



## **BUSINESS EDUCATOR'S STRATEGIES FOR ACQUISITION OF DIGITAL SKILLS AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES FOR SELF RELIANCE IN A CHANGING WORLD**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined business educator's strategies for acquisition of digital skills among Business Education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world. Two research questions and hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The area of the study was Delta State. The population of the study comprised 113 Business educators in three (3) Colleges of Education in Delta State. Since the population was sizeable, there was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by two experts. Spearman's rank order correlation was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78. The researchers with the help of two research assistants administered 113 copies of the instrument and retrieved 108 copies. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency distribution, mean scores and standard deviation while the T-test statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study reveals that business educators possess the digital communication skills such ability to use email, internet, projector among other. The study further reveals that business educators employ problem solving strategies that will enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world. The study recommended among other things that business educators should create an enabling environment that will ensure the use of innovative and motivational strategies in enhancing Business Education graduates acquisition of digital skills for self-reliance in a changing world.*

**Keywords:** Business Education, Strategies, Digital Skill, Self-Reliance, Changing world

### **Introduction**

The concept of business education has evolved. This is evident in the different definitions offered by various authors and researchers in trying to make clear the meaning of business education. Atakpa (2015) remarked that business education is an embodiment of vocational



knowledge and skills needed for employment and advancement in a broad range of business careers. In other words, business education means education for business or training skills which is required in business offices, clerical occupation, and business policy analysis. In his view, Okoye (2013) extensively defined business education as an education program that orientates students in: the art of business making (marketing), typing and shorthand skills (currently competing with computer appreciation and operation), service delivery, secretarial jobs, stenography, accounts clerking, office information system and management. Igboke in Obiete, Nwazor and Vin-Mbah (2015) on the other hand saw business education as a dynamic field of study geared towards preparing youths and adults for and about business. It is a preparation for a business career when instruction is designed to prepare youths and adults for actual practice in the world of business. On the other hand, education about business involves the preparation of youths and adults for intelligent and effective consumption of economic goods and services offered to society in our free enterprise economy. Business Education which is offered at the Universities and Colleges of Education is concerned mainly with the development of relevant and saleable skills and knowledge that would enable an individual to function effectively in the ever-changing world of work (Onojetah, 2012).

Business education therefore, is a programme designed to equip the learner with viable skills that enable for self-reliance. Ezenwafor, (2016), emphasized that Business Education is a programme of instruction that consists of two parts, namely office education - a programme of vocation for office careers, and general Business Education - a programme which provides the recipients with competencies and skills needed in managing personal business affairs and using the services of the business world. In this era of digitalization, business education students are expected to acquire particularly digital skills and competencies so they will be able to fit into the ever-changing and dynamic digital world (Emesini, 2009). This indicates that business education is innovative and progressive. Digital skills refer to a set of knowledge, competencies, and attitudes that allow an individual to achieve different life goals through digital technologies. Digital skills such as devices and software operation, information and data literacy, digital content creation, safety measures, digital problem solving, among others once acquired and developed by business education, would most likely bring about self-reliance in a changing world as well as the development of the nation's economy. The burden now falls on the shoulders of business educators as facilitators of learning in students to deploy innovative and effective teaching strategies to enhance business education graduates' acquisition of digital skills (Ajisafe, Bolarinwa & Edeh, 2015).

Skill acquisition is a gradual developmental process that requires the individual's cognitive processes to work with his/her physical abilities to learn how to perform business tasks that were previously unfamiliar with. In contemporary times, questions about the effectiveness of teacher strategies on student learning and acquisition of skills have consistently generated considerable interest and attention especially in the particular field of educational research thereby, making research on teaching and learning constantly endeavor to examine the extent to which different teaching strategies can enhance growth in student performance. Therefore, it could be argued that the poor performance of most students in business education programme like other academic programmes, is basically associated to the application of ineffective strategies by business educators to impart knowledge and skills to the students for better performance (Ganyaupfu, 2016). Based on this, knowledge acquired is determined by its impartation and application of various strategies as well as learner's interest.

Teaching strategies are all those methods available to a teacher during the teaching process for communicating ideas, knowledge, skills, attitudes, etc., to the students so that at the end of instruction, the students can behave in the manner stated in the objective for the lesson. There are several teaching strategies in use in classrooms the world over. Some of them in use



are based on philosophical principles; others are based on psychological principles derived from experiments (Awotua-Efebo in Ohaka, 2014). Be that as it may, while some of these teaching strategies may still be popular and consistent with contemporary society, others have become unpopular, inconsistent, and crude. Thus, crude teaching strategies are those anachronistic, ineffective, and inconsistent instructional patterns or methods used by teachers, trainers, or instructors to deliver ideas or instructions to their target audience. One thing is unequivocal about a crude teaching strategy. A crude teaching strategy sometimes may appear to be adequate and effective depending on the situation leading to its usage or the environment. It does not tend to serve the purpose in which it is meant to serve at all times. Although, crude teaching strategies may appear too simple, not all business educators either prefer to use them or even know how to use them. But despite its inadequacy in our contemporary setting, some business educators still prefer to use them (Ohaka, 2017).

