



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND EMPLOYABILITY POTENTIALS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS: TOWARDS PREPARING STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

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Abstract

This study determined the level of utilization of ICT tools and the level of teaching of ICT skills to undergraduate business education students. Two research questions were answered, while two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The area of the study was University of Calabar. Survey research design was adopted for the study. A questionnaire titled "information and communication technology and employability potentials' Questionnaire" (ICTAEPQ) was used for data collection. Three experts validated the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established using test retest method. The population of the study was 333 undergraduate business education students. The sample for the study was 167 undergraduate business education students selected using the stratified random sampling technique. Data collected were analyzed using mean scores for the research questions and One Way Analysis of Variance for the hypotheses. The findings revealed that lecturers did utilize ICT tools in teaching the students. Also there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education students in 200 level, 300 level and 400 level on the level of teaching of ICT skills to business education students in enhancing their employability potentials. Based on the findings some recommendations were made which included that the university authorities should make provision for e-library and ICT studio for teaching in business education programmes.

Introduction

Information and communication technology has become a household term globally and has brought radical changes in the way people live, learn and work. The last decade or two have witnessed tremendous changes in the way businesses and organizations operate due to the emergence of Information and communication technology (ICT). According to Ubani in Njoku (2006) ICT is the combination of technologies for collecting, storing, processing, communicating and delivering of information. Anyakoha in Ikwuka (2013) defined ICT as the electronic means of capturing, processing, storing and disseminating information. Presently classrooms are shifting away from rows of desks to an environment that promotes collaboration between students, teachers and learning devices.

Schein, Wilson and Keelan (2017) stated that in this era of 24-hour news cycle, the traditional once-a-day press conference featuring talking heads with a bunch of fancy titles has to be revamped and supplemented with Twitter posts, YouTube videos and the like made possible by ICT skill. The public according to the authors needs to be engaged in conversations and debate about issues affecting them. Schein et al went further to note that data from Statistics Canada (2010) showed that not only are more and more Canadians using the internet at home in their daily lives but that they are engaging in an ever more diverse array of online activities via ICT tools.

These activities show the growing integration of ICT skills into the peoples' personal and professional lives and the shift from what Schein, Wilson and Keelan addressed as "Web 1.0" platforms to the dynamic, interactive, and collaborative qualities of what they call Web 2.0. It is not an over statement to state that the new ICT environment is characterized by interactivity, user-generated content and multi-directional communication flows. Appraising the positive attribute of e-learning



via ICT Schein, Wilson and Keelan (2017) noted that the transition to Web 2.0 reflects a shift from a “one-way conversation” to a “multi-way conversation,” in which users participate as both creators and consumers of the data. The nature of the content produced by users vary considerably across platforms, from passively collected data that can be fed back into the system and reflected back to users in word clouds or other popularity metrics, to content actively created, propagated, and iteratively revised by users in wikis, blogs, and video-sharing or social networking sites, on RSS feeds or through the creation and circulation of “widgets,” “gadgets,” and “badges” that can be embedded in sites across the web.

Turnbull (2009) asserted that the user behaviours enabled by ICT architecture have shifted the boundaries between experts/information providers and lay people/information-consumers. Today information is increasingly created and co- created by users in a dynamic, collective manner. There has been a change in what individuals expect of information delivery services. Hesse (2009) argued that just as consumers now expect twenty-four hour access to information through ICT applications, they increasingly expect 24-hour customer service capabilities, including expanded self-serve options online. Consumers want to be able to bypass traditional gatekeepers of system information, whether they are booking flights or conducting bank transactions, expecting timely transparent access to information they want, in the form they want it in, and as they need it. Information-seekers adapted to today's media environment rely on other users' reviews.

Individuals and organizations according to Ajuluchukwu and Duruamaku-Dim (20013) due to ICT application have access to information that was previously neither available nor expected. The environment has changed from information insufficiency to information overload. This has been made possible by e-learning, a necessity for globalization, global learning and working. Globalization has brought nations and regions closer together as parties and as competitors in technology and entrepreneurship. Globalization provides that the education one receives be relevant irrespective of the environment one finds oneself. The Nigerian government realizing the need for educational revolution towards the actualization of better society has encouraged the introduction of teaching of ICT into Nigerian educational systems. This is to enable Nigerian graduates of the different educational systems obtain the required ICT skills needed to fit in perfectly in any part of the world in this era of globalization. Thus compete perfectly globally.

