



UNIVERSITY-BANKING INDUSTRY COLLABORATION FOR BUSINESS EDUCATION CURRICULUM INNOVATION IN BORNO STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the need for University-Banking Industry Collaboration for Business Education Curriculum Innovation in Maiduguri, Borno State. One research question guided the study. One hypothesis was formulated and tested. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study area was Borno State, one of the states in Nigeria's North-East geo-political region. The population for the study was 20 (14 bank managers of commercial banks and 6 business education lecturers in university of Maiduguri, Borno State). There was no sampling; all bank managers of commercial banks and all lecturers of Business Education in University of Maiduguri were involved in the study. The study was census study. A four-point scale structured questionnaire validated by two research experts from Department of Technology Education Madibo Adama University, Yola was used to elicit responses from the respondents. The reliability coefficient of .83 was obtained for the instrument using Cronbach Alpha after a pilot test at Damaturu, Yobe State. Mean was used to answer the research question while the standard deviation was used to determine the closeness of or otherwise of the responses from the mean. Independent sample t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. Based on data analysis, the study revealed that University-Banking Industry collaboration in Business Education curriculum innovation is needed to prepare graduates for jobs of the moment and leverage emerging technologies in business world. The study concluded that UICs is an important mechanism for generating open innovation in curriculum development in business education. The study recommended for UICs for curriculum innovation, Business Education curriculum content should be redefined and enriched in line with work environment, global trends in labour market and employability skills for jobs of the moment,

Keywords: Skill, University-industry collaboration, curriculum innovation, graduates of business education, work environment.

Introduction

Education lies at the heart of every society. It is a key and a vital element in the broad development of the nation's youth's capacity to address and solves difficulties. Nwangwua in Eze and Obidile, (2018) explains that any form of education that does not equip its beneficiaries with skills to be self-reliant is a faulty system of education. Seiyaibo (2020) posits that Business Education must be ready to offer their recipients functional education that will enhance performance as well as assist them to contribute meaning to the economic development of the country. 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. Business Education curriculum according to Okoro cited in Okereke, Michel, & Brown (2018) is designed to build in the learner different skills and knowledge that would enable learners earn a living by becoming an employee, entrepreneur, employer and self-employed.

Over the last few years, there has been a tremendous change in nature, scope and functioning of business enterprise. Increasing standards of living, growing consumer awareness, continuous innovations in product designs and technology and worldwide telecommunications links have put business under immense pressure to strive for its survival and growth. To cope, with a business environment increasing complexity and rapid changes, there is a need to give a critical look at the existing curriculum in Business Education. Rather than loading it with not-so-relevant chunks of contents. It is necessary to base it on themes, issues and skills which are useful, practical, functioning and related to one's personal life at home and at work place. Ore (2023) posit that Business Education programme training environment should adequately replicate the work environment, trainers should be prepared for jobs of the moment rather than



obsolete occupations, or better still, from equipment of the moment rather than obsolete technologies. The training should meet the demands of the labour market and equips recipients with knowledge and skills appropriate for the jobs which they would perform. To adequately address these issues there is need for universities to collaborate with industries to update. Through university-industry collaboration, industries would be able to communicate with universities on the needed manpower skills of the information age for incorporation into school curriculum. The essence is to refine the curriculum contents in such way that their application to practical situations would be real. With this background in view, given below is a list of emerging trends in modern business world which may guide UIC in reviewing/refining the existing curriculum in Business Education (Ore (2023).

Business Update: The urge to modernize business organizations, in the wake of increasing competition, knowledge explosion and continuous innovations in science and technology has made it obligatory for our business students to update their knowledge of what is latest, in different fields in the business world. Thus, inclusion of recent trends in distribution, communication, financing as well as other time and labour-saving techniques will enhance the practice value of the course in business.

Career Awareness: The world of business has tremendous potential for offering career opportunities in the field of wage employment and self-employment. It is the right time for the students to get fundamental knowledge about such career avenues in the world of business so as to help them pick up one for themselves in future. For this, they should identify new career paths in various business fields and acquire job opportunity information. A good business education curriculum should prepare students for proper job placement best suited to their personality traits, expectations and preferences.

