

REFOCUSING BUSINESS TEACHERS TRAINING ON CORE COMPETENCIES AND 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

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Abstract

The study refocuses on the Training of Business Education Teachers on the core competencies that will serve as catalyst for building the 21th century skills. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and was conducted in Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze and Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe. Three research questions guided the study. The population of the study comprised 45 Business Educators in the two Colleges of Education in Anambra State. A 31item structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using mean and t-test at $P < 0.05$. The results of the data analyzed showed the business educators acknowledged the characteristics of a true 21st century educator and the roles of ICT facilities in the teaching and learning of business education courses greatly. It was recommended among others that adequate training in the area of business related courses should be organized for business educators to educate them on how to use these modern ICT facilities.

Keywords: *Business Teachers, Core Competencies and 21th Century Skills*

Introduction

The world in general and Nigeria in particular are witnessing a very critical period in a history characterized by radical changes in teaching and learning. These changes are constantly created by some major societal forces such as globalization and technological advances. Business educators are expected to enhance learning activities through careful manipulation of technologies with the learners as active participants; hence the role of business teacher is to organize learning experiences and allows learning to take place by providing adequate learning recourses required in the world of business. Unfortunately, Nigerian business educators seem to lack the ability to cope with the challenges of the information age due to probably lack of confidence and competence in integrating information communication technology into pedagogical practice. With this, many nations have been engaged in some major



educational transformations. Summit Report (2016) opined that today's students need educators who have the knowledge and skill to facilitate their participation in a collaborative web-based learning culture. They need teachers who know how to create a learning culture that looks and functions like the real and virtual workplaces of today.

In a way, societies are thus finally acknowledging that the teacher matters should always be put first for the actualization of quality educational team. Teachers are keys to the success of any educational transformation. Not only are teachers one of the 'critical variable' that needs to be changed in order to improve the educational system, they are also the most significant change agent in these transformation.

The traditional purpose of technological education and the supporting business teacher education curricula are seen as inadequate for helping Nigeria citizens cope with the life demands of information and technology age. Business teachers can be seen as educators that train their students to solve business problems, plan for future growth, and strategize how to run a business efficiently and effectively. Business teachers train students by making use of modern technology. Modern technology offers many means of improving teaching and learning in the classroom (Lefebure, Deaudelin & Loiselle, 2006). Daves (2001) is of the view that new technologies are pivotal to support education across the curriculum and provide opportunities for effective communication between teachers and students. Training institutions determine the pace of the nations' development. Jalyerba and Atanda (2007) stated that quality in the educational sector is considered in terms of exceptionally high standards, consistency, fitness for purpose, value for money (accountability) and transformative effects.

Business education teachers equally require exceptional training with respect to modern technologies to enable them possess the ability, power, authority, skill and knowledge required to fit into the information age. Information age is an expression used to describe the present age of the computer and other forms of communication super highway (Mohammed, 2008). It is concerned with the use of computer based information systems to convert, store, protect, process, transmit and retrieve information. A business education teacher according to Nwokolo and Ekwue (2001) should possess the following qualities: 1) mastery of effective communication skills, ability to select appropriate teaching methods and teach business students practice areas. In addition to the aforementioned, the business education teacher needs to



possess the ability to identify/select and utilize the modern technologies necessary for teaching and learning business courses. According to Olise and Gbenedion (2007), no meaningful economic development can take place unless a serious attention is given to quality business education.

The researchers also reviewed different studies conducted by different authors as they relate to the subject matter of the study. This include the study of Egberi (2012) who sees the use of computer technology for teaching and learning in the tertiary institutions as vital for impartation and acquisition of technology by both lecturers and students. Unfortunately ICT in their educational system have been grossly underutilized. The author added that even where the use of ICT has been adopted, there may be non availability of ICT gadgets or no trained lecturers with ICT competency skill to apply it. Agbo (2013), in his study: ICT and business education in Nigeria, pointed out that the significant challenges confronting the Integration of ICTs. In education are in the Context, capacity building and financing. Also in the study of Mandara (2012) on the utilization of ICT in the teaching of office education for quality assurance of office education graduates in Adamawa State tertiary Institution, the study found out that teachers of business education office option are not making adequate and effective use of ICT tools in teaching and learning of office education due to its unavailability.

Okoli (2012) posited that the maximum utilization of available information and communication technology (ICT) tools in the teaching and learning of business education courses had remained the only panacea to the doubtful challenges of ICT usage among business teachers in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

The double role of teachers in educational transformations being both the subject and object of change makes the field of teacher training a growing and challenging area. This calls for refocusing of the training of teachers on the core competencies that will serve as catalyst for building the 21st century skills more effectively.

