

CURRICULUM REFORMS IN BUSINESS EDUCATION: THE ICT IMPERATIVE FOR TEACHING EFFICIENCY IN NIGERIA'S JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

BY

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Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate the ICT component of Curriculum reform and the effect of computer skills on effective teaching of business studies in JSS in Akamkpa Educational zone. To aid the study, three research questions were developed and tested, with review of relevant literature. Survey design that covered Akamkpa Educational Zone, and random sample method was adopted to draw a sample size of 100 respondents the questionnaire was the instruments used for the data collection. A questionnaire with 19 structural items designed by the researchers was used for data collection. The instrument was face-validated by three experts in the department of curriculum and teaching, college of Education, Akamkpa. Cronbach's Alpha method was used in determining the reliability of the instrument and a correlation coefficient index of 0.87 was obtained; mean and standard deviation was used in analyzing the data used in answering the research question, the findings of the study revealed that computer skills enhance the teaching of business studies and also the performance of students. The findings further established that ICT is a reliable teaching tool and teachers need the skills to connect basic computer components for lesson delivery. It was recommended that ICT should be introduced early enough to the students and government should provide schools with computers and their accessories; also periodic training of teachers to upgrade their computer skills should also be instituted.

Keywords: Curriculum Reform, Business Education, ICT, Teaching Efficiency.

Introduction

Rapid advances in information communication technology which involves computer skills have provided new learning and teaching methods. This has been the case for the teaching of business studies over the years, especially when the Nigeria Education and Research Development Council (NERDC) introduced ICT component of a modern curriculum into the secondary school system.

With more advancement and increasing demand however, the Nigerian business studies curriculum needs more use of technology, computer skills and an examination of methods of delivering instruction. Research literature for the past decade has shown that computer skills can enhance literacy development, impact language acquisition, provide greater access to

information, support learning, motivate student's and enhance their self esteem. Ohara, Pritchard & Bacon (2014), West, (2002). Indeed researchers have affirmed that computer technology provides abundant opportunities for student's to build or modify their personal knowledge through rich experiences that computer skills affords (Wikipedia, 2009).

Information and communication technology (ICT) is an umbrella term that include any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on as well as the various application associated with them such as video conferencing and e-learning. It can also be seen as a revolution that involves the use of computers, projectors, internet and other

telecommunication techniques in every aspect of human life (Ajiase 2014). It is in this context that this research is anchored and hence computer skills and ICT skills would be used synonymously.

Computer skills have immense impact on teaching and learning of business studies because technology has changed the way people live, work and learn. The traditional methods of teaching business studies are no longer able to meet the needs of today's learners, new technologies provide opportunities including the ability to tailor learning with various individuals which is why the use of technology in education is one of the main challenges of the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) (Falobi 2014).

Business studies as an academic subject helps student's to be exposed to the realities of business practices. The subject is designed to introduce student's to the foundational knowledge of the principles and practices of business. Okute (2008) opined that business studies is a fundamental subject which has to do with acquisition, allocation and application of wealth. These objectives can therefore ' be achieved through teachers effectiveness who are the implementers of the curriculum.

Computer skills and its usefulness in the teaching/learning process

Due to the increasing interest in introducing innovations such as information and communication technology (ICT) into the teaching and learning of business studies in junior secondary 9 schools, Daniels (2002) explained that the use of ICT in the educative process has been divided into two broad categories; these are ICTs for education and ICTs in education. ICTs for education refers to the

developm specifically for teaching and learning purposes, while the ICTs in education involves the adoption of general components of ICTs in the teaching and learning process.

According to Effiong (2003), efficient instructional delivery in Business Studies as envisaged by the curriculum would require skilled teachers and use of ICT tools, computer skills in the teaching of business studies and in the schools curriculum depends highly on the teachers who will use ICT to teach the students. This requires that teachers should have the ability to incorporate IC into teaching and learning.

Okereke (2008) also emphasized that application of ICT to teaching and learning makes instructions more effective and productive, in this regard, computer skills are viewed as innovations that enable business studies teachers facilitate teaching and learning of business studies.

