

POSITIONING THE TERTIARY BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA FOR RELEVANCE IN THE GLOBAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

The continuous rise in the rate of unemployment among youths in Nigeria indicate that business education appear to have lost its relevance in the global competitive business environment. In that it has failed to equip its graduate with global competitive skills set for the 21st century. In a bid to turn around this negative trajectory, the study sought to determine strategies for positioning the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment. One research question guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study comprised 780 respondents made up of 126 business educators and 654 managers of medium scale enterprises. The sample of study comprised 256 respondents. The instrument for data collection was a 16 item structured questionnaire which was developed by the researcher and structured on a 4-point rating scale. The test of reliability yielded coefficient values of 0.79 and 0.83 for the two clusters with an overall reliability co-efficient of 0.81. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed with mean, standard deviation and t-test. Finding revealed that ensuring that business education gives priority attention to professional ethics development, collaborating with industry experts on research development on novel business areas, availing students opportunities for engaging in exchange programmes abroad, reformulating the mission of business education towards developing 21st century business managers and recruiting highly innovative lecturers with industry wide experience among others are some of the strategies for positioning the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment. The status and years of experience of the respondents did not influence their mean responses. Based on the finding, the researcher recommended among others that administrators of business education programme should prioritize collaboration between the programme and business experts locally and internationally in areas of research, funding, training and technologies.

Keywords: Business Education, Tertiary, Institution, Global Business Environment, Relevance

Introduction

Over the years, the global business environment has continued to evolve as new technologies are introduced into the market that brings about modifications in business practices or a technologically driven alternative in business processes. These developments have completely revolutionised the business space resulting in complete overhaul of system design and technologies as well as manpower (those who keep up with the changes). The pace and dynamism of the current business market makes it imperative for business professionals to continue to develop and up-date knowledge to match new technologies, skills and practices.

Lubeck, Cheng, Myszkowski, Doedijns, Drew and Snow (2015) opined that the global business space is expanding, requirements are diversifying, and needs differ greatly by prospective customer. Ilie, Fornes, Cardoza and Quintana (2020) noted that business education programmes are exposed to the same threats that companies encounter as a result of faster globalization, higher rates of growth, and greater diversity in the workplace, which necessitates more internationalization policies, creative faculty recruiting and retention, new ethical methods, and novel organizational structures, as well as new teaching, studying, and study strategies.

Furthermore, the above definition suggest that business education programmes needs to be highly competitive and in tune with the current trends in the business environment. Sadly, business schools and business education programmes continue to lose competitively to financial services companies in addition to these needs (Lubeck et al, 2015). This reality is even more worrisome when the curriculum of business education in Nigeria is not geared towards meeting the demands of the global market. According to Ikpesu (2017), the curriculum of business education is a far cry from what is obtainable in the business world. Previously, scholars like Obiete, Nwazor and Vin-Mbah (2015) had lamented the failure of tertiary business education programmes in Nigeria to prepare graduates for the demands of the corporate environment. In Nigeria, the business education programme seems to be far behind in catching up to the current trends in the global business environment. This is evident in its curriculum which still gives relevance to the study of typewriters and shorthand in the 21st century while in the global stage, universities, polytechnics', colleges of education and business experts are discussing the inclusion of teaching of block chain technologies as the new way to go given the impacts it is having in the global financial market (Obiete, Nwazor& Vin-Mbah, 2015). Olurounbi (2021) reported that the National Bureau of Statistics' revealed that the unemployment rate increased to 33.3 percent in the three months leading up to December. This figure is the second in the world global index according to Bloomberg (Olurounbi, 2021). The figure according to the report shows that over 69.7 million people in Nigeria is unemployed.

This is gloomy given the fact that the country has a predominantly youthful population.

