

REVISITING BUSINESS EDUCATION CURRICULUM CONTENT FOR SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Akeke, Mercy N. G. (PhD), Eleng, Agbor Evor & Iniewe, Christiana B.
Department of Business Education, Faculty of Vocational and Entrepreneurial
Education, University of Calabar, Calabar

Abstract

This study focuses on revisiting the business education curriculum content for a sustainable global economy. An ex-post facto design was adopted for the study. The study was delimited to the Business Education departments in public universities in Cross River State. The population of the study consisted of 595 respondents, comprising 45 lecturers and 550 students in the Business Education department. A census was used since the population was manageable. The instrument used for data collection was the Revisiting Business Education Curriculum for Sustainable Global Economy Questionnaire (RBECSGEQ). Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Estimates were employed to determine the reliability coefficient, which ranged from .81 to .85, confirming that the instrument was reliable. The instrument was administered to 595 respondents, of whom 500 provided valid responses, while 95 were discarded due to incorrect completion. Simple linear regression was used to test the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the business education curriculum content is not significantly designed for a sustainable global economy, but improvements in the business education curriculum significantly influence progress toward a sustainable global economy. Based on these conclusions, it was recommended, among other things, that business education curriculum content should be designed to support a sustainable global economy.

Keywords: Curriculum, Business Education, Global Economy, Revisiting and Sustainable,

Introduction

The global economy continues to change in line with global realities such as digitalization, teeming population, climate change, multiculturalism among others. The global economy is an economy in which wealth and resources move across national borders, and comprise an aggregate of economic activities throughout the country (Ahmed, 2022). The global economy continues to be bridled with unemployment due to lack of job creation and low productivity. The achievement of sustainable economy comes through human capital and national development which are enhanced through education. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) opined that the tertiary institutions are the cradle of national growth. This is because the tertiary level of education equips students with the requisite expertise and skills to work successfully in the real world. It is however, impossible to develop global sustainability without stable and sustainable economy.

Business education has been defined in several ways by several scholars, to suit different situations and purposes. Business Education is therefore a programme of study that equips students with needed skills, values, and knowledge that will enable them perform maximally and be productive in the field of work, teaching and entrepreneurship for self esteem, sufficiency and financial independence. It is designed to prepare individuals to take up their work role in the various profession and occupation and aims at achieving the required skills for self-reliance which will enhance economic diversification. According to Elogbo and Akeke (2019), business education refers to an aspect of education that equips students with marketable skills, knowledge and attitude needed for initial employment and advancement in business related occupations. This implies that the curriculum content ought to be enriched with contents to achieve these purposes.

Curriculum according to Coles (2013) is the sum of all the activities, experiences and learning opportunities that institution(s) and teacher(s) have responsibility for either deliberately or by default to make learning take place. Curriculum includes the formal and the informal education, the overt and the covert, it recognized and overlooked, the intentional and the unintentional actions that take place in school. Additionally, curriculum is educational program of experience offered to the learner under the guidance of the school to produce certain changes in the learner's behavior for better living (Akeke, Angiating and Agbor, 2016)

Business education curriculum is part of the continuous process of planning and development, that involves the selection of learning experiences calculated to help in the attainment of goals and objectives of the programme. Dike (2019) viewed business education curriculum as an educational process of action and about opportunities for the engagement of students to be educated in business and educational related disciplines. Business education curriculum in this context, is responsible for equipping students with skills, attributes, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours required for teaching, entrepreneurship, administrative and clerical work.

According to Ohiwerei (2019) business education curriculum should be designed such that all universities offering business education programme in Nigeria should have unified curriculum such that graduates from any of the universities must have same course content exposure. Hence, organizing and managing business education curriculum in tertiary institutions to meet both requisite and soft skills of 21st century knowledge based economy have become imperative to every stakeholder in the programme (Ementa & Alonta, 2021). For Umo and Okon (2023), the curriculum of business education must have its contents reflective of the labour market demands of the contemporary global society.

