

TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN THE NIGER DELTA

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to examine technology and the future of business education in the Niger Delta. The survey research design was adopted in the study. The study was carried out in the Niger Delta of Rivers State. The Population of this study comprised 140 business education lecturers in three tertiary institutions offering business education programme in Rivers State. The sample used for the study was 40 business education lecturers. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.93. Data collected was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and independent T-test to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The findings technology has positive impact on the future of Business Education in the Niger Delta. Also, findings showed that application of technology in business education faces some problems such as lack of fund, qualified manpower and high cost facilities. Therefore, it was recommended amongst others that there should be awareness creation for Business Education teachers and students about the potentials and prospects of technology in Business Education. Also, computer laboratories with internet facilities should be provided for all business education departments in universities, polytechnics and colleges of education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Technology, Future, Business Education, Niger Delta.

INTRODUCTION

The emerging technologies are changing the way we learn. Education has become too flexible and fun. Technology for business education is promoting individual learning and mobile learning, both teachers and students are benefiting from this new technology for education. Some of the barriers in education have been broken down by this new technology for education; students can learn from anywhere, teachers can easily reach their students from anywhere. Technology is helping to change education in a positive way; it is part of the modern world. New technology for business education is improving grades for students and it prepares them for the future. The integration of computers and communications offers unprecedented opportunities to the education systems with its capacity to integrate, enhance and interact with each other over a wide geographic distance in a meaningful way to achieve the learning objectives. The growth of these communication and computer systems, their ease of use, the power and diversity of information transfer allow teachers and students to have access to a world beyond the classroom. It has the potential to transform the nature and process of the learning environment and envision a new learning culture. Interactivity, flexibility and convenience have become the order of the day in the ICT supported environment ICT opens up opportunities for learning because it enables learners to access, extend, transform and share ideas and information in multi-modal communication styles and format. It helps the learner to share learning resources and spaces, promote learner centred and collaborative learning principles and enhance critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving skills for solving Business education problems. For business education to be relevant in this technological age, teaching and learning of the programme must embrace the current trend by the use of technology. According to Njoku (2006), business education is an educational programme that equips an individual with functional and suitable skills, knowledge, attitude and value that would enable him/her operate in the environment he/she finds himself/herself. This means that business education is not static. Therefore any worthwhile programme has to move with time.

It is observed that technological advancement has taken over different aspects of work and life at large and this has made digital skills become more relevant especially in this 21st Century. The rapidly changing global environment provides both opportunities and threats. It is difficult to find a business today that is not affected in some way by global developments. Business education which is an aspect of the total education programme is not unaffected by the penetrating wind of modern technology. It is very important and timely to consider the need for Business Education to be repositioned and enhanced its comparative advantage to its recipient in this digitalized and global workforce (Olaniyi, 2015).

Technology in business education enables students to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems for effective and creative self-fulfillment in life, learning, work, and social activities (Olaniyi, 2015). A typical example of this multidimensional concept is the Information and Communication Technology, which has created new global networks, dismantling national boundaries and barriers, thereby generating a global village where one can access information from any part of the universe within seconds (Olaniyi, 2015).

It is not an overstatement to state that technologies are changing the way people work in recent times, revealing opportunities and risks. Millions of jobs are at risk of being replaced with automation, especially jobs that involve repetitive, routine tasks (Gonzalez-Vazquez *et al.*, 2019). In as much as jobs could be replaced by automation due to digitalization, the fact cannot still be denied that digital skills could increase employability and earnings. A considerable number of companies, particularly large companies with more than 250 employees, need digitally competent workers. Curtarelli *et al.* (2017) illustrated that almost 60% of employers in large firms believed some of their staff were not fully proficient in digital tasks, while less than a quarter of employers at small firms (10 to 249 employees) expressed the same concern. Moreover, workers with moderate or advanced use of ICT have a higher probability of having high-paid jobs, compared to those with little or no use of ICT.

Business education on the other hand is one of the occupational areas that are richly provided by vocational and technical education in Nigeria. Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) had stipulated that the actual goals of business education shall be to: prepare students for specific career in office occupations, equip students with the requisite skills for job creation and entrepreneurship, and expose students with knowledge about business, including a good blend of computer technology, which incorporates Information and Communication Technology (ICT). They further explained that the first two goals involve education 'for' business, which is aimed at equipping recipients with the requisite attributes (technological skills, knowledge, competencies, and attitudes) to become gainfully employed in the world of work, whereas the later addresses education 'about' business, which is aimed at providing a sound basis for further studies at the graduate and post-graduate levels.