Limitations of Academic Business Research: A major issue causing a significant rift between academia and industry is the disconnectedness between academic research and the market. Faculty academic research that is underwritten by business donors to Colleges and Universities has been less than responsive to critical issues faced by executives day to day. Business research should lead to improved business practices business methods that lead to higher productivity. There is little evidence that business research is connected to the industry's critical issues that are faced in the field.

Globalization and Diversity: Employers have commented that the curriculum in business schools lags behind the true scale of the globalization strategy in their operations. All business schools have been affected by global business trends and international business activity, forcing these institutions to develop international curriculum to prepare students to work in a global business environment. This content had to be developed at a rapid pace, and largely came from expertise obtained from professionals in the field (AACSB cited (Loebbecke, 2016).) calls for collaboration to refine business school's curriculum to meet global business trends.

Technology Influences: Employers demand graduates who can leverage technology and can advance the company's strategy and operation. It also forces colleges to insert more technological courses in the business curriculum that are considered descriptive rather than analytical further pushing the discipline away from the liberal arts (AACSB, in (Loebbecke, 2016).). Other obstacles to inserting technology in the curriculum include faculty's discomfort level with new technologies; academicians whose background is mostly theoretical with limited business practical experiences are relevant to utilize new software and business technology in the classroom.

Like other service industries, banking is also a customer focused service industry; where the attention is on differentiate customer services as compare to the competitors. The main challenges for the banking industry is increasing satisfaction of customer through advance quality services, lesser cost of documentation (Kombo, 2015). Banks should increase their services and make good relationship with the customer so as to create the desired loyalty. Banks are gradually accepting a relationship-based method to marketing to grow client loyalty which depend largely on the training obtained by the staff who are graduates of universities.

Santoro and Chakrabarti in Lara *et al* (2023) posited that universities undertake collaborative arrangements with bank industries including businesses, to enable students and academics to solve practical problems through project work, undertake instructional case studies, gain insights from industrial research and to gain exposure to industrial environments. These activities contribute to the improvement of teaching quality and curriculum development. The move to the knowledge-based economy has been considered to be an influencing factor for industry to enter into relationships with universities (Santoro and Betts, 2002), university-industry partnerships are a good way of influencing technology-based firms, especially businesses to achieve growth.

Universities-Industry Collaboration (UIC) refers to the interaction between any parts of the higher educational system and industry aiming mainly to encourage knowledge and technology exchange



(Junwen, 2020). The interaction that facilitates technology and knowledge exchange between higher education institutions and industries, has long been acknowledged to be an important method of building the knowledge base of a firm which need to be embedded into business education curriculum. It has been recognized that today's market is becoming increasingly competitive due to rapid changes in technology, and that a firm's in-house R&D capabilities may therefore be insufficient for it to develop innovations that help it rise above the intense competition (Alexandre et al, 2021). This is evident as it is the graduate of the Universities that are employed to work in industries. On the University level, it was found that Universities that have collaborated with industry for a long time are more likely to have relevant curriculum content that are highly demanded by industries (Lehtonen et al, 2019). These collaborations benefit both parties: the industry obtains skilled workers with practical training and specialized expertise, while universities have the chance to work on pertinent technologies and problems.

The need for UIC has been attributed to a combination of pressures on both industry and university. For industry, pressures have included rapid technological change, shorter product life cycles and intense global competition that have radically transformed the current competitive environment for most firms (Alexandre et al, 2021). With regards to Universities, pressures have included the growth in new knowledge and the challenge of rising costs and funding problems, which have exerted enormous resource burdens on universities to seek relationships with firms to enable them to remain at the leading edge in all subject areas. UIC has been widely perceived as a promising tool for enhancing organizational capacity in open innovation — where an institution employs external networks in developing innovation and knowledge, and as a complementary option to traditional internal R&D in organizations (Rocha & Zavale, 2021). According to Samuel and Omar (2015) collaborations between universities and industry is a means of improving innovation efficiency and thereby enhance wealth creation, interface between universities and industry to ensure that exploitable research transfer to industry quickly and successfully to contribute to the growth and well-being of the economy. To Santoro and Chakrabarti in Lara et al (2023) universities collaborate with industry is to expose academics and students to industrial environments, the most up-to-date insights from industrial research, instructional case studies and practical problems through projects. All of these contribute to curriculum development and improve the quality of teaching.

