

DIGITALIZATION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR ACHIEVING RENEWED HOPE AGENDA

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Abstract

This paper discussed the place of digitalized business education curriculum towards achieving Nigerian renewed hope agenda. The paper appraised the intent renewed hope agenda with emphasis on its objectives. It was established that, digitalized business education curriculum is a veritable tool for achieving the established renewed hope agenda. The paper equally highlighted the challenges impeding the digitalization of business education curriculum to be administrative challenges and economic challenges which include among others; poor funding, inadequate ICT facilities, laboratories, workshops, furniture, lack of physical facilities and unstable government policies. In order to overcome the aforementioned challenges, the paper suggested the following strategies; building of meaningful digital ICT centres in schools, constant in-service training for business educators and acquisition of basic digital resources for both teachers and learners of business education. The paper concluded that, the place of business education in achieving the PBAT led administration's renewed hope agenda is inevitable. The paper therefore suggested among others that, the federal government of Nigeria should mainstream innovation into business education curriculum to foster better learning outcomes for the achievement of her renewed hope agenda; and that government both at state and national level should leverage on the capabilities of the present-day technology and continuously stay updated for the achievement of renewed hope agenda.

Keywords: Business Education, Curriculum, Digital, Renewed Hope Agenda.

Introduction

The education and skills training of a country's population is a major factor determining how that country's economy performs. A nation's education level also contributes to, or undermines, the quality of its democratic governance. However, renewed hope agenda saga for achieving socio-economic development of Nigeria is not out of place. The PBAT administration has as part of its aims to reform the education sector by focusing on the following indices; quality, access, funding, management, effectiveness and competitiveness. Achieving the afore-stated aims requires quality business education.

Business education according to, is an important part of general education which emphasizes skills and competency acquisition. It is a programme of study which encompasses education for office, occupations, business teaching administration and economic understanding. Oladunjoye (2016), opined that business education is an academic programme offered in tertiary educational institutions geared towards the acquisition of knowledge and skills needed in the place of work.

Renewed hope agenda for the country's socio-economic development can be achieved through digitalizing business education curriculum. Digital curriculum changes the tradition of old teaching and brings higher results in different domains. The curriculum is the sum of the educational, cultural, social, sports, religious, environmental and artistic experiences that the educational institution prepares for its students inside and outside the institution in order to achieve their overall growth and modify their behaviour (Malak, Jhanjhi & Momona, 2020). The curriculum of business education as prescribed by the Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Centre (CESAC) in Emeasoba (2015), was structured with the objectives of providing the orientation of basic skills with which to start an occupation for those who cannot continue training; preparing students for further training in business studies; relating knowledge and skills in office occupations and providing basic business skills for personal use and for the future. Business education is an important oriented programme of study that prepares its recipient with multiple skills for teaching and entrepreneurial competencies for self-reliance. However, achieving the aforementioned prospects of business education especially in the era of government renewed hope agenda might not see the light of the day if the curriculum of business education does not conform to the prevailing blended learning of the 21st century.

Renewed Hope Agenda

Tinubu (2023), during his electioneering campaign in Nigeria submitted that Nigeria is a unique nation, impressive in its diverse character and composition, resounding and hopeful in unity and collective fate. Nigeria is a home of over 200 million vibrant people which stands as the most populous nation on the African continent and the largest concentration of black people on earth. The renewed hope of PBAT stands on the premise to achieve the following;

- i. Build a Nigeria, especially youth, where sufficient jobs with decent wages create a better life
- ii. Manufacture, create, and invent more of the goods and services we require.
- iii. Export more and import less, strengthening both the naira and our way of life.
- iv. Continue assisting our ever toiling farmers, through enlightened agricultural policy that promotes productivity and assures decent incomes, so that farmers can support their families and feed the nation.
- v. Modernize and expand public infrastructure so that the rest of the economy can grow at an optimal rate.
- vi. Embolden and support youth and women by harnessing emerging sectors such as the digital economy, entertainment and culture, tourism and others to build the Nigeria of tomorrow, today.
- vii. Train and give economic opportunity to the poorest and most vulnerable.
- viii. Generate, transmit and distribute sufficient, affordable electricity and give requisite power to enlighten lives, homes and dreams.
- ix. Make basic health care, education, and housing accessible and affordable for all.
- x. Establish a bold and assertive policy that will create the strong yet adaptive national security architecture and action to obliterate terror, kidnapping, banditry, and all other forms of violent extremism from the face of our nation.

