



SKILL ACQUISITION IN BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME: A PREDICTOR FOR EFFECTIVE JOB PERFORMANCE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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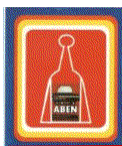
Abstract

The study was carried out to examine how skill acquisition in business education programme can predict job performance of business education graduates in the digital era. Three research questions were raised for the study and one hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population was made up of the entire staff of Business education department, non academic staff (graduates of business education only), ministry of tertiary education and ministry of education and human capital development staff of Kwara state (graduates of Business education only). Randomly, 160 respondents were used as sample using purposive sampling technique. The instrument used for the study was structured questionnaire validated by experts. A reliability test was conducted with the use of Cronbach Alpha which yielded reliability coefficient values of 0.88, 0.81, and 0.76 respectively and was considered adequate. Mean rating was used to answer the three research questions while regression analysis statistics at 0.05 levels of significance was used to test the only null hypothesis. It was revealed that the knowledge acquired in business education programme is enough to make Business education graduates perform better in the digital era. It was recommended among others that Management of various schools need to realise that the world is in a digital era, therefore the need for acquiring various modern technologies for business education programmes for best job performance. It was also recommended that the focus of the curriculum of business education programme should be on skill acquisition rather than theory knowledge.

Key words: Skill Acquisition, Business Education, Predictor, Job Performance, DigitalERA

Introduction

Acquisition of skills in various fields have become so important that no one would be able to perform effectively without the required knowledge, skills and competencies expected of him to function in his job. This is the reason why every individual who intend to excel in his field must strive



to acquire the required skills that is needed and will make him perform better and rule over his contemporaries in the field of job. Graduates of business education therefore require a number of skills while in school that will make them a complete business educator as well as perform effectively in whatever job they find themselves, either as a self employed person, employees of various organisations and even as an employer of labour.

Business Education is a course that prepares students for entry into and advancement in jobs within business and it is equally important because it prepares students to handle their own business affairs and to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. Njoku (1997) sees Business Education as that facet of educational training that helps the individual to acquire relevant skills needed for living. However, in 2006, Njoku gave another definition as an educational programme that equips an individual with functional and suitable skills, knowledge, attitude and value that would enable him/her operates in the environment he/she finds himself/herself.

Business education is a component of vocational education. It is offered in Nigeria schools at the secondary and tertiary levels of education. Business education leads to development, understanding and acquisition of skills and attitude which will enable the recipient to enter into business world or teaching profession in order to earn a living (Sulayman, Hamzat & Abdul, 2016). Also, Utoware and kren-ikidi (2014) supported this by maintaining that business education is a component of vocational technical education programme that prepares an individual for career in business and also to be intelligent consumer of economic goods and services.

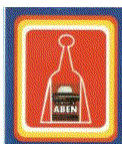
In line with this, Nwazor (2014) also maintain that business education is an educational programme that is offered in higher institutions which prepares students for careers in business through inculcating in them skills, knowledge about or useful in business world.

It will not be an over statement if we conclude that business education can ensure individuals' full employment as a result of adequate training and effective skill acquisition acquired in the field. According to Abdulkadri (2011), the remarkable characteristics of business education programme is that its products can function effectively as self employed, employees in various organisations and as employers of labour.

Skill is an essential aspect of human life that a successful person cannot do without. It is so important that it forms the foundation of any business venture or enterprises that anyone may engage in. For an individual to excel in business, job or any enterprise he find himself, he must be proficient in his area of business that will make him stand out among many.