By collaborating with industrial firms, universities would be able to test the practical applications of their research on real-world problems, foster links with knowledge users and facilitate technology transfer (Hadid & Kirby, 2016). Not only are the UICs beneficial for universities but also beneficial for industrial firms. For example, UICs help industrial firms to gain access to knowledge, expertise and techniques that are not available in house. These benefits suggest that UICs are an important mechanism for generating open innovation and also contribute positively to achieving economic growth in today's knowledge-based societies (Pinheiro, Langa, & Pausits, 2015). Robert & Roland (2019) affirm that an effective knowledge and technology transfer is important for a successful collaboration. An intense transfer can foster innovation performance, improve the technology novelty or enhance product development; and on the other hand (Mingji & Ping 2014) enrich school curriculum content. As such, industry itself becomes one of the most powerful influences for enabling partnerships with academia. By making opportunities for experiential learning more readily available to students prior to their entry into the workforce, companies may thus better equip future employees with the skills and experiences needed to succeed after graduation (Weagle, Ortendahl, & Ahern, 2019).

Research shows that graduates of universities were generally left out of the industry community due to irrelevancy to job requirements. In this time, however, they did not assimilate the required knowledge into industry, hindering many of them to take on positions with “industries” in the title and to take on more responsibility than they were historically given (Lucietto, 2016). Thus, in order to enable more students to better fulfil the needs of industry post-graduation, it is crucial for them to be equipped with required skills throughout their education and careers, whether through informal extracurricular interactions, or through curricular design (curriculum innovations). However, a large amount of the responsibility for enabling these pathways in the first-place falls on university and industry. Curriculum that replicate work environment is critical in adequately preparing students for the workforce later on, but many of the factors that enable the successful relationships that make those opportunities available fall on the industrial, rather than the academic, side. This holds true in terms of both research partnerships and curricular design, especially in the sense that strong engagement and initiative from industry is often correlated with successful industry-academia relationships (Lucietto).

Ultimately, industry cannot expect academia to produce the ideal workforce without a significant amount of collaboration. Although the attitude and initiative of academic representatives is key (Dallegrave & Santos, 2023), communication is key; without a clear idea of what industry requires from graduates



entering the workforce, no amount of curriculum restructuring or pedagogical change will adequately prepares students for the transition out of academia. As the importance of experiential learning continues to rise, the importance of establishing these relationships will rise with it. Furthermore, as college programs are undergoing modifications to their curricular structures, research into what industry professionals are looking for in a new hires from business graduates and Business Education programs is crucial. To this effect Lucietto, et al., (2021) observed that changing curriculum and making experiential learning opportunities more available calls for ones to provide this experience. More industry involvement in curriculum development is therefore needed, lack of extensive experience in industry and less familiar of industry needs for recent graduates (Junwen, 2020). According to Yitian (2021) new technologies and new knowledge are emerging faster than ever, which put firms and nations under pressure to either lead the charge with the use of new technology or settle for playing catch-up. Innovation in the knowledge economy is an interactive learning process, and the network of innovation partners matters at both university and industries.

Statement of the problem

The importance of industry-academia collaboration is recognized in the recent years. Professionals in both industry and academia realized that they had to cooperate to solve issues inherent to their work environments because history has proved that many academic personnel lack extensive experience in industry, and are less familiar with what industry needs in a recent graduate. This difference in experience has call for UIC for curriculum innovation is necessary to aid students in making a smooth transition into industry following four or more years in an academic setting. The changing curriculum, the corresponding update of Business Education skills, and the redevelopment and adjustment of pedagogy based on labour market manpower needs thus motivate this research, Strong collaborations between industry and academia have resulted in significant strides in student educational quality, including an improved ability to bridge graduation and begin a successful career; more industry involvement in curricular development is needed, as there is still a gap between what industry expects and what recent graduates are perceived to deliver. For example, the banking industries sector has seen recent changes in the form of digital upgrades and the addition of artificial intelligence to advanced service delivery requiring students to now be more tech-savvy to succeed in this field. Increased involvement from industry, in this case and many others, would ultimately be beneficial both for meeting curricular innovation and for appropriately equipping graduates to enter the workforce or rather remain irrelevant to industry manpower needs resulting to little or no economic earning capacity of Business Education graduates from Universities. This paper is carried out to determine the need for university-banking industry collaboration for Business Education curriculum innovation in Borno State.

