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Challenges to and Prospects of the Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Into The Business Education Programme in Selected Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study was carried out to determine the challenges to and prospects of the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the business education programme in selected universities in Cross River State. Two specific objectives, two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Descriptive survey research design was used. The population of study comprised 46 business educators from the selected universities. The entire population was used due to its manageable size. Data were collected using a four-point rating scale (questionnaire) designed by the researchers. The instrument contains 16 items were arranged in two clusters. Cluster 1 is on Challenges to effective integration of AI and cluster 2 is on the Prospects of effective integration of AI into business education programme. The questionnaire was validated by two research experts, and tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha reliability formula which produced a coefficient of 0.88. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, and t-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings from the study indicate that there are challenges to the effective integration of AI into business education Programme in the selected universities in Cross River State. The challenges include inadequate technological infrastructure; inadequate funding; lack of sufficient retraining of the teachers; resistance to change; unreliable internet connectivity; lack of clear policy framework, among others. Responses also show that the integration of AI into business education programmes will enhance teaching quality, improve learning outcomes, foster innovation, and boost student engagement among others. Based on these findings, it was recommended that universities offering Business Education should, among other things, prioritize investment in the necessary technological infrastructure such as reliable internet access, AI-driven tools, and appropriate hardware and software to support effective integration of AI into the Business Education programme.*

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), business education programmes, challenges, integration and prospect.

INTRODUCTION

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into educational systems globally has emerged as a transformative approach, aimed enhancing teaching, learning, and administrative processes in the education sector. AI technologies offer significant opportunities for improving educational processes and outcomes through personalizing learning experiences, automating routine tasks, and fostering innovation (Adesina, 2023). AI-driven tools can enable educational systems to better adapt to individual students' learning speeds, provide instant feedback, and assist educators in identifying knowledge gaps. However, despite its vast potential, the adoption of AI in Nigeria's educational sector remains limited due to various challenges, particularly within Business Education programmes. This study, therefore, focuses on determining the challenges to and prospects of the integration of AI into Business Education programmes.Globally, AI has been recognized as a tool capable of revolutionizing education by addressing inefficiencies and introducing innovative learning solutions (Adesina, 2023). The ability of AI to automate administrative tasks and streamline content delivery presents enormous potential to improve the educational experience; including offering personalized instruction (Zhang et al., 2021). Despite these benefits, the implementation of AI technologies in Nigeria may face significant barriers such as inadequate technological infrastructure, insufficient funding, resistance to change among stakeholders, and the lack of properly trained educators (Obi & Akpan, 2022). These challenges are particularly evident in specialized fields like Business Education, where curricula must regularly evolve to align with global trends and market demands, emphasizing the need to address both infrastructural and human resource gaps.

Business Education, as a critical academic discipline, equips students with the skills and knowledge essential for entrepreneurial ventures and corporate success. Integrating AI into this field offers opportunities to enhance the curriculum, promote innovative teaching methods, and improve administrative efficiency (Effiom, 2021). For example, AI applications like automated test administration and grading, plagiarism detection and virtual tutors can significantly reduce educators' workloads while improving the quality of the education students receive (Nwosu & Itah, 2023). However, some universities in Cross River State are struggling to adopt AI. As such, this study focused on determining the challenges to and prospects of integrating AI into the Business Education programmes in the state.

The findings are expected to contribute significantly to the academic discourse on adoption and integration of AI in education, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria, and provide practical recommendations for overcoming challenges related to AI integration in Business Education programmes. These insights will be valuable to policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders working to transform Nigeria's educational landscape.

Further examination of gender dynamics in AI adoption within educational settings reveals that gender can influence attitudes toward technology. Rahman (2022) found that men tended to be more confident in engaging with AI and technological tools due to societal encouragement and greater exposure to technology-related disciplines. In contrast, women in educational settings often focus on more collaborative, student-centred AI applications, while men emphasize efficiency and data-driven outcomes (Zhang, 2021). These gender differences suggest that AI integration strategies should account for diverse preferences and engagement levels across genders. Such an approach would help ensure

that both male and female educators participate in and benefit equally from AI technologies integrated into the education process.

Some studies have indicated that the gender gap in technology adoption is gradually narrowing. Akpa and Etim (2023) are of the view that initiatives aimed at increasing digital literacy among women, particularly in academic institutions, have played a crucial role in reducing barriers to technology adoption. They assert that, with equal access to resources and training, both genders are equally capable of demonstrating proficiency in using AI technologies. This finding points to the potential for creating a more inclusive environment for AI adoption, where gender does not limit the willingness or ability to engage with new technological tools.

