



DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS ACQUISITION: ESSENTIAL TOOL FOR BUSINESS EDUCATORS' RELEVANCE IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN IMO STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study focused on digital literacy skills acquisition as essential tool for business educators' relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State Nigeria. Specifically, the study was designed to determine the digital skills that should be acquired by business educators, the constraints in the acquisition of digital skills and the likely solutions to the problems confronting business educators in the acquisition of digital skills for relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study and one hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study consists of the 56 business educators in tertiary institutions in Imo State where business education and office technology and management programme are offered. The entire population was used for the study since the number is small and relatively manageable, hence there was no sampling. A three sectioned research questionnaire was developed by researchers and validated by experts. The results of the analyses revealed that digital literacy skills acquisition remains essential tool for business educators' relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State; that acquisition of digital literacy skill by business educators has suffered a lot of constraints, however concert efforts will adequately address the problems. Based on the findings, it was recommended that every business educator should take personal responsibility to ensure the he/she is acquires relevant digital skills essential to remain relevant in the current scheme of things

Keywords: *Digital literacy, skill acquisition, business educators, relevance*

Introduction

Education is the bedrock for survival, growth and development of any society. It is relevant to individual and societal growth and contributes significantly to the economic, social, political and cultural development of the human society world-wide. This is why Okolocha and Odimmega (2019) described it as an instrument per excellence for sustainable national development and global competitiveness. It is a basic necessity of life and an important factor which brings about changes both in citizens and the nation. Education enables people to compete favorably with the best of the world and it has a long-standing connection with the economy. According to Agi and Yellow (2013), education is critical to the development of human resources, impartation of appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude. It is basic for transformation, industrialization and Socio-economic advancement.



Tertiary education in Nigeria recognize the fact that mastering the basic skills and concepts of new technologies as the core of education must be the major plank through which transformation agenda in education could be realized. This is because education is a catalyst for any meaningful change in the society. Education, according to Umoru (2015) is the tool for integration of individual effectively into a competitive society so that the individual can achieve self-realization, develop national consciousness, promote unity, and strive for social, economic, political, scientific, cultural and technological process. In the opinion of Ekwe, Udemba and Ojuro (2019) education is vital instrument that liberates the people from ignorance and stimulates development. From the forgoing, this can be achieved through business education programme.

Amoor (2010) noted that business education plays a significant role in the economic development by providing knowledge and skills to the learners, thereby, enabling them to adequately impart knowledge into others, and handle sophisticated office technologies and information systems. The goal of business education is primarily to produce competent, skillful and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work. It has as its primary aim, the preparation of people for roles in enterprises such roles could be as employees, entrepreneurs and employers or simply as self-employed.

This implies that business educators must be will equipped with the required skills and abilities to inculcate in its recipients attitudes, knowledge, skills, values that are required in the world of work. This is because no one can truly offer what he/she does not have. Therefore if students must be equipped with relevant skills and competence to meet the ever changing world of work, skill acquisition among business educators are inevitable. Business educators according to Enang and Okute (2019) will need to meet the demands of the global economy by exemplifying and embedding in instruction, the mastery of these skills, also known as the 21st century skills such as (critical thinking, technological skills, leadership skills, collaboration and teamwork, creativity, ICT and entrepreneurial skills) through infusing these strategies that they are encouraging their students to excel in. educators will have to take conscious efforts to communicate and collaborate with each other and with students, become flexible with managing new classroom dynamics; be able to support and enable independent student learning, and be willing to adapt their teaching styles to accommodate new pedagogical approaches to learning. In essence, teachers will need professional development and strong support systems to acquire required digital skills for continued relevance in tertiary institutions.

Digital literacy skills refer to an individual's ability to find, evaluate, and clearly communicate information through typing and other media on various digital platforms It is evaluated by an individual's grammar, composition, typing skills and ability to produce text, images, audio and designs using technology (Wikipedia, 2021). Digital literacy skills according to Katz in Salifu (2019) refer to specific abilities in the use of electronic office gadgets that are required for effective office operation and administration. California Emerging Technology Fund (2008) defined that the digital literacy is ability to use digital technology and communications tools, and/or networks to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, create and communicate information in order to function in a knowledge society. Ilomäki, Kantosalo, and Lakkala (2011) stated that the digital competence is the most recent concept describing technology-related skills. In recent years, several terms have been used to describe the skills and competence of using digital technologies, such as ICT skills, technology skills, information technology skills, 21st century skills, information literacy, digital literacy, and digital skills (Piatip, Chantana and Paitoon, 2015).