Research Question

What is the need for university-banking industry collaboration for business education curriculum innovation?

Research Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of bank managers and lecturers of Business Education in Universities on the need for university-banking industry collaboration for Business Education curriculum innovation.

Methodology

The study adopted survey research design involving the use of questionnaire. One research question guided the study. One hypothesis was formulated and tested. The study area was Borno State, one of the states in Nigeria's North-east geo-political region. The population for the study was 14 bank managers of commercial banks and 6 Business Education lecturers in university of Maiduguri, Borno State. There was no sampling; all bank managers of commercial banks and all lecturers of Business Education in University of Maiduguri were involved in the study. The study was census study. A four-point scale structured questionnaire validated by two research experts from Department of Technology Education Madibbo Adama University, Yola was used to elicit responses from the respondents. The reliability coefficient of .83 was obtained for the instrument using Cronbach Alpha after a pilot test at Damaturu, Yobe State. Each of the items was assigned four responses options of Strongly Agreed, (SA-4points), Agreed (A-3points), Disagreed (D-2points) and Strongly Agree (SD-1points). The instrument was administered personally by the researchers. The mean was used to answer the research question while the standard



deviation was used to determine the closeness of or otherwise of the responses from the mean. Positive decision rule for the study was established at a mean of 2.50 and above while any mean less than that was regarded as negative. Independent sample t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. Hypothesis of no significant difference was retained when the calculated value was less than the tale value at 0.05 level of significance. Where the calculated value was greater or equal to the tale value at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Result of the study

Research Question

What is the need for university-banking industry collaboration for Business Education curriculum innovation?.

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation of responses on need for university-banking industry collaboration for Business Education curriculum innovation

S/ N	Items	Managers		Lecturers		Total		Decision
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	
1	University-industry collaboration for business education curriculum innovation enable students solve practical problems	3.12	1.13	3.10	1.11	3.11	1.12	Positive
2	University-industry collaboration in curriculum innovation enhances knowledge creation	3.22	0.96	3.26	0.94	3.24	0.95	Positive
3	University-industry collaboration in curriculum innovation influences technology based curriculum	3.38	0.52	3.29	0.54	3.34	0.53	Positive
4	University-industry collaboration in curriculum innovation improves innovation efficiency of the students at work place.	3.36	0.66	3.24	0.24	3.30	0.68	Positive
5	University-industry collaboration in curriculum innovation enhances research and development productivity of business education graduates	3.20	0.76	3.16	0.76	3.18	0.77	Positive
6	University-industry collaborations in curriculum innovation enable students have the chance to work on pertinent technologies and problems.	3.16	0.54	3.22	0.70	3.19	0.62	Positive
7	University-industry collaborations in curriculum innovation helps business education programme training environment replicate the work environment,	3.27	0.82	3.23	0.86	3.25	0.84	Positive
8	University-industry collaborations in curriculum innovation prepare trainers for jobs of the moment rather than obsolete occupations	3.28	0.75	3.30	0.69	3.29	0.72	Positive
9	University-industry collaborations in curriculum innovation facilitate the use of equipment of the moment rather than obsolete technologies	3.38	0.51	3.29	0.55	3.34	0.50	Positive
10	University-industry collaborations in curriculum innovation equip recipients with knowledge and skills appropriate for the jobs which they would performs.	3.29	0.73	3.22	0.70	3.26	0.72	Positive
11	University-industry collaborations in curriculum innovation enables graduates to leverage technology	3.22	0.79	3.29	0.85	3.26	0.82	Positive
12	University-industry collaborations in curriculum innovation enable students identify new career paths in various business fields	3.39	0.46	3.32	0.51	3.36	0.49	Positive
	Weighted Average Mean	3.22	0.73	3.31	0.68	3.26	0.73	Positive



