



ASSESSMENT OF DIGITAL SKILLS ACQUIRED BY UNIVERSITY BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS FOR EMPLOYABILITY IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to assess digital skills acquired by university Business Education student for employability in Rivers State. Two specific objectives, research questions and hypotheses were posed and formulated for the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of four hundred and fifty nine (459) third year university Business Education students in Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE). 100 percent of the total population was used as sample and census sampling technique was adopted. A structured questionnaire titled "Assessment of Digital Skills Acquired by University Business Education Students for Employability Questionnaire (ADSAUBESEQ) was used as instruments for data collection. The instrument was designed on a 4 point rating scale of (SA-4, A-3, DA-2 and SD-1) and used to elicit responses from the respondents. The instrument was face and content validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. Cronbach Alpha was used to establish the reliability coefficient of 0.87. 450 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and used for the analysis. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that university Business Education students in RSU and IAUE acquired audio-visual content creation skills and software skills for employability in Rivers State. The researcher therefore recommends that students upon graduation should be giving opportunity of real life experiences through exposure to various audio-visual tools to enable them perform efficiently in business and as employees and that university Business Education students should be exposed to further learning through workshops and seminars to enable them acquire more software skills.

Introduction

The term assessment refers a variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate students' academic performance. Chukwugbo (2014) defined assessment as the systematic collection, review and use of information about educational programmes to improve student's learning. In the same vein, Marzano in Ezenwafor and Achugamonye (2019) defined assessment as the process of collecting information which is conducted in order to improve educational programmes and demonstrate their effectiveness. It is therefore necessary to assess the digital skills acquired by university Business Education students which eventually lead to their employability upon graduation.

Digital skills have been considered to be vital in teaching and learning as the technology assists the achievement of basic skills, expose students to practical workplace environment,



supplement and consolidate what is read in textbooks and journals. According to Usoro and Caleb (2014), digital teaching and learning encompasses many different facets, tools and applications to support and empower teachers and students, including online courses, blended or hybrid learning or digital content and resources. Digital skill is very useful in the area of teaching for lecturers, business management practices and accounting (Sanusi, 2011). Currently, it seems inevitable that the usage and reliance on digital technologies will continue to grow unprecedentedly. While reading books and paper resources and manual writing remain fundamentally important, this current period in time may well represent a pivotal point in the march towards digital domination (www.e-safetysupport.com). Therefore, it is important to provide accounting education students with the necessary tools, understanding and practice in using digital technologies and skills to ensure they are not disenfranchised from what is probable, if not highly likely, shift towards technology based literacy.

The role of digital skills in teaching and learning is rapidly becoming one of the most important and widely discussed issues in contemporary education as observed by Thierer in Nimfel, Wetnman and Yongsunghikfu (2017). Therefore, educational professionals agreed that digital technologies have the prospects for improving teaching and learning as well as showing workforce opportunities. It is also evident as agreed by Amiaya (2016) that the traditional educational environments are not suitable for preparing students to function or be productive in the workplace in today's society. Boholano (2013) opined that ability to establish a blog or wiki, ability to create engaging visuals, ability to use and create video content, ability to create digital audio content, ability to use social media for professional development opportunities and ability to use social bookmarking sites to collate resources are the digital skills required by Business Education lecturers for teaching accounting education courses. Therefore, if Business Education lecturers fail to incorporate digital skills in course of teaching, preparing students for life in the 21st century knowledge-driven economy will not be achieved.

The concepts of Business Education is based on a vision and a set of competencies designed to prepare students to become knowledgeable and ethical decision makers as they fulfill their roles as consumers, workers, good citizens and also contribute to the development of the society. In the academic arena, Business Educators play a prominent role in preparing students to become responsible citizens capable of making the astute economic decisions that will benefit their personal and professional lives (Ogungboyega, 2019). Business Education students need to acquire skills in order to be effective and efficient in their chosen field of work. In order words, the teaching method adopted by a business educator in teaching and learning is very imperative for improving and developing the skills of Business Education students. In view of the afore mentioned, Iufunwa, Waziri and Olorunmolu (2013) stated that if institutions that have Business Education programme must achieve their goals, they must put in place quality graduates for national development. The placement of quality graduates is predicated on the acquisition of the required skills more importantly digital skills, this can be achieved by the combination of both theoretical and practical ways of teaching and learning. The placement of quality graduates is predicated on the acquisition of the required skills more importantly digital skills, this can be achieved by the combination of both theoretical and practical ways of teaching and learning. In line with the above assertion, Chan and Murphy (2010) opined that key skills cannot be developed or learned by reading books alone as knowledge of key skills ought to be strengthened through instruction and demonstration and by providing opportunities for students to practice. The acquisition of skill is important because when efficient and skillful hands are employed in any field of human endeavour, high productivity is usually achieved. Economically, maximum skills acquisition by Business Education students and others will help to enrich the Nigerian society and in this way, make possible sustainable development. Nigeria as a nation will enjoy sustainable development if Business Education students in particular and all other students in general acquire maximum skills and competencies in their specialties which will enable them to be gainfully employed or become employers of labour.



