BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF DIGITALIZING BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN OYO STATE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

The study examined Digitalization of Business Education for Sustainable Skill Acquisition in Oyo State Colleges of education. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated for the study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Population of the study comprised all Business Education students and lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo state, Nigeria. 400 respondents (250 students and 150 lecturers) were selected randomly and used as sample for the study. Data were collected through a self-structured 20 items questionnaire as the research instrument. Three experts in Business Education Department, Tai Solarin University of Education validated the instrument via face and content validity. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained using 20 Business Educators and students from University of Ilorin who are not part of the study participants. The data collected were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha yielding a coefficient value of 0.84 thereby confirming internal consistency of the instrument. The research questions were answered using mean score and standard deviation. The findings indicated that there are many benefits of digitalizing business education in colleges of education in Oyo State for example, Customized Learning experiences, personalized learning experiences, online testing and assessment etc but faced problems with numerous challenges such like poor funding, faculty development and support, insufficient skilled staff, insufficient modern facilities to mention but few. It was recommended among others that government should increase funding of business education programme in order to procure digitalization equipment.

Keywords: Benefits of Digitalization, Business Education, Digitalization, Sustainable Skill Acquisition, Colleges of education.

Introduction

The development of a country largely depends on the economic welfare of its citizens. This economic welfare cannot be achieved without adequate commercial and financial literacy. The commercial and financial literacy is one of the major aims of business education programme. In fact, business education programme intended to provide skills needed to be rational producers and intelligent consumers. The present trends in life and business require digitalization as contemporary societies are operating virtually in digitalized environment. Therefore, if business education will live to its expectations, there is the need to digitalize business education programme particularly in Colleges of education.

Business Education have been defined by different authors, for instance, Suleman and Akaeze (2014) defined business education as an aspect of total educational programme which provides the recipients and learners with needed knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes to perform well in business environment as a rational producer, entrepreneur and intelligent consumer of goods and services offered by business. Business education can also be regarded as a programme of instruction that offers various skills in accounting, marketing and Office Technology and Management (OTM) with emphasis on topics like office practice, book keeping, business



business communication, secretarial duties, word processing, mathematics. advertising, entrepreneurship, to mention but few (Ajisafe, Bolarinwa & Edeh 2015). Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) noted that the actual goals of business education shall be to: prepare its recipients for specific career in office occupations, equip them with the requisite skills for self-employment, job creation and entrepreneurship, and expose them to knowledge about business, including a good blend of computer technology, which incorporates Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Similarly, Business education can be seen as a programme of instruction concerned with the teaching and learning of various types of business skills as well as how to practically and successfully engage in them for the purpose of earning a living and the pedagogical training for transmitting such knowledge to others (Odike & Kingsley, 2019). Hence Udo and Bako (2014) stated that Business education comprises accounting education, marketing education, office technology education, entrepreneurship education and teaching methodology. No wonder, Olaniyi (2022) was of the opinion that Business education is one of the occupationalareas that are richly provided by vocational and technical education in Nigeria. The programme is offered in both secondary and colleges of education of learning in Nigeria and it is designed to equip the recipients with both academic and vocational skills needed for both salaried and self-employment as job creators and entrepreneurs. Since education is designed to produce rational individuals who can contribute meaningfully to the society, it should be tailored towards societal goals and aspirations. One of the recent trends in the society and business world is digitalization. Gartner (2019), was of the opinion that digitalization is the use of digital technologies to change the business model, generate new revenue and create new opportunities for value creation. This definition suggests that business education will be effective and functional if it is integrated with digitalization hence the need to discuss digitalization of business education and its benefits.