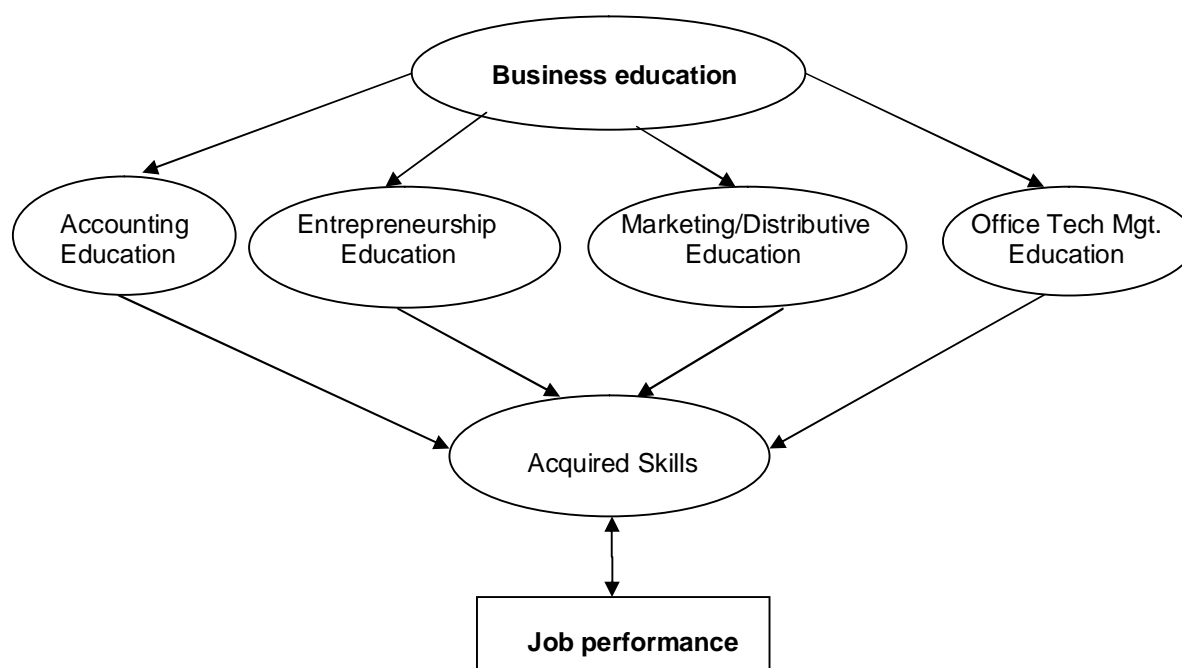
According to Bolt-Lee and Foster (2003), Skill is the art of possessing the ability to power, authority, or competency etc. to do the task required of an individual on the job. This however entails that only the skilled person can perform the job expected of him accordingly. Tajudeen (2014) sees skill as a special ability or expertise to do something well, which is by learning and having undergone a particular training exercise. Okoro and Ursula (2012) stated that two fundamental issues arise when a skill is to be acquired, the first is the conditions which promote acquisition and the second is the change that will occur when the skill is acquired. However, when an individual set out to learn a new skill, he usually starts with a communicable programme of instruction. Good learners do not jump into an operation without first receiving the necessary verbal instruction. Thus the instruction given in bits, units modules in stages, perhaps must be fused together to form a skilled performance. (Okoro and Ursula, 2012).

Skill acquisition is very essential in every society and nation at large. The type and level of skills acquired is what determine the level of productivity of a nation. This therefore mean that graduates in various field of study are expected to acquire the required skill in their fields which will make them proficient in the job they may find themselves after graduating from the school. According Uju (2017), skill acquisition is the ability to be trained on a particular task or function and become expert in it. In business education programme, acquisition of various skills is very important without



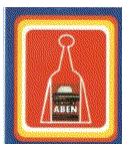
which the graduate will not be able to perform in the area of business education programmes such as Accounting education, Marketing and distributive education and Office technology and management education. Odewumi, Bakshak and Felix (2014) stated that there are numerous skills necessary for business educators and are acquired in the course of their study. These include: Arithmetic skills, communication skills, book-keeping skills, typing skills, filing skills as well as other skills like marketing skill which give the students insight to various strategies used in relating to customers.

Any graduate of business education that is proficient in these skills will not have problem in doing well with his job and in whatever business enterprises he finds himself in the near future. It is very important to state here that part of the skills expected of graduates of business education is an entrepreneurial skill which is aimed at equipping them the right attitudes and competences in order to perform very well in any job they find themselves and also be job creators. The entrepreneurship training in the various Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education in the country is geared towards assisting students to develop positive attitudes, innovative and skill towards self-reliance rather than depending on government to provide employment for them (Banabo and Ndiomu, 2011). Areas of skill acquisition in Business education programme.



Salami and Kehinde (2022)

The Digital Era is characterized by technology which increases the speed and breadth of knowledge turnover within the economy and society. The process of moving a business into the digital age is known as digitalization, this involve embracing the technologies that are relevant to improving your organization and enabling it to become more competitive in the market place.



The progress achieved globally into the digital age is inevitable. Therefore, for businesses to survive and compete favourably in this era, there must be an understanding of the necessary required innovations.

Verobiova (2021) noted that the way we live, work, and play has drastically changed in about past half-century ago. The initial 9-5 economies have been replaced with globally integrated 24/7 service offerings. Digital age consumers now have access to a number of services and products that would have previously been considered available only in the realms of science fiction.

