



## **INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN ENHANCING BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS' SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR ACQUISITION OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS**

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### **Abstract**

*The need to improve students' self-regulated learning necessitated this study. The study ascertained the influence of digital technologies in enhancing business education students' self-regulated learning strategies for acquisition of employability skills. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design and the population of the study comprised 204 (2021/2022) academic session final year business education students in the two tertiary institutions where business education programme is offered. There was no sampling since the population was manageable. A-14 item questionnaire which was validated by three experts in the field of business education and measurement and evaluation was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established using pilot study and analysis carried out using Cronbach alpha formula yielded correlation coefficients of .89 and .95 were obtained for clusters B1 to B2 respectively with an overall value of .92. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used for data analysis. Findings showed that business education students agree that digital technologies influence their academic goal-setting and self-monitoring strategies. Institutional type was not a significant factor on business education students' opinion in this regard. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that effective use of digital technologies in leaning enhances business education students' self-regulated learning strategies for acquisition of employability skills. It was recommended among others that; business education lecturers should encourage their student to use digital technologies to set academic goals and self-monitor their learning progress instead for using them mainly for non-academic purposes. This will help them to acquire relevant employability skills.*

**Key Words:** Digital Technologies, Business education, Self-regulated Learning, Employability Skills

### **Introduction**

A business education programme is widely recognized as a tool for achieving sustainable economic development and growth of many nations. As a result, business education is prioritized in nations like the USA, UK, and Canada among others like China and Japan. The need for business



education programme's development cannot be overstated, especially in a nation like Nigeria where unemployment and poverty are pervasive. This is due to the fact that it gives students the training in business skills, and economic understanding necessary to obtain employment, advance in their careers as business professionals, or start their own businesses after graduation. Business education programme is an effective tool for reducing unemployment and poverty as well as for national development because it prepares students to graduate with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to launch and successfully run their own businesses.

Business education is a discipline that prepares students to be logical contributors to society as well as knowledgeable consumers. It is a skill-based learning programme that offers various competencies and skills in accounting, marketing/distribution, as well as office technology and management (OTM) (Olupayimo, 2021). Training and education in business are receiving more attention these days. This may be because the discipline, if properly taught in tertiary institutions has benefits of equipping young people and adults with skills necessary for the workforce by allowing them gain experience in the field (Olagunju, 2020). The main goals of business education at the tertiary level, according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013), include preparing students for careers in or advancement within office occupations and professions, giving students the necessary skills for job creation and entrepreneurship, and imparting business knowledge to students, including a good blend of office technology that incorporates Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The first two purposes as noted by Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) involve education for business which aims at equipping students with requisite attributes to become gainfully employed, while the later involves education about business that aim at providing a sound basis for further studies. The aforementioned shows that business education does much more than just making students more employable; it also gives students necessary skills for lifelong learning.

With the growing believe that learning is a lifelong process, and the emphasis on individualized learning, Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) has received a lot of attention in educational context across the globe (Aysel and Zehra, 2016). SRL, according to Okolocha and Nwaukwa (2020), is the process that helps students to control their thoughts, actions, and emotions so they can successfully navigate their academic experiences. In order to become successful learners, SRL enables students to set learning objectives, and allows students to convert their mental faculties into academic skills through a self-directed process. Students actively participate in this routine mental process of learning until their learning goals are attained (Zimmerman in Okolocha and Nwaukwa, 2020). The SRL techniques of monitoring, goal-setting, and controlling are thought to be essential in assisting students in developing a sense of personal control, which is regarded as a significant source of motivation for learning (Zimmerman, 2008). The ability to exercise control and take initiative in the learning process is a natural aspect of the learning process that facilitates learning, and control over the learning process is one of the factors leading to academic success, and acquisition of employable skills (Lewis and Vialleton, 2011).

Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) strategies include: goal setting, planning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation (Yot-Domínguez and Marcelo, 2008). This study however covered goal setting and self-monitoring strategies. Goal-setting is a norm that governs a student's behaviour. It is one of the defining characteristics of self-regulation and has direct bearing on students' motivation (Zimmerman, 2008). Students that excelled at self-regulated learning exhibited a desire to achieve goals and a dedication to setting goals, among other qualities (Pintrich, 2004). In the classroom, objectives may be as straightforward as acquiring a relevant skill through understanding of a course. For instance, Ozoegwu (2021) stated that if a student sets a long-term goal to acquire a skill in a particular course, the student may also set more manageable objectives such as studying for a predetermined period of time, and employing particular study techniques to increase the likelihood of achieving the goals. In Becker (2014), Weinstein and Mayer recommended that college instructors teach students how to set



goals, such as identifying one or more learning objectives for the semester and outlining the steps they intended to take. Similarly, to become lifelong learners, students in the twenty-first century must take responsibility for their academic performance (Kitner, Rakoczy and Otto in Ozoegwu, 2021). By keeping track of their advancement towards learning objectives, students take on this obligation. Students must define their own learning goals, make a strategy, autonomously motivate themselves to achieve those goals, concentrate on the activity at hand, and apply learning strategies to help them understand the subject in order to be able to self-monitor their progress. By requiring students to keep track of the number of times they worked on a given learning assignment, the tactics they employed, and the amount of time they spent working, teachers can promote self-monitoring. Students can see their development through this activity and adjust as necessary. To get regular feedback on their students' academic performance, effective teachers keep track of their students' academic progress (Ozoegwu, 2021).

The enhancement of undergraduate students' goal-setting and self-monitoring strategies can be facilitated through digital technologies. Digital technologies are techniques, systems, equipment, or resources that produce, store, or process data electronically. They represent an open gateway to new learning possibilities, and support acquisition of practical skills (Okolocha and Nwaukwa, 2020). They are electronic tools that allow for individualized instruction and hasten students' active, independent, and productive knowledge acquisition. Okolocha and Nwaukwa listed types of digital technologies as follows; computers, internet, multimedia, mobile phones, and social software technologies. Digital technologies also cover computer programmes and software; web pages and websites, including social media; data and databases; digital audio such as mp3s; and e-books. Yot-Domínguez and Marcelo (2017) on the other hand enumerated digital technologies as communication and interactive tools (WhatsApp, Line, Skype, Google Talk, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams), repositories (Slideshare, Instagram, Pinterest, Youtube and iTunes), social network tools (Twitter, Facebook), and internet tools (Wikipedia or online dictionaries, translators, Google academic, Dialnet) among others that can be used in enhancing learning.

Due to the instructional abilities of digital technologies, and the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, the field of education has undergone significant changes in teaching and learning (Haleem, Javaid, Qadri and Suman, 2022). The use of digital technologies in education has become even more institutionalized in the wake of this pandemic. Digital technologies enhance sharing of knowledge, serve as assessor, and co-creator of information. Students' lives have been simpler as a result of digital technological advancements. Nowadays, students can prepare presentations and projects utilizing a variety of software and tools rather than pen and paper. Similarly, digital technologies build knowledge, understanding, and skills to ensure that students thrive individually and as a team, they enhance students' curiosity and inquisitiveness through exciting and instructive material, which has been linked to academic performance, and creating inclusive learning environments which provides an equal opportunity for each student with different ability levels to learn in the same place. Virtual classrooms, video, augmented reality, robots, and other technology tools make the class exciting and create inclusive learning environments that foster collaboration and curiosity while allowing teachers to collect data on student performance.

It is anticipated that tertiary undergraduate students use digital technologies more readily to improve their critical thinking and cooperation skills in addition to their speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities (Chelghoum, 2017). The students are the first generations to have grown up with digital tools, which explain why. They are referred to as "digital natives" (Hayes, 2019). Due to this, students, including those in business education, are required to leverage on digital technologies to set academic goals, and self-monitor their progress to ensure that they achieve set goals. Students of business education can have online chats with their classmates, exchange academic information, and clear their concerns using digital tools like Google Talk, Skype and WhatsApp. To review specific materials



gathered for studies, they could also make use of technologies such as Slideshare, Instagram, Pinterest, Youtube, and iTunes. Wikis, blogs, Dropbox, and Google+ can be used to produce and store documents, and podcasts and videos can be employed to access previously recorded lessons (Okolocha and Nwaukwa, 2020).

