

Business Education Software Applications for Instructional Delivery among Business Education Lecturers in Universities

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Abstract

The paper reviews business education software applications for instructional delivery among business education lecturers in universities in Nigeria. The paper considers the three software applications of the three areas/options of business education which include; accounting, marketing and office technology management software applications. The findings of the review indicated that accounting, marketing and office technology management software applications can be utilized for business education instructional delivery with the aim of inculcating the competencies of these software applications to students who are prospective employees in the business world. It was also found that there is an existing gap between current business practice and business education instructional delivery. The paper concluded that there is need to determine the present training needs of business education lecturers in the usage of accounting software applications, marketing software applications and office technology management software applications in order to have an effective and efficient utilization of these applications for instructional delivery as well as bridge the existing gaps between current business practice and business education instructions.

Key Words: Software Application, Instructional Delivery, Business Education Lecturers

Introduction

Business education was seen as one of the educational training programmes which comprises of knowledge, skills, abilities, competencies, capabilities, structural activities as well as other structural experiences and competencies acquired formally through either on-the-job or off-the-job, which has the capability of improving recipients' opportunities of securing jobs in different sectors of the economy or enabling them to be self-reliant (Ekaette & Edet, 2016). Therefore, business education is the inculcation of relevant competencies needed by individuals to enable them not to only teach business concepts, beliefs, ideas, knowledge and skills but also be able to perform effectively and efficiently in the business world. There are three broad areas/options in business education which include accounting, marketing and office technology management as indicated in Figure 1.

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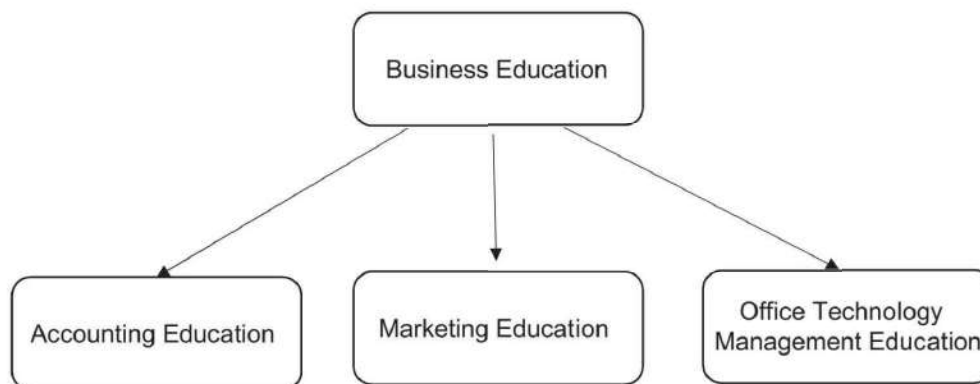


Figure 1: Broad Options/Areas of Business Education Programme

In spite of the paradigm shift in ICT and the complexity attached to globalization, business education lecturers need adequate and effective training and development in order to meet the demands of the present society (Adanne & Adizi, 2018). The emergence of modern technologies such as computers and its software applications has become an indispensable tool for business education's instructional delivery and therefore the need for training business educators in this respect is inevitable (Okanazu et al., 2017). This assertion is in line with the recommendation of Ugwoke et al., (2018) encouraging the need for the teaching of computers in business education with the view to equipping the business education students with the necessary ICT skills upon graduation.

As a competency based educational programme, business education relies on modern technologies to some extent (Chukwuemeka & Igbenedion, 2017). That is why Ajunwo (2017) recommends that government and other partners in education should provide the necessary ICT facilities in both hardware and software with the view to encourage their utilization in business education's instructional delivery. Despite the fact that Ajunwo (2017) asserted that utilization of computer software applications in instructional delivery has contributed significantly in simplifying and executing teaching and learning processes, business education lecturers have not utilized accounting, marketing and office technology management software applications for instructional delivery.

Despite government commitment in the production of a reliable business education graduate, there are various criticisms that current business education graduates in Nigeria are incompetent in the usage of modern technologies (Nwokocha, 2015). The authors further stressed that presently, business education lecturers were faced with the challenge of integrating and utilizing ICT facilities for instructional delivery in such a way that enhanced their students' academic performance (Nwokocha, 2015). This challenge can be overcome through training them for effective service delivery. Even though there is a paradigm shift in business education's instructional delivery in tertiary institutions with regards to the application of emerging technologies (Okanazu et al., 2017), but there are various issues hindering the smooth utilization of the emerging technologies among business educators as opined by Okanazu et al. (2017) stating that most of the business education lecturers in tertiary institutions of learning lack the needed competencies necessary in meeting up with the emerging technology for instructional delivery. Hence the need for ascertaining the required competencies of utilizing software applications for instructional delivery among business education lecturers becomes imperative as concurred by Agbo (2018) who stated that business education lecturers are highly instrumental to the integration of ICT driven education in Nigeria.

