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**Covid-19 Pandemic for Restructuring of Business Education Programme in Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The main focus of this paper was to examine the COVID-19 pandemic for the restructuring of business education programme in Nigeria. Many definitions of business education have been proposed by various authors. The objectives of business education as stated in the National Policy on Education were elucidated. The paper discussed four areas of skills in business education, which include accounting skills, office management skills, computer/secretariat skills, and marketing skills. ClassDojo, Edmodo, Moodle classroom Google Classroom, Adaptive E-learning, Schoology, and simulation computer-based learning were extensively discussed as modern technology plat forms that could be used for teaching and learning. These platforms do not need a physical laboratory for practicals, but they create forums for practicals, questions, answers, and proper interactions as would be in the physical laboratory in the school environment. Specifically, the Social Constructionist pyramid was used to demonstrate students' learning in percentage, as seen in the Moodle Digital Tool. Restructuring and its benefits in business education programs were shown. Social Constructionist pedagogy and blended learning were explained in the study. A conclusion was drawn that the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown school period could be managed as a normal school period with the use of the Moodle Digital tool, and this could be applicable to the Business Education Programme. One suggestion, among others, was that private, public secondary schools and universities should adopt and install Moodle classroom as a modern technology platform for the restructuring of business education programmes in Nigeria. One of the recommendations made was that the federal, state, and local governments should help to install the different digital platforms in schools to enable students to have a free-flowing learning environment for theory and practical.*

**KEYWORDS: COVID-19 Pandemic, Business Education, Moodle Classroom, Restructuring, Skills.**

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**INTRODUCTION**

COVID-19 pandemic has influenced educational programmes in Nigeria. COVID-19 is a type of communicable respiratory disease caused by a new strain virus that causes illness in humans. Education is the foundation for a country's economic, industrial and human development. Notably, COVID-19 Pandemic has shattered and disrupted educational programme in Nigeria including Business Education Progname. Therefore, there is need to restructure Business Education programme in Nigeria so as to revamp its standard after

COVID- 19 experience. Since, COVID-19 pandemic has made it impossible to operate physical classroom where lecturers interact with students physically and practicals in an organized laboratory. Hence, it has become necessary to restructure Business Education programme. Restructuring of Business Education programme entails the act of organizing the programme in a new way to make it operates more effectively. It involves the adoption of new strategies for achievement of Business Education goals. Business Education is a skill oriented programme that requires both theory and intensive practicals for competency and skills acquisition at graduation. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt different digital tools where different platforms will be used for lecturing and practicals. Business education is an aspect of vocational education which deals with skills (Usoro, 2016).

Accordingly, Usen, Offiong, and Essien (2020) explained the concept of business education as a programme of studies that seeks to create awareness in different business occupations. Business education helps to prepare the youth to work in business, be consumers of goods and services, better citizens, quality business teachers, and acquire different skills in business. Business education, as stated by Goddy-Mkpa, Akpan, and Okon (2020), is an integral part of vocational education aimed at producing citizens who are self-reliant in society. Business education is a field of study that imparts knowledge, skills, and competences to its recipients, enabling employability and advancement in office careers and in running personal businesses. With these benefits, it is necessary to restructure business education programme in order to continuously enjoy the aforementioned benefits.

The National Policy on Education (2014) reiterated Business Education as being a conglomerate of courses/subjects that are concerned with the acquisition of skills, development and inculcation of the proper values for the survival of the individual and the society, the development of the intellectual capacities of the individual to understand and appreciate business environments, the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills, which will enable individuals to develop into useful members to the community, the acquisition of an objective of local and external environments. Business Education has the following objectives:

1. To provide the business knowledge and vocational skills necessary for industrial, commercial, and economic development.
2. To provide trained manpower in applied technology and commerce, particularly at sub-professional grades.
3. To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of economic and environmental problems for the use and convenience of mankind.
4. To enable our young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology (NPE, 2014).

