

RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION AS STRATEGIES FOR REPOSITIONING BUSINESS EDUCATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ANAMBRA STATE

BETHEL A. OKEKE

*School of Business Education, OTM Department,
Federal College of Education (Technical), Umuze,*

And

FAITH UKAMAKA UMEANO

*School of Business Education, OTM Department,
Federal College of Education (Technical), Umuze,*

Abstract

The study was aimed at research and technology integration as strategies for repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 109 business educators in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire which was validated by three experts in education. The test of reliability on the instrument yielded coefficient values of 0.78 and 0.85 for Clusters 1 and 2 respectively with an average reliability coefficient of 0.81. The mean value was used to answer the research questions while the standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' ratings. Findings revealed that research and technology integration are strategies for repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended among others that government at all levels should also ensure that funds are readily provided for research activities in tertiary institutions. Administrators of the programme should prioritize collaborative initiatives with private technology firms in the area of technology infrastructure provision and technical expertise.

Keywords: Research, Technology, Sustainable, National Development, Business Education

Introduction

Nigeria is a country blessed with lots of human and natural resources. These resources are spread across the 36 states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria including Anambra State. Sadly, the human and natural resources in the country have not been effectively utilized for national good. This is manifested in the high rate of unemployment among youths in the country and the clear incapacity on the part of government and its agencies in the

management of human resources in the country. According to Nwokike, Ezeabi and Jim (2018), the increasing rate of unemployment and crimes in Nigeria are clear indications of the inability of youths to acquire effective skills that will enable them contribute their part in contributing to sustainable national development.

Sustainable national development is defined as a holistic approach to improving the quality of life through judicious use of available natural resources. This view was enunciated by Umezulike (2015) saw sustainable development as involving the carrying capacity of natural system with social, political and economic challenges faced by the society. This view was enunciated by Lilly and Igbemi in Nwokike et al (2018) defined sustainable development as efforts geared towards improving the lives of people. In the context of business enterprise, sustainable development means adopting business strategies and activities that meet the needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders presently and enhancing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future. Nwokike et al emphasized that sustainable development depends on education, while investing in education leads to economic growth. Okoye (2021) suggested for the need to provide sustainability relevant education that enables business people to apply the appropriate knowledge and skills in their daily business activities, as well as highlighting the importance of sustainability issues within the business education curriculum,

Business education is a course of study that prepares individuals for business and entrepreneurial life. Okoye (2021) defined Business education as a programme of study that exposes individuals to different spectrum of economic activities that is necessary for sustainability. It is education for office occupation, accounting, distributive and marketing occupation, purchasing, teaching, business administration and entrepreneurship development. Nwokike and Okoli (2015) saw business education as education that enriches basic education for teaching career, entrepreneurship, business understanding, office understanding, office environment and vocational practices. Business education students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria are expected to acquire the necessary teaching, entrepreneurial and business management skills (Ikpesu, 2017). According to Asisafe, Bolarinwa, and Edeh (2015), business education is a program of instruction that provides various skills in accounting, marketing, office technology, and management. It is one of the occupations that vocational and technical education provides abundantly for the survival of individuals and nations. In this study, business education is defined as a core component of vocational and technical education that emphasizes the acquisition of survival skills and competencies for economic empowerment, repositioning, and sustainability. Business education is considered to be one of the crucial vehicles for social equity as well as sustainable national development if it priority attention is placed on investment in research and technology integration is placed in the front burner.

Investment in academic research has been viewed as a way through which business education can promote sustainable development. Improving research efforts in business education programmes in tertiary institutions is seen as a means through which the business education programme can contribute to sustainable national development (Ratten & Jones, 2021). By ensuring that academic research is aligned to the needs of society, business education programme can provides a path way to growth and development. Ratten and Jones further opined that research is relevant if it has the potential to improve the decision making of managers or policymakers. The provision of funds for research activities in business