Similarly, in conformity with the assertion of Otonko (2012) who concluded that one of the contributions of university education in Nigeria is facilitating the effective industrialization of the economy through the provision of competent human resources with adequate managerial, technical and professional skills. This contribution can only be sustained through training and retraining of university lecturers most especially business education lecturers who are the drivers in the provision of effective man power that will manage the economy. Based on this background, this paper reviews accounting, marketing and office technology management software applications for business education lecturers' instructional delivery in Nigerian universities.

Accounting Software Applications for Business Education Lecturers' Instructional Delivery

Accounting refers to the systematic process of identifying, recording and communicating all economic events of an organization (business or nonbusiness) to interested users of the information (Weygandt et al., 1998). In his contribution, Ahmed (2014) states that accounting was defined by The Committee on Terminology of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants as "the art of recording, classifying and summarizing in a significant manner and in terms of money, transactions and events which are in part at least, of a financial character, and interpreting the results thereof". Also Eze (2014) asserts that accounting is a generic terminology that covers both bookkeeping and accounting aspects of an economic entity, it provides quantitative financial reports about an economic entity for both internal and external users in making decisions.

Accounting software applications are the various application software packages that record, organize and process accounting transactions with reference to the functional accounting modules such as accounts receivables, accounts payable, general ledger, journal, trial balance and payroll among others. These include: Peachtree, QuickBooks, Accounting Xpert, LedgerLite, Traverse, Receipt Bank, Mr Accounting, Invoice2go, Sage Business Cloud Accounting, Crunch Accounting, Oracle Financial Cloud, Close Management Software, Accounting by Wave, Clear Books, Busy Accounting Software, Cashflow Manager, Invoice Quickly, SlickPie, DAC Easy, PACIOLI 2000, SMACC, Cashbook Complete, Accounter, MS-Money Manager, Kashflow and many others as indicated in Figure 2 (Nazif, et al., 2016; Onyeka, 2006).



Figure 2: Examples of Accounting Software Applications

Source: Basnayaka (2016).

Emerging trends in the current business environment have caused a paradigm shift in the roles of financial accountants from traditional function of users of information to additional roles of evaluators, designers and managers of information systems (Tudor et al., 2013). This is because of the rapid change necessitated by the emergence of ICT. As technology continuously changes the businesses that are conducted, the incorporation of ICT in the teaching and learning of financial accounting remains sacrosanct as accounting future graduates will be required to provide various services that are based on software applications in the world of work (Tudor et al., 2013). In the same vein, the use of software applications remains one of the modern ways of financial accounting instruction in recent time thereby facilitating the attainment of various goals of teaching and learning (Dimitrios et al., 2013). Previous literature has affirmed that by utilizing accounting software applications in instructional delivery an emerging and promising learning environment is created which offers an alternative means in teaching and learning of accounting courses (Nazif et al., 2016; Dimitrios et al., 2013). But the sole or excessive use of software applications in teaching financial accounting can be detrimental to the students' in-depth understanding of the fundamentals of accounting most especially to students that lack sound theoretical background of the subject (Dimitrios et al., 2013). This clearly indicates that software applications should be used to supplement the present conventional teaching strategies with the view to bridge the gaps between theory and practice in the world of work.

In the same vein, empirical evidence has proved that utilization of accounting software applications in instructional delivery among lecturers has a positive impact on students' performance (Osuola & Adukwu, 2013; Nazif, et al., 2016). They therefore stressed the need for business education lecturers most especially those teaching financial accounting to possess the required competencies necessary for effective utilization of software applications in teaching of financial accounting. However, Connell et al. (2011) argued that even though using accounting software in instructional delivery might improve the students' academic score but its over reliance might potentially block the students' learning outcome in grasping and understanding basic accounting concepts and procedures. This challenge can be ameliorated by balancing in the usage of the software by the lecturers in instructional delivery as suggested by Nazif et al. (2016).