Ensuring that everyone has the right skills for an increasingly digital and globalised world is essential to promote inclusive labour markets and to spur innovation, productivity and growth. According to Grundke et al. (2017), several types of skills are needed; such as technical and professional skills, including ICT specialist skills for workers who drive innovation and to support digital infrastructures and the functioning of the digital eco-system; ICT generic skills for workers and citizens alike to be able to use digital technologies; and ICT complementary “soft” skills, such as leadership, communication and teamwork skills, required for the expanding number of opportunities for ICT-enabled collaborative work (OECD, 2016).

Forbes Business Council (2021) stated that there are 14 critical career skills to cultivate in the digital era, which are: **collaborating and self-managing, building a digital toolbox, hiring and managing a 'new wave' team, working remotely as a team, managing the email inbox, interacting with the digital world, using communication platforms, complex problem solving, fostering digital dexterity, continuously learning, mastering the basics, adapting and learning quickly, navigating user interfaces, and referencing information.**

Statement of Problem

The purpose of attending educational institutions is to undergo necessary training and acquire required skills and competencies that are expected to make one function effectively and efficiently in the job the person may find himself after graduating from the school. The skills acquired could go a long way in determining how well a graduate perform in his jobs particularly in the digital era. Despite the efforts being put in place by the state and federal government at various levels of education, the required skills expected of the graduates of business education in various schools of higher learning is still lacking. Many are leaving the schools without necessary required skills. These have made many graduates to perform below expectation in their job. Therefore the study intends to investigate the level of skill acquisition in Business Education programme and how such could predict effective job performance of Business Education graduates more importantly in this period of digital era.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of skills acquired by business education graduates in the digital era?
2. What is the extent of proficiency of business education graduates job performance in the digital era?
3. To what extent do skills acquired in business education programmes predict job performance in the digital era?

Research Hypothesis

1. Skills acquired in Business education programmes does not significantly predict their job performance in the digital era.

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population for the study comprises the entire staff of Business education department, non academic staff (graduates of business education



only), ministry of tertiary education and ministry of education and human capital development staff of Kwara state (graduates of Business education only). Randomly, 160 respondents were used as sample using purposive sampling technique.

The instrument used for collecting data for the study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. A four point rating scale of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent was used. The instrument was tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha reliability method which yielded coefficient values of 0.88, 0.81, and 0.76 respectively. The questionnaire was administered on the respondents and all were collected back. Mean rating was used to answer the three research questions while regression analysis statistics at 0.05 levels of significance was used to test the only null hypothesis.

Results

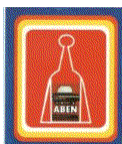
Answers to Research Questions

1. What is the extent of skills acquired by business education graduates in the digital era?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent of skills acquired by Business education graduates in the digital era

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Business education graduates acquire required digital skills while in school	3.00	.000	HE
2	The skills required are imparted to Business education students before graduating from the programme	3.25	.957	HE
3	Business education lecturers are not up-to-date in the know how in the digital era	1.25	1.957	LE
4	The attitude of Business education students does not encourage the impartation of the required skills in the digital; era	1.88	.857	LE
5	Graduates of Business education do not consider digital skills necessary while on the programme.	2.96	1.019	HE
6	Business education graduates acquire appropriate skill in the use of internet	2.71	1.054	HE
7	Business education graduates acquire relevant skills in the use of e-mails	2.760	1.305	HE
8	Business education graduates acquire relevant electronic accounting skill before graduating from the programme	2.96	1.206	HE
9	Business education graduates acquire electronic commerce skill before graduating from the programme	2.62	1.187	HE
10	Business education graduates were exposed to various digital soft-ware skills before graduating from the programme	3.00	.000	HE
	Weighted Average	2.94	.106	HE

Table 1 reveals that the respondents indicated high extent of the skills acquired by Business education graduates on the following item: Business education graduates acquire required digital skills while in school (mean rating of 3.00 ,The skills required are imparted to Business education students before graduating from the programme (mean rating =3.25), Graduates of Business education do not consider digital skills necessary while on the programme (mean rating = 2.96),Business education graduates acquire appropriate skill in the use of internet (mean rating =



2.71), Business education graduates acquire relevant electronic accounting skill before graduating from the programme (mean rating =2.96), Business education graduates acquire electronic commerce skill before graduating from the programme (mean rating = 2.62), Business education graduates were exposed to various digital soft-ware skills before graduating from the programme. On the other hand, the following negative items indicated a low rating: Business education lecturers are not up-to-date in the know how in the digital era (mean rating 1.25), and The attitude of Business education students does not encourage the impartation of the required skills in the digital era (mean rating 1.88) Summarily, the skills acquired by business education graduates in the digital era is to a high extent as the weighted average mean revealed 2.94 and standard deviation of 0.106.