education appear to offer a lot in terms of collaboration among with colleagues internationally and nationally as well as revealing breakthrough in novel methods of conducting businesses (Avolio, Benzaquen & Pretel, 2019). The integration of technology in the business education programme is another way that business education could lead to sustainable national development.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have been hailed as potentially strong enablers of educational change and reform. ICTs are a collection of technological tools and resources that are used to communicate, as well as to create, disseminate, store, and manage data. Computers, the Internet, broadcasting technologies (radio and television), and telephones are examples of these technology. The objective of ICT's is to convey the values, information, and skills that students require for long-term success in a multinational corporate world that is constantly changing technologically and economically (Avolio, Benzaquen & Pretel, 2019). ICT is one of the most important links in students' growth in order for them to contribute to sustainable national development. of technology mediated learning, blended learning, distance learning, mobile learning and online global learning, all supporting individualised, customised instruction could provide an avenue for promoting sustainable national development (Ratten & Jones, 2021). However, these views are theoretical and have not been empirically proven in Anambra State. The researcher therefore determined if research and technology integration are strategies for repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

The rates of unemployment, poverty and crime in Anambra State, Nigeria have reached an alarming level. This is evident in the large number of youths parading the streets without jobs and solely depending on the dreams of winning millions of Naira through bet. Moreso, the increasing rate of criminal activities like kidnapping, cultism and prostitution in the state worsened by failure of graduates to find well paying job appear to be crippling social and economic activities in the State, the researchers are worried that the failure of youths to acquire necessary skills which can be provided through business education is affecting economic growth in Anambra State. It is therefore imperative to determine the ways through which business education can contribute to sustainable national development in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent is investment in research a strategy for repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State?
2. To what extent is integration of technology a strategy for repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State?

Method

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 109 business educators in tertiary institutions (Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (16), Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbaria Campus (5), Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze

(71), Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe (10) and Madonna University, Okija (7) in the State. The instrument was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument was titled “Research and Technology Integration Strategies for Repositioning Business Education for Sustainable National Development Questionnaire (RTISR BESNDP)”. The instrument was structured on a 4-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The instrument contains 18 items split in two sections according to the research questions. Section A contains eight items on research for repositioning business education for sustainable national development in tertiary institutions while Section B contains 10 items on technology integration for repositioning business education for sustainable national development in tertiary institutions. The instrument was validated by three experts in the Department of Technology and Vocational Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Further the instrument was subject to a pilot test on 20 business educators in Enugu State. The application of the Cronbach Alpha reliability test on the returned data yielded coefficient values of 0.86 and 0.89 for clusters A and B with an average reliability co-efficient of 0.87. The researcher administered 109 copies of questionnaire, however, 98 copies were returned in good condition and were used for the collection of data for the study. The mean value was used to answer the research questions while the standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents’ ratings. In analyzing the mean value, any item with mean value equal to 2.50 and above was High Extent while any item below 2.50 was Low Extent.

Result

Research Question 1

To what extent is investment in research a strategy for repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State?

Table 1: Respondents Mean Rating on the Extent Investment in Research a Strategy for Repositioning Business Education in Tertiary Institutions for Sustainable National Development (N=98)

S/N	Item Statement	X	SD	Remarks
1.	Ensuring that funds are made available for business educators for academic research	3.22	0.73	High Extent
2.	Employing more research assistants to help in research activities in the business education programmes	3.29	0.77	High Extent
3.	Organizing research events like workshops, exhibitions, conferences where scholars come to discuss findings and inventions.	3.10	0.71	High Extent
4.	Ensuring that the departmental libraries are well equipped with current literature	3.19	0.70	High Extent
5.	Ensuring that research in business education is targeted at meeting needs of industry	3.12	0.78	High Extent
6.	Ensuring that research is aimed at	3.34	0.83	High Extent

	improving knowledge in the global context			
7.	Encouraging lecturers in higher institutions to engage in collaborative research works with their colleagues abroad	3.35	0.88	High Extent
8.	Providing a benchmark for research works in the business education programmes in tertiary institutions	3.40	0.86	High Extent
Cluster Mean		3.25		High Extent

Data in Table 1 reveal that the respondents rated all the items with mean ratings ranging from 3.10 to 3.40 and standard deviations ranging between 0.70 to 0.86 on the extent investment in research is a strategy for repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State to a high extent. The cluster mean of 3.25 indicate that investment in research is a strategy for repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State to a high extent.