Employability is seen as an aspect of the school curricula that has attracted many contextual definitions and contributions from different schools. Samson (2013) described employability as highly human skills that included basic thinking skills and imagination, subjective decision making, social skills and responsibility. According to Blackmore, Bulaitis and Tan (2016), employability has assumed a global recognition and popularity therefore increasing attention is being given to the role of higher education in developing employability. Blackmore et al further stated that employability is generally knowledge-based and skill-based curriculum that prepares students for world of work, enterprise development, self-employment and social adjustment in society. Employability fosters multiple means of engagement for students and facilitates their transition to the workplace, therefore employability is the combination of knowledge, personal attributes and competencies that ensures that students upon graduation are more likely to secure employment and continue to progress during their career. It is therefore the responsibility of Business Educators to improve the employability levels of Business Education students which will in turn ensure that their skills and knowledge are fit-for-purpose for the labour market upon graduation. This can be effectively done with the use of audio-visual content creation skills or software skills by Business Educators.

Audio-Visual technology is referred to as a combination of audio technology and visual technology which addresses the sense of sight and the sense of sound to achieve the purpose of a teaching and learning process. The Webster's Encyclopedia Unabridged Dictionary of English Language in Amesi and Ugorji (2019) defined audio-visual as aids for training or educational materials directed at both senses of learning and senses of sight. Examples of audio-visuals according to the Webster's Encyclopedia Unabridged Dictionary of English Language are photographs, films, recordings used in classroom instructions. The uses of this technology plays significant role in instructional delivery as according to Tokentunji in Amesi and Ugorji (2019) audio-visual materials when effectively used have the advantages of overcoming the weaknesses of verbalism, it humanize and vitalize the subject matter, provides interesting approach to new topics and gives initial correct impressions, provides economic time in learning, supply concrete materials needed and stimulates the initiative of the student. Anazaku (2011) viewed audio-visual as those instructional materials that can convey meaning without complete dependence upon verbal symbols or language.

There is urgent need to improve the quality of education to bridge the gap between developed and developing nations and audio-visual instruction is considered as a necessary tool for this purpose (Adamu, Ibrahim, Adamu & Ibrahim, 2018). However, Hoffman in Adamu, Ibrahim, Adamu and Ibrahim (2018) opined that the presence of audio-visual alone will not stimulate significant changes in a school or institution. Teachers are important ingredients in the implementation of audio-visual instruction in education. Without the involvement of teachers, most students may not take advantage of all the available potential benefits of audio-visual on their own. Teachers therefore need to actively participate in the use of audio-visual facilities as they have been trained in the use of audio-visuals and in its integration in the classroom activities to enhance thinking and creativity among students.

The teaching model based on digital audio media according to Xin (2020), has the advantage of allowing the students to control their study independently, increasing interaction in learning and improving the psychological superiority which can make up for the insufficiency of the existing skill gap. Factors such as inadequate funding, irregular power supply, lack of skill, non-provision of professionals to man audio-visual resources centers according to Aina and Ademola (2013), amongst others are responsible for the non-adequacy of audio-visual technology. It is therefore a requirement that Business Education students **possess audio-visual skill for employability upon graduation.**

Software tools and techniques are needed for the creation of database, therefore essential for preparing students for the world of business. According to Edet (2019), software tools and techniques



include structured programming that can make software development more visible to management and more controllable. Educational software is computer software and the primary purpose of which is teaching. Some educational software could be designed for use in school classrooms. Such software according to Mishra (2015), may be projected to a large whiteboard at the front of the class and or run simultaneously on a network of desktop computers in a classroom. This type of software according to Mishra is called classroom management software. While lecturers often choose to use educational software from other categories in their information technology suites, a whole category of educational software has grown up specifically intended to assist classroom learning.

