

**DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION
PROGRAM IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES FOR 21ST-
CENTURY
SKILL ACQUISITION**

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Abstract: *This study examined digital transformation of business education program for 21st-century skill acquisition in Nigerian universities. Two purposes of the study were employed in this research work. two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 34 business educators in universities in Anambra state. The entire population was used for the study since the population is manageable and accessible to the researcher. Hence, there was no sampling. The instrument used to collect data for the study was a structured questionnaire with two parts; part A contained items on the demography of respondents and part B contained items on the two research questions under the study. The questions were structured on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree. The instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Business Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was used to test consistency of the instrument and a general coefficient of 0.76. Data collected was analyzed using arithmetic mean and standard*

deviation while t- test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. When the p value was found to be equal or less than 0.05 alpha levels, the noted difference was said to be significant, therefore, the null hypothesis was be rejected. However, a p value found to be greater than 0.05, the noted difference was insignificant, therefore, the null hypothesis will be accepted. The findings of the study revealed among others that curriculum modernization, administration facilitate 21st century skill acquisition in universities in Anambra state. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended that curriculum planners should revamp the business education curriculum to emphasize experiential learning and real-world application of knowledge and skills by integrating relevant and future-focused content, students can develop the skills required for success in the 21st century. There should be integration of digital literacy into the core curriculum of business education programs by designing courses and learning activities that explicitly incorporate digital tools and technologies relevant to the field, such as data analysis software, project management platforms, and digital marketing tools.

Keywords: *digital; education; skill.*

Introduction

Business education is a specialized field of education that focuses on imparting knowledge and skills related to the business industry. It encompasses various teaching methods and approaches aimed at equipping students with a solid understanding of fundamental business practices. The primary objective of business education is to provide learners with the necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes, and competencies required for employment, career advancement, and self-reliance.

According to Otum (2018), business education programs cover a wide range of subjects, including business management, office occupations, economics, and entrepreneurship. These programs are designed to develop the basic skills of learners that can be applied in their personal lives and future careers. The overarching goals and objectives of

business education are driven by the needs of industry, commerce, and society as a whole.

One of the primary aims of business education is to facilitate skill acquisition among students. This means that the curriculum is designed to equip learners with practical skills that are in demand in the job market. By providing hands-on learning experiences, business education programs prepare individuals for gainful employment by ensuring they possess the relevant skills and competencies needed in the business world.

Skill acquisition is the process of learning and acquiring a specific skill or art from a professional, with the aim of earning a living or educating others. In today's digital age, it is crucial to acquire the necessary skills to thrive in the global world. Oliseh (2016) emphasizes the importance of being prepared to acquire the skills needed to operate and excel in the current E-world.

The skills required for success in education and the workplace are often referred to as 21st-century skills. Countries around the world are recognizing the significance of interdisciplinary approaches to develop the digital skills and competencies of their citizens (Skolverket, 2017). As organizations increasingly adopt online learning and leverage technology to cut costs, educational institutions are transitioning to provide flexible learning environments where students can acquire digital skills (Seaman, Allen, and Seaman, 2017).

Having inadequate digital skills can act as an "invisible drag" on productivity and worker mobility, which is detrimental to both employers and employees (Bergson-Shilcock, 2017). As automation becomes more prevalent, the demand for digital skills will continue to rise. This demand extends across various sectors and industries. Higher education institutions need to focus on developing students' self-efficacy and adaptability skills. Digital transformation plays a significant role in achieving contextualized learning. Key dimensions of digital transformation include curriculum modernization and digital administration (Bond, 2018).

Digital transformation refers to the implementation and application of digital technologies in various aspects of our daily lives, both as individuals and organizations. It involves incorporating digital technologies in a disruptive and comprehensive manner, leading to significant changes in organizational processes. Digital transformation

aims to develop new business models that integrate digitized data, applications, and workflows (Heuermann, Engel & Lucke, 2018).