2. What is the extent of proficiency of Business education graduates job performance in the digital era?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent of proficiency of business education graduates job performance in the digital era

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Business education graduates are skilful in handling automated machines in the digital era	3.45	1.414	HE
2	Business education graduates exhibit professionalism in job performance in the digital era	2.50	.836	HE
3	The knowledge acquired in business education programme is enough to make Business education graduates perform better in the digital era.	2.12	.834	LE
4	Business education graduates perform better in the handling of organisations accounts and control system	2.69	1.087	HE
5	Business education graduates are skilful in the use of E-mail to impact knowledge to students and relationship with colleagues	2.78	1.050	HE
6	Business education graduates are skilful in the use of whatsapp to impact knowledge to students and relationship with their colleagues	2.65	.933	HE
7	Business education graduates are skilful in the use of Twitter to impact knowledge to students and relationship with their colleagues	2.72	.984	HE
8	Business education graduates are skilful in the application of electronic/digital accounting to impact knowledge to students and relate with clients	2.93	1.314	HE
9	Business education graduates are skilful in the use of internet facilities to impact knowledge to students and relationship with clients	2.63	1.116	HE
10	Business education graduates are skilful in the application of electronic/digital commerce to impact knowledge to students and relate with clients	3.42	1.216	HE
	Weighted Average	2.60	.994	HE

Table 2 reveals that the respondents indicated high extent of proficiency of business education graduates job performance in the digital era on the following item: Business education graduates are skilful in handling automated machines in the digital era (mean rating =3.45), Business education graduates exhibit professionalism in job performance in the digital era (mean rating =2.50), Business education graduates perform better in the handling of organisations accounts and



control system (mean rating =2.69), Business education graduates are skilful in the use of E-mail to impact knowledge to students and relationship with colleagues (mean rating = 2.78),Business education graduates are skilful in the use of whatsapp to impact knowledge to students and relationship with their colleagues 9 mean rating =2.65), Business education graduates are skilful in the use of Twitter to impact knowledge to students and relationship with their colleagues (mean rating = 2.72), Business education graduates are skilful in the application of electronic/digital accounting to impact knowledge to students and relate with clients (mean rating 2.83), Business education graduates are skilful in the use of internet facilities to impact knowledge to students and relationship with clients (mean rating =2.63), Business education graduates are skilful in the application of electronic/digital commerce to impact knowledge to students and relate with clients (mean rating =3.42) Summarily, the proficiency of business education graduates job performance in the digital era is to a high extent as the weighted average mean revealed 2.60 and standard deviation of 0.994. In essence, the result reveals that; the knowledge acquired in business education programme is enough to make Business education graduates perform better in the digital era.

3. To what extent do skills acquired in business education programmes predict job performance in the digital era?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on how skills acquired in business education programmes predict job performance in the digital era

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Business education graduates access necessary skills that will make them perform better in the digital era while in school.	3.00	.707	HE
2	Skills acquired in SIWES programme in Business education determine their job performance in the digital era.	2.50	1.500	HE
3	The use of various social media application while in the school determines the job performance of Business education graduates in the digital era.	2.75	.899	HE
4	The teaching of entrepreneurial courses and the knowledge acquired is a determinant of Business education graduates job performance in the digital era.	3.14	1.121	HE
5	Acquaintance with Business education laboratory by students while in the programme is a determinant of Business education graduates job performance in the digital era.	3.21	1.120	HE
6	Digital accounting skills acquired in school determines the job performance of Business education graduates	3.36	.861	HE
7	Electronic commerce skills acquired in school determines the job performance of Business education graduates	2.80	.997	HE
8	Skills acquired in E-business in school determine the job performance of Business education graduates	2.92	.967	HE
9	Appropriate skills in the use of various digital soft-wares determines the effectiveness in job performance	2.53	1.183	HE
	Weighted Average	2.98	1.176	HE

Table 3 reveals that the respondents indicated high extent of how skills acquired in business education programmes predict job performance in the digital era on the following items: Business



education graduates access necessary skills that will make them perform better in the digital era while in school. (mean rating = .3.00), Skills acquired in SIWES programme in Business education determine their job performance in the digital era. (mean rating = 2.50), The use of various social media application while in the school determines the job performance of Business education graduates in the digital era. (mean rating = 2.75),The teaching of entrepreneurial courses and the knowledge acquired is a determinant of Business education graduates job performance in the digital era (mean rating =3.14), Acquaintance with Business education laboratory by students while in the programme is a determinant of Business education graduates job performance in the digital era. (mean rating = 3.21), Digital accounting skills acquired in school determines the job performance of Business education graduates (mean rating = 3.36),Electronic commerce skills acquired in school determines the job performance of Business education graduates (mean rating = 2.80), Skills acquired in E-business in school determine the job performance of Business education graduates(mean rating = 2.92), Appropriate skills in the use of various digital soft-wares determines the effectiveness in job performance(mean rating = 2.53). Generally, table 3 shows that the skills acquired in business education programmes predict job performance in the digital era as it is perceived to a very high extent by the respondent with the weighted mean of 2.98 and standard deviation of 1.176.