The effective integration of AI into Business Education Programmes presents both significant challenges and promising prospects. Various studies have highlighted these challenges. Smith and Johnson (2020) identified inadequate technological infrastructure, high costs of AI tools, and limited training opportunities for educators as major barriers to AI adoption in higher education institutions. Similarly, Adams and Okafor (2022) found that resistance to change among faculty members and the lack of clear policy frameworks further hinder AI integration in Business Education. Brown and Chen (2024) emphasized the high costs of AI tools and unreliable internet connectivity as primary challenges, particularly in less developed regions like Asia and Africa. Okechukwu (2023) also revealed that lack of training for educators and outdated curricula are key obstacles to the effective adoption of AI in Nigerian business education programmes.

Despite these challenges, the prospects of AI integration are widely recognized. Taylor and Ahmad (2021) found that AI-driven tools have the potential to enhance curriculum delivery, administrative efficiency, and offer personalized learning experiences. Wang and Smith (2022) highlighted that AI fosters innovative teaching methods, improving student engagement and academic performance. Patel and Ahmed (2023) further noted that AI tools, such as automated grading, reduce educators' workload and improve institutional efficiency. Garcia and Johnson (2024) added that AI facilitates personalized learning experiences, improving student outcomes and enhancing institutional competitiveness. These findings underscore AI's transformative potential in Business Education, despite the barriers that must be addressed for successful integration.

In addition to gender, the type of institution, whether public or private, may influence AI adoption. Private institutions often possess greater resources and flexibility, which enable them to acquire and use advanced technologies like AI more quickly (Okoro & Nwafor, 2023). In contrast, public universities face challenges such as limited funding, outdated infrastructure, and bureaucratic hurdles, which can delay AI integration (Ekong, 2022). However, studies have shown that public institutions can overcome these challenges by engaging in strategic partnerships and securing targeted funding. Johnson and Peters (2022) highlighted successful AI pilot programmes in public universities funded by government grants and international collaborations, suggesting that public institutions can rival private universities in AI integration when provided with the right support.

The intersection between gender and institutional type further complicates AI adoption in education. Research by Olayemi (2023) found that female educators in public universities face compounded challenges, such as limited access to resources and societal biases that discourage active participation

in technology adoption. Male educators in private universities, however, tend to benefit from both institutional support and societal expectations favouring technology engagement. This disparity underscores the need for targeted interventions to promote more equitable AI adoption. For instance, offering gender-inclusive training programmes and developing policies to bridge resource gaps between public and private institutions would help ensure that all educators—regardless of gender or institutional affiliation—are equally equipped to integrate AI into their teaching. These findings highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to AI integration that considers both gender dynamics and institutional factors. By addressing these variables, the study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the challenges and prospects of AI adoption in Business Education.

Statement of the Problem

The integration of AI in business education holds great promise for improving learning outcomes and providing students with necessary skills to thrive in the constantly evolving corporate landscape. AI will be a relief to business educators from strenuous activities in business education programmes and as an innovative way of instructional delivery to ensure student acquisition of adequate technological skills needed in modern offices, industries and business. Although promising, the use of AI in Nigerian universities, especially in Cross River State, has not been feasible. Though, many scholars have emphasized the need for application of AI tools in teaching and learning, yet the effective application of AI in business education programme is still unrealistic in Nigeria especially in Cross River State. Therefore, this study aimed at determining the challenges to and the prospects of the integration of AI into business education programme.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the challenges to and prospects of integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into Business Education Programmes in selected universities in Cross River State. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. The challenges to the effective integration of AI into Business Education programmes.
2 The prospects of effectively integrating AI into Business Education programmes.

Research Questions

Based on the purpose of the study, the following research questions were asked to guide the study.

1. What are the challenges to the effective integration of AI into Business Education programmes?
2. What are the prospects of effective integration of AI into Business Education programmes.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses have been formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female respondents on the challenges to effective integration of AI into Business Education programmes.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of respondents in Federal and State universities on the prospects of effective integration of AI into Business Education programmes.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. Survey designs are effective for gathering information about the characteristics, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and behaviour of

individuals. This design was deemed appropriate for the study as it would allow the researcher to gather the opinions of respondents regarding the integration of AI into Business Education programmes. The study was conducted in Cross River State, using 48 Business Education lecturers, 32 from the University of Calabar and 16 from University of Cross River State. This population is made up of 31 male lecturers and 17 female lecturers. All the 48 members of the population participated in the study. Data was collected using a questionnaire titled "Challenges to and Prospects of the Integration of AI into Business Education Programmes. The questionnaire is a four-point rating scale with 16 items. To ensure the validity of the instrument, it was validated by three research experts. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha formula which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.88. A total of 48 copies of the questionnaire were administered and successfully collected from the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used for the data analysis to ensure accuracy.

