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Training of Business Education Students for Technological Empowerment in Rivers State

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Abstract
This study examined Training of Business Education Students for Technological Empowerment in Rivers State. Two research questions were posed to guide the study and two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study population was 1,300 students, while the sample size was 455 respondents representing 35% of the population. Data was collected by means of questionnaire titled "Training of Business Education Students for Technological Empowerment in Rivers State (TBESTERSQ)". A total of 428 copies of the questionnaire were properly completed, retrieved and analyzed. The researcher adopted four points rating scale. Test-retest method was used for the reliability test. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions while Z-test was used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that technological training should not only be addressed in tertiary levels but should be incorporated into all levels of education in order to achieve the desired goal of business education and ensuring self-reliance among students in Rivers State. Thus, the study recommended among others that Technological training in business education should be adequately funded by the Federal and State Governments.

Keywords: Training, Business Education, Technological Empowerment.

Introduction

Technology is a prevailing tool for transforming learning. It can help affirm and advance relationships between educators and students, reinvent approaches to learning and collaboration, shrink long-standing equity and accessibility gaps, and adapt learning experiences to meet the needs of all learners. Schools, communities and educational institutions should be incubators of exploration, invention and interventions in terms currency in developmental strides to meet the demands of today socio-economic and political needs. Educators are catalysts and collaborators in learning, that seek new knowledge and constantly acquires new skills alongside their students. Thus, education leaders set the vision for creating learning experiences that provide the right tools and supports for all learners to thrive (John, Joseph, & Katrina, 2017). However, to remain globally competitive and develop an engaged citizens, the schools should interlace 21st century competencies and expertise throughout the learning experience, especially technological experiences. These include the development of critical thinking, complex

problem solving, collaboration, and adding multimedia communication into the teaching of traditional academic subjects (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2013) and high-tech savvy. In addition, learners should have the opportunity to develop a sense of agency (I.e work, actions or intervention) in their learning and the belief that they can succeed in school. Beyond these essential core academic competencies, there is a growing body of research on the importance of non-cognitive competencies as they relate to academic success (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011)

However, just as teeth development is a problem for growing children and their parents, so is unemployment of graduates in Rivers state and Nigeria generally. The various higher institutions in the country turns out graduates annually, so does unemployment of graduates' increases, and the scourge for graduates' unemployment is blamed on the university curriculum which has been structured towards stereotyped jobs without adequate practical work experiences. This means that graduates from the university acquire knowledge without adequate technical skills which would enable them to be technically empowered after graduation from school, create jobs fore themselves or for others and participate in economic development in Nigeria (Akpan & Etor, 2013). The Federal Government of Nigeria through the National University Commission (NUC) made entrepreneurship education a compulsory course for all undergraduate students in Nigeria universities in order to make university education functional, relevant and practical. Uche, Nwabueze and Omeme (2009) stated that the policy is to ignite entrepreneurial spirit which will help graduates to recognize business opportunities, mobilize resources and exploit the opportunities for self-employment and reliant which will be beneficial to the society and for national development.

Nevertheless, the rate at which young people are graduating from higher institutions and seeking employment continuously, outpaces the capacity of the economy to provide employment. Awogbeule and Iwuamadi, (2010) argued that the problems of mass unemployment, low productivity, high inflation and poverty will depend on how speedily it is able to develop the millions of its labour force into knowledgeable and skilled people needed for the required change. Consequently, one of the best ways to reduce the menace of unemployment and encourage students is to network the vision of the 21st technological derive to suit the current situation in Nigeria. Hence, the neglect of technological training in business education has been robbing the nation of the potential contributions of its graduates to national growth and economic development. This is in line with Dike (2009) who noted that underdevelopment status of Nigeria could be linked to the neglect of its educational institutions.

According to Human Resources (HR) Help Board (2019, retrieved) training may be stated as 'arranged program intended to enhance execution and realize quantifiable changes in learning, abilities, states of mind and social conduct of workers. Training may be carried out through various approaches such as on the job, through classroom session,

on site, off site, online and case studies etc. Training is mainly job related in that it aims at maintaining and improving current job performance. It is considered an only tool of human resources department through which the learning and change can be brought in an organization. Also, Nedum (2002) in Ekeke (2013) opined that Business Education is an education 'for' and 'about' business. Business education is a programme of study which emphasizes the production of graduates who will engage in professional studies in business and strong advocates and promoters of viable industries and business enterprises (Koko, 2010). While, Njoku (2006) defined business education as an educational programme that equips an individual with functional and suitable skills, knowledge, attitude, and value that would enable him/her to operate in the environment he/she finds himself/herself. The main aim of business education programme is to train individuals for the acquisition of practical skills needed for gainful employment. In the 21st century, it is practically impossible to train or graduate business education students without appropriate technological empowerment to enable them function effectively either as an employee or an employer of labour. Managing modern offices requires that all graduates of office related functions be exposed to modern technologies to be able to communicate, interact, relate and function productively within and without an organizational system. Beside, due to the high rate of unemployment in the country, and inflation many states are struggling to maintain their existing work forces, thus, employing new workers is never a consideration, therefore, it means that a very large number of graduates will depend on self-reliant engagements to be sustained. The very first option, for any wise student, will be to develop technological skills through effective engagement by the school system or personal training, in other to move along with the trends of the global system especially the global market pace, which is empowered by technology. Tertiary institutions therefore need to train and graduate students who are technologically savvy to empower them for the hard and harsh economic realities of the current economy.

