

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AFFECTING TEACHING AND LEARNING OF BUSINESS SUBJECTS IN NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

The paper is set to examine the contemporary issues affecting teaching and learning of Business subjects in Nigeria. The need for this study arose because of the observed ineffective teaching and learning of business subjects which in turn defeats the aim of the sustainable Development Goals which emphasized the acquisition of skills, competencies, attitude, knowledge, values etc. for the realization of self-reliance among youths. This paper therefore, present some concepts of contemporary issues, teaching, learning and business subjects. It discussed importance of business subjects, the various contemporary issues to national development affecting teaching and learning of Business subjects, and numerous strategies to be adopted to resolve the abnormalities in teaching and learning of business subjects and conclusion was made that efforts should be put on gear for effective and efficient use of the learner centred method which will lead to qualitative education in order to lay much emphasis on the students who are to acquire the skills. Finally, it recommends that the Nigerian governments should ensure that all levels of educational institutions are well funded so as it can help the management to carryout repairs and maintenance of some essential facilities that will improve the teaching and learning environment.

Keywords: Contemporary Issues, Learning, Teaching, Business Subjects

Introduction

Education is a potent vehicle for national transformation. It is a veritable platform for youths to realize their intellectual potential, develop their abilities and follow their aspirations. Education broadens opportunities and bulbs capacities, education determines the kind of future any nation want to have. Indeed, any nation's future socio-economic success will depend on the ability of its people to deal with a global environment that is knowledge driven. Education is the key and bedrock for sustainable transformation (Ajisafe, et al, 2015). Business subjects as programmes offered in all levels of education have important components that give the graduates opportunity to be self-employed because they have acquired the prerequisite skills to function in the world of works. Graduates from tertiary institutions can also function as administrative officer in the public and private sectors of the economy. The philosophy behind business subjects is to provide its graduates with appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies to become self-employed people who utilize both human and material resources for optimal productivity and also with the skills to be self-reliant. Business subjects promotes self-employment through the skill acquisition development and it is a tool in the hand of governments to combat unemployment and reduce poverty in the society (Okoro, 2020). From the foregoing, it become imperative to examine the contemporary issues affecting teaching and learning of Business subjects in the educational system.

Concept of Contemporary Issues

Contemporary issue means problems and opportunities that are relevant to present day life and politics. The word contemporary means modern, current present day or existing. In this context, contemporary issues in education refer to the various events, policies and developments of an educational nature which exist in the modern world. Most of these are influenced by the changes and initiatives caused by modern trends and innovations in Education, Science and Technology, the spread and influence of information and Communication Technologies among others. In Africa, experience widespread poverty, inadequate funding and facilitation in education, health, infrastructure and other related areas. Muhammed and Haliu (2019) defined teaching as an attempt to help someone to acquire or change some idea, knowledge, skills, and attitude. The teacher's task is to create desirable changes in behaviour or in tendencies toward behaviour in students. The goal of teaching is to bring about the desired learning in students. Thus, teaching is an active, constructive process in which the teacher assumes the role of strategic planner, making decisions about the content and the appropriate instructional strategies. In other words, effective teaching is a deliberate and planned activity. It is purposeful (goal-oriented), coherent (structured), and meaningful (bridges the gap between the known and unknown) and functional (usable and transferable). This indicates that effective

teaching consists of helping students to acquire and use knowledge, learn to think and solve problems. Teaching has also been viewed as the process of transforming the individual and the society for the purpose of making a source of learning (Enyekit&Enyekit, 2019).