Business studies is an academic subject that help student's to be exposed to realities of business practices. The subjects is designed to introduce students to the foundational knowledge of the principles and practices of business. Osuala (2004) stated that business studies help the student's to make informed decisions in the everyday business of living. Obi (2005) explained that business studies prepares student's for business career or enable those in that career to become more efficient and advance to higher business positions. It is in view of the importance of business studies to the student's that the teachers need computer skills to enable them incorporate the use of ICT in the teaching of the subject. Skill is a persons ability to perform a given task as a result of training and practice. Skills, as viewed by Soanes (2001), is the ability to do something well especially, as a result of

long practice. Obi (2005) defined skill as manual dexterity acquired through repetitive performance of operations. Osinem and Nwaoji (2005) stated that skill is proficiency displayed by someone in the performance of a given task. Therefore computer skills in the ability required by business studies teachers for effective instructions to junior secondary school student's in Akamkpa Educational Zone.

The new curriculum therefore contain some components of ICT skills such as computer appreciation, word processing, use of internet and data processing which were absent in the old curriculum of business studies. The researcher however observed that most business studies teachers in Akamkpa Educational Zone have some difficulties in teaching the ICT components of the curriculum. The present business studies teachers are those that were trained and had been working in the school system many years ago particularly before the introduction of modern technologies in teaching and learning of business studies. This suggest that the training they received seems to be irrelevant to the present curriculum because of the technological changes taking place in work places where the students will find themselves after graduation Ademiluyi (2007) observed that this inefficiency by business studies teachers in imparting ICT skills to junior secondary school students is responsible for their inability to do well in the work place and that most business studies student's do not have the ability to succeed in private enterprise.

The researcher observed further that many junior secondary school student's after graduation find it difficult to establish and manage small businesses particularly those who had no opportunity for further training. Olufemi and Onyenu (2010) affirmed that the influence of technologies has rendered manual skills

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~~needs for new sophisticated skills. Therefore, it is~~
very necessary to determine ICT skills needed by business studies teachers for effective instruction in junior secondary schools in Akamkpa Educational Zone. The ICT skills needed of the teachers will however depend on their perception for the use of the ICT skills in teaching and learning of business studies.

A teacher is an individual who is trained in pedagogy and content of a particular subject to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes to student's in an institution. According to Olaitan, Alaribe and Nwobu (2009), a teacher is a person who communicates knowledge, skills and attitudes to someone in a school. Okute and Agomus (2010) noted that a teacher is a facilitator of learning, who helps student's to realize their full potential educationally, emotionally and socially in career selection and transition. Garba and Dambe (2007) similarly defined a teacher as one who possesses practical and theoretical knowledge of his vocation, has clear understanding of the student's he teaches and ensures that he increases the knowledge of his field at all times. He is someone who is trained in pedagogical areas of business education and is charged with the responsibilities of imparting knowledge, skills and attitude of business studies to student's in junior secondary schools.

Business studies teachers perception of the use of ICT is very important to both teacher and student's. The ability to impart the skills on the students depends on how the teacher embraces new technologies brought about by ICT (Ademiliyi, (2007). The researcher noted that business studies teachers in Akamkpa Educational Zone are still obsessed with the old order as only very few are open to the

innovations of ICT skills. It is therefore incumbent on the business studies teachers to be open minded to the new ICT components so that they can impart same to the student's.

Statement of the problem

In line with the government adoption of 9-years universal basic education (UBE), the realigned curriculum had restructured business studies subject to conform with need to provide students with knowledge and skills for gainful employment upon completion of their studies, while at the same time preparing them to set up their small businesses as entrepreneurs. Furthermore, by creating awareness on how to be better consumers and knowing their rights Nigeria Educational Research Development Council (NERDEC) (2012). Business studies as a subject with restructured and realigned curriculum taking cognizance of the need to provide student's with the knowledge and skills to be gainfully employed upon completion of their study as well as to prepare them for setting up their small businesses as entrepreneurs by creating awareness on how to be a better consumer and knowing the right of the consumers NERDEC (2012).