### **Business Education as a Skill Programme**

As stated by Olise (2016), business education is a utilitarian and skill-oriented education that develops competences, attitudes, habits, leadership and citizenship required in business management and in private and public organizations. In line with this, Usoro, Akpan, Udo, and Usen (2020) defined business education as an educational programme which involves skills acquisition, knowledge, and competences that help the individual to become proficient

at graduation. Hence, business education creates a platform for the acquisition and development of various skills that cut across the three domains of learning (cognitive, psychomotor, and affective). When harnessed, these skills will be more relevant at different points in one's life. Thus, the business education programme includes accounting education, office management education, secretariat/computer education, and marketing education, among others. This programme prepares undergraduate students to acquire skills like accounting skills, office management skills, secretariat/computer skills, and marketing skills. In this work, these four areas mentioned above will be the focus for discussion.

- (a) **Accounting Skills:** These are skills emerging from an accounting education programme. Accounting skills, according to Usoro (2016), include, among other things, bookkeeping skills, ledger posting skills, bank reconciliation skills, imprest management skills, data analysis skills, financial reporting skills, auditing skills, cost analysis skills, financial management skills, vouchering skills, stock analysis skills, tax computation skills, and tax assessment skills.
- (b) **Office Management Skills:** This is another umbrella skill that includes skills such as record management, equipment handling, equipment maintenance, office design, client management, and human relations.
- (c) **Computer/Secretariat Skills:** This has the following skills: filing skills, indexing skills, keyboarding skills, word processing skills, editing skills, corel drawing skills, data management skills, data manipulation skills, spread sheets, power point presentations, and publisher.

As asserted by Usoro (2016), marketing skills as asserted by Usoro (2016) have the following skills: product development skill, product identification skill, pricing skill, product branding skill, product distribution skill, labeling skill, product placement skill, product packing skill, advertising skill, public relations skill, sales promotion skill, personal selling skill, direct marketing skill, merchandizing skill, retailing skill, among others. These are different skills that can be used effectively in business.

### **Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on Business Education Programme**

The Business Education programme focuses deeply on skills acquisition, which needs practical in the laboratory. The closure of schools as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible for lecturers to have lectures, give assignments, hold practical classes in the laboratory, do supervision of projects and conduct examinations in the school. During the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, many students were left stranded and frustrated while at home. Students could not have an interactive classroom where they could have the forum to ask questions and get answers/clarifications from their lecturers, do their project defense, or have access to the library for term paper work and do assignments. This unpleasant experience could result in half-baked graduates at graduation, which could flood the labour market without skills and lead to increased unemployment in Nigeria. It has an adverse effect on the industry and the training institution. In order to remedy this dreadful situation, there is a need to restructure the Business Education programme through the utilization of digital tools.

## Digital Tools for Restructuring

Digital learning is replacing traditional education methods whereby the lecturers and students interact in the classroom and have physical contact with each other. COVID-19 has brought about a drastic change in the classroom, and it is best for the education sector to think about newer lecturing and learning techniques based on digital learning tools and technologies. The inclusion of digital learning in the classroom could vary from simply using tablets and paper to using elaborate software programs and equipment. Digital learning, as asserted by Usoro, Usoro and Usoro (2020), empowers students by getting them to be more interested in learning and expanding their cognitive reasoning and skills. Digital learning tools and technology enable students to develop effective self-directed learning skills. They are able to identify what they need to learn, find and use online resources, apply the information to the problem at hand, and evaluate the resultant feedback (Panworld, 2017). In order to be able to bring restructuring to business education, certain digital tools as noted by Usoro, Usoro and Usoro (2020) need to be put in place which the lecturers would use, which include but are not limited to: Class Dojo, Edmodo, Google Classroom, Adaptive E-Learning, Schoology, Simulation computer-based can be utilized.