According to Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) technology in Business Education programme will go a long way in developing the students' ICT skills, intellectual and competencies needed in the establishment of business enterprise and also make them employable in the work force. For effective entrepreneurial practice in the present technological dispensation, the acquisitions of the basic digital skills by graduates of business education are of paramount importance vis-a-vis ICTs communication, technology, organization and management skills. Business education should embrace enormous changes in digitalization in a bid to produce quality students who will become successful in the modern business world. Turner (2005) contended that those in education (business education inclusive) have moved at light speed in the area of education technology. Business educators should possess and make effective use of information and communication technology skills in the impartation of digitalized entrepreneurial knowledge to the students. They should make use of a variety of digital tools such as email, desktop conferencing, online programmes such as web CT and Blackboard as well as video conferencing in their instructional activities so as to impart the necessary skills to business education students for self-sustenance after graduation.

According to Koyosaki (2013) Business Education is the type of education needed in the 21st century, which has a built-in mechanism for developing skills in almost all disciplines viz accounting, investment, marketing, law and information communication and technology (ICT) in the learner. Knowledge and skills and its application to problem solving are essential attribute of any good educational model. The world through digitalization has become a global village, making internet a meeting point for everybody and in carrying out most activities. Conducting businesses via the internet system is trending and this has made internet an important new market place. The internet market offers lots of potential for start, growth and development of businesses because of its global appeal that involves billions of people converging in one place. Many businesses are now keying into the on-line model of business and any organization that are not yet tapping into this new business model does so at a great risk.

Developing the capacity to do business utilizing on-line and off-line facilities in the business environment requires appropriate skill-sets demanded of today's entrepreneur who must understanding the dynamics of business and the technology that drives the 21st century businesses. The unique nature and potential of internet businesses makes it imperative that nowadays business education students should be well trained to be digital literate or attain ICT skill compliance. This will enable them develop the know-how in registering, managing and optimizing their business potential on-line for local and global impact. Business Education is important because it teaches how the office functions, how to keep accounts and enter transactions into different books; it teaches how to keep documents, how to own and run small business enterprise, and to manipulate the keyboard of a typewriter and the computer for the enhancement of business

Business activity affects the daily lives of all Nigerians as they work, spend, save, invest, travel and play. It influences jobs, incomes and opportunities for personal enterprise. Business has significant effect on the standard of living and quality of life of people, and on the environment in which they live and which future generations will inherit (Ekanem, 2008). Eventually, all students will encounter the world of business, whether they work in urban or rural areas. They must be prepared to engage in business activity with confidence and competence

Digitalization now the major driver in today's global economy has become one of the most sought after skill-sets of the 21st century. The internet is now the new and obviously the biggest market place worldwide, and digital skills are the key to unlocking the potentials in this new market place. The global market system of today needs new sets of skills for marketing, advertising and business promotional activities necessary for setting-up, growing and effective management of businesses. Students need full range of such digital skills in order to meaningfully participate in the 21st century global economy (Barbara, 2017).

How well Business Education student will fare in the business world depend greatly on the appropriate skill the have acquired that will enable them fit into the society and the world of work. Twenty-first century skills are not entirely a new concept; but technology or ICT component of the skill sets are very crucial in today's global setting. Technological compliant of Business Education offers unique opportunity for participation in the growing digital business world and the changing dynamics of business ecosystems. The usefulness of technology or its compliance as important skill-sets for business development lies on the use perception, the productive function and usage frequency. A study by Gregor, &Valerij (2015) shows that e-learning courses, market research data bases and business plan software are among the technological tools that can be used for inculcating digital competencies in the students. The school system must develop the capacity to direct and provide relevant answers to such expectations that will lead to the desired future.

Looking at the developing nations, such as Nigeria, there are several problems that impede the integration of technology in the teaching and learning processes especially in the teaching and learning of business education. Edokpolor and Egberi (2017) stated that they include but not limited to economic barrier, political barrier, technological barrier, personal factors, ICT training needs, and curriculum re-evaluation. The inability to develop, manage, utilize and sustain technological facilities in the teaching and learning processes due to inadequate funding. Inadequate funding has

made the purchase and maintenance of ICT facilities in education sector difficult (Rumanyika & Galan, 2015). Internet services are quite expensive for online learning. Expensive hardware and software facilities as well as high costs of communication services restrict access to ICT usage in the teaching and learning processes. Most schools in Nigeria do not have adequate fund to purchase the necessary ICT facilities needed in the teaching and learning of business education courses. Therefore, this paper assessed technology and the future of business education in the Niger Delta.