In a study carried out by Atah, Akeke, Ajuluchukwu, Aderibigbe, Akinwumi, Wonah, Udayi, Ogar, Nwannunu, Olabisi, Bella, Bullem, Ititim, Ushie, Nnaji, Emeka, Ben & Ogbeche (2023) on digitalization of business education curriculum for the twenty-first century for global relevance in Nigeria, the survey research design was employed for the investigation, two research questions with corresponding hypotheses were used. The population consisted of 23 participants: fifteen (15) male and eight (8) female business educators from two universities in Ebonyi State, Abakaliki. The instrument for the study was a four-point scale questionnaire named "The Digitalization of Business Education Curriculum for the Twenty-First Century: Global Relevance in Nigeria (DBECCGR). The mean and standard deviation were utilized to answer the research question, and an independent t-test at the 0.05 level of significance was employed to evaluate the null hypothesis. The mean and standard deviation were utilized to answer the research question, and an independent t-test at the 0.05 level of significance was employed to evaluate the null hypothesis. The results showed that business education curriculum should be digitalized for students to acquire new skills to meet the migration of the world to technology.

Therefore, business education curriculum for undergraduate programme must reflect the following components, which this research focuses: theoretical component, practical component, general education component, general business education component and specialised (occupational) business education component. In the opinion of Agu and Kadunur (2016) a productive society is a skill oriented society, a skill oriented society required a huge investment on human capacity. This means that business education should be invested on in other to achieve human capacity development through skills acquisition for sustainable global economy.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, university education plays a crucial role in contributing to economic and human development. The nation's professional and highly skilled personnel such as engineers, managers, technicians and teachers among others are products of universities. Curricula of

universities in this context define the in-depth knowledge, skills, competency and attitudes to be achieved. As a result, the curricula are prepared towards integrating relevant skills with diversity in considerations to enable graduates gain job and enhance their performance in the fieldwork. The curriculum of business education is geared towards equipping students with broader requisite knowledge attributes, such as team-working, communication, leadership, critical thinking and problem solving for graduates employability has emphasized by philosophy of business education programme in Nigeria.

Despite the laudable philosophy of business education programme in Nigeria, business education graduates do suffer labour market discriminations in areas of administrative, banking and financial institutions in the country. Most employers of labour continue to reject business education graduates arguing that their skill is only needed in the classroom. The situation is also found in teaching professions more especially in tertiary institutions where graduates of the programme are not considered to be specialist in accounting, marketing, purchases and supply departments.

Beside the discriminations, graduates of business education programme have not adequate skills for life and services to society in various spheres of human endeavor. Indeed, most graduates of the programme lack adequate skill and knowledge for entrepreneurship in the country. In addition, this era of modern technology, business education graduates in Nigeria are ill-prepared for the full range of application of ICT skills required for job opportunity in the 21st century. Business education curriculum is inadequate and it has very little capacity to develop students' skills for job opportunities and entrepreneurship consciousness in the country. By implication, the possibility of securing job is becoming more difficult while number of unemployed graduates is always increasing. The situation triggers hundreds of unemployed university graduates (business education inclusive) to mount a demonstration as far back as October 18, 2000 in Abuja. However the outcry of labour market and other bodies have led to commendable changes in the procurement of more facilities and modern equipment, employment of more manpower, construction and renovation of structures and even partial review of curriculum. Considering that, these developments are anticipated to make robust changes in Nigeria tertiary institutions the researcher to assess the adequacy Business Education curriculum in federal universities on student's acquisition of requisite skills for job opportunities in Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to find out how far revisiting business education curriculum content would influence sustainable global economy. Specifically, the study aimed at:

1. Determining whether business education curriculum content is significantly designed for sustainable global economy;
2. Find out whether improvement in business education curriculum significantly influences sustainable global economy.

Research questions

1. To what extent does business education curriculum content significantly influence sustainable global economy?
2. How does improvement in business education curriculum significantly influence sustainable global economy?

Statement of hypothesis

1. Business education curriculum content is not significantly designed to influence sustainable global economy;
2. Improvement in business education curriculum does not significantly influence sustainable global economy.

Methodology

Ex-post facto design was adopted for this study. This design was preferred because the major variables in the study were inherently not manipulated. Idaka and Anagbogu (2012) stated that ex-post-facto is a non-experimental design in which the phenomena of interest have already occurred and cannot be manipulated in any way. The variables business education curriculum content and improvement in business education curriculum (independent sub-variables) and sustainable global economy (dependent variable) had already interacted in the study area long before the researcher even thought of going to study them. The researcher by this, merely determine the relationship that existed among these variables. This study was delimited to the Business Education department of University of Calabar, Calabar and University of Cross River State, Calabar in Cross River State of Nigeria because of the wideness of the area of study as well as enabling the researcher to complete the study in good time. The population of the study was 595 respondents (45 lecturers and 550 under-graduate students) in Business Education department of University of Calabar, Calabar and University of Cross River State, Calabar. The study's sample was 595 respondents who were censused.