The old curriculum is being systematically phased out in line with global best practice and national concern for producing the best in teaching performance, achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in compliance with the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS). However an unresolved and very important problem is: does computer skills make a difference in the performance of business student's in junior secondary schools in Akamkpa Educational Zone? This is the problem addressed by this research.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to determine how computer skills could enhance the teaching of business studies and improve performance in junior secondary schools in Akamkpa Educational Zone. Specifically the study attempted to achieve the following objectives:

1. The extent computer skills benefit the teaching and learning of business studies.
2. The students and teachers perception of utilization of computer skills in business studies instructional delivery.
3. Computer skills needed by business studies teachers for effective instructional delivery.

Research questions

Based on the specific purposes of the study, the following research questions were raised:

1. To what extent has computer skills been applied in the teaching and learning of business studies
2. What are teachers and students perception of utilization of computer skills in business studies instructional delivery
3. Why are the computer skills needed by business studies teacher for effective instructional delivery.

Significance of the study

The study will be of immense importance in the following ways

1. The study will be of immense importance in the study of computer skills.
2. It will provide awareness needed by the government to carry out her roles in providing ICT infrastructural materials and also train and retrain teachers
3. It will also add to existing knowledge on the relevance of computer skills in the teaching of business studies.

Methodology

The research design used for this study is a survey design to investigate the effect of computer skills on effective teaching of business studies in junior secondary schools in Akamkpa Educational Zone, this method was adopted because it allows the use of questionnaire to collect data from a given population.

Area of the study

This study was conducted in five junior secondary schools of Akamkpa Educational zone of Cross River State. Akamkpa Local government area is one of the eighteen.

The choice of Akamkpa Local government is apt due to vast array of natural resources, its agrarian occupational culture and fast rising population skill-short school leavers who if well harnessed could take maximum advantage to engage viable commercial enterprises and their value chain.

It is one of the eighteen (18) Local Government Areas and located in the southern senatorial district of Cross River State. It is bounded on the north by Biase Local Government Area, on the south by Odukpani local government, on the east by the republic of Cameroon and on the west by Akwa Ibom State.

The language spoken is predominantly Ejagham; the Area is blessed with deposits of granites and limestone, which attract industries to the state. The main occupation of the people is farming with a few working in the companies and a few others in the civil service.

Population for the study

The population for the study comprises all the junior secondary schools (JSS) Business studies teachers and students in the sampled schools in

~~only). Akamkpa Local Government Area has~~ fifteen public secondary schools with a population of about eighteen thousand (18,000) student's. According to data from Cross River State Secondary Education Board.

Sample and sampling technique

The sample size for the study is 100. A simple random sampling method was adopted to select five 5 secondary schools among the existing ones in the study area. The same method was used to draw the sample size of one hundred respondents in which twenty 20 were from each school sampled for the study. The respondents are made up of business studies teachers and the student's.

Instrument for data collection

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire based on the research questions formulated for the study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A deals with the personal data of the respondents, while section B is of the statement items indicating Agreed (A) and Disagreed (D).

Method of data collection

A total of one hundred questionnaires were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of the principals of the various schools. The respondents filled the spaces provided and all were returned.

Method of data analysis

The statistical tool used for the study was simple percentage.

Results

Presentation of results

This chapters deals with the analysis of the responses by respondents from the questionnaire

and it was be done based on the research questions formulated for the study.

Research question

1. How adequate is ICT skills component of curriculum for practical skill acquisition among JSS students in Akamkpa?

2. What perception of utilization of computer skills in business studies instructional delivery

3. Why are computer skills needed by business studies teachers for effective instructional delivery

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Research question 1

How adequate is ICT skills component of curriculum for practical skill acquisition among JSS students in Akamkpa?

Data relating to this research question are analyzed and presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings on the adequacy of ICT skills component of JSS curriculum for practical skills acquisition among JSS students