One of the benefits of digital transformation is resource savings. By optimizing resource utilization and adopting a selective and structured approach, organizations can avoid regular budget constraints and achieve cost savings (Carter, 2020; Powell & McGuigan, 2020). Digital transformation is also utilized to attract high-quality students, improve student experiences and accessibility, deliver high-quality teaching materials, and provide blended learning opportunities.

Furthermore, digital transformation can extend to administrative dimensions. Tay (2017) highlights that digitally transforming the administrative architecture enables organizations to create agile and flexible systems that can quickly adapt to emerging technologies. Faria and Henriqueta (2017) also emphasize the need for educational institutions to incorporate digital technologies to enhance their current practices, such as managing student data and curriculum. This enables institutions to innovate their management experiences and make proactive and informed decisions based on data-driven insights.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly accelerated the need for digitalization in businesses. Many industries that previously relied on in-person interactions have been compelled to adopt digital technologies to continue their operations. In this context, the future of business education in Nigeria relies heavily on embracing digitalization. Business education graduates can only thrive in their designated roles in society if they are well-equipped with the relevant digital skills needed to succeed in the 21st century.

The success of Business Education students in the business world largely depends on the skills they have acquired that enable them to adapt to society and the evolving dynamics of the workplace. A Business Education program that incorporates digital skills offers a unique opportunity for students to actively participate in the growing digital business world and the changing business ecosystems.

The response and opinions of academics in business education regarding the digital transformation of programs for 21st-century skill acquisition can be influenced by their age and experience. Younger academics who have grown up in the digital age may possess a higher level of digital literacy and familiarity with technology. They are likely more comfortable using digital tools and platforms, which enhances their ability to envision and implement digital transformations in

business education. On the other hand, older academics bring extensive experience and expertise in their respective business domains.

Given the changing dynamics of business, globalization, and the knowledge economy, the emphasis and focus of Business Education have shifted towards digital content. The goal of Business Education is to produce self-reliant graduates who can create jobs for others. To achieve this, strategies needed for proper exposure to digital skills for success in the 21st-century global economy and digitally transformed economic systems need to be identified. This has prompted the study of how to digitally transform Business Education programs for 21st-century skill acquisition in universities, particularly in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Business education is tasked with equipping its recipients with the requisite 21st-century digital skills for self-efficiency and adaptability in the present world. To achieve this, digital skills & competencies must be integrated into all modules, courses, and learning settings of business education. The curriculum of business education seems to be too obsolete, filled with many courses, and themes that might not be applicable in the present world, it seems that the workforce in the field of business education lacks the technological skills & expertise required in this present digital era.

Also, digital tools which can provide new roles for researchers, teachers, and students which will also generate more interactive, engaging, and learning seem not to be available or utilized. Handling students' data, records and other management practices needs to be improved. This among others made a study on the digital transformation of business education programmed for 21st-century skill acquisition in universities a very paramount study.

Purpose of the Study:

The main purpose of this study is to ascertain how to digitally transform business education programmed for 21st century skill acquisition in universities Specifically, the study intends to ascertain how to digitally transform business education through:

1. Curriculum modernization for 21st-century skill acquisition in universities
2. Digital administration for 21st-century skill acquisition in universities

Research Question:

1. How can curriculum modernization facilitate 21st-century skill acquisition in universities ?
2. How can digital administration facilitate 21st-century skill acquisition in universities ?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 levels of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean response of business educators on how curriculum modernization can facilitate 21st-century skill acquisition in universities with respect to age.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean response of business educators on how digital administration can facilitate 21st-century skill acquisition in universities with respect to age.

Method

A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted of business education lecturers in the universities in Anambra State. According to information gathered from the departmental offices in the various institutions, the total population of business education lecturers in universities in Anambra State was 34 as at 2020/2021 academic session. There was no sampling for the study since the population was manageable. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The response option for the instrument was a five-point rating scale with the following options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the items. The reliability coefficient obtained for the test was 0.76, hence it was considered reliable. Copies of the questionnaire were physically administered to the business educators by the researcher and collected on the spot. Data collected in the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to answer the research question. The null hypotheses formulated was tested using independent samples t-test at 0.05 level of significance. When the p value will be found to be equal or less than 0.05 alpha levels, the noted difference will be said to be significant, therefore, the null hypothesis will be rejected. However, if the p value is found to be greater than 0.05, the noted difference will be insignificant, therefore, the null hypothesis will be accepted.

