

# Sustainable Digital Business, Management and Entrepreneurship as An Integrated Dimension in The Post-Pandemic Era in Nigeria

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## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on global business, and has accelerated the digital transformation of businesses and societies around the world. In Nigeria, the COVID-19 impact, has further increased sustainability in business process and its management, creating new opportunities for sustainable digital business, management, and entrepreneurship across different industries. Sustainable digital business models explain those that create economic, environmental, and social value, achievable by embedding digital technologies into business models in ways that reduce resource consumption, emissions, and waste. Sustainable digital management explain business management practices that critically considers profitability, and sustainability, achievable through the utilisation of digital technologies to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and mitigate risks. Sustainable digital entrepreneurship entails the process of creating new businesses that are profitable and sustainable, achievable through the development of new products and services that help in addressing both environmental and social in nature, in addition to the using digital technologies to improve the efficiency and sustainability of existing businesses. A systematic literature review is used to identify, examine and evaluate industries that have experienced transformation, due to the COVID pandemic in Nigeria, in order to access new opportunities created and how sustainable they are. In the post-pandemic era, sustainable digital business, management, and entrepreneurship becomes paramount, especially for business that has goals and objectives aligned for success. The combination of these approaches can help businesses to create long-term value, build resilience, and contribute to a more sustainable future

**Keywords:** COVID, Sustainable Digital Business, Sustainable Digital Management, Sustainable Digital Entrepreneurship, Digitalization

## Introduction

The impact and effect of the pandemic was felt across the globe Hossain et al (2023), especially in developing countries such as Nigeria, where there is lack of proper infrastructure

to support Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs), lack of adequate power supplies to power industries, and lack of proper financing schemes to help Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs), especially in a critical period such as the one experienced during the pandemic. One of the key impacts of the pandemic on Nigeria is that it instantly affected the food system in terms of price of food stuff, as well as its production, owing to the fact it had disrupted production (Gain et al., 2021; Hossain et al., 2020). In addition to this, Nigeria faced severe decline in remittance and export demand (Andam et al., 2020).

In the healthcare sector, the demand for personal protective equipment increased and further strained the supply chain, coupled with the fact that healthcare medications delivery were delayed due to the lockdown that was imposed across the nation (Etteh et al., 2020). In addition to this, the lockdown movement further halted transportation systems across the country, making it difficult for healthcare professionals to get to work on time and therefore making their work, as well as services extremely difficult and strenuous (Afolalu et al., 2021). In the educational sector, the total lockdown imposed meant that higher institutions across the country had to be closed down, in order to curtail the spread of Covid, learning was disrupted nationwide (Anyika et al., 2021). The impact of this was to transition to online and remote learning, this further exposed the disparities in access to both learning technology, as well as internet connectivity for students (Jacob et al., 2020). In addition to this, teachers also faced challenges in adapting to new teaching methods, leading to the compromise of the quality of education.

In a nutshell, economic activities were paralysed for a while, affecting almost every industry, this further prompted transition to online and remote work, due to the fact that companies did have a choice than to allow people work from home. In addition to this, lockdown combined with social distancing measures further compelled organisations (Aladejebi, 2020; Amuda, 2020). The impact of this was that E-commerce, telecommuting as well as digital payment platforms witnessed unprecedented growth, coupled with the fact that both digital marketing and E-commerce strategies were largely adopted (UNDP, 2021; Ong et al., 2020). This further gave rise to digital businesses, management and entrepreneurship due to the fact that the impact of pandemic had actually pushed Nigeria businesses to massively embrace technology as well as digital solution (Ariful., 2023; Hossain et al., 2022).

However, for these businesses to be effective to further affect the country's economic landscape, it has to be sustainable. This becomes paramount in order for Nigeria to successfully navigate post-pandemic era.

### **Problem Statement**

A critical examination and evaluation clearly indicates that the impact of pandemic cannot be overemphasized due to the fact that it has forced Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) towards full digitalisation in order for businesses to still operate. This forms the basis for which this research was conducted, the problem statement is to examine and evaluate sustainable digital business, management and entrepreneurship as an integrated dimension in the post-pandemic era. This will further help in understanding how sustainable digital business, management and entrepreneurship can help Nigeria recover from the impact of the pandemic, while creating new opportunities, products and services that help Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria become sustainable.

**Limitations**

Research limitations is a term used to explain the constraints that can affect the reliability, scope and validity of a research study findings. In this research, five main areas can become limitations. First is data availability due to the fact that access to relevant and updated data on post pandemic business practices as well as sustainable efforts was limited. Secondly, rapidly changing landscape also became a constraint due to the fact that post pandemic era is dynamic in nature, with evolving business models as well as strategies, making research findings outdate as quickly as possible. Lastly, ethical and privacy considerations posed a constraint owing to the fact that research that involves digital businesses and entrepreneurship always raise ethical and privacy consideration that are related to data collection and analysis.

**Literature Review**

The COVID 19 Pandemic has been able to spur a paradigm shift in business strategies in Nigeria, which has further facilitated the integration of both sustainability, and digitalisation across Nigeria. In this review, emphasis is laid on Sustainable Digital Business (SDB), Sustainable Digital Management (SDM), as well as Sustainable Digital Entrepreneurship (SDE), with regards to the Nigerian context of post-pandemic recovery.