Statement of the Problem

The new global economy created by technological change and globalization with ICTs at the core has serious implications on the nature and purpose of educational institutions. Technologies are potentially powerful enabling tools for educational change and reform processes. The extent to which this has helped improved both access to education and the quality of that education in Nigeria requires determination.

The educational effectiveness of technology in business education depends on their use and purpose. Haddad and Drexler (2002) identified a number of levels of technology use in education and how they can address varying business education challenges. But how have these been employed in expanding access to, and raising quality education in Nigeria? The optimal level of technology integration in business education programme in the Niger Delta also needs to be ascertained.

Purpose of the Study

The major aim of the study is to examine technology and the future of Business Education in the Niger Delta. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

1. impact of technology in the future of Business Education in the Niger Delta
2. problems facing application of technology in Business Education in the Niger Delta

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study.

1. What is the impact of technology in the future of Business Education in the Niger Delta
2. What are the problems facing application of technology in Business Education in the Niger Delta-

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated in this study thus;

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business educators on the impact of technology in the future of Business Education in the Niger Delta
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business educators on the problems facing application of technology in Business Education in the Niger Delta-

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The study was carried out in the Niger Delta and particularly in Rivers State and three tertiary institutions offering business education programme was used. These tertiary institutions include Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State University and Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku. The population for this study was 140 business education lecturers in three tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The sample size of the study was 40 business education educators in three tertiary institutions in Rivers State. This comprised of 15 business education lecturers from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE), 10 from Rivers State University (RSU), and 15 lecturers from Federal College of Education Technical (FCET) Omoku the stratified random sampling technique was used. A twelve item questionnaire was designed by the researcher titled: Technology and Future of Business Education Questionnaire (TFBEQ). The questionnaire was divided into two

sections. Section A gathers information on demographic variables while section B addresses questions on dependent and independent variables. Each of the Sections (A-B) was assigned a four response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

The instrument for the study was subjected to face validation by two experts: in Business Education Unit, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The Cronbach alpha method was used to calculate the internal consistency of the instrument. The Cronbach alpha reliability was appropriate for the instrument because the items were not dichotomously scored as no response was deemed correct or wrong. The whole test yielded 0.93 which was high enough to consider the instrument reliable and internally consistent for the study to utilize it Data collected was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviations was used in answering the research questions. Hypotheses was tested using independent t-test at 0.05alpha level.

RESULTS

Research Question 1. What is the impact of technology in the future of Business Education in the Niger Delta

Table 1: Mean Responses and standard deviation on the impact of technology in the future of Business Education in the Niger Delta

(N = 40)				
S/N	items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Business education teachers can easily reach their students from anywhere	3.55	0.49	SA
2	Technology for business education is promoting individual learning and mobile learning	3.40	0.49	A
3	Technology for business education is improving grades for students and it prepares them for the future	3.91	0.78	SA
4	Technology in business education enables students to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems	3.95	0.70	SA
5	Technology in Business Education programme will go a long way in developing the students' ICT skills	3.75	0.40	SA
6	Developing the capacity to do business utilizing on-line and off-line facilities in the business environment	3.23	0.64	A
	Mean Average	3.68	0.52	SA

Table 1 presented the mean ratings of respondents on the impact of technology in the future of Business Education in the Niger Delta. Items 1-6, was agreed indicating that technology has impact in the future of business education in Niger Delta because it enables the teachers easily reach their students from anywhere, promotes individual learning and mobile learning, improving grades for students and it prepares them for the future, enables students to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems, developing the students' ICT skills and also developing the capacity to do business utilizing on-line and off-line facilities in the business environment with a mean value of 3.55, 3.40, 3.91, 3.95, 3.75, 3.23, respectively. While aggregate mean value of 3.68 and standard deviation of 0.52 obtained from questionnaire item 1-6 shows that technology has impact in the future of Business Education in the Niger Delta.