Presentation and Interpretation of Results

Research Question 1: How can curriculum modernization facilitate 21st-century skill acquisition in universities?

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation scores of respondents on how curriculum modernization can facilitate 21st-century skill acquisition in universities

S/N	Curriculum Modernization and 21 st -century skill acquisition	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Curriculum modernization exposes students to new ideas and opposing viewpoints while demonstrating the power of the collective mind.	3.29	0.63	Agree
2	It affords students opportunities to flex their creative muscles beyond the traditionally	3.26	0.61	Agree
3	It will consequently change the ways the library, which is significantly placed in the profession of information management operates.	3.23	0.55	Agree
4	It will provide teachers with digital skills in the selection of the most effective digital resources/materials for teaching.	3.55	0.66	Strongly Agree
5	Through curriculum modernization, the development of digital infrastructure in the school system will gradually take place	3.26	0.66	Agree
Cluster Mean and SD		3.31	0.62	Agree

Table 1 demonstrates the perceptions of lecturers regarding curriculum modernization and its potential to facilitate 21st-century skill acquisition in universities in Anambra State. Out of the five items related to curriculum modernization, four items have mean ratings ranging from 2.50 to 3.49, indicating agreement among lecturers that curriculum modernization can support 21st-century skill acquisition. Item 4, on the other hand, has mean ratings ranging from 3.50 to 4.49, suggesting strong agreement among lecturers in that particular area of study. The overall cluster mean of 3.30 indicates that lecturers

generally agree that curriculum modernization can facilitate 21st-century skill acquisition in universities. The standard deviation scores for all the items are within the same range. This implies that the respondents' opinions were relatively homogeneous, indicating a degree of consensus among the lecturers.

Research Question 2: In what way can digital administration facilitate 21st century skill acquisition in universities?

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation scores of respondents on how digital administration facilitate 21st century skill acquisition in universities

SN	Digital administration and 21 st - century skill acquisition	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
6	ICT is used to display information about business education program on its website making it easy to showcase the university	4.55	0.68	Strongly Agree
7	Computers network are extensively used for accounts-related, clerical, and general administrative duties in the university.	3.41	0.60	Agree
8	Information about students can be accessed online.	3.32	0.68	Agree
9	It eliminates the use of a heap of files in offices	3.50	0.61	Agree
10	Examination results and assessments are released online.	3.23	0.60	Agree
11	It eliminates cheating and manipulation	3.11	0.84	Agree
12	Payments of fees are processed online preventing fraudulent loss of revenue, to students who would want to evade payment.	3.23	0.78	Agree
Cluster Mean and SD		3.30	0.68	Agree

Table 2 presents the perceptions of lecturers regarding digital administration and its potential to facilitate 21st-century skill acquisition in universities in Anambra State. Out of the seven items related to digital administration, six items have mean ratings ranging from 2.50 to 3.49, indicating agreement among lecturers that digital

administration can support 21st-century skill acquisition. Item 1, on the other hand, has a mean rating between 3.50 and 4.49, suggesting strong agreement among lecturers in that particular area of study. The overall cluster mean of 3.30 demonstrates that all the lecturers in that area of study agree that digital administration can facilitate 21st-century skill acquisition in universities. The standard deviation scores for all the items are within the same range, indicating a relatively homogeneous opinion among the respondents. This suggests a consensus among the lecturers regarding the role of digital administration in enhancing 21st-century skills.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of business educators on how curriculum modernization can facilitate 21st century skill acquisition in universities in Anambra state with respect to age.

Table 5: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of business educators on how curriculum modernization can facilitate 21st century skill acquisition in universities with respect to age.