Digitalization of business education according to Akinyemi et al (2022) is a concept adopted to ensure the innovative integration of modern technologies and digital tools to assist the progress of teaching and learning and to create more room for remote learning in business education. Micheal and Jacob (2017) opined that digitization is the process of converting educational resources from material forms to electronic forms where they can be stored and manipulated by a computer. This transfer of data from analogue to digital is viewed as a crucial driver of innovation in teaching and learning process (Gillpatrick, 2020). Titus (2018) and Olatunde-Aiyedun, Eyiolorunse-Aiyedun, & Ogunode, (2021) conceptualized digitalization in education as the process of transferring traditional teaching and learning materials to electronic model such as online learning platforms, educational apps, and multimedia resources online courses, online assessments, and web seminars/conferences or workshops for deployment in the schools. Bejinaru (2019) maintained that digitalization is concerned with the conversion of text, pictures, video, and music into digital format utilizing technologies such as a laptop computer, the internet, mobile devices, scanners, digital cameras, projectors, and printers, to mention but few, that may be played by a computer. Machekhina (2017) viewed digitalization as the translation of all information kinds, such as text, audio, pictures, video, and other data from multiple sources into digital language. These definitions and opinions suggested that digitalization of business education can be conceptualized as those facilities that enhance the conversion of teaching and learning situations in business education into platforms like online courses, online assessments, and web seminars/conferences or workshops through the use of electronic platforms and media. Digitalization of business education is the process of transforming physical teaching and learning resources into packages or platforms or electronic forms where they can be stored and manipulated by a computer for the implementation of teaching and learning programmes in schools. Panjio"g"li (2023) confirmed that it can be used in various fields such as



accounting, business, journalism and other fields. Therefore, business education will benefit from the integration of digitalization into its curriculum.

Statement of the Problem

One of the major objectives of business education is the provision of saleable skills needed by the society and the world of business. The present business environment requires acquisition of digital skills if prospective operators will have saleable skills. This could not be achieved without digitalization of business education. Barbara (2017) noted that 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. Prospective business education graduates need such digital skills in order to meaningfully compete in the 21st century global economic system. The authors observed that the implementation of digitalization of business education programme in Oyo State Colleges of education is a mirage and this may be as a result of lack of empirical reports on the importance of digitalization of business education and where they exist, there may be challenges facing the implementation of digitalization of business education hence the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to discuss benefits and challenges of integrating digitalization into business education programme in Oyo State Colleges of education. Specifically, the study sought to investigate:

1. the benefits of digitalizing business education in Oyo State Colleges of education.

2. the challenges of digitalizing business education in Oyo State Colleges of education.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the benefits of digitalizing business education in Oyo State Colleges of education?

2. What are the challenges of digitalizing business education in Oyo State Colleges of education?

Literature Review

Benefits of Digitalizing Business Education in Colleges of education:

Digitalization can be beneficial to business education students and teachers in the area of inculcation and acquisition of digital skills needed in today's business world and ecosystems. Students need wide range of such digital skills in order to successfully participate in the 21st century global economy (Barbara, 2017) hence, the need for 21st century skills. Twenty-first century skills are not entirely a new concept; but ICT component of the skill sets are very vital in today's global and business settings. Digitalization of Business Education offers unique opportunity to teachers to equip students with required skills for participation in the growing digital business world and the changing dynamics of business ecosystems. This assertion corroborate a study by Gregor and Valerij (2015) who reported that e-learning courses, market research data bases and business plan software are among the digital tools that can be used for inculcating digital competencies in the students.

Furthermore, Panjio"g"li (2023) outlined the benefits of digitalization in Business Education in Colleges of education to include; Transformation of teaching through facilities like online learning, education apps, which can provide students with access to educational resources from anywhere in the world. This can be particularly beneficial for students who are unable to attend traditional brick-and-mortar institutions due to financial, geographical, or personal constraints thereby providing students with more flexible learning opportunities, allowing them to study at their own pace and on their schedule and allowing teachers to attend to many students at the same time.

Customized Learning experiences is another benefit of digitalization of business education as it provide the teachers with space to customize learning experiences to suit individual needs of the learners. Digital technologies can provide students with personalized learning experiences, allowing them to focus on areas where they need the most support and challenge themselves in areas where they excel.

The online Testing and assessment is another benefit of digitalization of business education which will make testing and assessment easier, impartial and entirely fair. If a machine is grading the test and automatically correcting wrong answers, it's impossible to show any signs of bias. Additionally, online testing can be an excellent solution for those who suffer from test anxiety and are distressed by taking tests in a room with a group of other people and can be a source of relief for teachers in large classes like business education classes. Improved ability to meet special needs is another benefit offered by digitalization of business education in which rigid classroom structure where student had the same experience, no matter their differing needs or abilities are abolished.

