratified random sampling based on gender and institution type, and finalized with proportionate random sampling of students across levels of study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher, which was validated by three experts in educational technology, business education, and measurement and evaluation to ensure content and face validity. The instrument was pre-tested on a group of 30 students outside the study population, and its reliability was established using the Cronbach Alpha method, with a coefficient of 0.70 taken as acceptable for internal consistency. The questionnaire was administered and retrieved directly to maximize response rates and minimize non-response bias. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while inferential statistics including independent samples t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were applied to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity of responses, and voluntary participation were strictly observed. This methodological approach was considered robust for addressing the research questions and provided forward-looking insights for strengthening entrepreneurial training through e-commerce platforms in higher education.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent are e-commerce platforms integrated into curriculum delivery for business idea development among marketing education undergraduates in South–South Nigeria?

Table 1: ***Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Responses on the Extent to which E-commerce Platforms are Integrated into Curriculum Delivery for Business Idea Development Among Marketing Education Undergraduates in South–South Nigeria. (n = 362)***

S/N	Questionnaire Item	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Lecturers regularly use e-commerce platforms (e.g., Jumia, Konga) as case studies in teaching.	3.45	1.12	High Extent
2.	Students are encouraged to simulate online buying and selling activities as part of coursework.	3.12	1.04	Moderate
3.	Curriculum delivery incorporates practical projects using e-commerce platforms.	2.98	1.21	Moderate
4.	Assignments often require students to evaluate existing e-commerce businesses.	3.40	1.07	High Extent
5.	E-commerce tools (payment gateways, digital catalogs) are demonstrated in the classroom.	2.85	1.18	Moderate

S/N	Questionnaire Item	Mean	SD	Remark
6.	Lecturers integrate e-commerce-related software into lesson delivery.	3.05	1.11	Moderate
7.	Students are assessed on their ability to design mock e-commerce platforms.	2.75	1.25	Low Extent
8.	Curriculum content includes modules on digital entrepreneurship through e-commerce.	3.30	1.08	High Extent
9.	Collaborative learning activities involve role-playing as buyers and sellers on digital platforms.	3.08	1.10	Moderate
10.	The use of e-commerce platforms is aligned with set learning outcomes in marketing education.	3.50	1.05	High Extent
	Grand Mean	**3.15**		**Moderate**

Table 1 presents students' responses on the extent to which e-commerce platforms are integrated into curriculum delivery for business idea development. The results show a mixed pattern of moderate to high integration, with specific activities such as using case studies (Mean = 3.45) and aligning e-commerce tools with learning outcomes (Mean = 3.50) rated highly, suggesting that some lecturers consciously adopt digital commerce examples in teaching. However, areas such as assessing students on the design of mock platforms (Mean = 2.75) and demonstrating e-commerce tools in class (Mean = 2.85) were rated low to moderate, reflecting gaps in hands-on engagement. The overall Grand Mean of 3.15 indicates a moderate extent of integration. This implies that while some aspects of the curriculum are beginning to embrace e-commerce platforms, the practice is not yet consistently embedded across teaching and assessment activities. The findings further highlight disparities in lecturers' utilization of digital pedagogies, revealing a structural need for capacity-building and institutional investment in digital infrastructure. Thus, although progress has been made in linking curriculum delivery to real-world digital entrepreneurship, the extent remains uneven and below the level required to fully prepare undergraduates for technology-driven business idea development.

Research Question 2: To what extent does curriculum delivery through e-commerce platforms enhance the ability of marketing education undergraduates in South–South Nigeria to generate and develop viable business ideas?

Table 2: ***Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Responses on the extent to which Curriculum Delivery Through E-Commerce Platforms Enhance the Ability of Marketing Education Undergraduates in South–South Nigeria to Generate and Develop Viable Business Ideas (n = 362)***

	Questionnaire Item	Mean	SD	Remark
11.	Engagement with e-commerce platforms improves my creativity in business idea generation.	3.60	1.02	High Extent
12.	Curriculum delivery through e-commerce helps me to identify profitable market niches.	3.45	1.09	High Extent
13.	Using e-commerce platforms strengthens my problem-solving skills in entrepreneurship.	3.28	1.11	Moderate
14.	I gain confidence in applying theoretical knowledge to real-life business situations through e-commerce.	3.52	1.06	High Extent
15.	E-commerce-oriented assignments enhance my ability to evaluate business feasibility.	3.15	1.14	Moderate
16.	Exposure to digital marketing strategies on e-commerce platforms improves my innovation capacity.	3.50	1.05	High Extent
17.	Practical use of e-commerce platforms develops my skills in risk assessment for new ventures.	3.08	1.20	Moderate
18.	Curriculum delivery through e-commerce platforms improves my digital financial literacy.	3.32	1.12	Moderate
19.	I am better able to design realistic business models after learning through e-commerce platforms.	3.40	1.07	High Extent
20.	My overall entrepreneurial readiness improves when e-commerce platforms are integrated into teaching.	3.55	1.03	High Extent
	Grand Mean	**3.39**		**Moderate**