Concept of Learning

Ogaga et al (2016) see learning as a complex process, that can be defined as a change in disposition, a relatively permanent change in behaviour overtime and that is brought about by experience. Learning can occur as a result of newly acquire skill, knowledge, perception, facts, principles, new information at hand, which can be achieved through adequate availability and utilization of human and materials. Availability of human and materials resources in academic institutions such as Junior and Secondary School would contribute immensely in achieving the goals and objectives of teaching and learning of study. Learning occurs when there is a permanent change in the behaviour of an individual, parties in learning are learners, teachers and environment. For learning to occur students need to be taught or guided. However, teaching is either to explain or impart knowledge. The first implies that once a subject matter has been taught, learning is assumed to have taken place but the latter posits that if learning has not taken place, the subject matter has not been taught. To achieve learning through teaching, modern pedagogy insists on learner-centred approach to teaching. The above type of approach of teaching concentrates on students as learners; on the improvement of learning outcomes instead of subject contents delivery. The learner-centred method of teaching includes active based, team based, inquiry based and problem based, learning process. Think-pair-share, case studies, student led seminars, Brain storming, concept mapping, Business Games, Just in time, Field trip, Project method, Demonstration. The facilitator gives learners opportunity to learn individually or in groups (peer), he provides guidance by identifying subject matter, providing guideline, posing challenges for learners to solve and assessing the learners with the view to providing feedback. The facilitator functions not as the sole source of wisdom and knowledge but more of a Coach or guide whose job is to help students acquire the desired knowledge and skills for themselves (Aluko& Oba 2021).

Business Subjects

Business subjects are subjects taught in educational institutions. They teach the arts and science of business to the recipients. In junior secondary school education, There are four components of Business Studies (Office Practice, Commerce, Book-Keeping and Keyboarding as revised by NERDC (2013). As stated by Kaizer (2019) business subjects equip its recipients with skills for self-employment or gain employment at the completion of JSS education. At senior secondary school, business subjects consists of Accounts, Word Processing and Economics etc. While at tertiary education institutions, it is called Business Education, which refers to an important part of the general education, which emphasises on skills and competencies acquisition for use in offices, and business related occupations (Aluko& Oba (2021). Business subjects in J.S.S. and S.S.S. and tertiary education institutions is concerned with the impartation of business orientation and knowledge for personal and national development. Courses in Business Education are: Word Processing, Financial Accounting, Business Law, Business Communication, Principles of Management to mention few.

Business subjects are subjects which lead recipients to career opportunity. In this regard, it leads to employment skills in which students offering them can be offered white collar job in educational sectors such as Accounting, Office Technology and Management, Marketing, Secretary, Accounts Clerk among others. They also give room for self-reliance and allow graduates to be loosed from the grip of unemployment. Some institutions like Lagos State University (LASU)Ojoo, Lagos State and OlabisiOnabanjo University (OOU), Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State call it Business Studies at the Ph.D level whereas it is known as Business Education in universities like University of Benin (UNIBEN), Benin-City, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria among others (Adewuyi, 2020).

Osuala in Adewuyi (2022) emphasized that the beginning of Business subject (Business studies) in Junior Secondary School serves as a pre-requisites for providing youth with educational knowledge which prepares them with saleable skills and competencies. Adewuyi further said that business studies is a vocational subject taught in Junior Secondary School in Nigeria which is targeted at providing youths who may wish to continue through Secondary School to graduate with the necessary pre-vocational skills that will allow them to be useful to themselves and to the community in which they find themselves.

Abimbola (2019) in her own view opined that business subject enables students acquire skills, knowledge and attitude (SKA) required for self-reliance. These skills enable students to be exposed to various career opportunities available in the world of work so as to enable them entrepreneurially oriented. They also promotes students'

realization for school continuity at all levels of education. Ogwunte and Okolocha (2016) considered business subjects as the key agent of economic and technological development either as a way of developing human capacity, increasing the shield of workforce for modernization, industrialization, and environmental development or as a matter of personal freedom and empowerment of the populace. Business subjects have the following as objectives at Junior Secondary School:

- (i) Orientations and importation of knowledge of basic skills to enable students who cannot pursue further education to start their own businesses.
- (ii) Basic business skills for personal use now and in future.
- (iii) A base for further training of students in Business Studies
- (iv) Knowledge and skills for the effective management and drive of the national economy.
- (v) Basic skills in office practice (Odunsi et al, 2017).