Objectives of Renewed Hope Agenda

Tinubu (2023) purported that his administration promised to reform the education sector based on the following three objectives;

- i. Ensuring on abundance of qualified and capable educators.
- ii. Creating safe and conducive learning environments, and
- iii. Improving educational outcomes in Nigeria

Specifically, the policies and reforms of renewed hope agenda intend to introduce; quality education for all, technical and vocational education, tertiary education. The quality education for all aimed at investing in the infrastructure of educational institutions and provides adequate resources that improve the educational environment in which children are taught; accreditation standards and curriculum developed for all institutions, from the primary to the tertiary level; a modern standard curriculum developed and implemented in all primary and secondary schools throughout the country; teachers training with the introduction of new accreditation requirement for teachers in federally funded primary and secondary schools with standardized teacher training courses and examinations; and management of schools by board of education which include among others members of the local communities.

Establishing and resuscitating the existing technical and vocational learning institutions to stimulate Nigeria's natural entrepreneurial spirit and empower more individuals toward self-reliance and economic prosperity, thereby reducing poverty, unemployment, and inequality, and ultimately transforming Nigeria into a vibrant and sustainable economy. These centres of excellence will focus on training the students in 21st century growth industries such as information technology software development, artificial intelligence, and robotics. In the same vein, the programme aims to restructure tertiary education such as funding and compensation structures, students loans to pilot all students access to education regardless of their background; special education fund through new legislation; and STEM incentives such as scholarships, internships, graduate school admissions, and employment.

Business Education Curriculum

Business Education as an integral part of the broad spectrum of vocational education aimed at preparing individuals to establish and manage their own businesses as intelligent and good consumers of goods and services. Business Education involves equipping students with the appropriate skills, knowledge and competences needed to advance in the field of business or to progress in the world of business as managers, business executives, entrepreneurs, secretaries and accountants (Okoye, 2017). Business Education Programme as viewed by Olowookere & Akinsanya (2014), is a programme of education which equip the students with the marketable skills, knowledge and attitudes for initial employment and advancement in business occupation.

The National Policy on Education (2014) in Okoye (2017), integrated Business Education Programme into the total education programme to cater for the needs of the nation. The objectives of Business Education Programme as a means to achieve renewed hope agenda include;

- i. To provide trained manpower in applied science, technology, commerce particularly as sub professional grade.
- ii. To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for industrial, commercial and economic development.
- iii. To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to environmental problems for the use and convenience of man.
- iv. To give training and impart the skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant.
- v. To give an introduction to professional studies in engineering and other technology.
- vi. To enable young men and women have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

Ementa and Alonta (2021) opined that curriculum is often seen as a course of study that students must learn to reach a certain level of education. It is a vehicle through which the school strives to achieve educational objectives. It is the life wire of a school programme, and it is a track that prepares students for their future life. According to a report by the International Bureau of Education (2016), curriculum represents a conscious and systematic selection of knowledge, skills and values; a selection that shapes the way teaching, learning, and assessment processes are organized by addressing questions such as what, why, when and how students should learn., remarked that the curriculum consists of all the learning experiences or educational programmes planned for students under the auspices of the school. Curriculum refers to a group of courses or planned experiences in proper sequence of topics designed to prepare an individual for efficient service in a specific vocation, it is the offering of a society valued knowledge, skills and attitudes that is made available to students through a variety of arrangements in schools, colleges or the universities or other arrangements (Adebayo & Lawal, 2011).

