

EFFECTS OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN BUSINESS EDUCATION: FOCUS ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Okegbemiro, Jamiu Okesola

okegbemiro@gmail.com

Mustapha Afusat Aderonke

mummyshifau@yahoo.com

Alao Lateefah Abiola

latty2000@gmail.com;

School of Business of Education,
Federal College of Education (Technical), Gombe, Gombe State

Abstract

This paper examined Business Education and Quality Assurance in Business Education, new technologies in Business Education, technological changes, and challenges to Business Education on instruction and practice, constraints to new technologies and quality assurance. Conclusion was drawn and workable recommendations, amongst which are only qualified business educators should be recruited to teach business education courses at all educational levels. The already recruited ones should as a matter of urgency go for retraining especially in the use of ICTs; obsolete technologies should give way to computers and other modern ICTs; computer laboratories should be properly networked for teachers and students to take full advantage of shared printer, shared logic/resources, and other resources; and teacher-student ratio of 1:30 should be maintained for quality delivery of practical courses.

Keywords: Business Education, National Development, Quality Assurance. New Technology

Introduction

Business Education like many other subjects in the school system has been defined in several ways by several scholars, to suit different situations and purposes. Some scholars define it from the way it is practiced in the field, while others define it from the angle it is taught in schools and colleges. Jubril (2010) defines Business Education as a specialized area of vocational education that provides educational training, skills development, attitudes adjustment towards business orientation and academic challenges. Bilyaminu (2011) views Business Education as an aspect of total education programme that provides the knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding needed to perform in the business world as a producer and/or consumer of goods and services. Over the past two decades, developments in the economic, social, and technological environment have led to far-reaching changes in the way organization operate. In particular, advances in Information Technology (IT) have assisted the emergence of new

organizational forms, work practices and training methods. As a result, in recent years teaching and learning methods have started to change in educational institutions in general and in business education in particular (Okwuanaso, 2004).

Change is the only constant factor in life. This characterizes the dynamism in the competitive business environment. Education is seen as a document per excellence in preparing citizens for effective roles in the society. One form of education that equips its recipients to adapt to the changing world of work is business education. According to the American Vocational Association (AVA) in Osuala (2019) business education is a programme of instruction which consist of two part : (a) Office Education; a Vocational Education Programme for office careers through initial, refresher and upgrading education leading to employability and advancement in office occupation, and (b) General Business Education; a programme to provide students with information and competencies which are needed by all in managing personal and

business affairs and in using the services of the business world. For Business Education Programmes to remain relevant in providing the needs of individuals and that of the society; it must embrace current trends in the academic and economic demands of the society.

New technologies in business education are designed to prepare students for variety of careers in high-tech business offices. It is not easy to develop taxonomy of new technologies in business education because of their diversity and evolution in structures and functions. No doubt, the emergence of new technologies such as the computer, word processor, the internet, automated teller machines, reprographic machines, micrographic machines, accounting machines, modern telephonic systems including handset and multimedia, among others, have not only revolutionized the office environment but have also brought changes in the ways people are doing things. The computer is one of the most visible of the new technologies. Much as new technologies are indispensable in business education programme delivery, the subject of quality assurance is of utmost importance.

Concepts of Quality Assurance, Business Education and Technology

Across the globe, it has been observed that countries that thrive in all sectors of their economy did embrace education as their bedrock (Meisinger & Wagner, 2006). It is, therefore, not far-fetched to understand that a nation is as good as the kind of education system it operates. For quality of education to be guaranteed, emphasis should be placed on the quality of teaching and learning in order to ensure impressiveness, efficiency and productivity of education. When focusing on quality, the possibility of national and international level comparability should remain and improve. It is also necessary to control the quality of education by using the relevant agencies such as the National University Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) as well as National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), among others. These agencies were established in order to ensure quality of education in Nigeria.

Over the years, there has been a serious erosion of teacher's respect, and this applies to all levels of education since quality and relevant education depend on what teachers do with learners. Quality of education is now an issue of global concern. The famous four pillars of the dealer(s) report on education for 21st Century (learning to know, learning to do, learning to live, and learning to be) are intended to link education to development, the aim of which should be the complete fulfilment of the individual's personality (Onyiliofor, 2019). If education is to achieve the purpose for which it is set to achieve, there is a great need for quality assessment. Onocha (2012), is of the view that quality or minimum standards for education sector require the establishment of a set of quality assurance indicators, measuring instruments and timeframe for measurement. He is also of the view that in order to have quality assurance in education, there is need for quality learners, quality learning environment, quality teaching and quality outcomes.