According to Karehka, (2013) technology is a body of knowledge devoted to creating tools, processing actions and the extracting of materials. Technology is also an application of science used to solve problems. Technology is knowledge or a set of tools that helps make things easier or resolve problems. A review of studies revealed that the pen is one of the first forms of technologies that made it easier for humans to record and reference their previous thoughts and actions. It was later improved with the development of the printing press which made it easier to produce the written word, allowing broader access to information, later, typewriters were created, which made it easier and faster for anyone to make their own documents. Finally, the computer came along and overtime, has dramatically improved on all previous technologies in the context of editing, writing and sharing. Studies conducted by the Chief Executive Officers (CEO) Forum (2001) emphasized that technology have the greatest impact when integrated into the curriculum to achieve clear, measurable educational objectives. Also, a recent study illustrates how alignment between content area learning standards and carefully selected technology uses

can significantly empower the 21st century youths for employability. Ekeke (2013) noted that preparing business education students for the workforce is an area where technology plays a pivotal role in helping school communities reach their educational goals and that of the world of work.

According to Eloisamnbt (2017), Empowered Technology or E-tech often deals with the use of different technologies such as mobile phones, telephone, computer and other devices to locate, save, communicate and to inform. Empowerment technology is important for its innovative uses is enough in our daily lives. There are three importance of empowered technology and these are for communication, to make our lives easier and to help our country for its modernization plans. The author further explained that empowered technology is important for it is used as a source of communication. It makes our individual lives easier in different aspects such as for school matters, office or work matters and for our individual matters. Before, blackboards and whiteboards are one of the tools used in teaching students. Now, there are already Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) projectors that is being used by many institutions or schools nowadays. It helps country for its modernization plans. Without E-tech, the future plan of the society in the field of technology will be hindered.

According to the United Nations General Assembly (1995), youths are young people between the ages of 18-35 years' age bracket irrespective of their gender. Also, the UN, the Commonwealth, the AU and Nigeria's National Youth Policy give different definitions of what a youth is. The UN states that "youths" are best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. The UN sees a youth as a more fluid category than a fixed age-group. Youths are the strong holds of any productive society, thus the need to empower youths especially the student youths are therefore as pertinent as survival of the society.

The Nigerian youth population is almost two hundred million representing, by this implication the youth constituted the backbone of the development of any nation considering their natural energy and intellectual endowment. Engaging youths in technological training is a business on its own which empowers the youths to produce or render services to people for their profit. According to Ugochukwu, Elom, Nwuzo, Inyiagu and Ndem (2014) empowerment means giving legal power or official authority to enable or promote self-actualization or influence. Empowerment is a process by which youth gain greater control over resources such as income, knowledge, information, technology, skills and training, thus challenges that ideology of patriarchy and participates in leadership decision making process, enhance self-image of youths to become active participants in the process of change and to develop the skills to assert themselves. To this end, this study examines technological empowerment and training for youths in Nigeria and abroad.

Statement of the Problem

Generally, youth empowerment is often than not confronted with myriads of problems. The challenges range from sense of hopelessness, social marginalization, insufficient opportunities for youth to participate in a meaningful way, lack of communication between youth and adult groups, adults 'negative perception of youth and lack of civic knowledge and skills' (Balsano, 2005). Other barriers to youth empowerment include illiteracy, inferiority complex, and lack of incentives at the graduation from a tech related training and poverty. However, one important avenue to empower youths especially students is through technological training and development. The evidence of the histories of India and Ireland concerning their tremendous growth using Technology are all living witnesses to their status' today and the tremendous benefits being derived through Information Communication Technology (ICT) by way of export of both finished products and personnel. Also, the foreign investment by technologically advanced countries not for the purpose of opening sales outlets as is the case with our country but for actual manufacture of both software and hardware products are evidence of the place of technology in recent times. Even the school fees of Indian schools for ICT courses have risen astronomically as a result of the great importance attached to ICT.