Table 1 above showed the responses of bank managers and Business Education lecturers of University of Maiduguri, Borno State on the need for university-banking industry collaboration for Business Education curriculum innovation. The result of the analysis revealed that all the constructs outlined bank managers and Business Education lecturers of University of Maiduguri on the need for university-banking industry collaboration for Business Education curriculum innovation with a weighted average mean of 3.26. The close range of the standard deviations showed that the respondents were not very far from each other in their responses. This implies that the University-banking industry collaborations in curriculum development, facilitate the use of equipment of the moment rather than obsolete technologies, solve practical problems and prepare trainers for jobs of the moment rather than obsolete occupations,

Research Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of bank managers and lecturers of Business Education in universities on the need for University-banking industry collaboration for Business Education curriculum innovation

Table 2: Summary of independent sample t-test of the difference between the mean responses of bank managers and lecturers of business education in universities on the need for university-banking industry collaboration for business education curriculum innovation

Group	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t _{cal}	t _{criq}	Decision
Bank Managers	14	3.22	0.73	18	0.4381	2.101	Not Rejected
Lecturers	6	3.31	0.68				

P>0.05

The data in Table 2 revealed that there are 14 Bank Managers and 6 Lecturers of Business Education. The Bank Managers and lecturers of Business Education responses showed the need for University-Banking industry collaboration for Business Education curriculum innovation, Maiduguri, Borno State (Mean= 3.22, SD=0.73) and (mean = 3.31, SD =0.68 at a degree of freedom of 18, with t_{cal} of 0.4381). Their responses are close to the mean as the standard deviations are very low. The Table revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of Bank Managers and lecturers of Business Education on the need for university-banking industry collaboration for Business Education curriculum innovation in Maiduguri, Borno State as the calculated value (0.4381) was less than the table value (2.101), and therefore null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that Bank Managers and lecturers of Business Education did not differ in their responses regarding the need for university-banking industry collaboration for Business Education curriculum innovation. Though there was a slight difference between their mean responses with lecturers having higher mean responses, but the difference was not statistically significant (Mean = 0.09).

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that UIC collaboration for Business Education curriculum innovation enable Business Education students solve practical problems, enhances knowledge creation, improves innovation efficiency of the students at work place, enable students have the chance to work on pertinent technologies and problems, helps Business Education programme training environment replicate the work environment, prepare trainers for jobs of the moment rather than obsolete occupations. Also UIC collaboration for Business Education curriculum innovation facilitate the use of equipment of the moment rather than obsolete technologies, equip recipients with knowledge and skills appropriate for the jobs which they would performs and enable students identify new career paths in various business fields, The findings further revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of bank managers and lecturers of Business Education regarding the need for university-banking industry collaboration for Business Education curriculum innovation in Maiduguri, Borno State.

This finding is in line with Samuel and Omar (2015) that collaborations between Universities and industry is a means of improving innovation efficiency and thereby enhance wealth creation. To also support this finding are Santoro and Chakrabarti in Lara et al (2023) posited that Universities collaborate with industry exposes academics and students to industrial environments, the most up-to-date insights from industrial research, instructional case studies and practical problems through projects. All of these contribute to curriculum development and improve the quality of teaching. The finding equally agrees with Lang et al (2016) that UIC has been widely perceived as a promising tool for enhancing organizational capacity in open innovation — where an institution employs external networks in developing innovation and



knowledge. Collaboration between university and industry provide significant opportunities for students to interact with the “real” world of industry with the satisfaction of having contributed to useful new products or processes (Loebbecke, 2016).

Conclusion

Based on the findings in this study, it was concluded that UICs are an important mechanism for generating open innovation in curriculum. Going by this pleasing revelation, it will be increasingly inspiring for to redefine and boost business education curriculum content through UICs to prepare the recipients for the jobs of the moment, to suit technological advancement in skills acquisition, leering environment to replicate work environment, equip recipients with knowledge and skills appropriate for the jobs which they would performs. so the goal of business education will be fulfilled and facilitate the use of equipment of the moment rather than obsolete technologies, the idea of integrating experience with academia is certainly a positive one; and UIC for curriculum innovation is necessary to aid students in making a smooth transition into industry following four or more years in an academic setting.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the study recommended for UICs for curriculum innovation, if collaboration is assigned high status, it will contribute to a positive spiral of collaborative researchers and firms may decide to collaborate even more.

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