Generally, quality as a concept is rooted in comparison and standards. Bisong (2010) aptly describes quality as relating to standards, and that, standards constitute the essential yardstick for the assessment of values and comparability, interpretability and harmonization. Therefore, quality forms an intricate part of education which focuses on the ability to conform to certain acceptable and institutional basis with respect to time, periods, practices and locations. It is no exaggeration that the educational enterprise and programme delivery is dedicated to establishing and maintaining standards. Viewed conceptually from a process, McKinnon, Walker and Davies (2010) identified three aspects that define quality assurance to include: setting of prescribed minimum standards or benchmark, quality assurance and quality improvement. Benchmarking has to do with comparing a set of products or services against the best that can be found within the relevant industry. It is the process of identifying and learning from good practices in other organizations by regularly comparing aspects of performance, identifying gaps in performance, seeking fresh approaches to bringing improvements in the performance and

implementing the improvements and following up by monitoring progress and reviewing the benefits.

Quality assurance is comparing the quality of a product or service with a minimum standard set either by the producer or provider or by some external government or industry standard. Finally, quality improvement concerns with raising the quality of a product or service. Here, current standard of a product is compared with the standard being expected. From the above definitions, it could be seen that quality assurance is a designed systematic measurement approach which an entity follows so that quality requirement of a product or service will be achieved. Quality assurance is the baron for measuring society's effort aimed at answering the critical question of customer satisfaction and improvement in standard of living.

Business education as an integral part of vocational and technical education is a form of vocational education according to Idialu (2007) that is directed towards developing the learner to become productive in teaching, paid employment, and self-employment. Amoor and Udoh (2018) opined that business education plays a significant role in the economic 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, skilful, and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work (Odunaike & Amoda, 2008).

Business education is rooted in Vocational education with specific mandate of providing skills, attitude and knowledge needed for employment or running a business. According to Anao in Oliver (2011), business education is the sum total of the knowledge, skills and attitude that are required for successfully promoting and administering business enterprises. The need for business education as a form of education is crucial especially in this era of globalization and information and communication technology (ICT) in which work processes and organizations are getting increasingly flexible, multi-tasking and

performance-base. Business Education as a programme needs to meet up with the needs of the learner and the society. And if that be the case, assuring quality of what is taught both skills and knowledge is very vital. Quality assurance is a process centred approach to ensuring that organization is providing the best possible products or service. If knowledge were stagnant in business education without improvement in what the learner learns in order to be relevant in his society, there would have been total abandonment of the programmes in Business Education since it may appear not to be providing the needs of the learners and that of the society. But since there is always content improvement through introduction of new technologies and approaches in the method of teaching and in what is learnt, the discipline has always provided for the needs of the society, hence maintaining a high standard in providing manpower for the industries in the economy.

Business Education having upheld this idea of providing marketable skills to learners has remained relevant in the world of study. Many factors are influencing the effort to make business education relevant today, one of which is the spate of technological advancements being witnessed. Technology has become the nexus of operation in the business world. Consequently, business education is affected in terms of instruction and delivery and in skills and competencies needed to adapt to these evolving technologies used for operation in offices. To this end, the writers observed that education quality is measured by the usefulness of or the compensation for opportunity cost for learners from the education to achieve learning objectives. The demand of education is based on its ability to provide marketable skills that will help individuals to engage in meaningful occupation.

Quality assurance refers to the planned and systematic activities implemented in a quality system so that quality requirements for a product or services will be fulfilled. Idialu (2007) described quality as standards of something as compared to other things, that is, the degree of goodness or excellence. Quality assurance generally means all the procedures, processes and systems that support and develop education (Kontio, 2007).

By this definition, technology helps to advance man's course in his environment, but moderation and control should be exercised to direct its use to solving problems of man, if not, may be misleading in itself. The technological changes in business education are basically from information and communication technology (ICT) perspective. The society generally is ICT-driven and to keep abreast of this change there must be a restructuring in the knowledge and skills given to learners/students in Business Education. Electronic office (E-office) is one of the phenomena of the 21st Century which is a paperless office approach in which every office work is done with the use of computer. It is based on this that most Business Education departments across Nigeria's tertiary institutions are building ICT centres, improved computer laboratories and as well as offering professional courses in computer studies to produce students/graduates that can easily adapt in their ever-changing business environment. The use of typewriter is almost going into extinct as the computer is fast taking over.

Concepts of Business Education and National Development

Business education has been defined in several ways, most of which highlight its vocational nature. It is a form of vocational education that is directed towards developing the learner to become productive in teaching, paid employment, and self-employment (Idialu in Amoor, 2010). Business education prepares beneficiaries for gainful employment and sustainable livelihood. It is generally seen as education for and about business. Business education for business is that aspect of vocational education which provides instruction and preparation for office occupations such as secretary, shorthand-typist or stenographer, bookkeeper, data processor, word processor, computer analyst and accountant. On the other hand, education about business provides knowledge and understanding of the economic, financial, marketing, accounting, management system and other branches of business endeavour. In other words, education about business prepares students to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy.