Adewuyi (2020) asserted that the fundamental determination of the Business subjects programme, is to offer students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to achieve success in secondary school, the workplace, post-secondary education or training and daily life. The goal of the business subjects' curriculum are to enable students to:

- (i) gain an understanding of business concepts through the study of subjects such as accounting, entrepreneurship, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), International Business, Marketing and Business Leadership;
- (ii) achieve business, economic, financial digital literacy;
- (iii) develop the skills, including critical thinking skills, and strategies, required to conduct research and inquiry and communicate findings accurately, ethically, and effectively;
- (iv) apply the knowledge, skills and attitude required through the study of business to a diversity of learning tasks and related them to business phenomena on the local, national and global level.

Objectives of Business Subjects at Tertiary Institution as stated by Obi (2021). These include:

- (i) to provide opportunity for practical job preparation or vocation studies for students in order to make them render effective and efficient services in office, distributive and service occupation.
- (ii) to prepare students based on interest and aptitudes with the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to enter who a business occupation, advance and profit.
- (iii) to provide opportunities for students to develop an understanding of the business and economic system of the nation so as to enable them participate actively as producers and consumers of goods and services.
- (iv) to develop and improve the personal qualities and attitude of students as required in personal and employment situation.
- (v) to develop in students the basic awareness of the contribution which business and office employees make to the nation's economy.
- (vi) to serve as a guide for individual students for suitable placement in business and office employment.
- (vii) to enable students have career consciousness and economic understanding of the free enterprise system.
- (viii) to prepare students for leadership position in both public and private life.

Business subjects because of the breadth and depth of its offering, can be on major tool of national development in these following ways:

- (i) Having desire for social-economic development demands for all citizens to have basic understanding of economics and commerce for them to make informed choices the areas of consumption, savings and investments well as teach citizen that economic decisions and indecisions have repercussions.
- (ii) Teaches its graduates to be creative and innovates in exploring possibilities and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities as well expands entrepreneurial knowledge and entrepreneurial skills.
- (iii) Promotes industrialization through entrepreneurship offerings. Promotion of investment in the manufacturing sector and teaching of management skill with which to run the business.
- (iv) Enhancement of national development by enabling workers with information and communication skills (Word Processing, Spreadsheet, Database Management and Digital Skills needed to fit optimally in contemporary global environment.
- (v) Minimize unemployment by giving learners saleable skills and knowledge to be effective and employees, employers, entrepreneurs and captains of industry.
- (vi) Importation of management knowledge, skills and practices with which to manage affairs.

- (vii) Teaches learners leadership skills and attitudes which may enhance the national developmental efforts.
- (viii) Help to achieve the goals of education in a nation such as Nigeria because goals are germane to national developmental efforts.
- (ix) Inculcate in the students the importance of work ethics like punctuality, integrity and dependability, hard work, to take pride in their work and to be fair to employers, employees and the larger society. Courses like Accounting, Auditing Education promotes financial integrity and fiscal prudence.
- (x) Instil the knowledge of consumer rights, privileges and duties as well focusing on producers' responsibilities, stressing on quality and standards which enhance confidence in industry and leads to national growth (ABEN, 2017).

Contemporary Issues affecting Teaching and Learning of Business Subjects

The following are some of the contemporary issues affecting teaching and learning of business subjects according to Julie & Josephine, (2015).