Software tools includes word processor, spreadsheets, power-point, desktop publishing, Microsoft excel, Microsoft word, graphics amongst others (Jubril, 2019). Similarly, Akomas, Ekeke and Douglas (2017) stated that software tools includes word processing, spreadsheet, data base management software, project management software, multimedia authorizing system amongst others. Software tools or techniques are digital tools that make collaboration, social interaction and feedback possible for students. According to Yot-Dominguez and Marcelo (2017) software technologies are communication and interactive tools, repositories and social network tools that can be used in enhancing teaching and learning. Beeland (2017) opined that software tools are important in education because they facilitate student's academic learning and achievement when effectively utilized. Beeland further stated that student's motivation which is one of the teacher's concerns in the classroom can be improved through effective utilization of software tools. Business Education lecturers could utilize software tools such as WhatsApp, skype and Google talk to exchange academic information, solve self-doubt and carry out online classes with students.

Business Education lecturers ought to inculcate the use of computer application software in the teaching. This will enable the students the practical use of computer in their various fields of endeavour. Business Education students are expected to acquire software skills to be able to successfully gain employment upon graduation.

Statement of the Problem

The relationship between quality of skills possessed by Business Education students upon graduation and the labour market has been the focus of growing theoretical and empirical investigations in the education literature. The Employers views of how well Business Education graduates are prepared for the workplace have received widespread attention in the education sector. The concept of Business Education are based on a vision and a set of competencies designed to prepare students to become knowledgeable and ethical decision makers as they fulfill their roles as consumers, workers, good citizens and also contribute to the development of the nation. however, Oliver in Umeano and Ifi (2019) observed that digital technologies which is among the skills acquired for gainful employment has not been extensively integrated in the education system in Nigeria, reasons been epileptic power supply, limited skills of teachers amongst others. The question then is, what are the digital skills acquired by Business Education university students for employability? To answer this question amongst others prompted a study of this nature.

Purpose of the Study

The main aim of the study was to assess digital skills acquired by university Business Education students for employability in universities in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Assess audio-visual content creation skills acquired by Business Education university students for employability in Rivers State
2. Assess software skills acquired by Business Education university students for employability in Rivers State



Research Questions.

The following research questions were posed for the study.

1. What are the audio-visual content creation skills acquired by university Business Education students for employability in Rivers State?
2. What are the software skills acquired by university Business Education students for employability in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of University Business Education students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on their perception of audio-visual content creation skills acquired by them for employability in Rivers State
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of University Business Education students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on their perception of software skills acquired by them for employability in Rivers State

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 459 third year Business Education students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education for 2020/2021 academic session which according to RSU and IAUE Departments of Business Education 2021 as shown in Table 1 is 213 and 246, totaling 459. Census sampling techniques was adopted since the population was of manageable size. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Assessment of Digital Skills Acquired by University Business Education Students for Employability Questionnaire (ADSAUBESEQ). The instrument was designed in a four point rating of agreement (Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagreed (2), and Strongly Disagreed (1). used to elicit responses from the respondents. In order to determine the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was face and content validated by experts in the Faculty of Education, Rivers State University. To ensure the consistency of the instrument, the Cronbach Alpha reliability method was adopted and a reliability coefficient of 0.86 was established. A total of 450 copies of the questionnaire administered were retrieved and used for the study. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The criterion mean score of 2.50 and above was agreed, while the mean score below 2.50 was disagreed. In the same vein, the decision rule for the hypotheses was that any hypothesis with t-calculated value less than the t-critical table value of 1.96 was agreed otherwise disagreed



Table 1: Population Distribution.

S/N	Institution	Total No of Third Year Business Education Students
1.	RSU	213
2.	IAUE	246
Total		459

Source: Departmental Examination Officers of RSU and IAUE

Results

The results for the study were presented according to each research question posed in the study as thus:

Research question 1: What are the audio-visual content creation skills acquired by university Business Education students for employability in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation on the Audio-Visual Content Creation Skills Acquired by University Business Education Students for Employability.