Amoor (2010) notes that business education plays a significant role in the economic 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, skilful, 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.

Vocational and Technical skills and competence have been identified as critical success factors in the actualization of Nigerian Vision 20:2020 which is about Nigeria becoming one of the first 20 economies in the world by the year 2020. Business education holds the prospect of contributing, through its job creation and self-employment packages, for the attainment of vision 20:2020. A gainfully employed individual contributes to GDP per capita, reduces poverty and unemployment which are some of the indices of development. A well-trained business educator can successfully be engaged in the following areas:

1. Teaching profession from secondary to university level depending on qualification
2. Business enterprise - as a promoter, manager, marketer, account clerk, secretary, word processor, sales representative, and broker.
3. Proprietorship of private schools - primary, secondary, tertiary and computer training institute.

In Business Education, there existed technology in a crude form but there has been a dramatic and significant change in the methods used by Business Educators to address the changing needs of the society (Nwoji, 2012). However, Olson in Nwoji (2012) submitted that technology is a many-faceted phenomenon in materials created and advanced by man to free himself from enslavement by nature, but which, when undisciplined, enslaves its own creator.

Technology could be defined as the application of the scientific method to solving problems in our daily life. Put in the perspective of business education, however, technology is the application of scientific method to solving problems regarding impartation of skills to learners to meet the changing needs and demands of the society. In business education, there existed technology in a crude form but there has been a dramatic and significant change in the methods used by business educators to address the changing needs of the society (Nwoji, 2012). However, Olson in Nwoji (2012) submitted that technology is a many-faceted phenomenon in materials created and advanced by man to free himself from endearment by nature, but which, when undisciplined, enslaves its own creator. By this definition, technology helps to advance man's course in his environment, but moderation and control should be exercised to direct its use to solving problems of man, if not, may be misleading in itself. The technological changes in business education are basically from Information and Communication Technology (ICT) perspective. The society generally is ICT-driven and in order to keep abreast of this change there must be a restructuring in the knowledge and skills given to learners/students in Business Education. Electronic office (E-office) is one of the phenomena of the 21st Century which is a paperless office approach in which every office work is done with the use of computer. It is based on this that most Business Education departments across Nigeria's tertiary institutions are building ICT centres, improved computer laboratories and as well as offering professional courses in computer studies to produce students/graduates that can easily adapt in their ever-changing business environment. The use of typewriter is almost going into extinct as the computer is fast taking-over.

There is a nexus between the employability skills and business education curriculum design and implementation as curriculum attempts to provide the best possible learning opportunities. The restructuring of the business education curriculum to adapt to these changes in technology is seen as quality assurance. It is the curriculum that conveys the environment for effecting the effective realization of technology impartation and adaptation on the part of business educators. The

curriculum therefore stands out as a strong factor for consideration in ensuring quality assurance and or re-assurance in business education. Curriculum as a planned programme of learning experience which seeks to develop the abilities of a learner under the supervision of the school has a laudable contribution in assuring quality in Business education. This is why Olaitan (2009), submitted that three aspects of the curriculum determine the achievement of objectives, namely, Input, Process and Output. These three stages highlight the role of human and material resources needed for implementation of the curriculum, method and techniques used by the teacher and the learners and the quality of change that has taken place in them from the interaction. These three factors are continuously assessed in the system in order to establish quality assurance. In the same vein, Moreno (2006) buttressed that, educational reforms, all over the world are increasingly curriculum-based as mounting pressures and demands for change tend to target and focus on both the structures and very content of the school curricula.

New Technological Changes and Business Education on National Development

Business Education has embraced enormous change in technology in a bid to providing quality education to students (Ugwuogo, 2013). The E-How (2012) identified some of the new technological changes to include:

1. Changes in Keyboarding: Traditionally, keyboarding has been the primary course taught by Business Education programmes at the secondary school level. Because of the computer, keyboarding is seen by many as a basic skill needed by all students. In fact, Toppe in Business Education Forum (1991) refers to keyboarding as an "enabling skill tool needed by almost every worker in all types of organizations and at every level in the hierarchy of these organizations". In addition, because of the wide spread prolific use of computers by younger students, the need for keyboarding has presented more challenges to Business Education programme.

2. **E-Learning Environment:** The Wikipedia Free Encyclopaedia (2012) identified some quality classroom delivery to include: Computer in the classroom, Class web site, Class blogs and wikis, Wireless Classroom Microphone, Mobile Devices and Interactive Whiteboard. These technologies interact with the teacher in a friendly manner as to motivate students into learning achievement. Also other technologies geared towards enhancing learning achievement of students are now available. These are in hardware and software forms and include: learning software in different areas of business, iPod, CD ROMs, Modems, Laser printers, You-tube software, Digital cameras, Digital scanners, (e-How 2012).

