Assessment of Lifelong Learning Attitude of Business Educators in Public Tertiary Institutions in Ogun State

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Abstract
The aim of this paper was to assess the lifelong learning attitudes of Business Educators in the digital era. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A 4-point rating scale questionnaire, containing 16 items in 2 clusters, titled: Teachers' Attitudes toward Acquiring Digital Competencies Questionnaire (TAADCQ) was used to collect data from 59 Business Educators: 29 males (8 of them below 40 years and 21above 40 years) and 30 females (4 of them below 40 years and 26 above 40 years) in 5 public tertiary institutions offering Business Education programme in Ogun State, Nigeria. The instrument was validated by two experts in Business Education Department and one from Science Education Department. The instrument was further subjected to internal consistency testing using Cronbach Alpha which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83. Mean and standard deviation were used to answers to the research questions, while t-test was used to test the research hypotheses. Findings revealed that gender and age did not prevent the respondents to have positive attitude towards learning new technology. Also, there is no significance difference in the mean attitudes of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on gender and age. It was concluded that the tendency to learn new technology is not based on gender or age. The paper recommended among others that school management should encourage both young and older teachers to learn new technological skills to improve job performance.

Keywords: Attitude, Assessment, Business Educators, Lifelong Learning, programme

Introduction

Learning is a very complex concept to define easily. It is often misunderstood by many as a product of schooling. However, not all learning take place in school. Learning can take place just anywhere; at home, office, market, church, farm, battlefield, street and so on. This explain why the Oxford University Press Sample Chapter (2016), elucidated that, most children arrive for their first day of formal education with a great deal of knowledge along with a vast array of skills and attributes they learnt long before walking into a classroom. Again, classroom learning has been widely criticized because of its emphasis on standardized scoring. In this regard, the learners learn in order to get good scores. As Looß (2001) noted, classroom learning focuses only on storing and reproducing during examinations. This further explain the existing knowledge gap between school and work place. On its part, the Queens University (2022) argued that, deep and long-lasting learning involves understanding, relating ideas and making connections between prior and new knowledge, independent and critical thinking and ability

to transfer knowledge to new and different contexts. Thus, the conception of learning as a product of school do not holds water. Another definition of learning becomes imperative. In this regards, attentions was paid to the *behaviourists,* humanists and connectivists' *views of learning.*

The behaviourists such as Thorndike, Pavlov, Watson, Guthrie, Hull, Tolman and Skinner, *believed that, learning is* a relatively permanent change in behaviour that results from experience (Cherry, 2020). It is the modification of the behaviour of a child as a result of knowledge, skills, and experiences gained over time, in a given environment. The types of learning in this school of thought include reward learning, omission learning, escape learning, discriminative operant learning, discriminated omission learning, active avoidance learning, discriminated punishment learning and punishment learning (Behlol and Dad, 2010).

Humanists like Maslow and Roger considered learning as a personal act of individuals to fully utilize their potential (Brockett & Roger in Behlol and Dad, 2010). In line with this school of thought, learning is a process of continuous change in human performance in order to actualize their potentials. Behlol and Dad (2010) gave the basic characteristics of self-actualizing people to include: tolerance for ambiguity, acceptance of self and others, and peak experiences that lead to personal transformation through new insights.

Connectivists believe that learning is an ongoing pattern of attitudes and actions taken by individuals and groups to deal with the surprising, new or novel, messy, obtrusive events and situations (Behlol and Dad, 2010). The connectivists considered learning to be an ongoing process. Something that is continuously increasing with time. In this vein, Laal (2011) defined learning as a process of becoming aware of the frame of reference within which we think, feel, and act, becoming critical of its adequacy with conscious of where it comes, developing newer more adequate frames of reference which are more inclusive, and discriminating of experience (the experience of old age) and finally acting out of this frame of reference. In the assertion of Malec (2022), it is the process of gaining new skills, knowledge, understanding, and values. Such learning is a continuous process for a lifetime, transiting from school to work and beyond. Definitions in this school of thought best described lifelong learning.