Globalization enhances the use of, and empowers in-depth awareness of ICT skills. ICT skills as defined by cedefop (2014) are the skills needed to use efficiently the elementary functions of information and communication technologies to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the internet. Dryden in Edozie, Olibie and Agu (2010) observed that educational systems all over the world are trying to come to grip with e-learning, but that nearly all are doing it wrongly, in that they are turning to graft 21st century technology on to a 19th century school model. They observed that even the best universities are making the same mistake of replacing black- and white overhead projector transparencies with one way power point colour presentations without empowering the students in ICT skills.

In this era of globalization it is necessary that all available means be used to achieve global competitiveness. Nigeria as a nation cannot afford to be left behind. There is an indication that, in this 21st Century, the search for job and employment will largely be based on the level of an individuals' acquired ICT skills. Individuals who do not possess these skills would be classified as outdated and not in tune with the present realities. ICT has brought about changes in all facets of human activities



both at home and offices. Thus, many of the offices and their inherent activities have gone digital. This however, requires a work force that is digitally inclined to work in such places hence the need to acquire employability skills by students while they are still in school.

Employability skills are job-related skills which enable employee to professionally carry out day to day routines. They are the skills that are required for securing jobs, sustaining in jobs and progressing in the jobs. According to the Integrated Employability Training Center (IETC) (2014), employability skills are range of abilities or competencies that one may develop during one's life through education, training, work experiences, interest and extra-curricular activities. Employability skills require that an individual be conversant with Information and communication technology skills and also be conversant with ICT tools.

Being conversant with ICT tools refers to the level of application of ICT tools in information sharing and dissemination to others as required. ICT tools have become powerful additions to the communication toolkit. They are currently utilized both as broadcasting platform to amplify messages, learning environment and as an entirely new way of collaborating and co-creating content with target audiences. There is a general belief that ICT tools such as social media, are rapidly transforming how the public relates and how individuals seek out and consume information. There is a shift in peoples' communication behaviours and their expectations about the degree of openness, transparency and responsiveness of the communication environment. Populations that are difficult to reach via traditional media usually due to geographic remoteness or other social factors can be targeted and effectively reached via ICT tools.

Information and communication technology skills refer to the level of technical know-how of ICT tools. It refers to the ability to use, identify and fix minor problems leading to malfunctioning of ICT tools. It also include the ability to connect other peripheral devices to computers. Ajuluchukwu (2015) explained that individuals are taught in business education programmes to be creative and be able to implement new ideas and ways of doing things. Graduates from business education programmes are expected to be job creators and not job seekers. With the prevailing skills in ICT which business education students are expected to acquire in the course of their study, they are expected to find employment on graduation, become self-employed or create job opportunities for others. Individuals in business education are not only encouraged to acquire knowledge but also use the knowledge.

This is supported by the second objective of business education programme in the National Universities Commission's Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards document of 2007. This objective has it that the business education programmes are aimed at producing manpower endowed with analytical and critical knowledge of the major factors in contemporary business world to influence the development of a virile economy. The government in pursuance of this objective has put some policies in place, like compulsory teaching of ICT in schools to ensure that students acquire the needed ICT skills which will enable them to be employed.

The teaching of ICT has also been incorporated into school's curriculum to ensure that these problems are put to the barest minimum. But this vision has not been realized as business education graduates from the different educational systems are seen moving around with files searching for jobs. This has prompted the need for this research on information and communication technology and employability potentials among undergraduate business education students towards preparing students for global competitiveness

Statement of the Problem

Information and communication technology skills competency are required virtually in every establishment to keep day to day running of activities. Thus lack of ICT skills and not being able



to communicate with ICT tools will put off a prospective business education graduate from being employed. The government has put some policies in place, like compulsory teaching of ICT skills in schools to ensure that students acquire the needed ICT knowledge which will enable them to be employed and also be in tune with global work requirement. The teaching of ICT has also been incorporated into schools' curriculum to ensure that these problems are put to the barest minimum, yet the problem of graduate unemployment continued. The researchers are thus concerned as to the level of business education students' ICT skills acquisition and business educators' use of ICT tools in teaching business education students in enhancing their employability potentials towards preparing students for global competitiveness. To this end this study is conceived.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to assess the level of information and communication technology and employability potentials among undergraduate business education students towards preparing students for global competitiveness. Specifically, the study found out the level of:

Use of ICT tools in teaching business education students in enhancing their employability potentials.

Teaching of ICT skills to business education students in enhancing their employability potentials.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study. What is the level of:

use of ICT tools in teaching business education students in enhancing their employability potentials?

teaching of ICT skills to business education students in enhancing their employability potentials?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education students in 200 level, 300 level and 400 level on the level of use of ICT tools in teaching business education students in enhancing their employability potentials?

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education students in 200 level, 300 level and 400 level on the level of teaching of ICT skills to business education students in enhancing their employability potentials?