The above figure indicate that the educational system in Nigeria especially the business education programme has failed in its objectives of preparing individual for the world of work and self-employment as well as national development. Given the arrays of technologies and business innovation, it is sad that youths in Nigeria are still dormant and dependent on stipends from government employment. It appears that there is a mismatch between what is expected and what is produced in business education. Obiete, et al (2015) had alluded that the programme continues to give priority attention to theoretical aspect of learning with little collaboration with business leaders, policy makers and industry experts. Ilie, et al (2020) averred that an aspect of business education which threatens to diminish its relevance is the overemphasis on study, rankings, and accreditations at the expense of teaching and scholarship. It appears that the business education has only concentrated on knowledge transfer while ignoring business professional formation. This according Chiang and Mitchel (2018) have turned business education into rent-seeking institutions that offer meaningless material to their students. The situation is ominous because business education programme should be a programme that creates awareness, skills, behaviors, and values that enable people to contribute to and benefit from a more equitable and prosperous future. It is expected to aspire to do more than just train students for the workforce; it must also provide students with the qualities they need to become involved, responsible, and committed citizens (Organization for Economic Co-operation and

Development, 2018). Hence, it is imperative that ways of improvement are sort to ensure that it becomes relevant in the global business environment.

For business education programmes to be progressive they have to invest in the human resources and distribution processes needed to succeed effectively in an environment marked by hyper-competition, technological transformation, and creativity (Smit, 2017). In addressing the technological transformation of block-chain technology in the business world, Shivendu, Kaushik & Kiran (2019), suggested that academic programmes like the business education must build solid curriculum to address the potential needs of key block-chain contributors, including programmers to develop block-chain-based enterprise software, analysts to design block-chain technologies, integrators to ensure block-chain technology objects operate within current technology platforms, and cryptographers to ensure block-chain technology artifacts function within established technology platforms. In other vein, the business education must reformulate their mission of training graduates who will be managers of the 21st century as well as hiring creative lecturers with real-world experience (Ilie, et al, 2020; Chiang & Mitchel; 2018). Ilie et al (2015) further averred that for business education to remain relevant they have to integrate more humanities, ethics, leadership, and other forms of knowledge in their curricula, but also by adopting a new economic paradigm. Dan (n.d.) suggested that for business education to remain competitive in the global business environment, administrators of the programme need to ensure that adequate educational resources are made readily available.

Another strategy is encouraging business students to venture abroad as a way to internationalize certain elements of the business curriculum (Chiang & Mitchel, 2018). Smit (2017) opined that some ways in which business education programmed could promote or improve teaching and learning processes include; integration of technology mediated learning, blended learning, distance learning, mobile learning and online global learning, all supporting individualized, customized instruction. Smit (2017) also suggested that experiential education (internships and field-based projects), project based teamwork, incubator and laboratory learning (including virtual reality), the ramification of learning, the international integration of classrooms and international team activities and competitions collaborative applied research in organizations and learning through consultation should be utilized in business education training. However, the extent to which this suggested measures can improve the relevance of tertiary business education programme in the global business environment has not been met in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Rising rate of unemployment among youths in Nigeria is indicative of the failure of the tertiary business education programme to equip students with skills required for modern business start-up and entrepreneurship. Business education is expected to be a front runner in the frontiers of business and innovation in Nigeria. However, the curriculum of the programme is still fashioned like it was in the early sixties. This has further deepened the mismatch between what is thought in school and what is expected in the global business world. The global business environment

which is highly professional, competitive and technologically driven demands that the executors of business educators are made up of professionals who are professional, highly competitive and knowledgeable about technology and teaching methodology. Sadly, these expectations seem not to have been met in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the strategies for positioning the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment.

Research Question

What are the strategies for positioning the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of business educators and medium managers on the strategies for positioning the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the strategies for positioning the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment based on years of experience (less than 10 years (less experienced) & Above 10 years (highly experienced)).