Over the years, man has continued to acquire through learning, new knowledge, skills and experiences to improve upon his life and live successfully. As Malec (2022) noted, learning has continued all over the world throughout the history of human life, in many ways. However, Kaplan (2016) noted that, the concept of lifelong learning was firstly suggested in 1919 as a discussion regarding the educational needs of individuals who work in the armed forces and industry. According to Bilir in Kaplan (2016), it took intellectual dimension and became popular as a result of studies on adult education by Eduard Lindeman in the 1920's. In the assertion of Kaplan (2016), lifelong learning has become one of the most frequently used learning approaches and it is based on all of an individual's life processes from birth to death. Similarly, Carlsen (2016) noted that, lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering lifelong (cradle to grave) and life-wide learning for people of all ages, delivered and undertaken through a variety of modalities and meeting a wide range of learning

needs and demands. Furthermore, Soni (2012) attributed lifelong learning to acquiring and updating abilities, interests, knowledge and qualifications beginning from the pre-school years to post retirement, which promotes the development of knowledge and competences necessary for adaptation to the knowledge-based society and also valuing all forms of learning. More so, Kaplan (2016:45), described Lifelong learning in the following words:

1. It contains all life processes from birth to death.
2. It is based on the personal and occupational needs, interests and learning requirement of individuals.
3. It contributes to the development of skills and talents of individuals.
4. It is an approach which includes comprehensive components.
5. It has become a compulsory aspect of individuals' lives as a result of changing world conditions and developing technology.
6. It provides equal opportunities to individuals and removes restrictions such as learning, age, socio-economic status and educational level.

Lifelong learning is necessary in order to keep up to date with the rapid changes in the world, improve on personal skills needed in different areas, develop intellectual capacities, sustain current jobs and find new ones, and to live healthy and harmoniously with other people. For Malec (2022), lifelong learning help people stimulate passions and interests; develop capacity, adaptability and innovative abilities at workplace and maintain better brain function as they age. Guanzi in Ates and Alsal (2012) put it in a philosophic terms that, to plan for a year plant corn, to plan for ten years plant trees and to plan for the far future, educate human beings. In essence, lifelong learning is a plan for a better future. It help people to acquire skills that enable them to survive in a dynamic society. In addition, Lifelong learning equip individuals with the skills they need to adapt to changes both at workplace and in life; empowering them to stay competitive in the labour market; increase their chances of promotions in jobs; and keep pace with technological changes going on in the world.

Lifelong learning covers every fields of life. However, Hürsen in Kaplan (2016) noted that, lifelong learning covers six broad areas of competencies, namely: Self-management competencies, learning to learn competencies, Initiative and entrepreneurship competencies, Information acquisition competency, making decisions competency and digital competencies. Out of these competencies, the digital competencies is more important to this study. It is an aspect of lifelong learning which is more focused on developing needed competencies to function effectively in the digital era.

Digital era is the period in man's history which has widely embraced relevant technologies to improve individuals and organizations, and provides them with instant access to information that enables them to become more competitive in the marketplace. It is an era that massively utilizes artificial intelligence, the Internet, cloud computing, Augmented Reality (AR), smart devices, mobile technologies and forums like the social networking sites to share

information. In the assertion of Gapsalamov (2020), digital era is witnessed by transformation of the main administrative, financial, industrial processes into a digital form using elements of artificial intelligence and self-learning systems.

Digital era has brought about large data management system, speedy completion of tasks, nonstop operations, and self-learning and improvement opportunities. Commenting in this regards, the Oxford University Press Sample Chapter (2016) noted that, young people today, can access information 24 hours in a week within the palm of their hands, to improve themselves. By way of buttress, Eshet (2012) noted that, in the modern era, digital literacy has become a survival skill that helps individuals to work intuitively in executing complex digital tasks. It is glaring in our society today that, workers with digital competencies have become the main aspect to sustain societies' life (Ates and Alsal, 2012).

It may not be deniable that, digital disruption may threaten current businesses operated by individuals and organizations without digital competencies, but at the same time, digitalization creates more opportunities for those individuals and organizations that are willing to embrace change (Van Houwelingen et al, 2015). By extension, individuals and organizations that do not seize the opportunity of digitalization stand to lose. This is because, they will find it more difficult to catch up, as technology continue to advance. Therefore, it behoves on everyone to key into the digital era, particularly those saddled with the responsibility of imparting knowledge, like the Business Educators.