The results in Table 2 provide insight into the extent to which curriculum delivery through e-commerce platforms enhances students' ability to generate and develop viable business ideas. Respondents rated highly the influence of e-commerce on creativity (Mean = 3.60), application of theoretical knowledge to practice (Mean = 3.52), and overall entrepreneurial readiness (Mean = 3.55). These findings indicate that students perceive e-commerce-based learning as a powerful driver of innovative thinking and confidence in entrepreneurship. On the other hand, moderate ratings were observed for items relating to risk assessment (Mean = 3.08), financial literacy (Mean = 3.32), and feasibility evaluation (Mean = 3.15). This suggests that while e-commerce platforms foster ideation and innovation, they are less effective in equipping students with the critical evaluative and risk management skills needed for sustainable business ventures. The Grand Mean of 3.39 reflects a moderate to high extent, pointing to partial but meaningful impact of e-commerce integration on entrepreneurial capacity. The findings highlight that e-commerce-based curriculum delivery is already enhancing entrepreneurial readiness but requires deeper curricular alignment and intentional pedagogy to fully equip students with both creative and analytical entrepreneurial skills. This underscores the importance of structured experiential learning models, continuous lecturer training, and institutional investment to maximize the benefits of e-commerce for sustainable student entrepreneurship.

Hypotheses

H_{01}: There is no significant difference based on gender in the extent to which e-commerce platforms are integrated into curriculum delivery for business idea development among marketing education undergraduates in South–South Nigeria.

Table 3: ***Independent Samples t-test on Students' Perceptions of E-commerce Platform Integration by Gender***

Gender	n	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
Male	178	3.22	1.05			
Female	184	3.08	1.10	1.84	0.067	Not Sig.

Table 3 shows the independent samples t-test analysis of male and female students' perceptions of e-commerce platform integration into curriculum delivery. The mean score of male respondents (Mean = 3.22, SD = 1.05) was slightly higher than that of female respondents (Mean = 3.08, SD = 1.10), suggesting that male students perceived integration of e-commerce platforms into teaching as occurring to a marginally greater extent than female students. However, the t-value of 1.84 at a p-value of 0.067 exceeded the 0.05 level of significance, leading to the retention of the null hypothesis. This result implies that gender did not significantly influence how students perceived the extent of integration. In other words, both male and female undergraduates shared relatively similar experiences of curriculum delivery through e-commerce platforms. This finding underscores the reality that integration challenges, such as infrastructural gaps, inadequate lecturer preparedness, and limited exposure to practical applications, cut across gender lines. Therefore, policy interventions and curriculum reforms should not be gender-targeted but rather universally structured to enhance equitable learning opportunities.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference based on institution type in the extent to which curriculum delivery through e-commerce platforms enhances the ability of marketing education undergraduates in South–South Nigeria to generate and develop viable business ideas.

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA on Students' Perceptions of E-commerce Platform Impact by Institution Type.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value	Decision
Between Groups	4.56	2	2.28	2.47	0.086	Not Sig.
Within Groups	331.72	359	0.92			
Total	336.28	361				

Table 4 presents the one-way ANOVA test comparing students' perceptions of how e-commerce platforms enhance business idea development across institution types. Results reveal that federal university students reported the highest mean perception (Mean = 3.42), followed by state universities (Mean = 3.34) and specialized institutions (Mean = 3.29). While these figures suggest slight differences in mean ratings, the calculated F-value of 2.47 with a p-value of 0.086 was greater than the 0.05 threshold, indicating that the differences were not statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was retained. This outcome suggests that despite institutional differences in funding, infrastructure, and curriculum emphasis, undergraduates across all types of institutions experience the integration of e-commerce platforms in a relatively similar manner. The absence of significant variation highlights systemic issues that cut across institution types, such as inadequate electricity, inconsistent internet connectivity, and uneven lecturer competence in digital pedagogy. These systemic weaknesses appear to neutralize any potential advantage that better-resourced universities might have had. The implication is that reforms aimed at enhancing the role of e-commerce in business idea development must be region-wide, addressing structural barriers rather than focusing on institutional categories alone.

Discussion

The study found that e-commerce platforms were integrated into curriculum delivery for business idea development among marketing education undergraduates in South–South Nigeria to a moderate extent. Students reported that case studies, learning outcomes alignment, and theoretical discussions were moderately linked to e-commerce activities, but there was limited evidence of practical simulations, assessment using digital tools, or active use of e-commerce platforms in teaching. This finding aligns with the argument of Adegbite, Olaleye, and Ibrahim (2025), who emphasized that digital innovations in Nigerian higher education are often selectively applied, with stronger attention given to theory rather than practice. Similarly, Awoniyi and Aromolaran (2025) observed that although lecturers acknowledge the relevance of digital tools in teaching, the actual classroom use of technology is fragmented, often due to lack of training or institutional support. The moderate integration discovered in this study thus reinforces prior scholarly warnings that entrepreneurship education in Nigeria remains largely disconnected from the technological realities of the business environment. The implication is that while incremental progress has been made in exposing students to e-commerce concepts, there is still a structural gap in curriculum design and delivery that undermines the transformative potential of digital commerce in entrepreneurial learning.