RESULTS

Research question 1

What are the challenges to the effective integration of AI into Business Education Programmes?
Data collected to answer the research question is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean responses on the challenges to the effective integration of AI into Business Education Programmes. N=48

S/N	Items Statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Inadequate technological infrastructure.	3.68	0.62	SA
2	Inadequate funding	3.85	0.72	SA
3	Lack of sufficient training for educators.	3.68	0.54	SA
4	Resistance to change among key stakeholders	3.75	0.66	SA
5	Unreliable internet connectivity	3.22	1.05	A
6	High costs of AI technologies	3.70	0.54	SA
7	Absence of clear policy frameworks	3.75	0.59	SA
8	Outdated curricula in Business Education	3.65	0.62	SA
	Grand Mean	**3.66**	**0.67**	SA

***SA= Strongly Agree; A = Agree**

The data presented in Table 1 shows that the respondents agreed with all the items as challenges to the integration of AI into the business Education programmes. These include inadequate technological

infrastructure (Mean = 3.68, SD = 0.62), inadequate funding (Mean = 3.85, SD = 0.72), and insufficient training for educators (Mean = 3.68, SD = 0.54). Resistance to change among stakeholders (Mean = 3.75, SD = 0.66) and unreliable internet connectivity (Mean = 3.22, SD = 1.05) were also highlighted as challenges, with the latter showing higher variability in responses. Additionally, respondents identified the high costs of AI technologies (Mean = 3.70, SD = 0.544), absence of clear policy frameworks (Mean = 3.75, SD = 0.59), and outdated curricula (Mean = 3.65, SD = 0.62) as challenges to AI integration. The overall cluster mean of 3.66 (SD = 0.67) indicates general agreement among respondents that these factors pose substantial challenges. These findings underscore the importance of addressing issues such as technological infrastructure, funding, training of educators, and development of policy framework to enhance the integration of AI in Business Education. The low variability in responses (except for unreliable internet connectivity) reflects a consensus among respondents about the severity of these challenges. Addressing these barriers is essential to unlocking the potential benefits of AI in Business Education Programmes.

Research question 2

What are the prospects of effectively integrating AI into Business Education Programmes?

Data collected to answer the research question is presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Mean responses on the prospects of effective integration of AI into Business Education Programmes in selected universities

S/N	Items Statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
9	AI will enhance curriculum delivery in Business Education.	3.59	0.70	SA
10	AI will foster innovative teaching methods	3.62	0.67	SA
11	AI will enable educators identify and address knowledge gaps in students.	3.48	0.67	SA
12	AI-driven tools, such as automated testing and grading, can reduce educators' workload.	3.52	0.77	SA
13	Integration of AI can improve administrative efficiency in the Business Education programmes.	3.54	0.82	SA
14	Personalized learning experiences can be achieved through AI integration.	3.32	0.94	A
15	AI technology can increase student engagement and academic performance.	3.41	0.96	A
16	Successful integration of AI in Business Education can enhance competitiveness.	3.52	0.71	SA
	Grand Mean	**3.50**	**0.78**	SA

SA= Strongly Agree; A = Agree

Data presented in Table 2 indicates that respondents agree with the prospects of effectively integrating AI into Business Education Programmes in selected universities in Cross River State. The item means, ranging from 3.32 to 3.62, demonstrate consistent agreement on the potential prospects of AI integration. These prospects include personalized learning, innovative teaching methodologies, enhanced curriculum delivery, improved student engagement, administrative efficiency, real-time

feedback mechanisms, and the optimization of educational outcomes. The cluster mean of 3.50 further affirms that respondents perceive significant prospects for AI integration. These results suggest that despite existing challenges, there is a strong belief among stakeholders in the transformative potential of AI to improve teaching and learning processes in Business Education Programmes.

Hypothesis 1
There is no significant difference in the challenges to the effective integration of AI into Business Education Programmes based on gender.