Business Educators are individuals trained in business areas and in education, and are qualified to teach business courses at various levels of education. The call for their digitalization to become more effective in the digital era is imperative. As Amhag et al (2019) have made it explicit, teachers in higher education need digital competency to use digital tools for effective instructional delivery. Hashim (2018) is of the opinion that, educators are facing challenges in adapting their teaching styles to accommodate a new generation of learners who are now entering schools, colleges and universities, have learning expectations, styles, and needs that are different from past students. More challenging is the integration of continuous grading, instant feedback, clear goals, rewards and positive reinforcement which are the new nature of education in the digital era (Hashim, 2018). Therefore, all teachers in general, and Business Educators in particular, must avail themselves with the opportunities provided by digitalization and constantly update their knowledge of technology, in order to teach course contents of the modern age using software, hardware, digital devices, new technologies, and social media to propagate instructions.

Attitude is a recognized factor generally known to have influence on peoples' learning of any kind. Attitude involves emotions and behaviour and can influence future behaviour towards something or someone. Otchere et al (2019) considered attitude as expressing gratitude towards something or someone. Attitude can contribute positively or negatively to learning. While positive attitude encourage learning, negative attitude discourage learning. In the opinion of Eickelmann and Vennemann (2017), teachers' attitudes and beliefs are crucial with regard to innovations in schools, especially those that combine pedagogics and technology. In

the assertion of Badia et al (2013), attitudes have been shown to be prerequisites for a successful implementation and use of ICT in schools.

In a normal situation, teachers are supposed to teach students many skills with technology, however, there are many of them who are not very comfortable with it (Gorder in Chow, 2015). Hashim (2018) described those teachers as digital immigrants, who are behind most learners that are the digital natives, who are very much vested in technology. More so, Chow (2015) noted that, some of the teachers feel that they do not have adequate knowledge on how to implement and maintain the integration of technology in the classroom. For Islahi and Nasrin (2019), teacher's attitude towards Information Technology (ICT) is crucial in achieving success in its adoption, effective integration and utilization for positive output in education.

Teachers' attitude toward learning new technologies to improve their performance in the digital world has received controversial reactions from many. For instance, Cifuentes-Rojas et al. (2019) noted that, most teachers seem to possess poor attitude towards learning how to use and apply technology. Contrarily, Kilinç et al. (2018), revealed that, teachers have positive beliefs and attitudes toward the use of technology. Similarly, Sa'ari et al. (2014) found that, most teachers possess positive attitudes towards Information Technology (IT)

There is also controversial results about teachers' attitudes towards learning new technology with regards to gender. Result of Zaman et al. (2018) shows that male had better positive attitude to learning new technology than their female counter. Also, Islahi and Nasrin (2019) revealed that, there was a significant difference in attitude between males and female teachers, with the female teachers been more sceptical across all the domains than the males. However, Serin & Bozdağ (2020) found that, teacher attitudes concerning technology use in teaching do not change according to gender. This implies that, the digital competencies needed for effective use of technology in classrooms is expected from all teachers irrespective of their gender.

Age is another variable considered in this paper with regards to digital competencies learning. This is important because they are some individuals considered as natives of digital era and some who are not. According to Gallardo-Echenique et al. (2015), those born roughly between 1980 and 1994 have been characterized by their familiarity and confidence with respect to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and they have spent most of their lives surrounded by digital communication technology. Similarly, Best et al in Hashim (2018) elucidated that those born between 1982 and 2000 are categorised the millennial generation or also known as Gen-Y and are often described as being digital natives who have a high level of technological literacy. Following this assertion, the digital natives should be forty years down while the non-digital age should be any year above forty.

Study to related age and teachers attitudes towards learning of new technology has shown that age is not a factor in instructional ICT learning, although some age-related differences appear in teachers' personal ICT uses (Keržič et al., 2018). Similarly, Mahdi and Al-Dera (2013), found no significant difference in using ICT between two groups of teachers

according to their age. However, Ainen et al, (2021) revealed that, older professionals often showed weak skills, but they also recognised the need for professional development in using digital technologies.