Marketing Software Applications for Business Education Lecturers' Instructional Delivery

Marketing is a process aimed at determining what products or services will interest a customer (Assad & Gomez, 2011). In the words of Kotler (2003) marketing "is the art of creating genuine customer value and the art of helping your customers to become better off". Marketing is a managerial and social process by which individuals and organizations obtain what they want and need through creating and exchanging value with others (Kotler & Armstrong, 2013). However, the impact of ICTs on the marketing sector has revolutionized the way marketers analyze, measure and respond to marketing activities (Echegaray & Gacia-Martin, 2019). This is in line with the assertion of Gonzalez-Fuentes (2016) who asserts that as a result of a paradigm shift in ICT in the past two decades, marketers were prompted to a change in marketing focus, strategy and competencies. The author further stressed that there is need for new marketing competencies as a result of the rise in "tradigital marketing" whereby marketers were provided with opportunities to utilize social media, internet of things, data mining and artificial intelligence in order for their businesses to meet up with the challenges of the 21st century.

The advent of the internet has brought about a paradigm shift in marketing not only changing the nature of a business and its market, but also transforming the way they relate to each other (Haig, 2001).

Similarly, marketing through the use of software applications remained the fastest growing type of direct marketing as a result of excessive use of the internet technology whereby marketers and buyers can easily come into contact (Armstrong & Kotler, 2011), this new technological breakthrough has dramatically changed marketing strategies and practices to meet the present needs of today's world. Today, there is a proliferation of marketing activities online, a lot of companies deal with their customers via their various websites with the use of marketing software applications, hence the need for business education students to be conversant with the usage of marketing software applications since they are the future marketers. This prompted the need for constant identification of a blend of competencies that will develop marketing graduates into competent marketing professionals (Walker et al., 2009). In the same vein, universities and other educational institutions are under constant pressure from their students and employers of labor to equip graduates with the relevant skills and capabilities required for the present world of work (McCulloch, 2008).

Marketing software applications are the various software packages that assist business organizations successfully execute sales promotion campaigns, reach their target customers or markets and successfully convert leads into sales. These include: Marketo, Hub Spot, Sailthru, Vocus, Yesware, Optimove, Infusionsoft, Demandbase, LocalVox, WordStream, Trello, Salesforce, Campaigner, Campaign Monitor, Mandrill, Autopilot, Pardot, Google Ads, Asana, Bing Ads, Taboola, Domo, Cvent, Event Farm, Clear Voice, Contently and many others (Vroutas, 2020). The most widely used marketing software is *Marketo* which is designed to assist business organizations in assessing and automating their marketing tasks through working with various digital channels which include; mobile devices, websites, email and search advertisements (Tech Target, 2018). One of the software's important features is its ability in tracking email links to assist a user to gauge the levels of engagement and the user can add the Branded Tracking Link(s) in order for spam filters to see the consistency between the links and user domain (Hill, 2012).

Similarly, with *Marketo* software a lot of features are in place which include; lead nurturing, lead scoring, campaign analysis, digital advertisement, website personalization, CRM integration and social marketing (Tech Target, 2018). Figure 3 indicates the sample menu for leads scoring in *Marketo*. The software also records the behavior of customers such as; customers' usage of the site, the time spent on the site, what was viewed on the site, and the time and date the customer visited the site (Tech Target, 2018). Using *Marketo* software applications for instructional delivery by business education lecturers can go a long way in bridging the existing gaps between current marketing practices and present instructional delivery in business education programmes in Nigerian universities.

However, Royle and Laing (2013) reiterated the need for collaboration between educational institutions and the industries. In the same vein, Echegaray & Gacia-Martin (2019) have indicated that lack of correspondence between marketing curriculum and present marketing requirements is a matter of serious concern. This means that the present marketing students' competencies did not correspond to the prevailing marketing practices. Therefore, the need to keep the students abreast with the new marketing competencies required by the present business environment remains imperative. In achieving that, there is need for training business education lecturers on some of the marketing software applications with the view to making them up-to-date in imparting the needed competencies to their students