Research Question 2

To what extent is integration of technology a strategy for repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State?

Table 2: Respondents Mean Ratings on the Extent Integration of Technology is a Strategy for Repositioning Business Education in Tertiary Institutions for Sustainable National Development(N=98)

S/N	Item Statement	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1.	Designing technology integration framework for business education	3.34	0.79	High Extent
2.	Judiciously implementing the business Education Technology integration Framework	3.27	0.78	High Extent
3.	Providing infrastructures for broadband technology in tertiary institutions	3.17	0.77	High Extent
4.	Making funds available for the technology integration process in business education departments	3.45	0.82	High Extent
5.	Recruitment of information and communication technology experts in the tertiary business education programmes	3.30	0.75	High Extent
6.	Ensuring access to internet facilities in business education department	3.41	0.76	High Extent
7.	Making internet connectivity in and around tertiary institutions free	3.38	0.83	High Extent
8.	Organizing in-service training for business educators on the use of technology for teaching	3.31	0.74	High Extent
9.	Collaborating with private IT firms for the provision of ICT facilities	3.32	0.80	High Extent

10.	Ensuring that digital libraries in tertiary institutions are functioning optimally	3.29	0.77	High Extent
	Cluster mean	3.23		High Extent

Data in Table 1 reveal that the respondents rated all the items with mean ratings ranging from 3.17 to 3.45 and standard deviation ranging between 0.75 to 0.83 on the extent technology integration is a strategy for repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State to a high extent. The cluster mean of 3.23 indicate that technology integration is a strategy for repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State to a high extent.

Discussion

Findings also revealed that investment in research is a strategy for repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State to a high extent. Findings further revealed that ensuring that funds are made available to academic research in the business education programme employing more research assistants to help in research activities, organizing research events like workshops exhibitions, conferences where scholars come to discuss findings and inventions, ensuring that the institutions libraries are well equipped with current literature and ensuring that research is targeted at meeting needs of industry are ways through which investment in academic research could repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State. This finding is in agreement with Nwokike et al (2019) reported that business education would be viable if investment is made in the area of academic research. Nwokike noted that business education can achieve sustainable development when the programme is at the forefront of business research. Thereby leading to improvements in pedagogical practices as well as offering solutions to business organizations leading to sustainable national development. Ratten and Jones (2021) stated that the business education programmes in tertiary institutions should through investment in research be pacesetter that is directing the focus of the global work environment. This is in support of Avolio et al (2019) who noted that through research higher institutions can place their students in better positions for leadership positions in their various fields while contributing to sustainable national development.

Findings also revealed that technology integration is a strategy for repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State to a high extent. Findings further revealed that through the design and implementation of technology integration framework for business education, providing free access to internet facilities, provision of ICT gadgets and recruitment of IT specialist, the business education programme can contribute to sustainable national development. This finding is in agreement with According to Avolio, Benzaquen and Pretel (2019) who noted that technology integration is imperative to national and global positioning of business education students for nation building. Avolio, et al further stated that the integration of technology in the business education programme will strengthen its capacity for sustainable global and national development. Similarly, Oviawe (2018) noted that technology integration in business education programme is very important in promoting a functional business education programme. As, the integration of technology will keep business educators and students

connected to the world. According to Nwokike, et al (2018), technology will enable business education students to be in tune with current trends in business practices as well as the necessary skills needed to carry out such task.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that investment in research and integration of technology are strategies for repositioning business education in tertiary institutions for sustainable national development in Anambra State. The business education as a programme of study that equip students with business skills needs to be properly harnessed through investment in research and priority attention placed on full integration of technology so as to promote sustainable national development in Anambra State in particular and Nigeria in general.

Recommendations

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

1. Government at all levels should also ensure that funds are readily provided for research activities in tertiary institutions.
2. Administrators of the programme should prioritize collaborative initiatives with private technology firms in the area of technology infrastructure provision and technical expertise.
3. A research Benchmark that will guide the quality of researches in business education should be published by heads of business education programmes in tertiary institutions.
4. The federal and state government should facilitate the recruitment of experienced ICT experts that will carry out the task of implementing and maintaining remote learning systems in tertiary institutions

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