Method

Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 780 respondents. This is made up of 126 business educators from the tertiary institutions (NAU 16, Madonna University 11, COOU 10, Nwafor Orisu COE 18, Nsugbe Federal College of Education Technical Umunze 71) and 654 managers of Medium Scale enterprises who are registered with the State Ministry of Commerce in Anambra State. The study used all the 126 business educators and through simple random sampling sampled 20 percent of managers of Medium Scale Enterprises amounting to 130 managers used. Thus, the sample of study comprised 256 business educators and Medium Scale Enterprises in Anambra State. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Strategies for Positioning Tertiary Business Education in Nigeria for Relevance in the Global Business Environment (QSPTBENRGE)". The instrument was structured on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The instrument was validated by three experts in the faculty of education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

The instrument was further subjected to reliability testing. Twenty copies (10 copies each) of the questionnaire were administered on business educators and medium scale entrepreneurs in Asaba Metropolis of Delta State who were not included in the population of the study. The application of Cronbach Alpha reliability method on the obtained data yielded coefficient values of 0.79 and 0.83 for the two clusters with an overall reliability co-efficient of

0.81. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed with mean, standard deviation and t-test. Out of the 256 copies of questionnaire administered, 200 (96 for business educators and 104 for business managers) were returned and used for data analysis.

The mean value was used to answer the research questions while standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' mean ratings. The item by item analysis was based on the real limits of numbers of Strongly Agree (3.50-4.00), Agree (2.50-3.49), Disagree (1.50-2.49) and Strongly Disagree

(1.00- 1.49). For the hypotheses, t-test was used to test all the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Where the calculated t value is less than the critical value of t, it meant that the variable did not significantly affect respondents' mean ratings and the hypothesis was not rejected. Conversely, where the calculated t value was equal to or greater than the critical t value, it meant that the variable has a significant effect on the respondents' mean ratings and the hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question

What are the strategies for positioning the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment?

Table 1: Respondents Mean ratings on the Strategies for Positioning the Tertiary Business Education Programme in Nigeria for Relevance in the Global Business Environment

S/N	Item Statements	X	SD	Remarks
1.	Reviewing the business education curriculum to modify or remove obsolete courses	2.91	0.72	Agree
2.	Ensuring that business education gives priority attention to professional ethics development	3.35	0.84	Agree
3.	Reformulating the mission of business education towards developing 21 st century business managers	3.01	0.75	Agree
4.	Integrating business leadership development courses in the business education curriculum	3.21	0.77	Agree
5.	Giving priority attention to the developments in technology and financial market as seen in block-chain	3.08	0.80	Agree
6.	Adequately providing educational resources are readily available for teachers and students	3.41	0.85	Agree
7.	Availing student's opportunities for engaging in exchange programmes abroad.	3.21	0.76	Agree
8.	Encouraging students to travel abroad so that they can acquire first hand global perspectives of business	3.03	0.71	Agree
9.	Collaborating with industry experts on research development			
10.	Recruiting highly innovative lecturers with industry wide experience	3.32	0.82	Agree

11.	Ensuring that business mentorship programmes are adequately used in training of business educators as against simulations	3.15	0.74	Agree
12.	Actively using online learning platforms	2.81	0.70	Agree
13.	Utilizing individualized learning model that that creates room for engaging students in apprenticeship programmes	3.07	0.78	Agree
14.	Adopting different economic models that is propelled by markets and hierarchies which are communal in nature	2.57	0.80	Agree
15.	Designing the programme to factor in the conditions that influence educational management in Nigeria	3.19	0.76	Agree
16.	Utilizing online discussion boards to facilitate feedback and assessment of students	2.79	0.71	Agree
	Cluster mean	3.09		Agree

Data in Table 1 reveal that the respondents agree that items 1-16 with mean ratings between 2.57 to 3.41 are strategies for positioning the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment. The cluster mean of 3.09 further shows that ensuring that business education gives priority attention to professional ethics development, collaborating with industry experts on research development on novel business areas, availing students opportunities for engaging in exchange programmes abroad, reformulating the mission of business education towards developing 21st century business managers, recruiting highly

innovative lecturers with industry wide experience and ensuring that business mentorship programmes are adequately used in training of business educators as against simulations are some of the strategies for positioning the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of business educators and business managers on the strategies for positioning the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment.

