



ICT IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

Occasionally, educational programme are reviewed to accommodate modern kinds especially in line with the country's goals and aspirations. business education, which is often regarded as education for and about business, is an umbrella for OTM, Accounting and Marketing courses cannot be an exception. The paper discusses the meaning of business education and its goals, the concept of ICT and its integration into business education programme for national development. The need for business education, challenges associated with business education programme and benefits accruable to it in Nigerian tertiary institutions were also enumerated. It concluded by highlighting several gains the nation's tertiary institutions stand to benefit through effective integration of ICT especially into business education programme. The paper therefore, recommends among others that the curriculum of business education programme should be restructured in order to accommodate more ICT courses and ensure uniformity.

Keywords: ICT, National Development, Business Education, Tertiary Institutions

Introduction

There is no doubt that most people, if not all, have come in contact with the latest trend in communication globally, as a result of the evolutionary changes in information and communication technology (ICT). ICT therefore, is indeed of the most pervasion technologies in the world and second only to human intelligence or human brain. No doubt, the capabilities for participating in various social and economic aspects of the society, teaching and learning in education system are changing with the diffusion of ICT.

ICT have become key tools in educational methodology and curriculum delivery globally. It has been identified as an indispensable instrument for the development of quality teaching and learning in the education system. ICT is fundamental for the preparation of students in meeting the innovations in the global arena (Ololube, 2006). The growth of information and communication technology has dramatically reshaped teaching and learning processes in higher education (Pulkkinen, 2007 and Wood, 1995)

The application of ICT in tertiary institutions is more critical today than ever before since its growing power and capabilities are triggering a change the learning environments in education (Pajo & Wallace, 2001).

The use of ICT offers powerful learning environment and can transform the learning and teaching process so that students can deal with knowledge in an active, self directed and constructive way. At present, ICT is considered as an important



means of promoting new methods of instruction (teaching and learning) and should be used to develop student's skill for cooperation communication, problem solving and life-long learning in order to achieve progressive and meaningful national development (Atsumber, Raymond and Enocha, 2012).

This study therefore wants to look into the roles of information communication technology (ICT) in National Development, its challenges and possible prospects for business education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Concept of Information and Communication Technology

Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which generally refers to a range of communication systems, devices, applications, and services (such as mobile phones, computers and the internet), offers powerful tools to change and foster new economic opportunities for citizens. ICT is widely viewed as a means of effecting changes in business process. These changes if properly implemented can translate directly to wealth maximization and other economical development. It is a fast growing new technological era, Nigeria both in education and in the job market. One can be in his sitting in their own house anywhere in the world without going to or attending the work place (Alam, 2009).

Tina (2009), defined Information and Communication Technology as a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store and manage information. These technologies include computers, electronic data processing, telecommunications, audiovisual equipments, the internet and related services.

The term ICT is referred to as a convergence of technologies that include the computer and microprocessor technology which enable users to access, store, transmit and manipulate information. Atueyi (2009) opined that ICT is a host of system, equipment and materials essentially computer based which are used to electronically achieve communication goals and varied services.

The National Policy on Information Technology in Ekpenyong, Ogbeide and Robinson (2012) see information technology as the bedrock for national survival and development in a rapidly changing global environment. Information and Communication Technology has greatly changed the environment and the teaching and learning method in business education programme. It has been a long time since the invention of the typewriter in 1868, and since then, no bigger invention has made such sweeping changes to it as the invention of the microchips and now internet. The emergence of the information age has given business educators new tools and progress never before margined.

It should be noted that business education graduates must be competent to provide quality services needed by the society hence the need for possession of entrepreneurial competencies because without them, the objective of developing individuals who shall be able and competent enough to achieve the set goals of business education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions will not be achieved.



Concept of Business Education

Historically, business education can be said to be as old as creation. Nobody was born all sufficient and so, exchanges started taking place to help man get what he could not produce on his own. The trend continued until money evolved. Parents taught their children how to exchange their products until formal education came. Aliyu (2006) traced that it was in the later part of nineteenth century that Nigerians in business partnerships with overseas exporters learnt simple commercial arithmetic, some book keeping, business communication and some typing for the purpose of facilitating business transactions. Business education is the education for the development of skills and competencies, attitudes and attributes which are necessary for efficiency of the economic system (Aliyu, 2006).