Business education been a program that houses a wide range of professional areas stands the position to empower students technologically for gainful or self-sustainable employment. Technological development is faced with a lot of challenges in Nigerian system, especially the Universities. One of these challenges is inability of teachers to assist the students develop the ability and knowledge necessary to make them use technological appliances effectively. In many cases students are faced with the challenges of bad perception during their studies; lack of pedagogy in their curriculum, lack of user touch and feel in their learning or training. Also, some technological studies conducted in developing countries show lack of vision and framework in implementing which lead to failure in actualization. Lack of both technical and social skills required for the implementation of hi-tech learning contributes to failure of technological projects.

Four obstacles affecting the total development of technology for students and youth's empowerment: Connectivity, which is limited or lack of linkages in many developing countries including Nigeria Universities impedes access to technological apparatus. Equipment: technological training or development requires equipment that can facilitate learning and training, but in some of Nigeria universities, the equipment such as computers, digital technology, and internet are not available for proper utilization. Software: Software enables educators to design and develop learning content. These softwares are costly and not available for use in some universities, to facilitate technological programme. Training: No combination of connectivity, equipment and software will achieve anything if people are not trained to use them. Some lecturers and students are not trained to make use of some of the technological equipment. Many students lack confidence and experience with computers. Many students lack skills in commonly used applications

such as Microsoft Word, Excel and Power Point which affects their level of development in technological skills. Time management, skills and self - motivation also influence students' interest and zeal to develop their technological skills for gainful or self-employment. On this backdrop this article seeks to carry out a study on Training of Business Education Students for Technological Empowerment in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

This study's specific objectives are:

1) Examine the importance of technological training in Business Education for youths' empowerment in Rivers State.
2) Find out the benefits of empowering youths technologically for gainful employment or self-sustenance in Rivers State.

Research Questions

1) What is the importance of technological training in Business Education for students' and youths' empowerment?
2) What are the benefits of empowering students and youths technologically for gainful employment or self-sustenance in Rivers State?

Null Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1) There is no significant difference on the mean rating of Business Education students on the importance of technological training in for youths' empowerment in Rivers State University.

2) There is no significant difference on the mean rating of Business Education students on the benefits of empowering youths technologically for gainful employment or self-sustenance in Rivers State.

Methodology

The paper is a descriptive design study with a population of 1300 students. The population is distributed according to institutions comprising of third and fourth year students as shown:

Ignatius Ajuru University of Education 648 students, Rivers State University, Nkpolu, Port Harcourt 457 students, Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku 195 students.

This study adopted a percentage sampling technique; thus, the sample size of the study is 455 respondents representing 35% of the population. Data was collected by means of a questionnaire titled "training of business education students for technological empowerment in Rivers State (TBESTERSQ)". The questionnaire was structured in two parts which were Part 'A' and 'B'. Part 'A' sought information on the selected personal

background of the respondents, and part 'B' sought information on the opinions of the students, regarding the topic of the study, which was broken into two and each contained four question items. The questionnaire adopted a four-point rating scale which were: Strongly Agreed (SA-4 points), Agreed (A-3 points), Disagreed (D-2 points), Strongly Disagreed (SD-1 point). The questionnaire was validated by three lecturers within the institution under study. A one test method was used to test the reliability of the items and a reliability coefficient of 0.89 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha reliability method. The 455 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents by the researcher and two research assistants guided by the researcher herself. Out of the 455 distributed, 428 copies were properly completed and retrieved, and this represents 94.4% of the entire questionnaire. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the research questions while a Z-test was used to test the hypotheses. If the calculated Z-value is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Results

The results obtained from the respondents is shown as follows:

Research Question 1: What is the importance of technological training in Business Education for students and youths' empowerment in Rivers State?

Table 1: Responses on the Importance of Technological Empowerment in Business Education for Students and Youths' in Rivers State.

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Rmk
1	Technological training is a viable means for training students and youths to be employable in Rivers State.	3.42	0.95	Agreed
2	Technological training promotes innovation and resilience in students and youths in the global society	3.34	0.94	Agreed
3	Technological training develops new skill and experience which makes students and youths to build confidence and courage in a challenging and ever changing labour market.	3.62	0.75	Strongly Agreed
4	Technological training instills a sense of belonging into students and youths to enhance their self-worth and believe.	3.37	0.99	Agreed
	Grand Mean	**3.43**		

Source: *Field Survey, 2020* (N-428)

The result in Table 2 Shows that one out of the four items on the importance of technological empowerment in students of in Business Education, items 1, 2 and 4 with mean values of 3.42, 3.34 and 3.37 respectively indicates that the students appreciates the

importance of technological empowerment training for empowerment in Rivers State. Item 3 with mean value, 3.62 strongly agreed to the fact that technological empowerment enables the students to be employable in Rivers State. A grand mean of 3.43 and standard deviation of 0.90 proves that empowering Students of business education technologically can help them become self-reliant and employable in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What are the benefits of technological training in Business Education for youths' empowerment?