The electronic environment now in vogue has necessitated the need for electronic teaching infrastructure. A prominent tool is the smart board which commands respect as it eases the use of multi-media and greater interactivity. A significant and unique feature of the smart board is that it allows teachers or instructors to make illustrations of those business concepts that hitherto were difficult to be illustrated.

Constraints of New Technologies and Quality Assurance in Business Education

Various constraints are associated with new technologies and quality assurance in business education. To this end, Ugwuogo (2013) identified the following constraints:

1. **Unqualified Teachers:** Teachers are critical stakeholders in curriculum implementation. The employment of unqualified teachers to teach business courses is a great disservice to quality of business education graduates. It is a well-known fact that most of the higher institutions that offer business education programme suffer from shortage of qualified teachers (Amoor in Ugwuogo, 2012). Business education has become a dumping ground sort of for graduates from different disciplines employed in the name of business educator.
2. **Obsolete Technologies:** Manual typewriters are still largely in use. Some available modern ICTs are grossly inadequate.
3. **Under Utilization of Computers:** The department is not taking full advantage of shared printer, shared logic/resources and networking.
4. **Large Class Size:** The high teacher-student ratio affects quality of delivery of practical courses like word processing, data processing, shorthand and others.
5. **Poor Funding:** Many administrators fail to understand that business education programme is capital intensive. It is a well-known fact that one of the major problems bedevilling education in Nigeria today is inadequate funding and business education is no exception.
6. **Epileptic power supply:** The electricity to power the few available modern technologies are not constant or sometimes not available.

Conclusion

This paper revealed that the economy is changing, and business education students should be trained to meet the market demands of the various occupations. In order to achieve business educators' needs to re-strategize in their methods of instruction and practice; it becomes important that business educators and institutional authorities provide requisite new technologies for effective instructional task management of business education. Business educators have to be challenged to provide their students with experiential base for developing requisite skills, knowledge and attitudes to live and work in a technologically and dynamic society and this would serve as quality assurance approach.

Business education has the potential of engendering development if the identified impediments are tackled headlong. Therefore, having surveyed the trends in new technologies in business education which covers the need, adaptation, and prospects, it is inferred that globalization era has necessitated individuals and organizations to key into the ongoing technological race to compete favourably. This will require today's business workers, managers, and educators to have the skills and competencies in

interacting with the vast world of knowledge and specifically the skills and know-how in handling and working with these evolving technologies.

As a result of the constant change in the society and in the world over, it becomes absolutely necessary that the content of curriculum be adjusted to suit the inevitable changes. This change brought about the introduction of new technologies in education which Business Education has a fair share of these changes. Modern business education curriculum provides the introduction of ICT in the form of ICT literacy, Application of ICT, Infusing of ICT skills and ICT specialization. These reforms have added good quality to business education curriculum content which is geared towards meeting the demands of the society. In the area of instruction, new technologies which revolve round the use of internet and resources have emerged that are aimed at improving productivity. Typical examples of internet teaching and learning media that facilitate teaching and learning in business education include Projectors, E-mail, Smart boards, and Mimeo boards, Teleconferencing, Video Conferencing, E-book Reader and Streaming Videos (E-How, 2012). In addition to the use of the Internet in business classroom, the business educator can enhance learning using Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI). According to Osuala (2004), CAI assumes that all people learn different materials in different ways at different rates of speed and thus promotes individualized instruction.

In fact, education remains the foundation of human resources development required for national development. The above assertion is supported by studies which showed significant relationship between education and development. Vocational and technical education, which business education is part of, has been identified as a means of tackling poverty and unemployment.

Recommendations

The following recommendations, if implemented, will help in increasing the capacity of business education to engender development:

1. Only qualified business educators should be recruited to teach business education courses

at all educational levels. The already recruited ones should as a matter of urgency go for retraining especially in the use of ICTs.

2. Obsolete technologies should give way to computers and other modern ICTs.
3. Computer laboratories should be properly networked for teachers and students to take full advantage of shared printer, shared logic/resources and other resources.
4. Teacher-student ratio of 1:30 should be maintained for quality delivery of practical courses.
5. Government and proprietors should increase funding of business education programme. Also, institutions and business education departments are urged to look for alternative means of funding to argument fund from government and proprietors.
6. Teachers should endeavour to always update their skills on new methods in instruction and knowledge to improve on their performance.
7. Institutions and organizations should update facilities and equipment for studios, laboratories, and workshops where the facilities are considered obsolete.
8. The schools/colleges should look for alternative electricity to power the few available modern technologies.

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