Table 3: t-test analysis of the difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the challenges to effective integration of AI into Business Education Programmes

S/N	Gender	N=48	Mean	Std.	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
1	Male	31	3.83	0.45	46	2.37	2.01	Sig
	Female	17	3.41	0.79				
2	Male	31	3.77	0.49	46	1.40	2.01	Not Sig
	Female	17	3.47	1.00				
3	Male	31	3.65	0.59	46	0.43	2.01	Not Sig
	Female	17	3.72	0.44				
4	Male	31	3.70	0.78	46	0.56	2.01	Not Sig
	Female	17	3.82	0.39				
5	Male	31	3.09	1.16	46	1.17	2.01	Not Sig
	Female	17	3.47	0.79				
6	Male	31	3.70	0.52	46	0.23	2.01	Not Sig
	Female	17	3.70	0.58				
7	Male	31	3.78	0.60	46	0.45	2.01	Not Sig
	Female	17	3.70	0.58				
8	Male	31	3.77	0.71	46	0.23	2.01	Not Sig
	Female	17	3.72	0.44				
	Grand Mean					**0.85**	**2.01**	**Not Sig**

Data presented in Table 3 reveals that there is a significant difference in the mean responses of male and female respondents on item 1 because the calculated-t value 2.37 was greater than the critical-t value of 2.01. The rest of the items showed no significant difference in the mean responses because the calculated-t values are less than the critical-t values. This indicates that gender had no significant influence on the mean responses of the respondents on the challenges to the effective integration of AI into Business Education Programmes in the selected universities in Cross River State.

Hypothesis 2
There is no significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents in federal and state owned universities on the prospects of effective integration of AI into Business Education Programmes in the selected universities in Cross River State based on institutional ownership.

Table 4: t-test analysis of the difference in the mean ratings on the prospects of effective integration of AI into Business Education Programmes based on university ownership type (Federal or State).

S/N	Ownership	N=48	Mean	Std.	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
9	Federal	32	3.56	0.71	46	0.40	2.01	NS
	State	16	3.65	0.70				
10	Federal	32	3.46	0.76	46	2.38	2.01	S
	State	16	3.93	0.25				
11	Federal	32	3.35	0.74	46	1.90	2.01	NS
	State	16	3.73	0.41				
12	Federal	32	3.40	0.87	46	1.47	2.01	NS
	State	16	3.75	0.44				
13	Federal	32	3.40	0.91	46	1.63	2.01	NS
	State	16	3.81	0.54				
14	Federal	32	3.41	0.90	46	1.01	2.01	NS
	State	16	3.12	1.02				
15	Federal	32	3.53	0.80	46	1.16	2.01	NS
	State	16	3.18	1.22				
16	Federal	32	3.34	0.78	46	2.57	2.01	S
	State	16	3.87	0.34				
	Grand Mean					**1.56**	**2.01**	**NS**

Data presented in Table 4 indicate significant differences in the mean response on items 10 and 16 because the calculated-t values 2.38 and 2.57 respectively are greater than the critical-t value of 2.01. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. However, the rest of the items indicated significant differences because the calculated-t values are less than the critical-t values. This indicates that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of respondents in Federal and State on the prospects of effective integration of AI into Business Education programme in selected universities in Cross River State. By implication therefore, the type of institutional ownership (federal or state) had no significant influence on the mean responses of the respondents on the prospects of the integration of AI into the Business Education programmes.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Challenges to Effective Integration of AI into Business Education Programmes

The findings reveal series of significant challenges to the effective integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into Business Education Programmes. These challenges include lack of adequate technological infrastructure, insufficient funding, inadequate training opportunities for educators, resistance to change from various stakeholders, unreliable internet connectivity, high costs associated with AI technologies, absence of clear policy frameworks and outdated curricula.

The lack of technological infrastructure has been highlighted as a major barrier. Educational institutions often lack the necessary hardware and software to support the implementation of AI tools effectively. This is compounded by insufficient funding, which further limits the capacity of institutions to invest in the required technologies and resources for AI integration. Inadequate training for educators is

another significant issue identified in the study. Educators need specialized skills and knowledge to integrate AI tools into their teaching and learning process. The absence of sufficient professional development opportunities for faculty members would restrict their ability to adopt and utilize AI effectively. This concern is consistent with the findings of Okechukwu (2023) which highlighted the critical role training of educators have in ensuring the effective and successful integration of AI in the Nigerian Business Education Programmes.