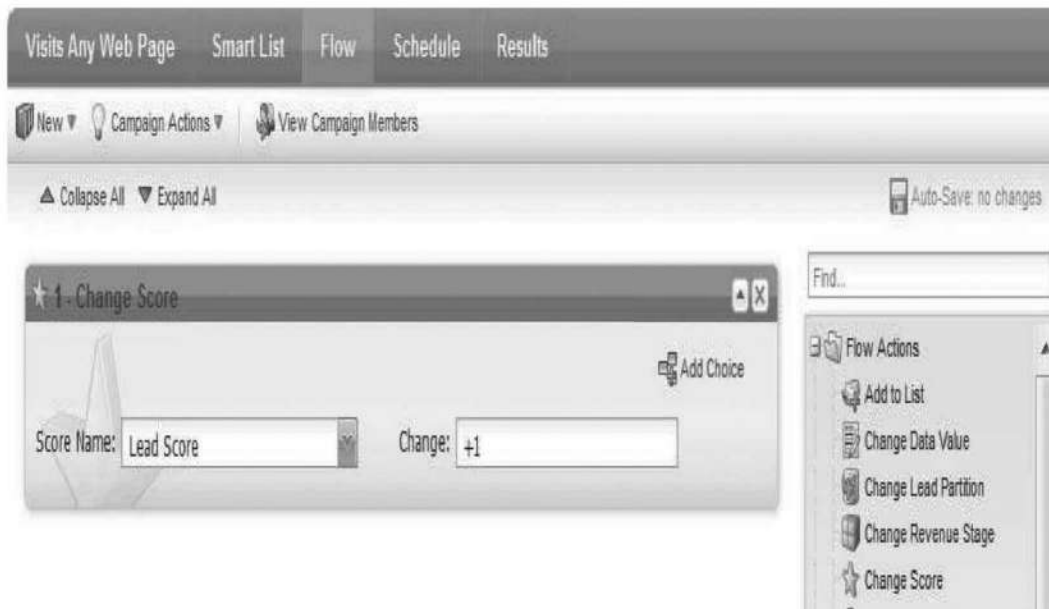


Figure 3: A Sample of Marketo's Lead Scoring Menu

Source: Marketo (2012).

Office Technology Management Software Applications for Business Education Lecturers' Instructional Delivery

Office technology management (OTM) refers to a branch of business education that prepares students to engage into teaching and office occupations as well as become capable and intelligent members of the present modern office (Ukata, 2019). The OTM programme was designed to provide graduates who are well equipped with relevant office and secretarial competencies necessary for effectively managing today's electronic-driven office. However, provision of modern office technologies to business education lecturers particularly those who specialized in OTM remain sacrosanct (Chukwuemeka & Igbinedion, 2017). If this assertion is achieved, training the lecturers with the needed competencies for using these technologies becomes imperative. Also, when the business education graduates lack the basic competencies needed for utilizing modern office technologies, employment opportunities become dim and consequently leads to persistent mobility of business educators to other areas with less comparative advantage (Chukwuemeka & Igbinedion, 2017). Therefore, the need for equipping the prospective graduates (students) with the required knowledge and skills necessary for effective utilization of the modern office technologies is inevitable. In the same vein, Sani (2015) suggests that there is need for making office managers up-to-date on the present developments in office technology and therefore require relevant training in order to remain relevant in the world of work. This suggestion can best be achieved through training the lecturers on effective utilization of modern office technologies as recommended by various studies (Ukata, 2019; Chukwuemeka & Igbinedion, 2017). The modern office technologies include office technology management software applications.

Office technology management (OTM) software applications are the various software packages used in modern offices which aid recording and filing of documents, scheduling meetings, receiving guests and

many more. These include: Bitrix24, Dialpad, Robin, Slack, Envoy Visitors, Kisi, Zoom, Comfy, OpenKM Document and many others (Lang, 2018). However, these software applications and many others can be utilized by business education lecturers in teaching OTM courses with the view to bridging the gap between the current OTM graduates' competencies with regards to the modern office and the present office requirements. In achieving the above assertion, there is a need for training the lecturers in that respect. In order to have a successful training of the lecturers, there is need to ascertain their present competency level with regards to the utilization of OTM software applications for effective and efficient instructional delivery.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the prevailing gaps existing between current business practice and the instructional delivery in educational institutions as reported by various studies, there is a need for bridging the gaps through training of business education lecturers on the effective and efficient utilization of accounting, marketing and office technology management software applications for instructional delivery. To achieve this, there is a need for ascertaining the present training needs of business education lecturers with regards to the usage of these software applications in order to have a successful training programme. This will in turn acquaint their students with the relevant knowledge and skills for effective and efficient utilization of accounting, marketing and office technology management software applications in their future endeavour thereby bridging the existing gaps between current business practice and business education instructional delivery.

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