

## ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BUSINESS EDUCATION TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS IN POST COVID-19 ERA

**Adewole, Edward Gbadebo**  
Business Education Department  
Federal College of Education (Special)  
Oyo, Oyo State  
*adewoleeg2016@gmail.com*

### Abstract

*Covid 19 pandemic has led to serious distortions of academic activities worldwide. Different approaches by nations to contain the spread of the disease through lockdown and restrictions of movement compelled educational institutions to adopt digital technologies for teaching and learning to continue. As a result, educational units including business education need to develop appropriate strategies to mitigate the effects of covid 19 on learning and re-engineer their process for better performance in post covid 19 era. This paper examines the effects of covid 19 on Nigerian education sector. It posits that the post covid 19 business education should be re-modelled to surmount the challenges posed by covid 19 pandemic. The paper suggests strategies that could be adopted to ensure the effectiveness of business education teaching and learning process in post covid-19 era. It recommends adoption of new technologies in the teaching and learning of business education, and provision of adequate digital learning equipment in business schools among others.*

**Keywords:** *Business Education, Post Covid 19 era, Teaching, Learning, Effectiveness.*

### Introduction

The outbreak of Covid 19 pandemic has affected almost all countries of the world. This pandemic ravaged most countries of the world having adverse effects on economic, social and political life of human beings. Countries around the world put in place different measures to curtail the spread of the virus. Such measures include social distancing, handwashing, wearing of face masks among others. To ensure compliance with these rules, lockdown and stay at home strategies have been adopted to flatten the curve and contain the transmission of the disease (Sintema, 2020). Restrictions of movement led to closure of schools and offices. Primary, post-primary and higher institutions have discontinued face-to-face teaching and learning while most of the schools remain under lock and key. This situation has particularly been of a great challenge to the education system across the world. COVID-19 posed serious consequences for students by depriving them of their fundamental rights to education and exposing them to the risks of child labour, early

marriage, exploitation, and poor academic abilities (Baytiyeh, 2018). The Educational sector has never witnessed such disruption in a colossal manner before (UNESCO, 2020a). UNESCO (2020a) confirmed that, over 1.5 billion students globally which represents 87% of the global student population, were deprived of education. More worrisome is the threat of extended closures which paved way for the need to rethink traditional teaching (UNESCO, 2020b).

The COVID-19 further exposed the worsening educational sector of Nigeria and provided the need to improve on the system which serves as the only panacea to the public amidst coronavirus pandemic. Business education as unit of the overall Nigerian education sector is not spared of the negative effects of covid 19 pandemic. In order to overcome the challenges posed by the wild disease, educational institutions must be resilient and find new ways to continue with teaching- learning activities (Chang-Richards, Vargo, & Seville, 2013). Consequently, there is a need to enhance the effectiveness of business education teaching and learning processes in post covid 19 era to achieve its mission and objectives.

### **Concept of Business Education**

Business education is a part of vocational education that prepares its beneficiary for the world of work. According to Ugwuogo, (2013) business education is a form of vocational education directed towards developing the learner to become productive in teaching, paid employment and self-employment. Ubulom and Enyoghasim (2012) described business education as an aspect of educational process, which provides an individual with the pedagogical and business competencies necessary for teaching of business concepts, knowledge, attitudes, and skills for personal use as an employee or employer and for participation as a business teacher.

Atakpa (2011) defined business education as an embodiment of vocational knowledge and skills needed for employment and advancement in various business careers. Also, Okoro (2013) submitted that business education is that part of the total educational process that provides the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes needed to perform in the business world as a producer and/or consumer. Furthermore, business education includes education for office occupation, distribution and marketing occupation, business, teaching, administration and economic understanding.

Okoye (2013) viewed business education as an education program that orientate students in: art of business making (marketing), typing and shorthand skills (currently competing with computer appreciation and operation), service delivery, secretarial jobs, stenography, account clerking, office information system and management. Business education prepares beneficiaries for gainful employment and sustainable livelihood. It plays significant role in the economic development by providing knowledge and skills to the learners, thereby, enabling them to adequately impart knowledge to others, and handle sophisticated office technologies and information systems (Amoor, 2010). It could be deduced from the various definitions that the effectiveness of business education is paramount to the economic development of any nation.

### **Objectives of Business Education**

According to the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (2017), business education has the following objectives:

- i. Vocational objectives relate specifically to the preparation of students for initial employment, upgrading existing skills and retraining in related business office occupation.
- ii. The exploratory objectives aimed primarily at the middle grades and early high school and this provides opportunities for students to gain information about business.
- iii. The occupational intelligence objectives recognize that all citizens should have an intelligent understanding of the various areas of work in which they can earn a living.
- iv. The economic understanding objective is related to developing economic literacy in all citizens.
- v. The consumer education objective serves a dual role: it promotes both the discriminating use of the services and resources by consumers and corresponding understanding of the consumer viewpoint and how best to serve the consumer.
- vi. The personal use objectives relate to those business courses designed to prepare students for proper execution of their personal business affairs.
- vii. The college preparation objectives recognize that high schools have an obligation to provide background preparation in business as well as to develop skills that provide students with the tools to cope more effectively with college demands

The goal of business education is primarily to produce competent, skillful and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work. Its primary aim is the preparation of people for roles in enterprises such employee, entrepreneur and employer.

### **Covid-19 Pandemic and Nigerian Educational System**

Covid 19 pandemic took the whole world by surprise including Nigeria. The sudden outbreak of the deadly and a highly contagious virus called COVID-19 overwhelmed the entire world such that World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a public health emergency of international concern (Anake, Aloye, Achuen, & Egbe, 2020). The educational sector was largely affected as the imposition of lockdown became prominent in containing the virus.