According to Wolugbom, Uranta & Firima (2022), Business education curriculum was designed and planned with guided learning experience and learning outcomes formulated through systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experiences engulfed with practical skills for self-reliance under the guidance of the school for learners in line with the reviewed national curriculum which became the New Basic Education Curriculum for lower basic and upper basic levels of education. This new curriculum is said to address issues of poverty reduction, critical thinking, value re-orientation, entrepreneurship, and skill acquisition.

Business education curriculum, according to Nwatarali and Emeasoba (2022), is part of a continuous process of planning and development, which involves the selection of learning experiences that will help in the attainment of goals, objectives of the programmes and for the recipients to fit into the world of work or be entrepreneurs' upon graduation. Business education curriculum is designed to provide skills such as; management skills, creative skills, planning skills, opportunity identification skills, cooperative skills, communication skills, goal setting skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, decision making skills, marketing strategy skills, financial management skills, conflict prevention/resolution skills, departmental recovery skills, risk bearing skills, motivation skills, technical skills, innovative skills, self-management skills and integrity/honesty skills.

Digitalization of Business Education Curriculum and Renewed Hope Agenda

Digitalizing the curriculum of business education could be described as online delivery of information and integration of learning with technology (Okure, 2018). Digital approach to business education curriculum is a student-centered method of learning that offers a great deal of flexibility considering time and location, which has the ability to facilitate the achievement of the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu-led team's achievement of renewed agenda. David and Abiola (2022), posited that one of the basic requirements for education in the 21st century is to prepare learners for preparation in a networked, knowledge-based economy in which knowledge will be the most critical resource for socio-economic development. Digitalizing educational content is achievable through the utilization of the internet. The internet is a valuable tool that is tremendously useful to teachers. This will allow both teachers and students to access new information, points of view, and experiences that they would otherwise not have been able to encounter.

According to Arkorful and Abaidoo (2014), some of the benefits of digitalizing business education curriculum in achieving socio-economic development include:

- i. It brings about modification of procedures and processes based on the needs of the students.
- ii. It has advantages to function in time of crisis such as man-made disasters, natural disasters or pandemic. Allow interaction with students on the platform.
- iii. It would transform the education sector by eradicating manual processes across and replace them with modern and dynamic online digital learning which will eventually create more interactive learning environment for students.
- iv. It allows students to learn at their own pace by attending online classes. This allows students to learn at their own pace.
- v. It brings about infrastructural development in terms of building, increases satisfaction and decreases stress brought about by traveling.

Other benefits derivable from digitalizing business education curriculum for the achievement of government agenda according to Jain International Residential School (2021), include the following;

- i. One-on-one learning: The main advantage of the digital business education system is that it allows students to learn at their own pace and when students are unable to keep up with the rest of the class, it causes them to lose interest.
- ii. Develop smart learners: Using learning tools and technology, students will be able to study more effectively.
- iii. Students become self-motivated: Students who use digital tools and technology to learn become more involved and interested.
- iv. Expansive learning opportunities: Additional learning options outside of the traditional classroom teaching and learning environment are referred to as expanded learning.
- v. Individualized learning experience: This is personalizing teaching based on the students' learning pace and aptitude to modern digital format.
- vi. Endless Information: The internet is enormous and full of information, the majority of which is freely available.

- vii. Highly engaged learning: The conventional education system limits engagement since its forces at work include restricted elements such as textbooks, an instructor, and handwritten notes, but the digital education system gives a wide range of learning option.
- viii. Student accountability: The digital education system includes real-time evaluation and system-generated performance reports, which improves assessment openness. It allows students to independently examine their performance and come up with the necessary remedies.