1. **Inadequacies in the curriculum content of Business Subjects.** The curriculum content of business subjects are inadequate at all levels of education and that some highly needed courses are not available in the curriculum such courses are Typewriting, Administrative Office Management and so on. This issue of inadequacy could lead to the production of half-baked graduates. In essence, they would not acquire the necessary skills for effective performance. Also, such teachers cannot compete with their counterparts elsewhere. Reason for the above inadequacies is that relevant stakeholders are not often or never invited to participate during the curriculum development.
2. **Time Allocation:**Subjects on the School Timetable were not enough especially practical subjects/courses (Typewriting, Accounting, Business Mathematics, Entrepreneurship in Business Education, Business Studies (Keyboarding, Bookkeeping, Commerce among others) to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge of these subjects/courses. This major issue call for proper attention.
3. **Selection of Subjects/Courses:**In all levels of education, the selection of subjects to be offered was to a large extent influenced by the person at the head, the time (space) available on the Timetable and the competence of the teachers available in some cases.
4. **Non-Relevance of Course/Subject Content:** Course content of any business subjects programme should be contain courses/subjects that would prepare the recipients for saleable skills, enable them have any understanding of the economic system and how a business operates or how to start or own a business. Also, such courses/subject should gear them towards acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude that would attain the objectives set in the content of the curriculum. Furthermore, help them function effectively in the world of work. All these issues mentioned can be caused by the choice of the person at the head.
5. **Poor Implementation of the Curriculum:** Industrial training programme for business teacher is no longer carried out the way it supposed to be or originally spelt out in the curriculum. For example, students now look for a place of attachment rather than the unit of SIWES. There are critical questions for discussion should the institutions visit the student to find out whether they are properly placed or should the students report back to the school on how they were placed. Also, the numbers of weeks and the number of time should spend are no longer fully observed in some institutions.
6. **Corrupt Practices:** This social vice has eaten deep into every aspect of the Nigerian economy. It continues to hit Nigeria hard despite efforts to fight for good. Money meant for the purchase of teaching and learning materials are diverted by corrupt stakeholders of education, politicians in highly placed offices for their personal use (Trading Economic, 2017). Unwillingness by management to train and retrain teachers, towards acquiring better knowledge, skills and competencies for the students.
7. **Lack of or inadequate educational facilities:**Business Education stakeholders expressed concerns on the poor funding and agreed that it is the main reason why most schools and institutions of higher learning today lack facilities. Goad and Yiwatda (2018) noted there are dilapidated buildings, classrooms and libraries and lack of repairs to spoilt equipment, lack of infrastructures like computer laboratories, libraries and medal offices and careless attitude towards management (Goad, Bawah&Duktr, 2022).
8. **Issues of Resignation:** Business educators are opting for other lucrative jobs in order to regain their image; the society as the negative perceptions affect their self-image and the ability to socialize comfortably in the society with diverse professionals. Ajayi and Shofoyeke in Akindutire and Ekundayo (2012) confirmed that the bad image of teachers is likely not to attract the right calibre of teachers to be absorbed in the profession.
9. **Dearth of business trader motivation:**The business teacher suffers neglect by the government. They are not motivated apart from the monthly salary. This results to diversion into other paying means of survival such as

conducting after school lessons, teaching in private schools, sponsoring self to obtain further degrees and embarking on entrepreneurial skills and businesses etc. Sequel to this, there is the problem of role conflict and disloyalty.

10. **Poor investment in problem solving researches in areas of dire need:** Inability to conduct, sponsor and implement research activities by the government so as to address or suggest ways to improve the education sector as well as facilitate continuation of school activities in times of emergencies.
11. **Lack of interest in the field of education:** Graduates do not have interest in the profession because of the bad teaching image. The field have been looked down upon because it has been tagged as a dumping ground for losers or those who could not get admission into universities institution due to this, they are piled up in the faculties of education and against their will.

Other contemporary issues affecting teaching and learning of Business Subjects as submitted by Ile and Ukabam (2021) are:

1. Failure to collaborate with private Information Technology (IT) experts.
2. High cost of data services.
3. High cost of internet accessible gadgets.
4. Poor internet networks
5. Lack of experts to resolve technical difficulties from the use of e-learning platforms.
6. Lack of students knowledge of the use of e-learning tools.
7. Socio economic status of parents.
8. Unavailability of necessary laboratories as required by the NBTE e.g. computer, model office, laboratory, attendance, flash drives, calculator and so on.
9. Inappropriate teaching methods.