In the same vein, McNulty (2021) opined that curricula that are delivered in digitalized learning environment improve learning and innovation skills, information, media and technology skills as well as life and career skills. This opinion is supported by the findings of Bepeh, Ojini, Udo and Aniefiok (2023) that the use of digital facilities like virtual reality simulation and teleconferencing by business educators in Nigeria's South-South universities significantly predict their teaching effectiveness. The digitalization of business education also provides a chance for students to establish a cognitive resource-based mechanism and enhance their abilities, as well as to engage in lifetime learning and continuous education (Abdullahi& Tijani, 2019). This is because it encourages the use of modern facilities to impart knowledge and can make teaching and learning in business education a collaborative and self-driven activities in which instructors, lecturers, students, and other stakeholders are involved as a result of the use of digital facilities which provide information that may be transmitted in a variety of ways, for instance, teacher directed, joint teacher-and-learner-directed, and learner-directed.

Ogunode and Ndayebom(2023) are of the opinion that digitalization bridges the gap in access to national and international books by making it possible for nearly all hard-copy textbooks, journals and other literary works to be converted into soft copy and stored on the World Wide Web for easy accessibility and therefore books with high costs may be affordable in soft copies. Digitization is capable of interconnecting students and lecturers from different schools, even internationally in the discussion of academic-related matters which widens the research of many lecturers and students.

Challenges of Digitalizing Business Education in Colleges of education

There are many benefits and challenges militating against digitalization of business education in Colleges of education and these include:



Inadequate Funding

There is inadequate funding of Colleges of education which in turn adversely affect the purchase and maintenance of modern and state-of-the-art digital equipment by the government and Management of Colleges of education (Onyia, 2021). Similarly, Ogunode et al. (2021) noted that Nigeria's colleges of education lack basic office gadgets and technologies like computers, printers, faxing machines, photocopiers, binders, and projectors not even to talk of the internet in most institutions as a result of underfunding and the high cost of the facilities.

Poor Power Supply

Digitalization cannot be effected in an environment of poor power supply. The issue of power has become a national infrastructural problem that has to be given priority by any tertiary institution aspiring to attain global visibility. Hence, all the institutions in Nigeria largely depend on generator for their power supply which is now difficult to maintain as a result of present upsurge in prices of petroleum products and thus hinders the digitalization process.

Lack of Modern Infrastructure

Infrastructural facilities in most Nigerian Tertiary institution are in a state of coma. Oluwafemi and Ewegbenro (2021) reported that ICT and e-learning facilities in these institutions particularly in Oyo State is in despair; even the few available systems are being infected with a virus which makes them unfit for the digitalization project.

Insufficient Skilled Staff

Many academic staff lacks the basic computer training, not to mention specialized training required for digitalization (Oluwafemi&Ewegbenro, 2021). To this end, Onyia (2021) opined that there is a need for continuous training to build academic staff capacity in equipment maintenance and software management.

Poor Internet Facilities and Coverage

The effective attainment of digitalization goals in Colleges of education largely depends on the availability of strong internet facilities and coverage. Internet service is critical for the operation of digital education. Internet service is the life wire of digitalization. Availability and stable internet services make digital education efficient and effective in colleges of education. It is saddened that in Nigeria, internet facilities and coverage are still a problems making it difficult for the implementation of digitalization in Business Education.

High Cost of Digital Facilities

Another issue that has frustrated the application of digital facilities by students and lecturers is the high cost of the facilities such as high cost of internet data and electronic services, which are the determinants of digital technology usage and value (Ogunodeetal, 2023). Furthermore, high cost of digital facilities, internet data and fast tariffs set by internet providers mostly international companies running business in Nigeria with the sole aim of making profits have affected digitalization of business education because colleges of education cannot afford to make ICT available to the whole university which includes staff and students, unless they have sponsors or government funding to embark on such projects.