The instrument for the study was of revisiting business education curriculum for sustainable global economy questionnaire (RBECSGEQ). The instrument contained 17 items (2 measured the respondent's bio-data: institution and designation; 10 measured business education curriculum content and improvement in business education curriculum and 5 measured sustainable global economy. The items were developed based on Likert 4 points rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with weight 4, 3, 2 and 1 for positively worded items and 1, 2, 3, and 4 for negatively worded items. The instrument after being developed by the researcher, was presented to two experts in the departments of Educational Foundations and Business Education of University of Calabar for face and content validation. The instrument was further administered on 59 respondents that formed an equivalent population to the study population in University of Port Harcourt. The responses were coded and prepared on a spread sheet as Cronbach Alpha Reliability Estimates was used to determine the reliability coefficient which ranged from .81 to .85, ascertaining that the instrument is reliable. The instrument was administered on 595 respondents and 500 were validly coded while 95 were discarded because of wrong filling. Simple linear regression was used for testing the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis one

Business education curriculum content is not significantly designed for sustainable global economy. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was used with business education curriculum content as independent variable and sustainable global economy as dependent variable. The f-ratio was used to test the overall influence. The results are presented in Table 1. The results in Table 1 showed that an R-value of .376 was obtained giving an R-square value of .141. This means that about 14.1% of the total variation in sustainable global economy was accounted for by the variation in business education curriculum content. The P-value (.069) associated with the computed F-value (82.016) is greater than .05. As a result, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This means business education curriculum content is not significantly designed for sustainable global economy. The coefficients ($B = .424$ and $Beta = .376$) indicated that an upgrading of business education curriculum content will lead to significant improvement in sustainable global economy. Furthermore, the P-values (.000 & .069) associated with the computed t-values (10.737 & 9.056) respectively for the regression constant is less than .05 while sustainable global economy is greater than .05. This means that only regression constant made significant positive contributions to the prediction of sustainable global economy while business education curriculum content does not.

TABLE 1: Regression analysis of influence of business education curriculum content on sustainable global economy.

R – value = .376			Adj R – square = .140		
R – square = .141			Std. Error = 2.14079		
Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F – value	P – value
Regression	375.129	1	375.129	82.016	.069
Residual	2282.324	498	4.583		
Total	2658.200	499			

Predictor variable	<u>Unstandardisedcoeff.</u>		Std.coeff.	t-value	P – value
	B	std. Error	Beta		
Constant	7.659	.713		10.737*	.000
Buseducurr content	.424	.047	.376	9.056	.069

*Significant at .05 level, $P < .05$

Hypothesis two

Improvement in business education curriculum does not significantly influence sustainable global economy. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was used with improvement in business education curriculum as independent variable and sustainable global economy as dependent variable. The f-ratio was used to test the overall influence. The results are presented in Table 2. The results in Table 2 showed that an R-value of .615 was obtained giving an R-square value of .379. This means that about 37.9% of the total variation in sustainable global economy was accounted for by the variation in improvement in business education curriculum. The P-value (.000) associated with the computed F-value (303.261) is less than .05. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means improvement in business education curriculum significantly influence sustainable global economy. The coefficients ($B = .661$ and $Beta = .615$) indicated that an improvement in business education curriculum will lead to significant improvement in sustainable global economy. Furthermore, the P-values (.000) associated with the computed t-values (8.350 & 17.417) respectively for the regression constant and improvement in business education curriculum are less than .05 level of significance. This means that both the regression constant and improvement in business education curriculum made significant positive contributions to the prediction of sustainable global economy.