Digital skills make the differences between updated soft-skilled business education graduates and out-dated skilled business education graduates. Digital skills cover all the electronic office competencies needed by office employees. Digital skills are the skills one needs to study and work in our fast-evolving digital world. Such skills and capabilities according Salifu (2019) include: learning



how to use and adapt the right digital devices, applications, software and systems, finding, reviewing, organizing and sharing information effectively.

The acquisition of digital skills is a means of increasing the productive power of nations. This is important because when efficient and skilful hands are employed in any field of human endeavour, high productivity is usually achieved. Economically, maximum skills acquisition by business education lecturers and others will help to enrich the Nigerian society and in this way, make possible sustainable development. Udo and Bako (2014) opined that a rich nation is one that is capable of meeting the economic, social, moral and political needs of the citizenry.

The 21st century economy needs highly trained and skilled human capital. Educational institutions are required to turn out qualified graduates to meet the needs of employers and national development through the inculcation of relevant skills. The goal of business education is to provide students with hands-on, technical training that prepares them for the rapidly evolving 21st century workforce. With continued development of new telecommunication gadgets and devices business education graduates must be prepared to learn new and modern technologically oriented office procedures. Renaissance (2019) observed that business educators must shift their focus more on digital literacy skills in school because today students are looking to the internet as a key source of information. Students who are digitally literate know to find and consume digital contents. The author maintained that digital literacy skills enable business teachers and students to understand the basic internet safety such as creating strong passwords, understanding and using privacy settings, and knowing what to share or not on social media. In today's digital world, nearly every career requires digital communication at some point so equipping student with the skill to effectively and responsibly find, evaluate, communicate, share online contents is key to their future.

In a similar remark, Salifu (2019) posited that as new business and opportunities spring daily, there is need for business educators to nurture their students well for the new challenges by acquiring digital skills for the use of these new technologies. In other words, business graduates who are not well equipped skillfully to face the new challenges occasioned by new technological advancement are sure to be embarrassed as their digital skill deficiencies will render them irrelevant in their discharge of routine office functions. Hence the present study is designed to find out the digital literacy skills essential for business educators to remain relevant in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

Statement of the Problem

Innovation in business and technology has created glaring need for teachers to acquire more skills in order to bring up the caliber of graduates that will fit squarely into the modern challenging work trends. Business education in this era of new technology requires competent business educators who are well equipped with current skills, knowledge and attitudes required in the business world. Therefore, business educators are expected to possess basic digital literacy skills which are considered essential for remarkable impact and relevance in the current scheme of things in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

However, Nwokocha and Onwuchekwa (2014) maintained that despite the enthusiasm towards the use of digital technology, and the huge investment in the acquisition of these tools, the potentials of increased instructional effectiveness in academic relevance, the use of new technologies seem to have little impact in the classroom because some business educators are showing signs of apathy towards digital technologies. In a similar view Okoli and Wagbara (2016) noted that many teacher lack knowledge and skills to use digital technologies and in addition are not enthusiastic about the changes due to inadequate training to meet up with technological flux. Therefore, the concern of the study is to identify the digital literacy skills essential for business educators to maintain relevance in tertiary institutions.



Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine digital literacy skills acquisition essential for business educators' relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State. Specifically, the study sought to determine

1. The digital skills that should be acquired by business educators for relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State
2. The constraints in the acquisition of digital skills by business educators for relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State
3. The likely solutions to the problems confronting business educators in the acquisition of digital skills for relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State

Research questions

1. What are the digital skills that should be acquired by business educators to enhance relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State?
2. What are the constraints faced in the acquisition of digital skills by business educators for enhanced relevance in tertiary institution in Imo State?
3. What are the likely solutions to the problems confronting business educators in the acquisition of digital skills for relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significance difference between the mean rating of male and female business educators on digital literacy skill acquisition as essential tool for business educators relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

Method

The research design used for this study is survey design. The population of the study comprised 56 business educators in tertiary institutions in Imo State Nigeria where business education programmes are offered. The entire population was used for the study since the number is small and manageable, hence there was no sampling.