The school time tables and schedules have changed, and at the resumption of the school after the lockdown, so many grounds need to be covered for the educational system of Nigeria to be able to conform with the global educational standard. Facilities in schools have been underutilized during lockdown, some might have developed faults as a result of not been used for a long period of time. As a result of the Covid-19 social distancing efforts, there has been a large-scale transition to online learning ([Govindarajan & Srivastava, 2020](#)).

The outbreak of the corona virus coupled with the lockdown of schools at various levels of education in Nigeria has served as test for the education technology interventions for teaching-learning activities. According to Dhawan (2020), there was an overnight shift from conventional classrooms into digital learning in order to tackle the conditions and adapt to the changing situations (Akther, 2020). Embracing digital learning prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was more of a choice due to the fact that the digital world was increasingly penetrating the educational domain with technology gradually being used to teach and learn (Nwachukwu, Ugwu, & Wogu 2021). These days, technology adoption is a necessity.

However, there is digital infrastructural backwardness and unpreparedness in most developing nations' educational sectors including Nigeria. This has made it difficult for them achieve continuing education through digital modalities. In fact, learning has become an activity that can be carried out irrespective of time and places amidst the pandemic, with the support of digital tools. (Fullan, 2013 and Hammond, 2013) submitted that this situation provides an opportunity to improve standards, contribute to knowledge-based economies, enrich learning potentials, facilitate personalized learning and in all, transform pedagogy to make it more student-centered in line with the global standard. The challenges posed by covid-19 pandemic requires all educational institutions to develop new strategies for achieving their goals and objectives.

### **Strategies for Enhancing Effectiveness of Business Education in Post Covid-19 Era**

The fallout from covid-19 pandemic indicates that every unit of education must develop appropriate strategies to survive and wax stronger in teaching and learning endeavor. The use of digital technology is a must step in this direction. Onyesom and Utoware (2012) asserted that the emergence of new technologies in teaching and learning has revolutionized the entire education system. However, most teaching and learning in business education is still being done manually. This situation should not continue in a post-covid 19 era due to the immense benefits of digital technology.

The use of digital technologies for learning has generated a lot interest for many years. Portable and lightweight digital devices have liberated learning from being restricted to fixed and predetermined locations. This has really changed the ways that knowledge circulates within societies. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, interest in mobile learning technologies has grown exponentially. Onyesom (2014) reported that the penetrating influence of new technologies has impacted on the quality and quantity of teaching, learning and research in conventional and distance education system as a result of its quantum benefits. The pandemic affords us an opportunity to create a strong virtual global education program (Whalen, 2020). Hence, embracing digital learning is a necessity. In addition, business educators in covid-19 era must be abreast with the use of digital technologies for improved performance towards realizing the goals and objectives of business education.

Furthermore, UNESCO (2020), submitted that post covid-19 educational institutions need to embrace the following strategies:

- i. The formidable tool of digital technology that enables communication, collaboration and learning across distance must be used as a source of innovation and expanded potentials.
- ii. Educational systems should be capable of valuing their teachers and giving them the conditions for autonomous and collaborative work.
- iii. Teachers must fully assume their role as knowledge enablers and pedagogic guides not to apply ready-made technologies or pre-prepared didactics,
- iv. The move to emergency remote teaching due to Covid-19 provides a discontinuous disruption to business-as-usual.

In line with the foregoing, [Norris and Lefrere \(2011\)](#) identify five stages that educational institutions need to undergo to excel in online learning. *They are: unbundling and re-inventing teaching, learning, assessment and certification; focusing on value, not just quality; changing the use and roles of faculty, mentors and peer-to-peer learning; and transforming business models by: continuously seeking new income streams that can mitigate the need to continuously increase tuition to fill revenue gaps, reducing operational overhead (i.e. new buildings, parking lots, dorms) and other costs, seeking lower price points and; enabling more rapid completion of learning objectives, and reducing the total cost of achieving learning goals.*

Moreover, business education departments must device means of personalizing learning. They should be able to pinpoint the learning needs of the student. Students of business education should be trained to become problem solvers through ethical inquiry and artificial intelligence (AI) ([Letheren, Russell-Bennett, & Whittaker, 2020](#)). The school must realise that the future is not simply about what the answers are but about what problems we wish to solve, given what we know. AI-enabled career planning and management will allow students to receive personalized guidance on how to imagine their professional life.

## Conclusion

The emergence of covid 19 pandemic has brought a remarkable challenge to business education delivery. Effective business education in a post covid 19 era should be remodeled through adoption of the discussed strategies for it to be responsive to skills and knowledge needs of students. Digital learning is fundamental to the survival of any education sector in the new learning order. To supply the world market ravaged by covid-19 pandemic with needed human resources, teaching and learning require appropriate re-modelling to produce versatile and dynamic workforce.

## Recommendations

In order to make business education more effective in this post covid 19 era, the following recommendations were made:

1. Business Education department must embrace new technologies in teaching and learning process.

2. Adequate digital learning equipment should be provided by relevant agencies for business education departments
3. Learning content of business schools should be reviewed by the Ministry of Education to include new skills for students to be relevant and employable in post-covid 19 era.
4. Efforts must be made by different business schools to encourage the use of new technologies by students.
5. Infrastructural facilities should be expanded by the government and proprietors of institutions to accommodate safe teachers' - students' interaction.

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