Age	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
25 – 45 year	25	3.40	.37	31	1.868	0.71	Accept Ho
46 years and Above	8	3.07	.38				

The data from the table indicated that there is no significant difference between the mean response of mean rating of business educators on how curriculum modernization can facilitate 21st-century skill acquisition in universities with respect to age ($t = -1.318$, $df = 31$, $p = 0.71 > 0.05$). the hypotheses were accepted indicating that both age bracket do not differ significantly in their mean responses on how curriculum modernization can facilitate 21st century skill acquisition in universities.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between the mean rating of business educators on how digital administration can facilitate 21st century skill acquisition in universities with respect to age.

Table 8: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of business educators on how digital administration can facilitate 21st century skill acquisition in universities with respect to age.

Age	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
25 – 45 year	25	3.61	1.21	31	1.024	0.314	Accept Ho
45 years and Above	8	3.03	.18				

The data from the table indicated that there is no significant difference between the mean response of mean rating of business educators on how digital administration can facilitate 21st century skill acquisition in universities in Anambra state with respect to age ($t = -1.024$, $df = 31$, $p = 0.31 > 0.05$). the hypotheses were accepted indicating that both age bracket do not differ significantly in their mean responses on how digital administration can facilitate 21st century skill acquisition in universities.

Discussion of Findings

The results were discussed under the following subheadings:

Curriculum modernization and 21st-century skill acquisition in universities

The study findings indicate that curriculum modernization brings about several positive outcomes for students. These include exposing students to new ideas and opposing viewpoints, demonstrating the power of collective thinking, and providing opportunities for creative expression beyond traditional creative subjects. These findings highlight the significance of updating and adapting the curriculum in educational institutions to enhance the acquisition and development of skills considered crucial in the 21st century.

The findings underscore the importance of maintaining the relevance and responsiveness of business education programs to meet the evolving needs of society. By updating the curriculum, educational institutions can ensure that students are adequately prepared for the challenges and opportunities present in the 21st century job market.

These findings align with the research conducted by Baydas and Goktas (2016), which emphasizes the importance of curriculum modernization in implementing and applying digital skills throughout the educational process. Additionally, there is necessity for curriculum modernization to address digital skills and facilitate professional development.

Digital administration and 21st century skill acquisition in universities

The study findings demonstrate that the utilization of digital administration practices brings several benefits to business education programs. These benefits include the ability to display information about the program on the university's website, making it easier to showcase the university to prospective students. It also helps in eliminating cheating and manipulations, among other advantages. These findings highlight the positive impact of incorporating digital tools and technologies in administrative processes on the development and acquisition of skills necessary for success in the 21st century.

Integrating digital administration practices in business education positively influences the acquisition of 21st-century skills among students. As a result, it is crucial for universities to embrace and integrate digital technologies in their administrative processes. By doing so, universities can create an environment that supports skill development and prepares students for success in the modern world.

These findings align with the research conducted by Dike (2019), which emphasizes that digital administration involves the use of electronic processes and information and communication technology (ICT) tools and applications. The purpose of digital administration is to enhance productivity, skill development, and efficiency in the internal administrative system, and responsiveness to the public.

Conclusion

Digital transformation is a vital aspect of acquiring 21st century skills in universities. The adoption of digital technology has revolutionized the educational sector, making it possible for students to access vast amounts of information, communicate and collaborate with peers and instructors, and develop skills that are relevant in the 21st century. The benefits of digital transformation in education cannot be overstated, as it has improved the quality of education, increased student engagement, and fostered a culture of innovation.

Recommendations

1. Curriculum planners should revamp the business education curriculum to emphasize experiential learning and real-world application of knowledge and skills by integrating relevant and future-focused content, students can develop the skills required for success in the 21st century.
2. The university management should create a centralized digital administration hub within the business education department. This hub should serve as a platform that utilizes digital tools and technologies to streamline administrative processes and provide students with hands-on experience in using them
3. Develop an updated and relevant curriculum: An updated curriculum should be developed that aligns with current trends and technology advancements in the business world. This will ensure that students are equipped with the necessary skills to succeed in the 21st century workplace.
4. Evaluate and measure effectiveness: Regular evaluation and measurement of the effectiveness of the digital transformation programme should be carried out to identify areas of improvement and ensure that the programme meets its objectives.

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