S/N	ICT skill components	X	SD	Remarks
1	ability to conduct internet search	1.62	.46	Adequate
2	ability to upload information	1.90	.77	Adequate
3	ability to send mails	2.00	.93	Adequate
4	ability to log in to website	1.95	.54	Adequate
5	ability to log out of website	1.93	.87	Adequate
6	ability to download information	1.95	.66	Adequate
7	ability to format worksheet	1.22	.90	Not Adequate
8	ability to organize data	1.56	.66	Adequate
9	ability to create chart in worksheet	1.13	.52	Not Adequate
10	ability to select text	1.52	.49	Adequate
11	ability to use bullets	1.79	.83	Adequate
12	ability to select font size	1.80	.57	Adequate
13	ability to create table	1.57	.75	Adequate
14	ability to insert table	1.60	.41	Adequate
15	ability to create folders	1.58	.28	Adequate
16	ability to print document	1.36	.94	Not Adequate
17	ability to adjust colour in a text or image	1.10	.81	Not Adequate
18	ability to add sounds and animations to text	1.14	.63	Not Adequate
19	ability to create a hyperlink to a text	0.81	.20	Not Adequate
20	ability to add a script to a webpage	1.07	.51	Not Adequate
21	ability to maintain data security	1.02	.32	Not Adequate

As shown in Table 1, the mean ratings of JSS educators on 13 out of the 21 items fell within the range of 1.50 - 2.00 indicating that the items were rated adequate while remaining eight items fell within the range of 0.50 - 1.49 were rated not

adequate. On the whole, majority of the respondents used in the study agreed that ICT skills component of JSS curriculum is adequate for practical skills acquisition among JSS students. The standard deviation of all the items

on ICT skills component of JSS curriculum for practical skills acquisition range from 0.20 to

0.93 showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

Research Question 2

What are the teacher's and students perception of utilization of computer skills in business studies instructional delivery

Data relating to this research question are analyzed and presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Respondents' mean ratings on the adequacy of keyboarding skills component of JSS curriculum for practical skills acquisition among JSS students

S/N	keyboarding skill components	X	SD	Remarks
22	ability to prepare layout of business letters	1.98	.39	Not Adequate
23	ability to type office correspondence at 35 wpm	2.00	.84	Not Adequate
24	ability to type office correspondence at 50 wpm	1.73	.38	Not Adequate
25	ability to type office correspondence at 60 wpm	1.15	.72	Not Adequate
26	ability to prepare memo	2.00	.64	Not Adequate
27	ability to maintain sitting and fingering positions	1.86	.41	Adequate
28	ability to use various paper size	1.92	.80	Adequate
29	ability to apply correction signs	2.00	.56	Not Adequate
30	ability to apply printers' signs and abbreviation	1.77	.69	Not Adequate
31	ability to display tabular work appropriately	1.14	.47	Not Adequate

As shown in Table 2, the mean ratings of JSS educators on two out of the 10 items fell within the range of 1.50 - 2.00 indicating that the items were rated adequate while remaining eight items fell within the range of 0.50 - 1.49 were rated not adequate. On the whole, majority of the respondents used in the study agreed that keyboarding skills component of JSS curriculum

is not adequate for practical skills acquisition among JSS students. The standard deviation of all the items on keyboarding skills component of JSS curriculum for practical skills acquisition range from 0.38 to 0.84 showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

Research Question 3

Why are computer skills needed by business studies teachers for effective instructional delivery

Data relating to this research question are analyzed and presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Respondents' mean ratings on the adequacy of shorthand skills component of JSS curriculum for practical skills acquisition among JSS students

S/N	shorthand skill components	X	SP	Remarks
1	ability to take minutes of meeting in shorthand	1.03	.29	Not Adequate
2	ability to take office correspondence in shorthand	0.75	.33	Not Adequate
3	ability to transcribe dictations accurately	1.14	.61	Not Adequate
4	ability to write in short forms and contractions	1.89	.42	Adequate
5	ability to take dictations accurately	1.66	.29	Adequate
6	ability to take dictation speedily	1.06	.38	Not Adequate
7	ability to transcribe in suffixes	1.12	.40	Not Adequate

8	ability to transcribe dictations in prefixes	1.20	.66	Not Adequate
9	ability to take down words in diphthongs	1.18	.52	Not Adequate
10	ability to take down words in loops and circles	1.22	.78	Not Adequate
11	ability to transcribe dictations in hooks and curves	1.26	.47	Not Adequate