Business education is a component of vocational technical education programme that prepare individuals for career in business and also to be an intelligent consumer of economic goods and services. Business Education provides students with the needed competencies, skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes to perform as workers in industries, civil service and also as proprietors of business. Onyesom, Egule and Okwukenye (2012) in their view posited that Business Education is the intellectual and vocational instructions given to students/recipients to earn a living in the contemporary industrial and ever changing business environment. Nwachukwu (2012) saw Business Education as an umbrella name concerning those educational processes involving the study of techniques, related science and acquisition of practical skills, attitudes and knowledge relating to occupation in vocational sectors of the economy and social life of people. Business Education prepares beneficiaries for gainful employment and sustainable livelihood.

Amoor (2010) noted that business education plays a significant role in the national development by providing knowledge and skills to the learners, thereby, enabling them to adequately impart knowledge into others, and handle sophisticated office technologies and information systems. The goal of business education is primarily to produce competent, skillful and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work. It has as its primary aim, the preparation of people for roles in enterprises such roles could be as employee, entrepreneur and employer or simply as self employed.

However, from the foregoing, this paper shares the same view with the centre point position advocated by Otamiri (2008). Otamiri viewed business education as a fusion of pedagogical and entrepreneurial preparation. He maintained that business education therefore involves the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills (including teaching skills), attitudes, understanding and knowledge related to occupation in various sectors of the nations development and social life.

Goals of Business Education Programme

Business education Programme has been carefully designed to meet basic skills, knowledge and capabilities to function either as a business teacher or business executive. Ubulom (1999), as stated by Bibiana and Joshua (2016 speaking about the



objectives of business education programme outlined the goals of business education to include:

- a. To make available to all students the opportunities to explore and learn about the world of business and the possible interests and potential careers it has to offer.
 - b. To help develop in all students, the ability to choose wisely the goods and services that business has to offer.
 - c. To assist in developing an intelligent understanding on the part of all students of the various occupation to be found in the world of business.
 - d. To develop in practical ways an understanding and an appreciation of the actual function of our economic system.
 - e. To enable students acquire business knowledge and skills that may be needed for personal use.
 - f. To prepare students to enter into and follow business as a career.
 - g. To prepare students to perform business activities common to many professional areas.
 - h. To prepare students for more effective study in the field of business.
 - i. To prepare students to be business teachers.
- Furthermore Aina (2002) also listed the goals of business education to include:
- i. To apply the various business concepts acquired in class to real life situations.
 - ii. To acquire skills and the competencies required for the performance of basic business jobs i.e. take administrative decisions and deal with correspondences.
 - iii. To keep simple records of financial and other transactions in the office and operate and cater for office machines and equipment.
 - iv. To identify and discriminate among alternatives available to them in the market given limited resources.

Challenges Associated with Integrating Information and Communication Technology into Business Education Programme in Nigeria.

Integrating the use of ICT into business education Programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions is not without its enormous attendant challenges.

The objective of business education in Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities does not differ yet the curriculum are not similar. business education in universities and polytechnics incorporated more ICT programme in their curriculum than that of colleges of education. In polytechnics, the students are exposed to ICT 1 and 2. Even with the few programme of ICT available yet much have not been achieved in equipping the students with the adequate knowledge of ICT. The reasons being that there are no adequate facilities, machines and even personnel's to implement the programme.

According to National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), one of the facilities which any institution mounting business education programme should acquire is a model office. The model office is for simulation drills and simulation exercise is to make the learning environment a replica of the present automated office which the students will come in contact with after graduation. But it



is quite unfortunate to note that many of the institutions running business education programme do not have model offices, there are no internet facilities, no adequate computers. Machines such as franking machines, dictating machines shredding machines, collating machines, addressing machines etc are lacking.

Available computers are treated like sacred cows, students are restricted from entering computer laboratory. In some of the institution, students claim that they see the computers but not allow to neither come close to it nor touch it. Some heads of department in these institutions agreed to that, standing on the ground that the computers are few and expensive, as a result students are restricted from operating them without close supervision as to avoid spoilage. This is in support with study by Iweh and Ufot (2012) which revealed that business education departments in some universities, polytechnics and colleges of education lack adequate computer studio as a result, these institutions continue with the use of traditional method of teaching. This is not different from the study by Egbri (2012) which also revealed that ICT resources are not available for teaching and learning of business education in University of Benin. Duktur, Barko and Zakka (2016) in their own report stated that there are not enough ICT resources in colleges of education in North Central Zone of Nigeria.