Statement of the Problem

Lifelong learning, especially as it concern digital technology, is an additional responsibility to Business Educators who do not only teach, but becoming digital learners in order to enhance their effectiveness in instructional delivery to the students. Technology keeps changing, meaning they have to struggle to adapt to the current events occasioned by the technological advancement. Should they failed to update their digital competence, it may cost their jobs. Yet, trying to level up with the digital natives who are now entering schools, colleges and universities, with learning expectations, styles, and needs that are different from past students is another challenge. It is likely that the attitude of these Business Educators to adapt to the digital age may not be the same. Thus, this paper sought to assess the lifelong learning attitudes of these educators in the digital era.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the paper was to assess the lifelong learning attitudes of Business Educators in the digital era. Specifically, the paper sought to determine:

1. The attitudes of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on gender.
2. The attitudes of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on age.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the attitudes of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on gender?
2. What is the attitudes of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on age?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study and were tested at 0.05 Alpha level of significance:

1. There is no significance difference in the mean attitudes of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on gender.
2. There is no significance difference in the mean attitudes of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on age.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A 4-point rating scale questionnaire, containing 16 items in 2 clusters, titled: Teachers' Attitudes toward Acquiring Digital Competencies Questionnaire (TAADCQ) was used to collect data from 59 Business Educators: 29 males (8 of them below 40 years and 21above 40 years) and 30 females (4 of them below 40 years and 26 above 40 years) in 5 public tertiary institutions (FCE, Abeokuta, Ogun; Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu, Ijebu; Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro; Moshood, Abiola

Polytechnic, Ojere; Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode and Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye) offering Business Education programme in Ogun State, Nigeria. The instrument was validated by two experts in Business Education Department and one from Science Education Department, major in Test and Measurement. The instrument was further subjected to internal consistency testing using Cronbach Alpha which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83. Mean and standard deviation were used to find answers to the research questions, while t-test was used to test the research hypotheses.

Results

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the attitude of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on gender?

The mean and standard deviation analysis answering research question 1 is presented in Table 1

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the attitude of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on gender

Gender	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
Males	29	2.7801	0.6075	Agree
Females	30	2.7291	0.6281	Agree

In Table 1, male respondents have the mean of 2.7801 and the standard deviation of 0.6075 while the females have the mean of 2.7291 and the standard deviation of 0.6281. The results did not show a pronounce difference between the male and female respondents. This suggest that both groups of respondents have positive attitude towards learning new technology.

Research Question 2: What is the attitude of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on age?

The mean and standard deviation analysis answering research question 2 is presented in Table 2

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the attitude of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on Age

Ages	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
Below 40 years	12	3.5208	0.4963	Strongly Agree
Above 40 years	47	3.4813	0.5026	Agree

Table 2 shows that the mean and standard deviation of respondents below the ages of 40 were 3.5208 and 0.4963. That of those above 40 years were 3.4813 and 0.5026 respectively. This indicates that both age groups have positive attitudes towards learning new technology.

However, respondents below the ages of 40 have a bit stronger positive attitude than their counterparts.

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significance difference in the mean attitude of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on gender.

The t-test analysis of the mean attitudes of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on gender is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: The t-test results of the mean attitude of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on gender

**df=57*

ITEM	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Symbol	t-critical	Decision
1	Male	29	3.41	0.56	0.50	<	2.01	Accept
	Female	30	3.33	0.66				
2	Male	29	2.93	0.92	0.28	<	2.01	Accept
	Female	30	2.86	0.81				
3	Male	29	2.72	0.64	1.03	<	2.01	Accept
	Female	30	2.90	0.66				
4	Male	29	2.03	0.56	0.83	<	2.01	Accept
	Female	30	1.90	0.66				
5	Male	29	2.17	0.46	0.72	<	2.01	Accept
	Female	30	2.06	0.63				
6	Male	29	3.48	0.57	1.08	<	2.01	Accept
	Female	30	3.63	0.49				
7	Male	29	2.10	0.61	1.22	<	2.01	Accept
	Female	30	1.90	0.66				
8	Male	29	3.37	0.49	1.21	<	2.01	Accept
	Female	30	3.23	0.43				
	Grand Mean				**0.85**	<	**2.01**	**Accept**

Table 3 shows that all the items were accepted. The grand mean of the calculated-t value (0.85) was less than the critical-t value (2.01). Null hypothesis 1 was accepted that, there is no significance difference in the mean attitudes of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on gender.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significance difference in the mean attitude of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on age. The t-test analysis of the mean attitude of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on age is presented in Table 4

Table 4: The t-test results of the mean attitude of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on age