Method

The research design used for this study was the survey research design. The study was specifically carried out using business education students in University of Calabar, Calabar. The population of the study was 332 undergraduate business education students from 200 level, 300 level and 400 level. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 167 for the study. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire constructed by the researchers titled "information and communication technology and employability potentials' Questionnaire" (ICTAEPQ). The questionnaire contained 21 items divided into two clusters. The questionnaire was structured on a modified five point Likert scale of Very Well Utilized, Well Utilized, Moderately Utilized, Not Well Utilized and Not Utilized on the one hand, and Very Well Taught (VWT), Well Taught (WT), Poorly Taught (PT), Very Poorly Taught (VPT) and Not Taught (NT).

Three experts from the University of Calabar validated the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established using test retest method. The reliability coefficient for the entire instrument was 0.82. Copies of the questionnaire were administered personally by the researchers. However only 165 copies were properly completed by the respondents and used for data analyses. The data obtained from the administered instrument were analyzed using weighted mean, standard deviation for the research questions and One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the hypotheses.

The following real limit of numbers were used to interpret the mean values attracted by each item of the questionnaire: Very Well Taught (VWT), 4.50 5.00. Well Taught (WT) 3.50 4.49 Poorly Taught (PT), 2.50 3.49, Very Poorly Taught (VPT) 1.50 2.49 and Not Taught (NT).0. 05 1.49. For the standard deviation, any value up to or above 1.00 was considered that the scores were not homogeneous. While the standard deviation value below 1.00 was considered that the scores were homogeneous. For the test of hypotheses, the decision was to reject the null hypotheses where the F calculated is greater than the table value. If otherwise, the hypothesis was not reject. The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 for the analyses.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the level of utilization of ICT tools in teaching business education students in enhancing their employability potentials?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Utilization of ICT Communication Tools in Teaching Business Education Students

S/N	Use of ICT Communication tools	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Social media sites	1.31	.46	NU
2.	Video conferencing	1.16	.38	NU
3.	Power point slides	1.50	.61	NWU
4.	Interactive videos	1.26	.57	NU
5.	Video cassette recorder	1.20	.40	NU
6.	Compact disk-audio player	1.18	.39	NU
7.	Overhead projectors	1.12	.33	NU
8.	Electronic chalkboard	1.21	.34	NU
Cluster Mean		1.24	.44	NU

Key: NU = Not Utilized, \bar{X} = mean, SD = Standard deviation

Data in Table 1 show that all the eight items used for the cluster are rated as not being utilized. All the standard deviation values are not up to 1.00. This standard deviation values show that there is homogeneity in the respondents' ratings.

Research Question 2

What is the level of teaching of ICT skills to business education students in enhancing their employability potentials?

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Teaching of ICT Skills

S/N	ICT Skills	X	SD	Remark
9.	Word processing skills	4.54	.50	VWT
10.	Web navigating skills	3.09	.63	PT
11.	Computer network application skills	2.71	.61	PT
12.	Window explorer skills	3.49	.50	PT
13.	File management skills	3.50	.50	WT
14.	Folder management skills	3.50	.50	WT
15.	Skills used in downloading software from the web	3.30	.71	PT
	Skills used in installing computer software onto a computer system	2.85	.74	PT
17.	E-mail management skills	2.89	.78	PT
18.	Website design skills	2.81	.59	PT
19.	Electronic presentation skills	3.13	.72	PT
20.	Computer network management skills	2.82	.65	PT
21.	Video conferencing skills	2.51	.61	PT
Cluster Mean		3.16	.62	PT

Key: VWT = Very well taught, PT= Poorly Taught, WT =Well taught

Data in Table 2 show that of the 13 items, one item is rated as being very well taught, two items are rated as being well taught while ten items are rated as being poorly taught. The cluster has a cluster mean value of 3.16. This falls within the rating of being poorly taught. All the standard deviation values are not up to 1.00 indicating homogeneity in the respondents' ratings.

Test of the Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education students in 200 level, 300 level and 400 level on the level of utilization of ICT tools in teaching business education students in enhancing their employability potentials.

Table 3: Summary of the analysis of One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of 200 level students, 300 level students and 400level students on the level of utilization of ICT tools in teaching business education students in enhancing their employability potentials.

Source of Variance	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F-cal	F-crit	Remark
Between Groups	.200	2	.100	.047	3.06	Not Significant
Within Groups	345.412	162	2.132			
Total	345.612	164				

The result in Table 3 shows ANOVA statistical result of undergraduate business education students, on the level of utilization of ICT tools in teaching business education students in enhancing their employability potentials. The test shows F-calculated as .147 while F-critical is 3.06 at 2 and 162 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. By this result the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education students in 200 level, 300level and 400 level on the level of teaching of ICT skills to business education students in enhancing their employability potentials.