Table 2: Summary of t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of Business Educators and Business Managers on the Strategies for Positioning the Tertiary Business Education Programme in Nigeria for Relevance in the Global Business Environment

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	α	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Bus. Educators	98	3.16	0.76					
				200	0.05	0.44	1.960	Not Significant
Medium Managers	104	2.99	0.84					

Data in Table 2 show that the calculated t-value of 0.44 at 200 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical value of

1.960. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators and business managers on the

strategies for positioning the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment, therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis 1

Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Strategies for Positioning the Tertiary Business Education Programme in Nigeria for Relevance in the Global Business Environment Based on Years of Experience

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	α	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Less Experienced	77	3.09	0.82	200	0.05	0.83	1.960	Not Significant
Highly Experienced	125	3.12	0.79					

Data in Table 3 show that the calculated t-value of 0.83 at 200 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical value of 1.960. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the strategies for positioning the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment based on years of experience, therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion

Findings on the research question show that business educators and business managers agree that ensuring that business education gives priority attention to professional ethics development, collaborating with industry experts on research development on novel business areas, availing students opportunities for engaging in exchange programmes abroad, reformulating the mission of business education towards developing 21st century business managers, recruiting highly innovative lecturers with industry wide experience and ensuring that

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the strategies for positioning the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment based on years of experience (0-10 years (less experienced) & Above 10 years (highly experienced).

business mentorship programmes are adequately used in training of business educators as against simulations are some of the strategies for positioning the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment. This finding is in agreement with Ikpesu (2017) who found that business education need to adopting innovative practices that is compliant and in sync with the global business environment. Ikpesu (2017) found that adopting strategies like exposing business students to multi-cultural environments, critical and analytical perspectives of global economic opportunities, and entrepreneurial skills would prepare them for business leadership in domestic and international business environments. Chiang and Mitchel (2018) noted that exposing students to their cultures of the world will help to broaden the students’ perspective on business as well as internationalize the business perspective to suite their local environment.

Another important strategy found is the review of the business education curricula to make room

for professional ethics, sciences, humanities and technology. Ilie et al (2015) averred that the integration of humanities, ethics, leadership, and other forms of knowledge in the business education programme curricula will broaden the scope of knowledge of business education students and put them in a better position to compete globally. Chiang and Mitchel (2018) noted that must be geared towards the development of 21st century managers who are trained by expert business educators with real-world experience. Shivendu, et al (2019) advised that business education have to give priority attention to the innovations of block-chain currently demystifying the current business environment. The authors suggested that the business education must build solid curriculum to address the generalized knowledge, application, technologies and policy framework driving the technologies.

Furthermore findings on the null hypotheses revealed that business educators and managers irrespective of their years of experience agree that the strategies as suggested in this study could help to position the tertiary business education programme in Nigeria for relevance in the global business environment. This is in agreement with Ilie et al (2015) who found that business education programme requires the adoption of strategies that will turn around its position and relevance in the global business environment.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that business education need to become highly competitive, technologically driven and professionally oriented if they have to become relevant in the business world. This means that they move from theoretical

knowledge based curriculum to a more hands on curriculum that exposes students to the processes, intricacies, technologies and innovation in the world market. It is important that administrators of business education become innovative in their approaches and methods so as to produce highly competitive students that can function in any business environment in the world.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Administrators of business education programme should prioritize collaboration between the programme and business experts locally and internationally in areas of research, funding, training and technologies. This will go a long way to improve the relevance of the business education programme.
2. There is need for an intensive curriculum review in business education so as to infuse more hands on teaching strategies like mentorship and apprenticeship.
3. Administrators of business education programme should ensure that educational resources that meet best practices are made readily available for teaching and learning.
4. Administrators of business education programme should engage students in exchange programmes that exposes them to cultural and business practices of the world.
5. Administrators of business education programme should ensure that highly qualified lecturers who possess requisite industry experiences are employed to train students.

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