Research Question 2: What are the problems facing application of technology in Business Education in the Niger Delta

Table 2: Mean Responses on the problems facing application of technology in Business Education in the Niger Delta (N = 40)

S/N	items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Inability to develop, manage, utilize and sustain technological facilities	3.47	0.41	SA
2	Expensive hardware and software facilities	3.78	0.43	SA
3	Inadequate provision of infrastructural facilities.	3.60	0.61	SA
4	lack of interest in technology	3.62	0.57	SA
5	Inadequate provision of financial resources	3.70	0.45	SA
6	Inadequate supply of qualified manpower	3.64	0.56	SA
	Mean Average	3.61	0.57	

Table 2, presents the mean ratings of respondents on the problems facing application of technology in Business Education in the Niger Delta. it was indicated that the respondents agreed that the problems facing application of technology in Business Education in the Niger Delta include Inability to develop, manage, utilize and sustain, Expensive hardware and software facilities, Inadequate provision of infrastructural facilities., lack of interest in technology, inadequate provision of financial resources and Inadequate supply of qualified manpower with a mean value of 3.47, 3.78, 3.60, 3.70, 3.64, 3.67, respectively. While aggregate mean value of 3.61 and standard deviation of 0.57 obtained from questionnaire item 1-6 shows that the response were not far from each other,

Hypotheses Testing

HO1: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business educators on the impact of technology in the future of Business Education in the Niger Delta

Table 3; T-test on analysis of no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business students on Creative/ entrepreneurial skills developed amongst Business Education students for self-reliant in Rivers State

Alternatives	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	20	3.66	0.72				
Female	20	3.40	0.41	262	0.726	1.97	Accepted

The result on table 3 revealed that the t-calculated value of 0.726 is less than the table t-value of 1.97 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the null hypothesis is retained that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business educators on the impact of technology in the future of Business Education in the Niger Delta.

Ho2.

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business educators on the problems facing application of technology in Business Education in the Niger Delta-

Table 6. T-test on analysis of no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business educators on the problems facing application of technology in Business Education in the Niger Delta-

Alternatives	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	20	3.82	0.81	262			
Female	20	3.10	0.58		1.421	1.97	Accepted

The result on table 4 revealed that the t-calculated value of 1.421 is less than the table t-value of 1.97 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the null hypothesis is retained that there is no

significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business educators on the problems facing application of technology in Business Education in the Niger Delta-

Discussion of Findings

The findings from research question one and corresponding hypotheses on the impact of technology in the future of Business Education in the Niger Delta revealed that technology has impact on the future of business education in Niger Delta because it enables the teachers easily reach their students from anywhere, promotes individual learning and mobile learning, improving grades for students and it prepares them for the future, enables students to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems, developing the students' ICT skills and also developing the capacity to do business utilizing on-line and off-line facilities. This finding is in agreement with Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) technology in Business Education programme will go a long way in developing the students' ICT skills, intellectual and competencies needed in the establishment of business enterprise and also make them employable in the work force. Technology in business education enables students to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems for effective and creative self-fulfillment in life, learning, work, and social activities (Olaniyi, 2015)..

Findings from research question two and the corresponding hypotheses revealed that there are problems facing application of technology in Business Education in the Niger Delta. it was indicated that the the problems facing application of technology in Business Education in the Niger Delta include Inability to develop, manage, utilize and sustain, Expensive hardware and software facilities, Inadequate provision of infrastructural facilities., lack of interest in technology, inadequate provision of financial resources and Inadequate supply of qualified manpower. This finding is in accordance with Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) the problems of application of technology in business education include but not limited to economic barrier, political barrier, technological barrier, personal factors, ICT training needs, and curriculum re-evaluation. The inability to develop, manage, utilize and sustain technological facilities in the teaching and learning processes due to inadequate funding. Inadequate funding has made the purchase and maintenance of ICT facilities in education sector difficult (Rumanyika & Galan, 2015).

CONCLUSION

It can be thus be said that the future of Business Education depend to a large extent on technology. This study concludes that the future of Business Education in Nigeria depends heavily on digitalization and its effective usage by Business Education student. Business Education Graduates can only achieve the designated role in the society when they are well grounded with relevant technological skills they need to succeed in the 21st century. For business education to maximally attain its goals in this period of rapid technological changes and development, effort should be made by the business educators to effectively use the ICT facilities in the teaching and learning of business education. T

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings, discussions and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. There should be awareness creation for Business Education teachers and students about the potentials and prospects of technology in Business Education.
2. Computer laboratories with internet facilities should be provided for all business education departments in universities, polytechnics and colleges of education in Nigeria.
3. Business Education student should upgrade to technology of their existing skillsets and the creation of new digital skills because remote and flexible working are more possible than ever.

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