Hypothesis Testing:

Skills acquired in business education programmes does not significantly predict their job performance in the digital era.

Table 4: Results of Regression Analysis on Skill acquisition in Business Education programme as a predictor for effective job performance of Business Education graduates in the Digital Era Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.783 ^a	.742	.794	8.96583
a. Predictors: (Constant), VAR				

provides the *R* and *R*² values. The *R* value represents the simple correlation and is 0.783 (the "R" Column), which indicates a high degree of correlation. The *R*² value (the "R Square" column) indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable Job performance, can be explained by the independent variable Skills acquired in Business education programme. In this case, 74.2% can be explained, which is very large.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	54182633.73	1	.579	57.773	.000 ^b
	Residual	3896196	158	24.659		
	Total	3896.775	159			

a. Dependent Variable: GRADE

b. Predictors: (Constant), VAR

The result from the above table indicates that the regression model predicts the dependent variable significantly. As the statistical significance of the regression model, *p* < 0.000, therefore, regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable (i.e., it is a good fit for the data).



Discussion of Findings

The result of the finding revealed that the extent of skills acquired by business education graduates in the digital era is high. Skills are special ability or expertise to do something well, which is by learning and having undergone a particular training exercise. This finding is supported by Uju (2017), who noted that skill acquisition is the ability to be trained on a particular task or function and become expert in it. In business education programme, acquisition of various skills is very important without which the graduate will not be able to perform in the area of business education programmes such as Accounting education, Marketing and distributive education and Office technology and management education.

Table 2 revealed that the respondents indicated high extent of proficiency of business education graduates job performance in the digital era. In essence, the result indicated that; the knowledge acquired in business education programme is enough to make Business education graduates perform better in the digital era. This finding is in line with Odewumi, Bakshak and Felix (2014) who stated that there are numerous skills necessary for business educators and are acquired in the course of their study. These include: Arithmetic skills, communication skills, book-keeping skills, typing skills, filing skills as well as other skills like marketing skill which give the students insight to various strategies used in relating to customers.

The study also found that the skills acquired in business education programmes predict job performance in the digital era as it is perceived to a very high extent by the respondent with the weighted mean of 2.98 and standard deviation of 1.176.

Finally, the result of the tested hypothesis indicated that the regression model predicts the dependent variable significantly. In essence skills acquired in business education programmes do significantly predict their job performance in the digital era. Verobiova (2021) noted that the way we live, work, and play has drastically changed in about past half-century ago, therefore, for businesses to survive and compete favourably in this era, there must be an understanding of the necessary required innovations. This is supported by Grundke et al. (2017), who conclude that several types of skills are needed; such as technical and professional skills, including ICT specialist skills for workers who drive innovation and to support digital infrastructures and the functioning of the digital ecosystem.

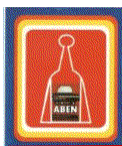
Conclusion

This paper investigated Skill acquisition in Business Education programme: A predictor for effective job performance of Business Education graduates in the Digital Era. It was revealed that the skills acquired in business education programmes predict job performance in the digital era as it is perceived to a very high extent by the respondent. This is an indication that skill acquisition is very important to the performance of business education graduates in whatever job they may find themselves. In essence, we can conclude that skill is an essential aspect of human life that a successful person cannot do without. It is so important that it forms the foundation of any business venture or enterprises that anyone may engage in. For an individual to excel in business, job or any enterprise he find himself, he must be proficient in his area of business that will make him stand out among many.

Recommendations

Base on the findings of this paper, the following recommendations are made:

1. Business education lecturers should be equipped with varied and up-to-date digital skills that can be imparted to the students for better job performance in the digital era.
2. Management of various schools need to realise that the world is in a digital era, therefore the need for acquiring various modern technologies that can bring about proficiency in job performance by business education graduates becomes very important.



3. The need to ensure that various graduates of business education engage in students works experience scheme (SIWES) programme before leaving the school for more exposure into the real work situation. Also, involvement of business education students in the operation of business education practicum centres becomes necessary for better job performance in the digital era.

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