A 23 item questionnaire was used as instrument for the study. The research instrument has two parts – Part A and Part B. Part A contains information on the respondent's biographic data. Part B is divided into three sections in line with research questions raised for the study. The instrument was structured to elicit information from the assessment of respondents on a 4 point rating scale as follows:

Strongly Agreed	(SA)	4
Agreed	(A)	3
Disagreed	(D)	2
Strongly Disagreed	(SD)	1

The instrument was validated by three experts in business education while the reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha (α) reliability test and overall reliability coefficient of 0.89 was obtained. The questionnaire constructed was administered by the researcher to the respondents with the aid of research assistants. In analyzing the data collected from the instrument administered, simple mean was used to analyze the responses for research question while t-test was used to test the hypothesis formulated for the study. The Decision Rule is this: Any item with a mean rating that is equal to or greater than 2.5 was considered 'Agreed' while any item with a mean rating that is less than 2.5 was considered 'Disagreed'. The null hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics at $p < 0.05$



Results

In analyzing the data for the study, the items were grouped according to the research questions.

Research Question 1

What are the digital skills that should be acquired by business educators to enhance relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State?

To answer Research Question 1, data collected were analyzed and the results of the computation are shown in the table below:

Table 1: Respondents' Rating on Digital Skill Acquisitions

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Remark</i>
1	Ability to use office application for creating, editing, revision and printing of text materials	3.38	Agreed
2.	Ability to use electronic image system to capture, store, process and retrieve images of documents.	3.32	Agreed
3.	Ability to use online terminals and electronic collaboration systems to organize and participate in zoom meeting and online functions.	2.92	Agreed
4.	Ability to create, email account and use same to send and receive messages with attachment.	3.28	Agreed
5.	Ability to access e-books, e-journals and other educational publications.	3.15	Agreed
6.	Ability to chat and share ideas with other academics through social media platforms to collaborate on problem solving.	3.62	Agreed
7.	Ability to deliver lectures through Reddit and skill soft application.	3.61	Agreed
8.	Responding properly to educational discussion through twitter and other similar platforms.	3.80	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3.39	Agreed

Source: Field Research Data (2022)

Table I above indicated digital literacy skills business educators should acquire to maintain relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State. All the items received mean scores above the cut off-point of 2.50. Therefore, the respondents agreed with all the items in this clusters are digital literacy skills business educators should acquire to maintain relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State

Table 2: Respondents' Ratings on Constraints to Digital Skill Acquisition

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
9	Poor anticipation of new skills by business educators	2.68	Agreed



10	Reluctance to take responsibility for self development by business educators.	3.22	Agreed
11	Inadequate collaboration with foreign colleagues	2.92	Agreed
12	Poor electronic and virtual infrastructures for digital skills acquisitions in schools.	3.28	Agreed
13	Poor network system and technical support	3.15	Agreed
14	Unwillingness to embrace change.	2.72	Agreed
15	Poor funding of education occasioned by little or no support from business community and government.	2.61	Agreed
16	Excess workload on business educators	2.80	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.05	Agreed

Source: Field research data (2022)

The data in Table 2 presents the constraints to digital skill acquisition by business educators for enhanced relevance in tertiary institution in Imo State. All the items in this cluster received mean rating above the cut-off point of 2.50. Therefore, the respondents agreed that all the items in this clusters are the constraints to digital skill acquisition by business educatorsfor enhanced relevance in tertiary institution in Imo State.

Table 3: Respondents' Ratings on Solutions to the Problems

S/N	Items	Mean	Remarks
17	Building of meaningful digital literacy centers in schools	3.23	Agreed
18	Provisions digital skill resources for free	3.16	Agreed
19	Constant in-service training program like seminar, conferences, workshops on digital literacy or skill development	3.13	Agreed
20	Non-governmental organizations should collaborate with schools in the provision of digital resources	3.22	Agreed
21	Provision of adequate security for digital resources	2.70	Agreed
22	Acquirement of basic digital resources by every business educator	3.08	Agreed
23	Provision of stable power supply	3.07	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.08	Agreed



Source: Field research data (2022)

The data in Table 3 indicate the likely solutions to the problems confronting business educators in the acquisition of digital skills for relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State. All the items received mean rating above the cut-off point above 2.50. This implies that the respondents agreed that all the items in this cluster are the likely solutions to the problems confronting business educators in the acquisition of digital skills for relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

Test of Hypothesis

There is no significance difference between the mean rating of male and female business educators on digital literacy skill acquisition as essential tool for business educators relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