Table 2: Benefits of technological training for Business Education students and youths' empowerment in Rivers State.

S/N	**Benefits of Technological training for Business Education youths' empowerment**	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Technology creates both domestic and global employment opportunities for student and the youths	3.55	0.87	Strongly Agreed
2	Technology encourage economic independence among students and the youths	3.08	0.86	Agreed
3	Technology enhances brilliance/self-confidence of students and youths	3.42	0.81	Agreed
4	Technology create job freedom and mobilities among students and the youths	3.08	0.95	Agreed
	Grand Mean	**3.28**		

Source: *Field Survey, 2020* *(N = 428)*

The results in Table 3 shows that items 5, 6, 7, and 8 with mean ratings of 3.55, 3.08, 3.42 and 3.08 respectively, reveals that there are several benefits youths and students of Business Education can derived from being technologically trained when studying business education such domestic and global employment opportunities, economic independence, self-excellence and confidence as well as job freedom and mobilities. The grand mean of 3.28 indicates that the respondents agree to the fact that youths and students of business education needs to be technologically trained in order to become empowerment and employable for self-sustainability.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business education students on the importance of technological training in business education for youths' empowerment in Rivers State.

Table 3: Z-test of difference between male and female business education students on the importance of technological training in business education for youths' empowerment.

	N	Mean	SD	df	Z-cal	Z-tab	Rmk
Male	480	1.25	1.62				Accepted
Female	720	1.89	1.73	1198	0.61	1.96	

Significant at 0.05 level of significance

The analysis in Table 4 shows the Z-test of difference between male and female business education students on the importance of technological training for youths' empowerment in business education which is seen as a means for creating employment opportunities for youths in Rivers State. The Z-calculated value of 0.61 is less than the Z-table value of 1.96, this is an indication that the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business education students on the importance of technological training for business education students' empowerment values as a way of helping Rivers State youths to be technologically empowerment and employable in Rivers State.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between male and female business education students on the benefits of technological training for business education youths' empowerment.

Table 4: Z-test of difference between male and female business education students on the benefits of technological training for business education youths' empowerment.

	N	Mean	SD	df	Z-cal	Z-tab	Remark
Male	480	1.24	1.59				Accepted
Female	720	1.67	1.68	1198	0.43	1.96	

Significant at 0.05 level of significance

The analysis in Table 5 reveals the Z-test of difference between male and female business education students with regards to realization of business education goal, the benefits of technological training for youths empowerment which includes: preparing youths to be employable in Rivers State, economic independence, advancement of confidence and self-confidence, as well as greater freedom and mobility etc are all necessary for goal attainment in business education with Z-calculated value of 0.43 lesser than the Z-table value of 1.96. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business education students.

Discussion of Findings

The results in research question 1, which was analyzed and presented in Table 1, revealed the extent to which business education students contemplate technological training as important. The students consider the following as the importance of technological training. They are: It creates employment opportunities, promotes innovations, instill a sense of belonging and helps youths develop new skills and address some of the socio-psychological problems that arises from joblessness. The finding of the study are in line with the opinion of Aliu (2007) who posited that technological training study is the ideal educational environment for producing individuals with a mindset of self-reliance, creativity and high productivity and are ready to cope with the 21st century world

of work. The results on Table 2 revealed that business education youths are in agreement that the benefits of technological training in business education helps for economic independence, establish own credit idea, achieve excellence, have self-confidence and greater freedom and mobility. In line with the study conducted by Ekeke (2017) which revealed that business education students in Rivers State University considered technological training very beneficial. The tested hypothesis on Table 3 indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of the male and female business education students. The result revealed that t-calculated of 0.61 was less than t-table of 1.96 at a 0.05 level of significance. The result of the hypothesis in Table 4 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female business education students. The result also revealed that t-calculated of 0.43 was less than the t-table of 1.96 at a 0.05 significant level. The gender of the respondents did not also influence their rating of the benefits of technological training.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that business education students are positive in their assessment of the relevance of technological training in business education as an empowerment strategy to graduate self-employment. They perceived technological training as a means of empowering Nigerian graduates through the acquisition of appropriate technological skills to be job creators, employers of labour and to contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the nation.

Recommendations

Premised on the findings, the paper recommends that:

1) Technological training in business education should be adequately funded by the government of Federal and State Governments.
2) Business education students should not be allowed to graduate without the acquisition of technological skills and knowledge with a transferable skill required for today's world of work.
3) Business education students should be practically oriented, trained and retrained in the application of 21st century technologies and its attended accessories.
4) The department of business education should include in their curriculum, technology application programs at all levels.
5) Adequate and experienced quality manpower with currency in technology-oriented skills should be employed to teach technology application programs in the department of business education.

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