Julie and Josephine (2015) discussed some challenges of teaching and learning below:

1. There are bottlenecks in the network connectivity particularly in the developing country like Nigeria where there are several network providers such as Airtel, MTN, Globacom, among others. Connectivity among the networks for the subscribers is competitive. Also, carrying about several Sim Cards of different network provided is another setback for the subscribers. The exorbitant charges by the various network provided are also a great problem for the customers.
2. Not every information through e-learning or online are useful for educational (research) purpose. Sometimes information comes from unknown and sometimes unreliable sources, as a result mislead the students materials on the internet sources are sometimes not regulated and monitored, that is not quality control.
3. Information on the internet are changed, updated; websites appear and disappear and they move and mutate daily.
4. Poor maintenance culture to maintain the availability of these technological equipment and facilities on the ground, is another disturbing challenges to the use of new technologies in teaching and learning of these subjects or courses.
5. Severe power outage: This issue posed a great impact on using teaching and learning in the programme. Without constant power, the equipment cannot be used and virtually all the equipment are power controlled. As a result subjects/courses to be taught with the use of these tool and equipment are only theoretically.
6. Resistance to change from traditional pedagogical networks to more innovative technology based teaching and learning is critical factor in education. Some people do not see reasons why they should be computer literate.
7. Inadequate infrastructure including hardware, software, appropriate classrooms building, to accommodate the technology, cooling and ventilation including safe and security of men and materials resources.
8. Lack of exposure to equipment: Many of the business subject teachers have not even seen some of these equipment let alone knowing how to make use of them in teaching business subject/courses.

Strategies Teaching Business Subjects

Here are a few teaching and learning strategies that have been a staple in most classrooms. Depending upon your styles, preference, and your students, choose the ones that suite your needs.

1. **Cooperative Learning:** This enable student the opportunity to work with others and see different point of view. Student learn more effectively when working together rather than a part. It also improve self confidence in them. In this technique, each students is responsible for one another's learning, students find out really quick that each group members has something equally important to contribute to the group so as to

make a successful work. They are exposed to and use many skills throughout this strategy: Communication, problem-solving skills, cognition, and critical thinking all of which are essential for a successful academic career.

2. **Inquiry-Based Instruction:** This implies that students are allowed to involve in the learning process in order to have a deeper understanding of what they are learning. These strategies are used to engage students to learn by asking questions, investigating, exploring, and reporting what they see. It also helps them to have a deeper understanding of the content that they are learning which helps them to apply these concepts into new situations. In order to help or students to be successful in the 21st century, they need to be able to answer complex questions and develop solutions for these problems.
3. **Differentiated Instruction:** Here teachers engage each student by accommodating to their specific learning style. This instruction offers a way to meet all students' needs. Learning stations can easily be designed to enable students with diverse learning needs. Teacher, set up each station where students will be able to complete the same task, but at level and style that is specifically designed for them.
4. **Graphic Organizers:** A simple and effective tool that helps students brainstorm and organize their thoughts and ideas in a visual presentation they help students organize information easily for them to comprehend. It can be used for any lesson; to structure, writing, brainstorming, planning, problem solving or decision-making. Examples are: the venn diagram, concept image, KWL chart, and T chart. Idehen and Emeasoba (2021).

Conclusion

It was concluded that there were several factors affecting the effective teaching and learning of business subjects in all levels of educational systems. It was also concluded that there were numerous ways to solve the obstacles for effective teaching and learning of Business subjects to students for the realization of the objectives of the courses/subjects, efforts should be made towards effective and efficient use of the learner-centred strategies. The expectation is that they would improve the quality of teaching and learning of the programme, which would in turn lead to qualitative education. Failure to this, may spell doom for the programme because much emphasis may not be laid on the students who are to acquire the skills being impacted by the teachers.

Suggestions

Based on review, the following were suggested thus:

1. Federal, State and non-governmental agency should equip business education laboratories with necessary equipment/machines for effective teaching and learning.
2. Curriculum planners and developers should review the outdated curriculum and introduce new curricular that will guide business educators to teach the modern technology.
3. Seminars and workshop to be organised by both the management and the government for advancement of skills among the lecturers and the staff that require such skills.
4. The Nigerian government should deliberately fight corruption sincerely to a standstill or to its barest minimum without fear or favour. Ethnic, religious and political view should be set aside when fighting corruption.
5. The Nigerian government should ensure that all levels of educational institutions are well funded so it can help the management of such institutions carry out repairs and maintenance of some essential facilities that will improve the teaching and learning environment.

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