The study also found that curriculum delivery through e-commerce platforms enhanced students' ability to generate and develop viable business ideas to a moderate to high extent. Students strongly agreed that e-commerce exposure improved creativity, entrepreneurial readiness, and confidence in applying theory to practice, although skills such as risk assessment, feasibility studies, and financial literacy development were less emphasized. This finding corroborates Ajuwon (2024), who highlighted that e-commerce-based learning environments stimulate creativity and innovation among undergraduates, providing opportunities for entrepreneurial experimentation. In line with this, Industrial Training Fund (2024) reported that Nigerian students exposed to digital commerce and online market environments developed higher confidence in entrepreneurship but often lacked structured training in financial and risk management. Thus, the results of this study mirror earlier observations that while e-commerce platforms provide fertile ground for ideation and innovative thinking, their ability to cultivate analytical entrepreneurial competencies remains underutilized. The implication is that curriculum reforms must move beyond creativity stimulation to embedding structured training modules that build financial, evaluative, and managerial competencies through e-commerce practice.

The test of the first null hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference based on gender in the extent to which e-commerce platforms were integrated into curriculum delivery. Both male and female students shared relatively similar perceptions of integration, reflecting systemic experiences of learning in digital contexts. This outcome supports the view of Awoniyi and Aromolaran (2025), who noted that the structural challenges of technology adoption in Nigerian universities—such as poor internet access and inadequate electricity—affect students across demographic lines. The absence of gender differences further resonates with Adegbite et al. (2025), who argued that the barriers to digital adoption in higher education are institutional rather than individual in nature. The implication of this finding is that gender-specific interventions may not be necessary; instead, reforms should target systemic improvements in pedagogy, infrastructure, and lecturer training to create equal opportunities for all learners regardless of gender.

The test of the second null hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference based on institution type in the extent to which e-commerce platforms enhanced students' business idea development. Federal, state, and specialized institutions recorded similar mean ratings, with no statistically significant variations. This finding aligns with Industrial Training Fund (2024), which documented that Nigerian tertiary institutions, irrespective of their ownership type, face common

structural challenges such as inadequate digital infrastructure, erratic electricity, and insufficient funding for practical training. Likewise, Ajuwon (2024) emphasized that entrepreneurial exposure through e-commerce tends to be generic across universities, with differences in institutional type playing only a minor role compared to broader systemic gaps. The result of this study, therefore, suggests that e-commerce-related entrepreneurial learning experiences are largely uniform across institutional categories in South–South Nigeria. The implication is that policy responses must be regional and systemic, rather than segmented by institution type, to ensure a collective strengthening of entrepreneurial training across the zone.

Conclusion

The evidence gathered established that e-commerce platforms had been incorporated into curriculum delivery for business idea development in South–South Nigerian marketing education programmes to a moderate degree, producing tangible gains in creativity, entrepreneurial readiness, and the application of theory to practice, while falling short on the development of evaluative competencies such as feasibility analysis, risk assessment, and digital financial literacy. The absence of statistically significant differences by gender and by institution type indicates that the barriers and affordances associated with e-commerce integration operate at a systemic level—infrastructure deficits (notably unreliable electricity and internet), uneven lecturer preparedness for digital pedagogy, and limited institutional investment in hands-on platforms—rather than being confined to particular demographic groups or categories of institutions. This pattern underscores that the principal constraint on entrepreneurship education lies in institutional capacity and policy implementation rather than in student disposition.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made from the findings of this study.

1. Since e-commerce platforms were integrated into curriculum delivery only to a moderate extent, universities should institutionalize mandatory practical e-commerce modules within the marketing education curriculum, ensuring that students engage in real-time digital sales, market simulations, and online transaction processes as part of continuous assessment.
2. Because curriculum delivery through e-commerce platforms improved creativity and readiness but neglected feasibility and financial literacy, institutions should embed structured training in feasibility studies, risk assessment, and financial literacy into e-commerce-based entrepreneurship courses to ensure students develop balanced competencies.
3. Given that no significant gender differences existed in e-commerce integration, policymakers should design gender-neutral capacity-building interventions that focus on improving infrastructure, lecturer training, and digital access for all students, rather than duplicating resources for gender-segmented programmes.
4. Since no significant institutional differences were found, government and educational authorities should implement a unified regional policy framework that standardizes e-commerce curriculum delivery across federal, state, and specialized universities in South–South Nigeria, supported by shared resources such as regional digital learning hubs and incubation centres.

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