**Sustainable Digital Business (SDB)**

Digital business is a process that leverages on technology and further allows an organisation to new value, experience and digital mindset (Indeed, 2023). In addition to this, Sustainable digital business entails using technology to create businesses that sustainable and profitable on long terms basis (Sarfraz et al., 2022). The impact of COVID 19 pandemic was that it pushed the business sector to increasingly adopt sustainable business practices (Hossain et al., 2022), with organisation leveraging on digital technologies for eco-friendly supply chain management, energy efficiency, as well as waste reduction (Hossain et al., 2022; Hossain et al., 2022). The pandemic just exposed the importance of developing and utilising resilient and sustainable business models, which has led to more investment in digital initiatives (Olatunde-Aiyedun et al., 2021).

**Sustainable Digital Management (SDM)**

Digital management is the practice of managing digital resources, including technologies, data, and information systems, to achieve an organization's goals (Sydle, 2023; Hossain et al., 2023). To effectively manage digital resources in Nigeria in a sustainable way, it is important to consider all aspects of sustainability, including responsible leadership, ethical data usage, and the alignment of digital strategies with sustainable goals (Ufua et al., 2021). This has further made organisations in Nigeria recognise sustainable digital management practices on the enhancement of competitiveness and resilience, especially in the face of disruption, such as the one caused by the pandemic.

**Sustainable Digital Entrepreneurship (SDE)**

Digital entrepreneurship is used to describe online businesses that individuals create and run (Indeed, 2023). In addition to this, the business may be new, however, it has to be profitable and sustainable. The Nigerian entrepreneurs have increasingly focused on sustainable digital innovations, with a lot of startup developing innovations that further address both social and

environmental challenges (Amadi, 2021). In Sustainable Digital Entrepreneurship (SDE), emphasis is laid on systems that are collaborative in nature, further bringing startups together. In view of this, the critical areas of post-pandemic recovery are the business, its management and well as people behind the businesses: entrepreneurs.

### **Research Questions**

The question are constructed in order to further help develop research objectives, these includes

1. What are Sustainable Digital Business (SDB) that can help Nigeria in the post-pandemic recovery?
2. How does Sustainable Digital Management (SDM) impact digital business in the post-pandemic recovery in Nigeria?
3. What digital innovation are Sustainable Digital Entrepreneurship (SDE) developing towards post-pandemic recovery in Nigeria?

### **Research Objectives**

The objectives outlines the steps that would be taken to achieve the goal of the research. These includes

1. Examination of Sustainable Digital Business (SDB) on post-pandemic recovery in Nigeria
2. Evaluation of Sustainable Digital Management (SDM) towards post-pandemic recovery in Nigeria
3. Evaluation of Sustainable Digital Entrepreneurship (SDE) and their innovations towards post-pandemic recovery in Nigeria

### **Research Hypothesis**

Research hypothesis is explained as a statement about an expected outcome of a study (McCombes, 2022). The hypothesis in this case are given below

- H1: Sustainable Digital Business (SDB) can have a significant impact on post pandemic recovery in Nigeria
- H2: Sustainable Digital Management (SDM) can have a significant impact on post pandemic recovery in Nigeria
- H3: Sustainable Digital Entrepreneurship (SDE) can have a significant impact on post pandemic recovery in Nigeria

### **Research Methodology**

Research methodology is the set of steps and procedures that researchers use to collect and analyze data to answer research questions. It is a systematic and structured approach that helps to ensure that research is conducted in a rigorous and reliable manner (McCombes & George, 2022). A qualitative research approach has been used to collect and analyse data, in the form of a systematic literature review. A review of different research done in same research domain have been collected and reviewed in order to be able to ascertain and establish facts and patterns that would eventually help in achieving research objectives and answering research questions. A total of 10 research papers have been examined.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

A data analysis plan is a written document that describes how researchers will collect, clean, analyze, and interpret data collected during a research study. For this research, content

analysis has been used to analyse research data gathered. Content analysis is a research method that involves analyzing the content of recorded communication to identify patterns and trends. It can be used to study a wide range of content, including written text, images, videos, and audio recordings (Drisko & Maschi, 2016).

### **Data Analysis**

Content analysis was performed on a collection of a list of research papers related to the research domain area. A total number of 10 research articles were all systematically reviewed and analysed in order for patterns and facts to be established.

### **Findings and Conclusion**

The systematic review was able to establish some basic facts which are attributed the impact of Covid and how it had been able to spur new generation of business processes, actions and people that are innovatively include toward producing new product and services that can last and stand the test of time.

In reality, the impact of the pandemic was devastating which cut across almost every industry, including the healthcare, education, hotel and tourism, transportation and logistics, manufacturing, production, as well as supply chain. The negative impact was that it forced these industries to scale down level of economic activities which meant such industries could not maintain their current level of engagement.

On the positive side, the restrictions the pandemic brought along, made people realise most businesses, management approach and entrepreneurs were not sustainable, eventually sustainability become the centre of the change. This further pushed people to adopt digitalisation in different industries, at different level and of course, different capacities.

The impact of digitalisation across Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs), brought a distinct level of sustainability (Hossain et al., 2020), however, the most significant impact was that it was able to spur a new movement towards digital business, thereby creating new business opportunities, management implications as well as a new generation of digital entrepreneur that had the mentality of profitability as well as sustainability integrated as building blocks.

In conclusion, sustainable digital business, management and entrepreneurship was an eventual positive outcome of the pandemic, and has continued to facilitate creation of new businesses, new opportunities, new products and services, new management approach, as well as new categories of entrepreneur. This has further helped Nigeria in its post-pandemic recovery, as it gradually rebuilds its economy back with digital sustainable practices.

### **Recommendation**

In recommendation, it becomes important to realise the impact pandemics such as Covid can have on economy such as that of Nigeria, and based on this, sustainable, resilient and profitable practices should be constantly developed and integrated, through digital technologies that have proved beyond reasonable doubt that it has the capacity, ability, framework and infrastructure to help a disrupted economy regain its momentum.

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