Table 2: Regression analysis of influence of improvement in business education curriculum on sustainable global economy

R – value = .615			Adj R – square = .377		
R – square = .379			Std. Error = 1.82130		
Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F – value	P – value
Regression	1006.261	1	1006.261	303.261*	.000
Residual	1651.939	498	3.317		
Total	2658.200	499			

Predictor variable	<u>Unstandardised coeff</u>		Std.coeff.	t-value	P – value
	B	std. Error	Beta		
Constant	4.590	.550		8.350*	.000
Improvement in bus educurr	.661	.038	.615	17.417*	.000

*Significant at .05 level, $P < .05$

Discussion

The results of hypothesis one showed that business education curriculum content is not significantly designed for sustainable global economy. This result supported Ementa and Alonta (2021) who revealed that the exponential rise in the number of unemployed graduates, and by extension, business education graduates in Nigeria countenanced calls across various divides to reassess the adequacy of business education curriculum content in meeting with skills needed by employers and for self-reliance. Hence, organising and managing business education curriculum in tertiary institutions to meet both requisite and soft skills of 21st century knowledge based economy have become imperative to every stakeholder in the programme.

Aimilarly, Ohiwerei (2019) explained that despite its attractiveness and appeal, internationalising the business curriculum may be an inherently difficult endeavour to be undertaken by many business administration and management faculty. However, they should abandon self-centered stances in order to accept their ultimate goal of transferring international managerial skills to students able to cope successfully with the magnitude of the SLEPT changes taking place throughout the world.

The interpretation of this is therefore, is that each company would prefer to recruit the most competent business educators who will be able to compete favourably with any business educator all over the world. This is supported by the study carried out by Atah, Akeke, Ajuluchukwu, Aderibigbe, Akinwumi, Wonah, Udayi, Ogar, Nwannunu, Olabisi, Bella, Bullem, Ititim, Ushie, Nnaji, Emeka, Ben, Ogbeche (2023) on digitalization of business education curriculum for the twenty-first century for global relevance in Nigeria, the survey research design was employed for the investigation, two research questions with corresponding hypotheses were used. The population consisted of 23 participants: fifteen (15) male and eight (8) female business educators from two universities in Ebonyi State, Abakaliki. The instrument for the study was a four-point scale questionnaire named "The Digitalization of Business Education Curriculum for the Twenty-First Century: Global Relevance in Nigeria (DBECCGR). The mean and standard deviation were utilized to answer the research question, and an independent t-test at the 0.05 level of significance was employed to evaluate the null hypothesis. The mean and standard deviation were utilized to answer the research question, and an independent t-test at the 0.05 level of significance was employed to evaluate the null hypothesis. The results showed that business education curriculum should be digitalized for students to acquire new skills to meet the migration of the world.

Students must have understanding of these concepts and be able to relate them to the contemporary business world; The practical components on the other hand form an integral part of the business education curriculum. Every course offered in business education has practical component. The practical component gives students opportunity to acquire practical skills for the real work situation; General education component are those courses that are offered by all students in the university system despite the programme of study. The general education component aims to equip students with general knowledge in specific areas of human endeavour outside of the student's area of specialty. Entrepreneurship in universities is offered as a general course of study. In addition, all Business Education courses have entrepreneurial orientation since the programme promotes self-reliance; General business education component are those courses that are offered by all business education students irrespective of areas of specialisation. Although business education has specialized areas such as accounting, marketing, management, secretarial studies or office management, undergraduate are expected to study the entire course to gain sound foundation for further studies; Specialised (occupational) curriculum component of business education covers those courses in the respective areas of specialisation. Those in accounting study accounting courses; that in management, management courses, while those in marketing, study marketing courses. Thus, accounting students are trained to be specialists in

accounting; management students are trained to be potential managers and marketing students are trained to be evolutionary in global marketing prospects (Umo & Okon (2023).

The results of hypothesis two revealed that improvement in business education curriculum significantly influence sustainable global economy. This results aligned with Binuomote and Okoli (2017), whose study proved that entrepreneurship education is needed now to tackle severe graduate unemployment and if adopted will help a lot to empower business education students to be self-employed and self-reliant after graduation. It is however, advisable to lay emphasized on courses that can improve employability like science, technology, business and entrepreneurship. It must be noted that youths who will succeed in employment are those who will shun irrelevant skills and attitudes, will acquire entrepreneurial skills which are relevant for employment.