High Cost of Maintenance and Poor Maintenance Culture

One of the problems of infrastructure management in Nigeria is poor maintenance culture this becomes problem in digitalization because digital facilities needs maintenance always. The sustainability and survival of digital facilities depend on proper maintenance culture from users. Ogunode (2020) submitted that the cost implication required for maintaining ICT facilities is high and this made many administrators limit the time allocation for internet services within the university environment.

Poor Faculty Development and Support

Panjio"g"li, (2023) noted that there is the need for faculty development and support because digital technologies require specialized knowledge and skills, and faculty members may need support and training to effectively incorporate these technologies into their teaching practices and instructional delivery. Without adequate support, faculty members may be hesitant to adopt digital technologies, or they may use them ineffectively, which can negatively impact student learning outcomes. This may lead to shortage of professional digital experts which can become another problem hindering the effective use of digital facilities in colleges of education thus, Titus (2018) lamented the dearth of digital professionals in colleges of education.

The issue of digitalization has created a glaring need for business education lecturers and students to acquire relevant skills in order to provide needed competencies and bring up the caliber of graduates that will fit squarely into the digital work trends (Zakka, Bewaran&Moris, 2021). It is globally recognized that the use of digital technologies in teaching and learning is a relevant and functional way of providing education to learners that will assist in imbibing in them the required capability for the world of work. In addition, effective application of digital technologies in teaching will facilitate the realization of stated objectives of any educational programme through improve innovativeness, curiosity and creativity of the learners. Therefore, this study investigated Digitalization of Business Education for Sustainable Skill Acquisition in Oyo State Colleges of education.

Method

Research Design

The study adopted a survey research design. This is because the study involved collection of data from respondents (students and lecturers) scattered in different locations.

Population and Sample

Population of the study comprised all Business Education students and lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State, Nigeria. 400 respondents (250 students and150 lecturers) selected randomly were used as sample for the study.

Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected through structured 20 items questionnaire as instrument, having two parts, namely: Part A and Part B. Part A is on personal data of the respondents, while part B contained 20 items on the formulated research questions.

Data Collection Instrument Validation and Reliability

Three experts from Business Education Department, Tai Solarin University of Education validated the instrument via face and content validity processes. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by 10 Business Educators and students from University of Ilorin that are not part of the study group. The data collected were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha yielding a coefficient value of 0.84 thereby confirming internal consistency of the instrument.

Data Analysis

The research questions were answered using means score and standard deviation. The cut-off point was fixed at 2.50 indicating that any value below 2.50 mean score was regarded as Disagreed.

Results

Research Question1: What are the benefits of digitalizing business education in Oyo State Colleges of education?

S/N	Item Statements	X	SD	Remark
1	Inculcation and acquisition of digital skills and competencies	3.40	0.82	Agreed
2 3	Provision of conducive learning environment Fosters Interaction between students sharing learning material	2.97	0.80 0.82	Agreed Agreed
5 4 5	Facilitates easy accessibility to learning materials Transformation of teaching	2.78	0.82 0.76 0.82	Agreed Agreed
6 7 8 9	Supports easy fair and impartial assessment of students Improved learning and innovation skills. Acquisition of information, media, life and career skills. Supports high Interaction between students and lecturers	3.00 2.85 3.50 2.89	0.75 0.88 0.82 0.91	Agreed Agreed Agreed Agreed
10	Customized Learning experiences	2.74	0.84	Agreed
	1 Grand mean	2.98		Agreed

Table1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on the benefits of digitalizing business education in Oyo State Colleges of education.

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The results in table1 show that all the items indicated a positive response as they have mean ratings above 2.50 which is the cutoff point. A grand mean of 2.98 which was generated above the cut off points indicated a positive response that the implementation of digitalization of business education in Colleges of education is more beneficial to both lecturers and students.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges of digitalizing business education in Oyo State Colleges of education?