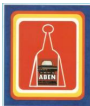


Table 4 : Summary of the analysis of One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of 200 level students, 300 level students and 400 level students on the level of teaching of ICT skills to business education students in enhancing their employability potentials.

Source of Variance	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F-cal	F-crit	Remark
Between Groups	.688	2	.344	.083	3.06	Not Significant
Within Groups	674.561	162	4.164			
Total	674.249	164				

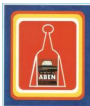
The analysis in Table 4 shows the summary of ANOVA statistical result of mean difference among the business education students, on the level of teaching of ICT skills to business education students in enhancing their employability potentials. The result shows F-calculated value of .083 while the value of F-critical is 3.06 at 2 and 162 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. The calculated F-value is less than the critical F-value. The result is therefore not significant. The null hypothesis is not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the study revealed that business education lecturers are not utilizing the ICT tools in teaching business education students. The implication is that the business education students' employability potentials were not properly being enhanced thus they are inadequately being prepared for global competitiveness. The findings of this study is in line with the findings of Nwanewezi (2013) who conducted a study on factors hindering the effectiveness of teaching of information and communication technology courses as perceived by office technology and management teachers and found out that inadequate and insufficient practical sessions, use of inappropriate teaching method are among the factors. The findings of this study find relevance in the findings of Etonyeaku (2013). Etonyeaku conducted a study on the utilization of ICT in business teacher education programmes for quality assurance in government tertiary institutions in Enugu State and found out that ICT tools and facilities were not utilized in teaching in the tertiary institutions.

The tested hypothesis, showed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of 200, 300 and 400 level students on the level of utilization of ICT tools in teaching of undergraduate business education students in enhancing their employability potentials. The findings of this study are supported by the observation of Akere and Agu in Akinola (2011). The authors noted that the implementation of the nations' ICT policy is a distant cry. The authors stated that the policy document is good with bright ideas but that its implementation was crude and that the National Information Development Agency established in March 2001 was ineffective despite the huge sums of money sunk into it by the government. The finding of this study is at variance with the findings of Ndinechi and Ementa (2013) who conducted a study on business education students' rating of the teaching of word processing and desk top publishing skills in tertiary institutions in Southeast Nigeria. They found out that word processing skills are well taught in tertiary institutions in Southeast Nigeria

The study also revealed that business education lecturers were poorly teaching ICT skills to business education students in enhancing their employability potentials. The implication is that the business education students are poorly prepared for global competitiveness. This is in line with what Akinola (2012) noted that the teaching of ICT courses have not been effectively carried out by lecturers and instructors. That students' success in result grades does not truly reflect their proficiency in the practical application of the ICT knowledge to the accomplishment of specific-work situation task.



This finding affirms the statement by Dryden in Edozie, Olibie and Agu, (2010). Dryden observed that educational systems all over the world are trying to come to grips with e-learning, but that nearly all are doing it wrongly, in that they are turning to graft the 21st century technology on to a 19th century school model. They observed that even the best universities are making the same mistake of replacing black- and white overhead projector transparencies with one way power point colour presentations without empowering the students in ICT skills.

The tested hypothesis, showed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education students in 200, 300 and 400 levels on the level of teaching of ICT skills to business education students in enhancing their employability potentials. The finding from this study found relevance in the statement by Okolocha and Ile (2007) that lack of use of ICT in schools previously can be attributed to lack of support and/or training and lack of adequate knowledge of the benefit of ICT in the teaching and learning process especially as it relate to employability potentials in the face of global unemployment of the youthful population. The finding is at variance with the opinion of Bakaree (2010) who explained that more and more Nigerian schools, especially those in the urban areas, are acquiring microcomputers and putting them to use for instruction,

Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, it is concluded that the acquisition of various ICT skills and teaching students with ICT tools at the undergraduate level is inadequate. This will lead to universities producing graduates who do not poses the employability potentials necessary for the present 21st century global competitiveness. Thus the business education graduates from the tertiary institutions in the country are not effectively prepared for global competitiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made;
The university authorities should make provision for e-library and ICT studio for teaching, business education courses to enable the student have practical experience.
Lecturers should upgrade their knowledge and skills in ICT through seminars and workshops to enable them update their knowledge in line with new ICT tools. Thus empowering them in their teaching of ICT application.
Students should endeavour to acquire the aforementioned skills in ICT before graduating from the university to enhance their employability potentials.
The government should ensure that there is constant power supply within the campus so as to improve activities in ICT.

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