The study also found that resistance to change among various stakeholders, including educators, administrators and students is a challenge to the effective integration of AI into the Business Education programme. This resistance is often due to a lack of understanding of the benefits of AI, fear of job displacement, or reluctance to adopt new technologies. The findings agree with those of Adams and Okafor (2022), who identified similar resistance to change within academic settings, which hindered the progress of AI integration. Additionally, the absence of clear policy frameworks by governments (federal and state) and educational institutions exacerbates the situation. Without appropriate policy framework guiding the integration of AI into education, efforts to do so would lack direction and coherence.

Another significant challenge identified is the issue of unreliable internet connectivity, which would affect the effective use of AI tools, especially in regions where broadband access is limited or inconsistent. This concern aligns with Brown and Chen's (2024) findings, particularly in developing regions such as Asia and Africa, where the lack of internet connectivity remains a critical barrier to the adoption of digital technologies.

The challenge of outdated curriculum was also identified. Although the Nigeria University Commission (NUC) recently introduced the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard (CCMAS), it failed to incorporate emerging technologies in AI into the Business Education programme, where the curriculum needs to evolve rapidly to keep up with advancements in technology and prepare students for future careers. The study's findings in this area agrees with those of Okechukwu (2023), who emphasized the necessity of updating curricula to reflect the changing technological landscape and equip students with the skills, needed to thrive in an AI-driven world.

Taken together, these findings underscore the importance of addressing these challenges in order to unlock the full potential of AI in Business Education Programmes. To facilitate the successful integration of AI, attention must be given to improving available technological infrastructure or providing new ones. Securing adequate funding; providing comprehensive training for educator; engaging stakeholders; developing clear policies, and revising outdated curriculum are some of the ways of addressing the challenges to the effective integration of AI into the Business Education Programmes in Nigerian universities.

Prospects of Effectively Integrating AI into Business Education Programmes

The prospects of effectively integrating AI into Business Education Programmes were found to be very promising. The findings highlight the potential benefits integrating AI into the Business Education programme such as achieving personalized learning, application of innovative teaching methodologies, enhanced curriculum delivery, improved student engagements, administrative efficiency, real-time feedback mechanisms, and the optimization of educational outcomes. These are consistent with the

findings of various scholars who had explored the role of AI in education. Taylor and Ahmad (2021) stated that AI-driven tools significantly enhanced curriculum delivery, administrative efficiency, and personalized learning experiences. By implication, AI tools have the capacity of transforming both the pedagogical and administrative aspects of Business Education. Through the provision of customized learning experiences, AI would address the diverse needs of students and their teachers. The findings of Taylor and Ahmad highlighted how these technologies create more adaptive and effective learning environments and these are in line with the findings of this study.

The findings also agree with the work of Wang and Smith (2022), that AI fosters innovative teaching methodologies, improves student engagements and consequently student academic performance. Patel and Ahmed (2023) believed that AI-driven tools, such as automated grading systems would help reduce educators' workload, leading to greater instructional and administrative efficiency. This is directly connected to the respondents' recognition of AI's ability to streamline administrative tasks, thereby improving overall operational effectiveness. By alleviating the burden of administrative duties, AI allows educators to focus more on teaching, enhancing the quality of interactions between instructors and students. Furthermore, the findings in Garcia and Johnson (2024), that personalized learning experiences, enabled by AI-driven tools improves student's learning outcomes and enhances institutional competitiveness agree with the finding in this study.

The overall cluster mean further reinforces the belief in the transformative potential of AI in Business Education Programmes. While challenges may exist, the findings suggest that the integration of AI has the prospect of improving the teaching and learning processes. To fully realize these prospects, it is essential for universities to invest in the necessary infrastructure, provide adequate training for both educators and students, and develop policies that support the effective integration of AI technologies. This strategic approach will help universities harness the full potentials of integrating AI in Business Education.

CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the challenges to the integration of AI into Business Education programmes, there is a very high prospect that its integration would be very beneficial to the programme in the universities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:
Universities should make investing in the necessary technological infrastructure including reliable internet access and connectivity, AI-driven tools, and acquisition of appropriate hardware and software their priority. Secondly, comprehensive training and retraining programmes should be organised for teachers to enhance their capacity to use AI tools effectively in their teaching methodologies, and consequently improve student engagements and enhance learning outcomes.
Furthermore, AI should be integrated into the administrative process in Business Education to enhance operational efficiency, reduce the administrative burden on the faculty, and provide more time for interactive student engagements and academic support services.

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