Digital technologies have a lot of potential to promote self-regulated learning, including those of business education. Despite this potential, it appears that students do not use them effectively for academic purposes. Instead of working on their academic assignments, they now focus their search on leisurely, non-educational online activities such as pointless chatting. The exposure to and use of digital technology tends to have detrimental effects on students, despite earlier studies showing that the younger generation (students) embraces them broadly (Nwagu, 2021). This is due to students spending more time using digital technology for non-academic purposes and less time using them for academic purposes. Given this, the adoption of digital technologies has generated controversy among those involved in education. Due to the multitasking involved, some believe it to be a distraction from the students' learning, while others attest to the potential of these technologies to improve learning. Others contend that students regard and use digital technologies more as a social platform than as tools for learning. Adebowale in Nwagu (2021) bemoaned the fact that students are continually using Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, or other networking tools, as well as e-mail and instant messaging, in the background as they work on their academic obligations. These cause distraction and cut into the amount of time they have to devote to studying.

Nigeria has one of the largest economies in Africa, but just 11.6 million internet users, 46% of its projected 206.1 million inhabitants still does not have access to the internet (Adeleke, 2021). The digital divide, however, does not only apply to people who have and do not have access to the internet, it encompasses other additional inconsistencies, such as the speed of the internet connectivity, digital resources, and the availability of technology expertise (Bahia and Suardi, 2019). Supporting these findings, YotDominguez and Marcelo (2017) reported that university students do not incorporate digital technologies into their own academic learning process. Yot-Dominguez and Marcelo further revealed that students make limited use of digital technologies for self-regulated learning. Sahin-Kizil and Savran (2016) however noted that EFL learners were actively engaged in the use of ICT tools for self-regulated language learning, but there were variations both among the students and in aspects of regulating learning through the use of ICT tools. This could be due to inadequate knowledge of the students regarding the influence of digital technologies in promoting their self-regulated learning. The responses of business education students on the influence of digital technologies in enhancing their self-regulated learning could be influenced by institutional type (universities and colleges of education). Digital technologies are the principal technologies reshaping higher education (universities and college of education). In view of advances in each of these domains, digital technologies can help students in their daily classroom experiences in universities and colleges of education. It is possible that the students of these institutions can view the influence of these technologies from different perspectives. It is against this backdrop that this study was carried out to influence of digital technologies in enhancing business education students' self-regulated learning for acquisition of employability skills.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The main goal of business education at the post-secondary level is to create graduates with the skills and dynamism necessary to fit into the digital labour market or launch successful businesses. Business education must change, and incorporate digital technologies in order to achieve this goal. The expectation of educational stakeholders to see these technologies employed for academic learning has increased due to the technologies popularity among students (Okolocha and Nwaukwa, 2020). Educational stakeholders have had high expectations for digital technologies to be integrated



into education to enhance learning quality in recent years. With the development of digital technologies, students now have access to a variety of digital technologies that can help them learn more independently. Researchers are concerned that these technologies are not being used by students in promoting their self-regulated learning, or that students choose to use them for mainly non-academic purposes, and devote less time to academic usage. This scenario could be due to their lack of knowledge about the influence of these digital technologies in enhancing their self-regulated learning. The researcher is concerned that the inability of business education students to use these digital tools in their academic learning could hinder them from acquiring employability skills required of gainful employment upon graduation. However, there seem to be lack of empirical studies in Nigeria especially, Anambra State on the influence of digital technologies in enhancing business education students self-regulated learning for employability skills acquisition. This study therefore determine (1) the influence of digital technologies in enhancing business education students academic goal settings for employability skills acquisition, (2) the influence of digital technologies in enhancing business education students academic self-monitoring for employability skills acquisition.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What is the influence of digital technologies in enhancing business education students' academic goal setting strategies for acquisition of employability skills in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?
2. What is the influence of digital technologies in enhancing business education students' academic self-monitoring strategies for acquisition of employability skills in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance;

1. Business education students in universities do not differ significantly with the counterparts in colleges of education in their mean ratings on the influence of digital technologies in enhancing their academic goal setting strategies for acquisition of employability skills.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education students in universities and those in colleges of education on the influence of digital technologies in enhancing their academic self-monitoring strategies for acquisition of employability skills.