As shown in Table 3, the mean ratings of JSS educators on two out of the 11 items fell within the range of 1.50 - 2.00 indicating that the items were rated adequate while remaining nine items fell within the range of 0.50 - 1.49 were rated not adequate. On the whole, majority of the respondents used in the study agreed that shorthand skills component of JSS curriculum is not adequate for practical skills acquisition among JSS students. The standard deviation of all the items on shorthand skills component of JSS curriculum for practical skills acquisition range from 0.29 to 0.78 showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

Testing of Hypotheses

Discussion of results

The outcome of the study revealed that computer skills enhance teaching of business subjects and rated ICT skills as adequate for practical skills acquisition among junior secondary school students in Akamkpa Educational Zone. The finding were in agreement with Okoye and Agbolor (2014) which reported that ICT based instruction in business studies curriculum was meant to make business graduates relevant in present day enterprise environment. Also, the finding of the study is in line with Esene (2014) finding that business studies curriculum fulfilled the requirement of ICT which makes Junior Secondary School graduates cope with challenges of work place. Also, business studies teachers based on their location did not differ significantly in their mean rating on ICT as a reliable tool for instructional delivery in Junior Secondary School classes. This finding supports the discovery of Ernest (2010) that computer skilled teachers shared the same view that

business studies curriculum is concerned with production of graduates which can quickly access data or information, process, disseminate, store and retrieve for enhanced enterprise operations.

Finding of the study revealed that utilization computer skills of business studies, teachers is not adequate for practical skills acquisition among students of Junior secondary schools. The finding of this study corroborated with the finding of Iro (2016) who discovered that the adequacy and utilization computer skills component of business studies curriculum is inadequate of skill acquisition among students. This could be why Ohakwe and Njoku (2009) reported that business studies graduate cannot effectively apply ICT packages in the work place. Buttressing this finding, Olawole (2013) posited that business studies teachers agreed that there is need to enrich business curriculum by adding and teaching modern skill subjects so that the job prospect for business graduates could be enhanced.

The essence of this study is to find out the effect of computer skills on effective teaching of business studies in junior secondary schools (JSS) in Akamkpa Educational Zone. The result of the study show that there exist a significant 24 relationship between computer skills and effective teaching of business studies in JSS in Akamkpa Educational Zone.

In research questions one which was designed to find out the extent of computer skills usefulness to the teaching and learning of business studies; 67.3% of the respondents agreed that computer skills is beneficial to the teaching and learning of business studies in JSS. However, 33.7% of the respondents totally disagreed.

In research questions two designed to investigate the perception of respondents on computer skills as it affects the teaching and learning of business studies in JSS in Akamkpa Educational Zone. The findings show that 62.7% of the respondents have a good perception of computer skills on the effective teaching of business studies in JSS in Akamkpa Educational Zone.

Research question three sought to investigate the computer skills need by teachers for effective teaching of business studies in JSS in Akamkpa Educational Zone. 64.7% of respondents agreed that teachers need special skills in certain areas for effective teaching of business areas for business studies in JSS in Akamkpa Educational Zone, nevertheless, 35.3% of respondents have a different view and disagreed completely.

Finding

The data from the respondents was appropriately analyzed to investigate the effect of computer skills on effective teaching of business studies in Junior Secondary Schools in the Akamkpa Zone and the findings reveal that:

1. Computer skills enhance the teaching of business studies
2. Performance in business Studies improved due to computer skills
3. Interactions between teachers and student's improved.
4. Lessons became more interesting
5. Classroom management improved
6. ICT is a reliable teaching aid
7. Teachers need skills to connect basic computers

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, Business studies curriculum is enriched with ICT skills but found

teachers less skilled in the application and utilization of ICT facilities to enhance instructional delivery. Hence the research concluded that JSS business studies graduates cannot have successful impact in the workforce when basic and advanced skills relevant to their professional growth in business and enterprises practice are not embedded in business studies curriculum and the teachers trained and equipped in the right use relevant ICT tools to promote effective instructional delivery to foundation classes of Junior Secondary School.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should promote policies that will accelerate acquisition of computer skills to enhance capacity of teachers to deliver lessons in business subjects.
2. Teachers should be trained periodically to upgrade their computer skills in line with current trends.
3. Government should provide schools with computers and accessories to enhance learning and applications
4. ICT should be introduced early enough to students to enable them appreciate the subject and kindle their passion

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