S/n	Items	RSU (N=213)			IAUE (N= 246)			RSU & IAUE Combined		
		X	SD	Rmks	X	SD	Rmks	X	SD	Rmks
1	Ability to use photographs for employability	2.52	0.32	Agreed	3.11	0.31	Strongly Agreed	2.81	0.31	Agreed
2	Proficiency in the use of films	2.67	0.32	Agreed	2.62	0.33	Agreed	2.64	0.32	Agreed
3	Ability to use recordings for employability	2.84	0.35	Agreed	2.84	0.29	Agreed	2.84	0.32	Agreed
4	Effective utilization of overhead projectors for employability	2.50	0.29	Agreed	2.59	0.30	Agreed	2.54	0.29	Agreed
5	Being able to use opaque projectors for employability	2.32	0.31	Disagreed	2.17	0.28	Disagreed	2.24	0.29	Disagreed
6	Ability to use videos for employability	2.77	0.31	Agreed	2.97	0.48	Agreed	2.87	0.39	Agreed
7	Ability to use audio tapes for employability	3.01	0.30	Strongly Agreed	2.96	0.47	Agreed	2.98	0.38	Agreed
8	Being able to use stream charts for employability	2.53	0.32	Agreed	2.25	0.32	Disagreed	2.39	0.32	Disagreed
9	Ability to effectively use audio CDs for employability	2.37	0.31	Disagreed	2.06	0.31	Disagreed	2.21	0.31	Disagreed
Grand Mean/S.D		2.61	0.31	Agreed	2.61	0.34	Agreed	2.61	0.32	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2021



Table 2 showed the respondents opinion on the audio-visual content creation skills acquired by university Business Education students for employability in Rivers State. Using the criterion mean of 2.50 as the bench-mark for acceptance, the data on Table 2 showed the respondents had divergent views that university Business Education students require audio-visual content creation skill for employability in Rivers State. Some of the respondents agreed while some disagreed. They agreed that university Business Education students acquire photographic skills for employability, they acquire filming skills for employability, they acquire recording skill for employability, they acquire the use of overhead projectors for employability, they acquire the use of videos for employability, they acquire the use of audio tapes for employability, while they disagreed that being able to use opaque projectors and ability to effectively use audio CDs are audio-visual content creation skills. The analysis revealed a combined mean of 2.61 and a combined standard deviation of 0.32 respectively which also indicated that university Business Education students acquire audio-visual content creation skills for employability in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What are the software skills acquired by university Business Education students for employability in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation on the Software Skills Acquired by University Business Education Students for Employability

S/n	Items	RSU (N=213)			IAUE (N= 246)			RSU & IAUE Combined		
		X	SD	Rmks	X	SD	Rmks	X	SD	Rmks
10	Ability to use word processor for employability	2.82	0.32	Agreed	2.61	0.31	Agreed	2.71	0.31	Agreed
11	Being able to use spreadsheet for employability	3.03	0.26	Strongly Agreed	2.63	0.35	Agreed	2.83	0.30	Agreed
12	Ability to use power-point for employability	2.54	0.35	Agreed	2.94	0.19	Agreed	2.74	0.27	Agreed
13	Proficiency in the use of desktop publishing for employability	2.60	0.29	Agreed	2.73	0.39	Agreed	2.66	0.34	Agreed
14	Being able to use Microsoft Excel for employability	2.52	0.27	Agreed	3.27	0.28	Strongly Agreed	2.89	0.27	Agreed
15	Ability to use Micro-soft word for employability	2.77	0.31	Agreed	3.97	0.36	Strongly Agreed	3.37	0.33	Strongly Agreed
16	Ability to use graphics for employability	2.91	0.30	Agreed	2.51	0.61	Agreed	2.71	0.45	Agreed
17	Being able to use Corel draw for employability	2.21	0.41	Disagreed	2.12	0.38	Disagreed	2.16	0.39	Disagreed
18	Ability to effectively use oracle for employability	2.57	0.50	Agreed	2.06	0.29	Disagreed	2.31	0.39	Disagreed
	Grand Mean/S.D	2.66	0.33	Agreed	2.76	0.35	Agreed	2.71	0.34	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2021