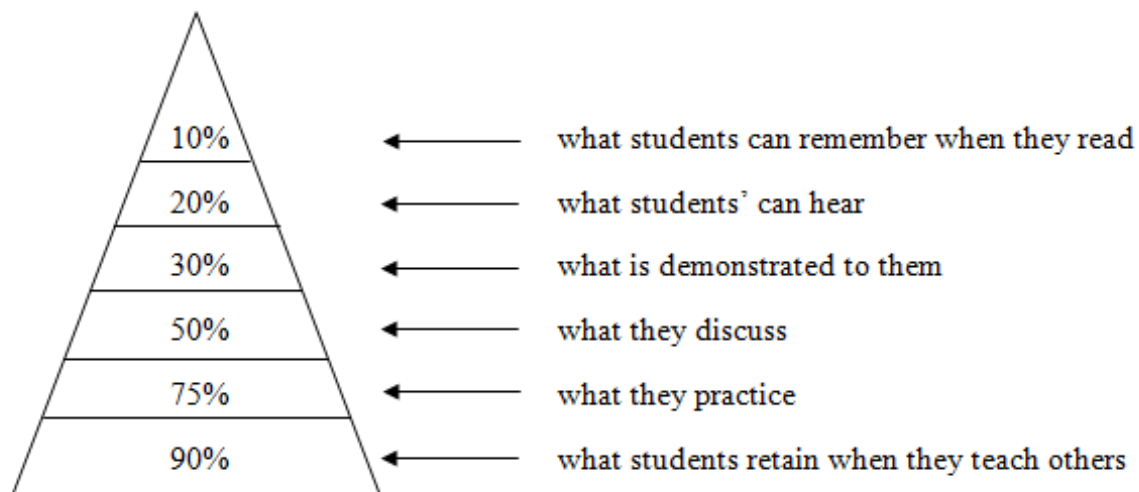
- (a) **Class Dojo:** This is a digital tool that connects school lecturers and students through communication features such as a feed for photos and videos from the school day and messaging that can be translated into more than 35 languages and has been used in more than 180 countries (Bharti, 2014). It enables lecturers to note feedback on students' skills and create a portfolio for students so that families can be aware of school activities outside of meetings with lecturers. Another digital tool that could be used for the restructuring of the Business Education programme during COVID-19 is the Edmodo platform.
- (b) **Edmodo:** is a tool for communicating and sharing classroom content. Tools and resources to manage classrooms and engage students remotely, offering a variety of languages. This is an educational technology company offering a communication, collaboration, and coaching platform to students, schools, and lecturers (Empson, 2013). The Edmodo network enables lecturers to share content, distribute quizzes and assignments, and manage communication with students, colleagues, and parents. It is lecturer-centric in its design and philosophy. Students can join when they are invited by the lecturers.
- (c) **Google Classroom:** This is a platform that helps classes connect remotely, communicate, and stay organized. It is a free web service developed by Google for schools that aims to simplify the process of creating, distributing, and grading assignments. It integrates docs, sheets, slides, Gmail, and calendar into a cohesive platform to manage student and lecturer communication. When using Google Classroom, students can be invited to join a class through a private code, or be automatically imported from a school domain. Lecturers can create, distribute, and mark assignments all within the Google ecosystem. Lecturers can monitor the progress of each student by receiving the revision history of a document, and after being graded, lecturers can return the work along with comments. Kerr (2014) wrote that Google Classroom ties Google Drive, Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides together to help educational institutions go paperless.

- (d) **Adaptive E-Learning:** Adaptive e-learning is a new and innovative type of e-learning that makes it possible to adapt and redesign learning materials for each individual learner. Taking a number of parameters such as student performance, goals, abilities, skills, and characteristics into consideration, adaptive e-learning tools allow education to become more individualized and student-centered than ever before. When done correctly, this could mean a new era for business education programme restructuring.
- (e) **Schoology:** Schoology is a tool to support instruction, learning, grading, collaboration, and assessment. Schoology is a social networking service and virtual learning environment for higher education institutions that allows users to create, manage, and share academic content. Also known as a Learning Management System (LMS) or Course Management System (CMS), the cloud-based platform provides the tools needed to manage an online classroom. It can help lecturers contact students with homework and more. Here, Conte (2011) wrote that lecturers can utilize this platform to manage students, manage the assignments, calendar, and add new assignments. The services of Schoology include attendance records, online grade books, tests and quizzes, and homework drop boxes. According to Moran (2010), social media features facilitate collaboration among students, groups, or schools. This system can also be integrated with existing school reporting and information systems and provides the security filters and support that schools require.
- (f) **Simulation Computer-based Learning:** This method integrates cognitive, technical and behavioral skills into environment where learners believe the setting is real, act as they would responding in the field and feel safe to make mistakes for the purpose of learning from them. Simulations are instructional scenarios where the learner is placed in a ‘world’ defined by the lecturers. They represent a reality within which students interact. Here, the lecturer controls the parameters of this ‘world’ and uses it to achieve the needed skills. Even though simulation-based learning is not a technology, the instructional package(s) can be prepared and use computer for demonstration with a virtual classroom. This will enable students to be connected from different locations for lessons.