Statement of the Problem

The quality of teachers determine the quality of graduates turned out of every educational programme. Education cannot be provided by just anybody, it requires a teacher who plans and delivers the lessons or instruction in such a way that the objectives can be achieved. The function of education is to change individuals in some ways; to add to the knowledge they possess to enable them to perform skills



which otherwise they would not perform, to develop certain understanding, insight and appreciation. One of the goals of business teacher education as stated in the National policy on Education (2004) is to produce highly motivated and efficient classroom business teachers. Nigerian business education teachers seem to lack the ability to cope with the challenges of the information age due to probably lack of confidence and competence in integrating information communication technology into pedagogical practice (Becta, 2004). This situation therefore would demand business teacher education programme that is ICT compliant.

Research Questions

The study was guided by two research questions:

- What are the characteristics of a true 21th century educator?
- How are the available modern technologies utilized in teaching and learning of business education courses?
- What are the barriers to effective utilization of ICT in teaching and learning of business education course?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

There is no statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators the available modern technologies utilized in teaching and learning of business education courses.

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the barriers to effective utilization of ICT in teaching and learning of business education course.

Method

A survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in the Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe and Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze. The population of the study comprised 45 Business Educators from the aforementioned two, tertiary Institution. A 31-item structured questionnaire was used for data collection. These were based on modified 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA)=4, Agreed (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1 for research questions 1 and 3 . For research question 2, Very Often (VO) =4, Often (O)=3, Occasionally Often (OF)=2, Not at All (NA)=1. The instrument was face validated by three lectures from the departments of business education and



science education in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. The final draft of the validated instrument was tested by administering it to 20 business education students in Enugu State College of Education, Enugu State. Data collected were analyzed and the internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient and it yielded a reliability index of 0.95. The instrument was administered to the respondents with the help of two research assistance. 45 copies of questionnaires was distributed and all the copies distributed were retrieved. The return rate of questionnaire was 100%. Mean ratings and t-test inferential statistics were used to analyzed data collected. Acceptable mean of 2.50 was adopted for all the research questions. Where t-critical was greater than or equal to the t-calculated, the null hypothesis was upheld. On the other hand, where the t-calculated exceeded the t-critical, the null hypothesis was upheld.

Research Question 1

What are the characteristics of a true 21st century Business educator?

Table 1: Mean Responses of Business Educator on the Characteristics of a True 21st Century Educator.

S/N	Items	X	SD	Remarks
1	Facilitate and inspire students learning and creativity	3.5	0.54	Agreed
2	Be global educators	3.4	1.05	Agreed
3	Work with their students to create new Learning opportunities	3.6	1.16	Agreed
4	Enable students to maximize the potential of their informal learning experiences	3.3	1.08	Agreed
5	Use the full range of digital age learning tools to improve student engagement and achievement.	3.3	1.96	Agreed
6	Use students' data to support students' learning and program improvement	3.2	1.00	Agreed
7	Be life-long learners	3.1	1.87	Agreed

Table 1 shows that all the items scored up to the acceptable mean of 2.50. This means that all of the above items were regarded as the characteristics of a true 21st century business educator by the respondents. The items mean scores ranges between 3.3 3.6 respectively.

Research Question 2

How are the available modern technologies utilized by Business Educators in Teaching and Learning business education courses?

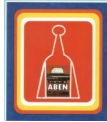


Table 2: Mean of Weighted Responses of Business Educators on the Utilization of Modern

S/N	Items	O	SD	Remarks
8	Computer	1.8	0.54	Not-utilized
9	PowerPoint	1.0	0.45	Not-utilized
10	E-mail services	1.6	0.50	Not-utilized
11	Internet	1.7	0.43	Not-utilized
12	Overhead Projector	1.1	0.46	Not-utilized
13	Fax	1.4	0.50	Not-utilized
14	Audio-visual	1.9	0.47	Not-utilized
15	Telephone(GSM)	3.6	0.74	Utilized
16	Adding Machines	3.2	0.60	Utilized
17	Television	3.6	0.79	Utilized

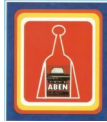
Table 2 indicated that only telephone (GSM), adding machines, television / Radio and video recorder are the modern technologies being utilized in the teaching of business education courses in Anambra State. Their weighted mean responses were 3.6, 3.2, 3.6 and 3.4 respectively; computers, power point, e-mail services, internet, overhead projector, fax and audio visual classrooms scored below the acceptable mean of 2.50. This means that they are not being utilized.

Research Question 3

What are the barriers to effective utilization of ICT in teaching and learning of business education course?