Table 3 showed the respondents opinion on the software skills acquired by university Business Education students for employability in Rivers State. Using the criterion mean of 2.50 as the benchmark for acceptance, the data on Table 3 showed that the respondents had divergent views that university Business Education students acquire software skill for employability in Rivers State. Some of the respondents agreed while some disagreed. Some agreed that university Business Education students acquire word processing skills for employability, they acquire spreadsheet skills for employability, they acquire power-point skill for employability, they acquire desktop publishing skill for employability, they acquire micro-soft excel skill for employability, they acquire micro-soft word skill for employability, they acquire graphics skills for employability, they acquire oracle skill for employability, while some disagreed that being able to use Corel draw is a software skill acquired by university Business Education students for employability in Rivers State. The analysis revealed a combine mean of 2.71 and a grand standard deviation of 0.34 respectively which also indicated that university Business Education students acquired software skills for employability in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of university Business Education students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on their perception of the audio-visual content creation skills acquired by them for employability in Rivers State.

Table 4: z-test Result on Audio-Visual Content Creation Skills Acquired by University Business Education Students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Respondents	N	Mean	SD Dev.	Std error	t-Cal	t-Crit	L/Sig.	Decision
RSU	213	2.61	0.31	0.15	1.16	1.96	0.05	Accepted
IAUE	246	2.62	0.29					

Source: Field Work, 2021.

Table 4 above revealed a t-calculated value of 1.16 which is less than the standard t-critical value of 1.96; hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. The result therefore is that there is no significant difference in audio-visual content creation skills acquired by university Business Education students of RSU and IAUE for employability in Rivers State

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of university Business Education students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on their perception of the software skills acquired by them for employability in Rivers State.

Table 5: z-test Result on Software Skills Acquired by University Business Education Students of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Respondents	N	Mean	SD Dev.	Std error	t-Cal	t-Crit	L/Sig.	Decision
RSU	213	2.64	0.33	0.17	1.24	1.96	0.05	Accepted
IAUE	246	2.76	0.35					

Source: Field Work, 2021.

Table 5 above revealed a t-calculated value of 1.24 which is less than the standard t-critical value of 1.96; hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. The result therefore is that there is no significant



difference in software skills acquired by university Business Education students of RSU and IAUE for employability in Rivers State

Discussion

Discussions of the study were made according to the research questions posed in the study.

Audio-Visual Content Creation Skills Acquired by University Business Education Students for Employability.

The Findings in research question one revealed that university Business Education students in RSU and IAUE acquired audio-visual content creation skills for employability. Similarly, the hypothesis testing indicated no significant difference in the opinion of respondents in RSU and IAUE on the acquisition of audio-visual content creation skills for employability. The findings corroborates with the views of Tokentunji in Amesi and Ugorji (2019) who stated that audio-visual materials when effectively used stimulates the initiative of the students. In agreement with the views of Tokentunji, Xin (2020) opined that audio-visual materials allows the students to control their study independently. Based on the views of Tokentunji in Amesi and Ugorji (2019) and Xin (2020), the researchers are of the views that the acquisition of audio-visual content creation skills by university Business Education students in Rivers State will lead to employment. It will also lead to their being self-employed as well as employers of labour making them independent of themselves as it will help to reduce the unemployment in the State and Nigeria at large. The students by acquisition of audio-visual content creation skills for employability can create their own photography business, content management system and public content creation that can help them to be employable.

Software Skills Acquired by University Business Education Students for Employability.

The Findings in research question two revealed that university Business Education students in RSU and IAUE acquired software skills for employability. Similarly, the hypothesis testing indicated no significant difference in the opinion of respondents in RSU and IAUE on the acquisition of software skills for employability. The findings aligns with Beeland (2017) who asserted that software tools facilitates students' academic learning and achievement when effectively utilized. Based on the view of Beeland (2017), the researchers are of the views that acquisition of software skills by university Business Education students in Rivers State will lead to employment. It will also enable the students to be self-reliant. Hence, it will enable them have knowledge of social media, spreadsheet, communication tools, word-processing and desktop publishing tools, presentation tools, graphic design, databases and computer programming amongst others.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that university Business Education students acquired audio-visual content creation skills and software skills for employability in Rivers State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusion made, the following recommendations were made:

1. Students upon graduation should be giving opportunity of real life experiences through exposure to various audio-visual tools to enable them perform efficiently in business and as employees.
2. University Business Education students should be exposed to further learning through workshops and seminars to enable them to acquire more software skills.
3. The acquisition of audio-visual and software skills by University Business Education students will enable them to be self-reliant, therefore Government should provide them with the necessary support such as provision of equipped laboratories to enable them acquire the skills.



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