This result is in agreement with Udo & Bako (2014) who reported that the acquisition of the requisite skills is a means of increasing the productive power of any nation. The scholar equally opined that a rich nation is one that is capable of meeting the economic, social, moral and political needs of the citizenry. This agrees with the study carried out by Atah, Akeke, Ajuluchukwu, Aderibigbe, Akinwumi, Wonah, Udayi, Ogar, Nwannunu, Olabisi, Bella, Bullem, Ititim, Ushie, Nnaji, Emeka, Ben & Ogbeche (2023) on digitalization of business education curriculum for the twenty-first century for global relevance in Nigeria, the survey research design was employed for the investigation, two research questions with corresponding hypotheses were used. The population consisted of 23 participants: fifteen (15) male and eight (8) female business educators from two universities in Ebonyi State, Abakaliki. The instrument for the study was a four-point scale questionnaire named "The Digitalization of Business Education Curriculum for the Twenty-First Century: Global Relevance in Nigeria (DBECCGR). The mean and standard deviation were utilized to answer the research question, and an independent t-test at the 0.05 level of significance was employed to evaluate the null hypothesis. The mean and standard deviation were utilized to answer the research question, and an independent t-test at the 0.05 level of significance was employed to evaluate the null hypothesis. The results showed that business education curriculum should be digitalized for students to acquire new skills to meet the migration of the world. Nigeria as a nation will enjoy sustainable development if business education students in particular and all other students in general acquire maximum skills and competencies in their specialties.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that business education curriculum content is not significantly designed for sustainable global economy and improvement in business education curriculum significantly influence sustainable global economy. This has proven that for business education curriculum to enhance sustainable global economy, there is an urgent need for it to be revisited with a view to reviewing it in accordance with the international best practices, such that our surging business education graduates will be employable.

Recommendations

Base on the conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Business education curriculum content should be designed for sustainable global economy.
2. The improved business education curriculum should be put into productive use for sustainable global economy.

References

- Agu, P. A. & Kaduhur, D. B. (2016). Repositioning skills acquisition for the transformation of Nigeria economy. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, 2, 70-85.
- Akeke, M.N.G.; Agiating, G. I.& Agbor, G. E. (2016). Implementation of vocational education curriculum for national development of senior secondary students in Calabar South. *Education for Today*, 12(1), 230-234.
- Ahmed, N. (2022). Global economy: Meaning, characteristics, challenges. Retrieved from <https://penpono.com/global-economy>.
- Atah, C. A.; Akeke, M.N.G.; Ajuluchukwu, N E., Wonah, F.; Udayi, A. A.; Nwannunu, B. I. Olabisi, B. I.; Bullem A. G., Ugbadu, D & Ititim, B. G. (2023). Digitalization of business education curriculum for 21st century global relevance, *Journal of Innovations*, 1(4)76-89.
- Binuomote, M. O., & Okoli, B. E. (2017). Strategies for empowering Business Education students for self employment through entrepreneurship education. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education*, 4(2), 318 -320.
- Coles, C. (2013). *The development of a curriculum for spinal surgeons: Observations Following the Second Spine Course of the Spinal Society of Europe Barcelona*. Retrieved from <https://essays.io/the-development-of-a-curriculum-for-spinal-surgeons-essay-example/>
- Dike, V. E. (2019). Addressing youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria: A call for Action, Not Rhetoric”, *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 11(3), 129-151.
- Elogbo, E. E. & Akeke, M . N. G. (2019). Extent of utilization of world wide web and E-mail in instructional delivery of Business Education in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Business Educators*, 6(1), 217-228.
- Ementa, C. N., & Alonta, G. C. (2021). Organising business education curriculum content in tertiary institutions for students’ effective skill acquisition. *Global Journal of Education, Humanities and Management Sciences*, 3(1), 155 – 174.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2013). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council.
- Idaka, I. I. & Anagbogu, G. (2012). Research design in Isangedighi, A. J. (ed) essentials of research and statistics in education and social sciences. Calabar-Nigeria: Eti-nwa Associates Researchers and Publishers.
- Nwazor, J. A. (2012). Capacity building, entrepreneurship and sustainable development. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 3(1), 51-54.
- Ohiwerei, F. O. (2019). Business Education: A departure from original curriculum in Nigerian Universities. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Engineering Science and Technology*, 6(10), 10797-10805.
- Udo, M. P., & Bako, D. H. (2014). Acquiring maximum vocational business education skills and competencies for sustainable development in Nigeria. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 4(7), 53.