Table 3: Mean Responses of Business Educators on the Barriers to the Effective Utilization of ICT facilities in Teaching Business Education Courses

S/N	Items	O	SD	Remarks
19.	Poor power Supply	3.7	0.98	Accepted
	Environmental factor such as air, dust, humanity, vibration mechanical	2.5	0.66	Accepted
	Acute shortage of manpower for administrative and education development	3.3	0.85	Accepted
22.	Mass unawareness and low computer literacy level	2.9	0.78	Accepted
	Low percentage of business educators with ICT skills/knowledge	2.8	0.60	Accepted
	Non-telecommunications infrastructure capable of Transporting multi-media messaging (access connectivity)	2.5	0.78	Accepted
25.	Lack of ICT technicians	2.5	0.72	Accepted
26.	Provision of few ICT facilities (computers) by government	3.4	0.80	Accepted
27.	High cost of equipment (Computers)	2.8	0.74	Accepted



28.	Inadequate telephone lines	2.5	0.60	Accepted
29.	Lack of enough copies of soft wares	2.0	0.45	Rejected
30.	Insufficient teachers' time and interest	2.7	0.60	Accepted
	Lack of laboratory/supervisor staff to guide both the lecturer and the students	3.0	0.67	Accepted

Table 3 reveals that all the items on the barriers to effective use of ICT facilities were accepted by the respondents except one item, lack of enough copies of software with mean score of 2.0.

Hypothesis 1

There is no statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the available modern technologies utilized in teaching and learning of business education courses.

Table 5: t-test analysis on the mean responses of male and female business educators on the available modern technologies utilized in teaching and learning of business education courses.

Variables	N	0	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Remarks
Males	15	3.31	1.39	43	1.34	1.90	NS
Females	30	3.36	1.49				

Data here reveals that t-calculated is less than t-critical and so the null hypothesis is upheld.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the barriers to effective utilization of ICT in teaching and learning of business education course.

Table 6: t-test analysis on the mean responses of male and female business educators on the barriers to effective utilization of ICT in teaching and learning of business education course

Variables	N	0	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Remarks
Males	15	3.43	0.68	43	1.01	1.96	NS
Females	30	3.50	0.91				

Data here reveals that t-calculated is less than t-critical and so the null hypothesis is upheld.



Discussion of the major Findings

The results of the data analysis showed that the business educators in the Colleges of Education in Anambra virtually acknowledge all the characteristics of a true 21st century educators. They thus outlined among other characteristics as: facilitate and inspire students learning and creativity, be global educators, be life long learners and work with their students to create new learning opportunities. It revealed that business educators need these characteristics, ability, power, authority, skill and knowledge required to fit unto the information age. It was revealed also that business educators utilize only telephone (GSM), adding machines, television, radio and video recorder for teaching and learning of business education courses. This is contrary to Nwokolo and Ekwue (2001) who maintained that business teachers should possess the ability to use all modern business equipment. Computers/Power point, series, internet, overhead projector, fax and audio visual classrooms were not being utilized. However, this finding is in line with Nworgu (2006), in one of his studies that business teachers lack the necessary skills for ICT application in classrooms.

Some barriers were found to inhibit the effective utilization of ICT facilities in the teaching and learning of business education courses in the Colleges of Education located in Anambra State. Among the barriers are the environmental factors, (heat, dust) high cost of equipment, and low percentage of business educators with ICT skills and among others. Nnaji and Ahmed (2012), and Sanusi (2011) indicated that high cost of equipment and poor funding of education in Nigeria makes ICT facilities out of reach of many institutions, students and business educator. The authors added that most lecturers do not have the knowledge and skills of ICT in order to promote the uniqueness of the content and skills relating to particular curricula areas.

Conclusion

It suffices to say that the business educators of the Colleges of Education in Anambra State acknowledged the characteristics of a true 21st century educator and the roles of ICT facilities in the teaching and learning of business education courses greatly. To attain effective and adequate business education programme, each college Education programmes, should ensure that the objectives of the programme as outlined by the (NCCE) National Commission for Colleges of Education was attained in their different colleges; hence occupation, opportunities such as auditors, accountants, book keepers, accounting clerks and general office clerks, exist for business education students upon graduation.



Recommendations

The colleges of education offering business education programme should widen the areas of their ICT facilities curriculum coverage so that the business educators and the students could meet the labour market demands.

Adequate training in the areas of business related courses should be organized for business educators to educate them on how to use these modern ICT facilities.

The institutions should try as much as possible to protect and reduce to the barest minimum radiations, emissions substances and mechanical, shocks that could emanate from the usage of ICT facilities so as to ensure good health conditions of teachers and students.

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