### **Method**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. It was conducted in Anambra State. The population of the study consists of 204 (2021/2022) final year business education students in tertiary institutions chosen for this study and where business education programme is offered. However, students from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka were excluded from the population because of ASUU strike which made the final years students inaccessible. The population (204) was not too large to give rise to sampling. Hence, the entire population was used for this study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Digital Technologies in Enhancing Business Education Students' Self-regulated Learning for Acquisition of Employability Skills "(IBESSRL-AES)". The questionnaire consisted of two sections A and B. Section A contained item on demographic information of the respondents such as type of institution while Section B contained 14 items according to the research questions. Items on section B are structured on four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Face and content validity of the instrument was ascertained using three experts, two from the field of Business Education and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was carried out using



trial-testing and data collected were calculated using Cronbach Alpha formula to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, and correlation index of .89 and .95 were obtained for clusters B1 to B2 respectively with an overall value of .92. The researcher with the help of three researcher assistants administered copies of the questionnaire to the respondents in their institutions. Out of 204 copies of questionnaire distributed, 191 were correctly filled and returned and used for data analysis. Statistical mean and standard deviation were used to answer the researcher questions and determined the homogeneity of respondents' views while t-test were used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. A hypothesis was rejected where the p - value is less than the significant value. Otherwise, the null hypothesis was accepted. The data analysis was carried out using statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

## Results

### Research Question 1

What is the influence of digital technologies in enhancing business education students' academic goal setting strategies for acquisition of employability skills in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

**Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings and standard deviation on the influence of digital technologies in enhancing business education students' academic goal setting strategies for acquisition of employability skills (N = 191)**

S/N	Influence of Digital Technologies on Academic Goal-Setting Strategies	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1.	Online platforms such as Google and Wikipedia are important sources to maintain students' interest in achieving learning goals.	2.54	.71	Agree
2.	Internets can help students to reach their ultimate academic goal in business education	3.48	.62	Agree
3.	Whatsapp and Instagram can assist students to achieve learning goals quickly and efficiently	3.57	.67	Strongly Agree
4.	Interactive whiteboard Lite help students to set sub-goals for my next stage of learning	3.43	.61	Agree
5.	Digital tools such as Google Calendar, EverNote assist students to set academic activity agenda	2.52	.78	Agree
6.	Blog/wiki helps students to plan for their own learning experiences	2.50	.73	Agree
7.	Google academic software helps students to record learning information to be used for exam revision	2.53	.81	Agree
<b>Cluster mean</b>		<b>2.94</b>	<b>.78</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Data in Table 1 shows that out of 7 items listed on influence of digital technologies in enhancing business education students, the respondents agree that digital technologies influence business education students' academic goal-setting strategies for acquisition of employability skills. This is shown by the cluster mean of 2.94 which fell within the agree category. The item by item analysis revealed item 3 are rated strongly agree with mean of 3.57 while the remaining six items 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 are rated agree with mean ranging from 2.50 to 3.48. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range meaning that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

### Research Question 2

What is the influence of digital technologies in enhancing business education students' academic self-monitoring strategies for acquisition of employability skills in tertiary institutions in Anambra State?



**Table 2: Respondents’ mean ratings and standard deviation on the influence of digital technologies in enhancing business education students’ academic self-monitoring strategies for acquisition of employability skills (N = 191)**

S/N	influence of digital technologies on students’ Academic Self-Monitoring Strategies	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
8.	Podcasts help students to record course contents to use them in future study	3.51	.80	Strongly Agree
9.	Mobile devices enable students to records their lecturers’ lessons	3.49	.62	Agree
10.	iTunes and iVoox help students to listen to course contents found in podcasts	2.81	.98	Agree
11.	laptops/palmtops devices help students to prepare for examinations or complete project research	3.24	.61	Agree
12.	Videos and YouTube helps students to monitor learning goals at each semester.	3.14	.82	Agree
13.	Handsets enables students to record and monitor the number of times they worked on particular learning tasks	4.00	.86	Strongly Agree
14.	Internet assists students to assume responsibility for learning and academic performance in business education courses	2.54	.71	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>3.35</b>	<b>.92</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Data in Table 2 show that business education students agree that digital technologies enhance their academic self-monitoring of strategies for acquisition of employability skills with a cluster mean score of 3.35 which fell within the agree category. The item by item analysis also reveals that items 8 and 13 are rated strongly agree with mean ranging between 3.51 to 4.00, while the remaining five items are rated agree. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range meaning that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings.

**Hypothesis 1**

Business education students in universities do not differ significantly with the counterparts in colleges of education on the influence of digital technologies in enhancing their academic goal settings strategies for employability skills acquisition.

**Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis of business education students in universities and colleges of education on the influence of digital technologies in enhancing their academic goal settings strategies for employability skills acquisition**

Type of Institution	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	P-value	Decision
University	18	3.72	.92	189	.06	Not Significant
College of Education	173	3.86	.79			

Data in Table 3 shows that the p-value of .06 at 189 degree of freedom is greater than the criterion value of .05 (P-value = .06 > .05). This means that business education students in universities



do not differ significantly with their counterparts in colleges of education on the influence of digital technologies in enhancing their academic goal settings strategies for employability skills acquisition. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education students in universities and those in colleges of education on the influence of digital technologies in enhancing their academic self-monitoring strategies for acquisition of employability skills.

**Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis of business education students in universities and colleges of education on the influence of digital technologies in enhancing their academic self-monitoring strategies for employability skills acquisition**

Type of Institution	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	P-value	Decision
University	18	2.85	.62	189	1.01	Not Significant
College of Education	173	3.26	.59			

3. Data in Table 3 shows that the p-value of 1.01 at 189 degree of freedom is greater than the criterion value of .05 (P-value = 1.01 > .05). This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education students in universities and those in colleges of education on the influence of digital technologies in enhancing their academic self-monitoring strategies for acquisition of employability skills.  
. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

**Discussion of Findings**

Findings of the study revealed that business education students agree that digital technologies influence their academic goal-setting strategies for acquisition of employability skills. The findings of the study agrees with that of Okolocha and Nwaukwa (2020) that if used effectively, digital technologies help university undergraduate students to set academic goals. This supports the earlier findings of Chelghoum (2017) that digital technologies more readily improve students' critical thinking and cooperation skills, and goal setting skills, in addition to their speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities. Additionally, Aysel and Zehra (2016) reported that learners possess positive engagement with ICT tools for goal commitment, affective regulation and resource regulation; however, they hold less positive attitudes towards using technology for social learning activities. This findings of is not surprising to the researcher considering the significant role of digital technologies in improving the quality of learning of students as they give students opportunities to be actively involved in their academic learning, which enhance their acquisition of skills for self-reliance. The findings of the study also showed that business education students in universities did not differ significantly with the counterparts in colleges of education on the influence of digital technologies in enhancing their academic goal settings strategies for employability skills acquisition. This could be that business education students in both institutions use these digital technologies in learning and therefore recognizes the importance of these tools in enhancing their acquisition of skills for self-reliance.

Findings of the study further revealed that business education students agree that digital technologies enhance their academic self-monitoring of strategies for acquisition of employability skills. The findings of this study agrees with that of Yot-Domínguez and Marcelo (2017) who found that Whatsapp and Facebook are digital technologies that students generally want to use in enhancing



their self-regulated learning. Nwagu (2021) reported that the potential of digital technologies in enabling students to monitor their academic progress cannot be overemphasized. Haleem, Javaid, Qadri and Suman (2022) stated digital technologies have instructional abilities to significantly alter the field of teaching and learning in tertiary institutions. Haleem et al. pointed out that digital technologies enhance sharing of knowledge, serve as assessor, and co-creator of information. Students' lives have been simpler as a result of digital technological advancements as they can leverage on them to prepare presentations and projects utilizing a variety of software and tools rather than pen and paper. Findings of the study likewise revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education students in universities and those in colleges of education on the influence of digital technologies in enhancing their academic self-monitoring strategies for acquisition of employability skills. This finding is in agreement with that of Yot-Domínguez and Marcelo (2017) which revealed that digital technologies enhance undergraduate students' self-regulated learning irrespective of institutional type.

### **Conclusion**

The students of today are among the first to have grown up with digital technologies such as computers, email, the internet, mobile phones, and instant messaging among others, and are therefore referred to as "digital natives." It is now evident that today's think and absorb information fundamentally differently than their forebears as a result of this pervasive environment and the sheer volume of their connection with it. The findings showed that business education students agree that digital technologies in enhancing their academic goal-setting and self-monitoring strategies for acquisition of employability skills. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that effective use of digital technologies in learning of business education courses is capable of enhancing students' self-regulated learning strategies for employability skills acquisition in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Business education lecturers should encourage their student to use digital technologies to set academic goals and self-monitor their learning progress instead for using them mainly for non-academic purposes. This will help them to acquire relevant employability skills.
2. Seminars and workshops should be organized by Business Education Departments in tertiary institutions to enlighten students on how to effectively utilize digital technologies to self-regulate their learning which will help to improve their academic performance, and skill acquisition.

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