### **Application of Moodle Classroom for Restructuring of Business Education Programme**

Moodle is a free and open-source learning management system. Moodle is used for blended learning, distance education, flipped classrooms, and other e-learning projects in schools, universities, workplaces, and other sectors. In Moodle, the features are carefully chosen to support the philosophy of learning called social constructionist pedagogy.

## Students' Learning Pyramid in percentage (Social Constructionist Pedagogy)



Source: Researcher (2020)

### Social Constructionist Pedagogy

Social constructionist pedagogy as used in Moodle is a sociological theory of knowledge according to which human development is socially situated and knowledge is constructed through interaction with others. The social constructionist pedagogy is based on four principles. These are;

1. Students acquire new knowledge as they interact with their environment, course activities and other students.
2. Students learn more when they construct learning activities for others.
3. When students become part of the culture they are constantly learning.
4. Some students try to remain objective and factual. It allows students to choose whichever approach is more appropriate

### General Features of Moodle Classroom

1. Modern, easy to use interface
2. Personalized dashboard
3. Collaborative tools and activities
4. All-in-one calendar
5. Convenient file management
6. Simple and intuitive text editor
7. Notifications

## Restructuring of Business Education Programme with Moodle Digital Approach

Restructuring of the Business Education Programme can be done with the application of Moodle Classroom. This digital tool uses a blended learning method (both traditional and electronic). Blended learning is a style of education in which students learn via electronic and online media as well as traditional face-to-face teaching methods (place-based classroom). It is an approach to education that combines online educational materials with opportunities. A combination with computer-mediated activities regarding content and delivery. In this regard, the business education programme can be restructured through content and delivery. Here, using blended learning as adopted by Moodle, students on the Business Education programme could be reached at home. Since the normal course content could be prepared to address basic knowledge of the course with more practical application for skill acquisition, since business education is a programme that is skill-oriented, instructional delivery could be through electronic teaching. This practice could help meet the learner at an appropriate location during the OVID-19 pandemic period. The Moodle digital approach is suitable for restructuring the Business Education programme because it considers six major issues:

1. It takes care of content of the Business Education programme.
2. It uses both traditional and electronic learning (blended learning).
3. It can be used for ordinary school period and during COVID-19 pandemic (lockdown) period.
4. Students can be reached at their different locations hence they cannot miss classes.
5. Practical for the course can be demonstrated using electronic approach.
6. Moodle adapt philosophy of learning (social constructionist pedagogy) hence give the learners opportunity to interact with other students, teach others and learn more (90%) as shown in the pyramid.

## Benefits of Restructuring Business Education Programme with Digital tools

The following benefits could be derived:

1. The available digitals tools help to create virtual learning environment where learning both theory and practical could take place including business education programme.
2. Restructuring Business Education programme with digital tools will create environment where learners can be met wherever they are for lessons and interactions.
3. It enables the Lecturers to get feedback as they would in the traditional classroom.
4. It enables schools activities/learning to be ongoing despite any lockdown.
5. With regards to Business Education programme as a skill oriented programme, practicals can be arranged as often as need arise for competency.
6. It creates room for students to be well prepared to acquire the needed skill at graduation.
7. It helps students to graduate at the proper time.

## **CONCLUSION**

Many countries suffered the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and Nigeria was not left out. For many months, schools at all levels were on lockdown, and students were at home without learning. The restructuring of the Business Education programme at a period like this is a welcome development. Restructuring involves the adoption and installation of different digital learning tools in schools so as to have ongoing lectures at all times. It is the application of different digital tools such as Class Dojo, Edmodo, Google Classroom, Schoology, among others, to an area of operation. Here, Moodle digital tool was selected for restructuring of Business Education Programme because it uses Blended Learning which include traditional and electronic approaches which could be utilized during lockdown and ordinary period. Additionally, the Moodle digital tool could help to meet students at their different locations and enable students to go on with their studies. Also, it has been observed that the adoption of Moodle tool with Social Constructionist learning style could be of immense benefit to the students.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Federal, State, and local governments should help to install the different digital platforms in schools to enable students to have a free-flowing learning environment for theory and practical.
2. Philanthropic organizations should build computer labs in schools to help students learn.
3. Private, public, secondary schools and universities should adopt the Moodle learning approach for blended learning for students.



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