**df=57*

ITEM	Ages	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Symbol	t-critical	Decision
9	Below 40	12	3.50	0.52	0.45	<	2.01	Accept
	Above 40	47	3.57	0.49				
10	Below 40	12	3.83	0.38	1.53	<	2.01	Accept
	Above 40	47	3.59	0.49				
11	Below 40	12	3.41	0.51	0.77	<	2.01	Accept
	Above 40	47	3.40	0.49				
12	Below 40	12	3.50	0.52	2.03	>	2.01	Reject
	Above 40	47	3.21	0.41				
13	Below 40	12	3.50	0.52	1.16	<	2.01	Accept
	Above 40	47	3.31	0.47				
14	Below 40	12	3.41	0.51	2.04	>	2.01	Reject
	Above 40	47	3.72	0.45				
15	Below 40	12	3.66	0.49	0.83	<	2.01	Accept
	Above 40	47	3.53	0.50				
16	Below 40	12	3.33	0.49	0.73	<	2.01	Accept
	Above 40	47	3.48	0.68				
	Grand Mean				**1.19**	<	**2.01**	**Accept**

In Table 4, 6 out of the 8 items were accepted because their individual calculated-t values were less than the critical-t value. Item 12 and 14 were rejected because the calculated-t values were greater than the critical-t values. However, the grand mean of the calculated-t value of 1.19 was less than the critical-value of 2.01. Null hypothesis 2 was accepted that, there is no significance difference in the mean attitudes of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on age.

Discussion of Findings

In Table 1, was revealed that, male respondents have the mean of 2.7801 and the standard deviation of 0.6075 while the females have the mean of 2.7291 and the standard deviation of 0.6281. This results did not show a pronounce difference between the male and female respondents. It was concluded that, both male and female respondents have positive attitude towards learning new technology. The finding agreed with Sa'ari et al. (2014) that, most teachers possess positive attitudes towards IT.

Similarly, Table 3 revealed that, all the items were accepted because the individual calculated-t values were less than the critical-t value. Also, the grand mean of the calculated-t value (0.85) was less than the critical-t value (2.01). Null hypothesis 1 was accepted that, there is no significance difference in the mean attitudes of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on gender. The findings is in contrast with Cifuentes-Rojas et al. (2019) who found that, most teachers (male and female) seem to possess poor attitude towards learning how to use and apply technology. The finding agreed with Kilinç et al. (2018) that, teachers whether male or female have positive beliefs and attitudes toward the use of technology. The positive attitude demonstrated by the respondents is a clear indication that Business Educators have the willingness to develop themselves and live up to the demands of the digital era.

Table 2 revealed that, the mean and standard deviation of respondents below the ages of 40 were 3.5208 and 0.4963. Similarly, that of those above 40 years were 3.4813 and 0.5026 respectively. This indicated that both age groups have positive attitudes towards learning new technology. However, respondents below the ages of 40 have a bit stronger positive attitude than their counterparts. The finding is in line with Ainen et al, (2021) that, older professionals often showed weak skills, but they also recognised the need for professional development in using digital technologies.

In Table 4, the grand mean of the calculated-t value of 1.19 was less than the critical-value of 2.009. Null hypothesis 2 was accepted that, there is no significance difference in the mean attitudes of Business Educators towards learning new technology based on age. The findings supports Keržič et al. (2018) that, age is not a factor in instructional ICT learning, although some age-related differences appear in teachers' personal ICT uses. The finding emphasis that learning is a continuous process from birth to the grave. No one is too young or too old to learn.

Conclusion

Lifelong learning involves the integration of formal, non-formal, and informal learning to continuously develop one's ability to function effectively in a task as well as upon the quality of life. Lifelong learning is an escape route from redundancy, and a smooth path to grabbing opportunities. Equipping oneself with the ability to adapt to changes in one's environment is very important. Most especially in adapting to suit the digital era, where digital literacy has become a survival skill needed virtually for everything. In education for instance, teaching and learning have taken technological dimension. For the teachers to be effective in their jobs, they most have digital competencies. This paper assessed the lifelong learning attitude of Business Educators in the digital era and found that, the tendency to learn new technology is not based on gender or age.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

1. Both male and female Business Educators should feel comfortable with adapting to new technology.
2. School management should encourage both young and older teachers to learn new technological skills to improve job performance.

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