Many institutions offering business education programme also lack lecturers who are proficient in the teaching of ICT. This was evidenced by the report of Bongotons and Onyenwe (2010) who asserted that although there are business teacher educators available, they lack pre-requisite ICT competency and this hinders the ability to effectively direct teaching and learning. The study by Chibuke and Igboke (2009) also reviewed that ICT is not adequately taught in the universities and colleges of education offering business education. Confirming these results, Ojeaga and Owolabi (2011) noted that products of the higher institutions producing business teacher educators were not receiving pedagogical and manipulative training in ICT.

ICT has not really gotten its foot in business teacher education. ICT programme are limited, the available ones are not well taught as a result of the factors already discussed. Students are still being graduated with insufficient knowledge of ICT. This was why Bongotons and Onyenwe (2010) stated that despite the policy directives and regulations towards the adoption and integration of ICT in our business teacher education programme, it is observed that the development of ICTs as part of the school system, with pedagogical considerations and accompanying infrastructure appear to be in the long feature as it is at low development state at present.

With the information on ground, it could be observed that the objective of including ICT in the curriculum of business teacher education is yet achieved. This was why Azih (2011) opined that there must be adequate provision of human and material resources for effective implementation of the curriculum.

The brief description of challenges both from institutional as well as government side are given as follows:

- Lack of highly qualified professional teachers
- Lack of linkages between industry and academia
- Not cutting-edge education and an overemphasis on analytics
- Leadership



- Lack of specialized teachers' training in business education
- Lack of facilities for good quality research and presence of work load among teachers
- No standardized performance evaluation system
- Poor Administration of business education Programme
- Lack of government investment.
- Politicized curricula
- Corrupt in educational sector
- Frequent education reforms

Benefits of Integrating ICT into the Business Education Programme in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Due to global trends in recent time, learning resources in education have grown and improved tremendously. It is therefore, imperative that, as the technology and learning resources change, so, also it is expected that, the education system of the programme, especially on business education programme should be dynamic. The educational system cannot be dynamic in the desirable way unless the teachers introduce the technology devices into the teaching and learning process of the business education educational course.

In business education, learning is a conscious effort to acquire skills and experience. During teaching and learning in business education, learners play active roles through a successful skill oriented individual programme. Through the use of ICTs, the learners are expected to play active role in making decision and accepting responsibilities. Their use of ICT is expected to enhance their better understanding in learning and applying same in their various endeavour in the world of work. Consequently, there are several reasons for Nigeria tertiary institutions to embrace the ICT in a pedagogical meaningful way.

The utilization of network technologies creates, fosters, delivers and facilitates learning and study anytime, anywhere and anyhow. It brings learning to your door step in an affordable learning environment, learning made easy, flexible and enjoyable! Besides, it is learner centered as it gives possibility of customizing the learning and teaching materials to the characteristic and needs of the learners. It saves teachers time and energy in teaching and demonstrating difficult concepts, theories and principles thus making presentation exciting using ICT. The ICTs gadgets are not in any way affected by noise but aids information verification instead of being confused and lost in thought in trying to assimilate and comprehend what the teacher says in a noisy clouded classroom as obtained in most Nigerian tertiary institutions where are inadequate classroom space and number of teachers to adhere with the NUC, NBTE and NCCE stipulated students' staff ratio and classroom space provision, interactive e-learning package aid teachers in getting accurate feedback from learners. It makes the teacher active and work ahead of students because they will be occupied preparing next instructions of software's to be worked on by students so it does not make teachers redundant. Redundancy which inhibits most conservative teachers is totally eliminated. The ICT in Business Education helps students to become independent learners, develop critical thinking and problem solving strategies



or policies, thereby discouraging spoon feeding. For instance OTM students can acquire soft touch keyboarding skills through CAI of Marvin Beacon with undivided attention and interest. Besides, through the interactive nature of amclinet.net platform, students not only learn how to access the various connectivity available on the internet, for social and entertainment as it were, but now for knowledge, information and skill competence.

Tinio (2002) identified the following as the ways by which ICT can be used in teaching Business Education courses. They are

The use of radio, television and video broadcasting which involves the following three approaches;

- (a) Direct class teaching where broadcast programming substitutes for teachers on the temporary basis;
- (b) School broadcasting: here broadcast programming provides complementary teaching and learning resources not otherwise available;
- (c) General educational programming over community which involves national and international stations providing general and informal educational opportunities.