Challenges of digitalizing Business Education Curriculum

Wolugbom, Uranta and Firima (2022) posited that the challenges of digitalizing business education curriculum could be categorized as administrative challenges and economic challenges. The administrative challenges include; allocation of business education courses to non-professionals, use of obsolete and inappropriate teaching methods, lack of teachers' training and re-training, inadequate time allocation, students' lack of interest in the subject, integration of several subject areas in the curriculum and non-teacher commitment towards practical skills. In the same vein, Ezenwa (2020) highlighted lack of infrastructure and teaching facilities; method of instructional delivery, lack of students' interest, quality of teachers, inadequate instructional supervision and corruption as the administrative challenges of business education curriculum. The economic challenges of business education challenges include; inadequate teaching/learning facilities, parents' socio economic status, inadequate funding, high cost of instructional materials like textbooks, lack of teacher motivation like timely promotion, salary increment and allowances, lack of physical facilities and unstable government policies. Needum-Ogede (2019), also submitted that the economic challenges of business education curriculum include poor funding, inadequate ICT facilities classrooms, laboratories, workshops, furniture, poor socio-economic background of parents and inconducive school environment.

Strategies for Effective Digitalization of Business Education Curriculum for Achieving Renewed Hope Agenda

In achieving renewed hope agenda through business education, effective digitalization of the curriculum is crucial. One key strategy is to integrate technology-enhanced learning tools, such as learning management systems (LMS), online simulations and gamification into the curriculum. This will enable students to access course materials, participate in interactive learning activities, and collaborate with peers remotely. In the same manner, incorporating emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and data analytics into the curriculum will equip students with the skills and knowledge required to succeed in today's digital economy.

Effective digitalization of business education curriculum is to focus on developing students' digital literacy and competencies. This can be achieved by incorporating digital skills training, such as digital marketing, e-commerce, and data analysis into the curriculum. However, encouraging students to participate in digital entrepreneurship and innovation initiatives can help them develop the skills and mindset required to succeed in the digital economy. Additionally, business education curriculum should accommodate partnership with industry stakeholders and companies to provide students with

opportunities for experimental learning, internships, and job placements, thereby enhancing their employability and career prospects.

Adeola and Adedayo (2022) posited that the 21st century economy needs highly trained and skilled human capital. Educational institutions are required to turn out qualified graduates to meet the needs of employers and national development through the inculcation of relevant skills. The goal of business education is to provide its recipients with hands-on, technical training that prepares them to the rapidly evolving 21st century workforce. The findings of Ejeka, Okoro and Ebenezer-Nwokeji (2022), also suggested likely solutions to the problems confronting the digitalization of business education curriculum towards achieving renewed hope agenda include;

- i. Building of meaningful digital literacy centers in schools
- ii. Constant in-service training programme like seminar, conferences, workshops on digital literacy or skill development
- iii. Involvement of non-governmental organizations to collaborate with schools in the provision of digital resources
- iv. Provision of adequate security and stable power supply for digital resources utilization by business educators
- v. Acquisition of basic digital resources by every business educators.

Conclusion

To actualize the renewed hope agenda in Nigeria, the place of business education cannot be overemphasized. As the educational sector becomes more competitive, digital transformation is now becoming a necessary means of survival. This new digital world requires business educators to adopt and adapt digital technologies, methodologies, and mindsets. The yearning better Nigeria is achievable if the concept of business education is digitalized for the citizens to behold and unwrap potential therein for socio-economic development and improved standard of living.

Suggestions

Based on the conclusion of this paper, it was suggested that:

1. The federal government of Nigeria should mainstream innovation into business education curriculum to foster better learning outcomes for the achievement of her renewed hope agenda.
2. There is a need to review the present curriculum of business education to further update more digital skills. Proper integration of technology in the learning environment gives children the opportunity to develop social interaction and collaboration.
3. The government, both at the state and national levels, should leverage the capabilities of present-day technology and continuously stay updated for the achievement of the renewed hope agenda.
4. Business educators at all levels of education should be trained on the usage of digital technologies for improved job performance in achieving the renewed hope agenda.

Business Education programme should be adequately funded by the PBAT-led administration through the provision of digitalized ICT laboratories and entrepreneurship laboratories at various level of education to expose students and trainees to the needed practical experiences garnered towards achieving the renewed hope agenda.

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