S/N	Item Statements	X	SD	Remark
1	Poor funding of business education programmes	3.40	0.72	Agreed
2	High cost of digitalization equipment and facilities	2.97	0.80	Agreed
3	High maintenance cost of digitalization equipment	2.87	0.80	Agreed
4	Poor maintenance culture	2.88	0.74	Agreed
5	Poor network and internet connection	2.96	0.80	Agreed
6	Insufficient digital skills experts	3.20	0.77	Agreed
7	Poor faculty development and support	2.95	0.84	Agreed
8	Inadequate modern infrastructure	3.50	0.82	Agreed
9	Poor accessibility to smart phones and digital gadgets	2.90	0.86	Agreed
10	Poor availability of learning support like wifi and free data	2.84	0.82	Agreed
	Grand mean	3.05		Agreed

 Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on the Challenges of Digitalizing Business

 Education in Colleges of Education.

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The results in table 2 show that all the items indicated a positive response as they have mean ratings above 2.50 which is the cutoff point. A grand mean of 3.05 which was generated above the cut off points indicated a positive response that the digitalization of business education in Colleges of education is being faced with all the listed problems.

Discussion

The findings of the research as stated in research Question 1 revealed that digitalization of business education in Colleges of education would be of immense benefit as it would lead to inculcation and acquisition of digital skills and competencies, provision of conducive learning environment, fostering Interaction between students sharing learning material, facilitation of easy accessibility to learning materials, transformation of teaching. It will also supports easy fair and impartial assessment of students, improved learning and innovation skills, acquisition of information, media, life and career skills, high Interaction between students and lecturers and customized learning experiences. The findings agree with the earlier opinions of McNulty (2021), Ogunode and Ndayebom (2023); and Bepeh, Ojini, Udo and Aniefiok (2023) that digitalization of business education is beneficial in that curricula that are delivered in digitalized learning environment improve learning and innovation skills, information, media and technology skills as well as life and career skills and that the use of digital facilities like virtual reality simulation and teleconferencing by business educators in universities significantly predict their teaching effectiveness. The findings also agree with the opinion of Abdullahi and Tijani (2019) that digitalization of business education is capable of providing a chance for students to establish a cognitive resource-based mechanism and enhance their abilities, as well as to engage in lifetime learning and continuous education.

Similarly, the findings in table 2 indicate that poor funding of business education programmes, high cost of digitalization equipment and facilities, high maintenance cost of digitalization equipment poor maintenance culture, network and internet connection, insufficient digital skills experts, poor faculty development and support, inadequate modern infrastructure, poor



accessibility to smart phones and digital gadgets; and poor availability of learning support like wifi and free data are the problems militating against digitalization of business education in Oyo State Colleges of education. These findings agree with the opinions of Titus (2018) who lamented the dearth of digital professionals in colleges of education. Panjio"g"li, (2023) noted that there is the problems of poor funding, high maintenance and procurement costs of digital equipment. Also findings agree with the opinion of Ogunode (2020) who submitted that the cost implication required for maintaining ICT facilities is high and that of Oluwafemi and Ewegbenro (2021) that many academic staff lacks the basic computer training, not to mention specialized training required for digitalization.

Conclusion

Digitization has no doubt been observed to be capable of effecting changes in teaching and learning activities in business education, but we cannot say that it has diminished the value of our old time classroom learning. The best part about the digitalization of business education in the 21st century is that it is combined with the aspects of both; classroom learning and online learning styles. Digitalization in business education has also proved to be the right method for saving resources and instructional delivery particularly amongst the tech-compliant students and business environment. Online testing and assessment platforms have restricted the frivolous usage of paper and are capable of constituting easy, impartial and fair mode of testing and assessment . This suggests that digitalization of business education will go a long way in the production of digital students, lecturers, learning and teaching environment leading to acquisition of skills for sustainable development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the authors recommended that:

- 1. There should be Increment in the funding of Oyo State colleges of education with specific allocation to digitalization of business education.
- 2. The government and management of colleges of education should provide adequate digitalization facilities to all the public colleges of education to enable them deploy digitalization facilities for teaching and learning in the classroom;
- 3. The government should ensure that colleges of education in Oyo State are provided with adequate and regular power supply internet facilities and services.
- 4. There should be adequate provision of increased internet coverage across the country;
- 5. The government should provide internet data costs subsidies and set a minimum tariff speed for internet providers, to enable business education to embrace digitalization.
- 6. There should be adequate faculty development and support in all the colleges of education so as to support the development of digitalized business education.

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