The use of computer in promoting learner-centred pedagogy. Teaching and learning business courses using computers and the internet focuses on developing technological literacy in the following areas:

- (a) The use of productivity tools such as a word processing, spreadsheet, database and graphic programs;
- (b) The use of the keyboard and mouse;
- (c) The teaching of fundamental basic terms, concepts and operations;
- (d) The use of research and collaboration tools such as search engines and e-mails;
- (e) The teaching of basic skills in using programming and authoring application;
- (f) Developing an awareness of the social impact of technological change;
- (g) It involves the presentation, demonstration and the manipulation of data using productivity tools;
- (h) Teaching with computers equally involves the use of information and resources on CD-ROM or online such as encyclopedia, interactive maps, electronic journals and other references.

The use of ICT equipment in promoting education equally involves telecollaboration which is an online leaning involving students logging into formal course online which is an application of internet in education.

Teleconferencing can be used to enhance teaching and learning which may not necessarily be in a specific classroom setting. Teleconferencing refers to interactive electronic communication among people located at two or more different places (Tinio, 2002). With this device a teacher can bring students together without necessarily being in a classroom setting for a formal discussion in terms of holding a meeting or delivering lectures.



Prospects of Business Education Programme in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

In spite of the numerous challenges of business education in Nigeria, the profession has made a lot of progress within the limits of human and material resources available for its success. However, below are some of the proposed suggestions for the improvement of present status of business education in Nigeria and for overcoming the problems bedeviled by business education in the country in order to achieve the educational goals and national development

i. Research Improvement: Research efforts geared towards technology and updated skills in the areas of infrastructural software packages which reflect the Nigerian background will have to be undertaken with professionals in the field.

ii. Staff Development and Training: The Federal republic of Nigeria (2004) posited that no education can rise above the level of its teachers. Therefore, the teachers' improvement remains cardinal and pivotal in the success of business education programme. To this end, every business teacher is expected to be acquainted with the present issues of technological advancement. Moreover, the teachers should be given special training in teaching and research, so that their quality of instruction is improved and they can produce good quality research work which can benefit not only their students but also the people outside the world of academia.

iii. Embrace Diverse Programme and Curriculum Improvement: The current curriculum must take into cognizance the current demands of the society and work places as well as the contemporary trends of technology and globalization. Hence, the gap between theory and practice in the curriculum must be bridged. business education department should try to include diverse number of programme and courses in the field of commerce, business, education, trade and industry so as to train their students in each and every aspects of business in order to meet up with the diverse needs of the business sector and education. This would in turn improve institutional students' enrolment and the revenue base.

iv. Establishment of Partnership with Business Sector: For business education programme to achieve greater heights, there is need to partner with business sector in such way that would provide a pool of well trained and talented personnel to business sector and in return ask for investment in the business education programme. This can be achieved by providing a source of fund for business education Programme and therefore providing strong linkages between business sector and academia.

v. Facilities Improvement: There is the need for a proper and strengthened synergy between the governments, schools, industries and other relevant stakeholders. Facilities and equipments are the pillars upon which any educational programme stands, hence the need for the provision of improved facilities.

vi. Opportunity for Training: Business education practitioners must show the willingness and be given every opportunity for training and retraining in modern methods of instruction and managing business in order to be relevant in the world of competition.

Conclusion

The integration of Information and Communication Technology in teaching and learning of business education Programme and the benefits accrued to it cannot be overemphasized. Business education Programme are fields of study which aims at



preparing students for the future. The paper finalises that the existing business education Programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions has the potentials and abilities for changing and enhancing national development if the highlighted challenges in this study are given adequate solutions. Problems like shortage of funds, corruption, inconsistent changes of educational policies, inadequate linkages between industries and academia are key to unsteady functioning of business education Programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions. All these if carefully considered and handled would raise the standard of business education Programme in our nation's tertiary institutions and ensure national development.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. The problem of erratic power supply should be addressed by the Federal Government by adequately stabilizing electricity supply in the country's tertiary institutions.
2. Greater opportunities should be provided for business educators in the area of training and retraining on the use of ICT equipments such as power point, website, spreadsheet, voice over internet, e-mailing, portal management etc in order to enhance the teaching and learning of business education courses
3. Business education students should be adequately exposed to the use of ICT equipments mentioned in (ii) above so as to enhance their academic performance
4. Nigerian tertiary institutions should source for funds beyond the government to enable them provide adequate computers for the both lecturers and students.
5. The institutions can also partner with non-governmental organisations and private sectors like MTN, CHEVRON etc who are willing to contribute their social responsibilities in order to benefit from such.
6. There is need to restructure the curriculum of business education so as to ensure uniformity. The curriculum should incorporate more ICT courses in tertiary institutions.
7. Government should endeavour to employ competent and academically qualified computer technologist without political influence; this would help lecturers and students to guide, operate and maintain the computer accessories for effective performance.

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