Table 4
The Summary of the t-test Analysis of Business Educators' Mean Ratings on Digital Literacy Skill Acquisition as Essential Tool for Business Educators Relevance

Gender	N	X	S	t-cal	α	Df	t-crit	Remark
Male	24	3.31	1.28					Not significant
Female	37	3.24	0.84	0.68	0.05	59	1.96	

The data in Table 4 revealed the t-test analysis of responses of male and female business educators on digital literacy skill acquisition as essential tool for business educators' relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State with mean scores of 3.31 and 3.24 respectively. The t-calculated value of 0.68 is less than the t-tabulated value of 1.96 at 59 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected which implies that, there is no significance difference between the mean rating of male and female business educators on digital literacy skill acquisition as essential tool for business educators relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

4 Discussion of Results

The results of the analysis of the data relating to the first research question indicated the digital literacy skills business educators should acquire to maintain relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State. The findings revealed that the following digital literacy skills are essential for business educators' relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State. They include ability to: use office applications for creating, editing, revision and printing of text materials, use electronic image system to capture, store, process and retrieve images of documents, use online terminals and electronic collaboration systems to organize and participate in zoom meeting and online functions, use online terminals and electronic collaboration systems to organize and participate in zoom meeting and online functions. Other digital literacy skills as revealed by the study include Ability to: use online terminals and electronic collaboration systems to organize and participate in online (zoom) meeting and online functions, chat and share ideas with other academics through social media platforms to collaborate on problem solving, respond properly to educational discussion through twitter and other similar platforms and deliver lectures through Reddit and skill soft applications

This was in line with Mshelia (2019) who held that in order to be relevant in today's global workplace, computer and digital skills are relevant for all business educators, students and secretaries as most business and office functions have been simplified through automation.



The result of the analysis of data with regard to the second research question indicated the constraints to digital literacy skill acquisition by business educators for enhanced relevance in tertiary institution in Imo State. The constraints according to the findings of the study include: poor anticipation of new skills by business educators, reluctance to take responsibility for self development, inadequate collaboration with foreign colleagues and poor electronic and virtual infrastructures for digital skills acquisitions in schools. Other constraints as revealed by the study include poor network system and technical support, unwillingness to embrace change, poor funding of education occasioned by little or no support from business community and government and excess workload on business educators. This result is in agreement with the position of Oyewole (2019) who observed that very little or no training is given to business education students in the use of internet and digital skills as a result of poor digital skill among educators, poor or non existent digital resource and infrastructure as well as limited time allocation for practical training.

The results of the analysis of the data relating to the third research question indicated the likely solutions to the problems confronting business educators in the acquisition of digital skills for relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State. The study revealed that building of meaningful digital literacy centers in schools, constant in-service training program like seminar, conferences, workshops on digital literacy or skill development, involvement of non-governmental organizations to collaborate with schools in the provision of digital resources, provision of adequate security and stable power supply for digital resources utilization by business educators will go a long way in ameliorating the constraints confronting digital literacy skill acquisition among business educators.

This finding is supported by Emode (2018) who maintained that adequate provision of digital and ICT facilities, provision of periodic training and retraining of business educators, adequate funding of business education programme will address a number of challenges facing business education programme in Nigeria.

The result of analysis of data relating to the test of hypothesis revealed that there is no significance difference between the mean rating of male and female business educators on digital literacy skill acquisition as essential tool for business educators relevance in tertiary institutions in Imo State. This result is in line with the finding of Tang (2018) who held that basic digital literacy skills acquisition is very important for all lecturers irrespective of gender and programme.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that digital literacy skills acquisition is essential for business educators to maintain relevance in tertiary institutions. Although, acquisition of digital literacy skill by business educators has suffered a lot of constraints, concert efforts such as building of meaningful digital literacy centers in schools, constant in-service training program, involvement of non-governmental organizations to collaborate with schools in the provision of digital resources, provision of adequate security and stable power supply for digital resources utilization by business educators will adequately address the limitations and reposition business educators and business education programme in line with digital realities in the global work place.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings made and the conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

- Every business educator should take personal responsibility to ensure that he/she acquires relevant digital skills essential to remain relevant in the current scheme of things.



- Business educators should always update their knowledge on digital skills through researches, training, workshops and conferences to meet the current trends and professional demands of the present times.
- Tertiary institutions should also collaborate with governmental and non government organization to provide digital resource center and facilities in schools for quality skill acquisition among educators and students

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