Some of the strategies used by business educators tend to consider students empty vessels to be filled (teacher-centered or lecture method), under the firm direction of the teacher, other strategies regard students as active participants learning through inquiry and problem-solving skills (students-centered), while others said learners are social organisms and learning should be through dialogue and interaction with others (social learning method). The term strategy is a deliberate act of choosing a different set of activities to deliver a unique blend of value. Amesi (2015) pointed out that strategy is all about competitive position, about differentiating oneself in the eyes of the students, about adding value through a combination of relevant activities different from those used by others. In the view of Akpomi (2017) strategy is a combination of the ends (goals) for which the teacher is striving and the goals and objectives by which it is seeking to achieve. Strategy can then be seen to consist of the important actions taken by the teacher which is a necessary key to realize set goals and objectives.

Business educators often use positive and negative reinforcement strategies to motivate students learning and acquisition of digital skills. Positive reinforcements include praise, group activities, and grades, whereas negative reinforcement is another way to strengthen student's behavior through reinforcements that would cause them to escape from an unpleasant situation or a way of preventing something unpleasant from occurring (Slavin, 2018). Within the class of positive reinforcements implemented in the teaching and learning process is praise. Praise on one hand is an expression of admiring words used to appreciate individual performance and appropriate behavior. Praise is the frequent, intermittent, and occasional comments that affect favorable action. It entails recognizing a student's orientation that can answer the need for belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization.

Business educators also make use of audiovisuals aids to motivate students learning outcomes, particularly in skills acquisition. Audio-visual aids according to Adepoju (2018) are tools in the teaching-learning process, used to improve the performance and learning process and more especially to motivate students towards participating actively in-class activities. Different audio-visual aids are being used in the teaching-learning process as a motivational strategy to arouse the students' interest in the learning process. There are various types of audiovisual aids; each aid has its specific functions and its advantages and limitations. The business educator has to know these functions to understand their relevance in the different teaching-learning situations. Adepoju further posited that teaching aids cannot be applied arbitrarily; it has to be applied at the proper place, at the proper time and in the proper manner. Their applicability depends upon their availability and the business educators long term planning. Hence knowledge about instructional aides is a must for every business educator. It is against this background that this study sought to examine business educators' strategies for the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world.



### **Statement of the Problem**

Functional education involves training youths in such a way that they would be self-reliant while contributing positively to national development. As a result, one of the major concerns of business educationists has been how to make not only teaching and learning more effective but also, how to enhance student's acquisition of digital skills. Unfortunately, the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates is not encouraging due to ineffective teaching strategies employed by business educators in various tertiary institutions. The teaching and learning of business education have been theoretical rather than practical in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Supporting this view, Nwaiwu (2016) reveals that as a result of ineffective instructional strategies, business education students tend to perform poorly in ICT practical courses and most business education graduates are not competent in digital skills. This can negatively affect entrepreneurial ventures since they lack digital skills to run businesses successfully. The problem of the study, therefore, was to examine business educators' strategies for the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine business educator's strategies for the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world. The study specifically sought to;

1. Examine the communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates.
2. find out how effective are the problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What are the communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates?
2. How effective are the problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses are stated for this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers on the communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates based on gender.
2. There is no significant relationship in the mean ratings of business education lecturers on the effectiveness of problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates based on location.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design which sought to examine business educator's perceived strategies for acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world. The population of the study comprised 113 business educators in three (3) Colleges of Education in Delta State. Since the population was sizeable, there was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured on a four point rating scale. The numerical value for the scale points include; Strongly Agreed = SA (4 points), Agree = A (3 points), Disagree = D



(2 points) and Strongly Disagree = (1 point). Any item with mean score less than or equal to 2.49 was considered as disagreed while any item with mean score equal to or more than 2.50 was considered as Agreed. The instrument was validated by two experts from business education department, FCE(T), Asaba. Spearman's rank order correlation was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78. The researcher with the help of two research assistants administered 113 copies of the instrument and retrieved 108 copies which were used for analysis. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency distribution, mean scores and standard deviation while the T-test statistical tool was used to test the two hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Presentation of Results**

**Research Question 1:** What are the communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates?

**Table 1:** Mean Scores and standard deviation of Responses on the communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates.

S/N	STATEMENTS	$\bar{x}$	SD	REMARK
1.	Ability to use email and instant messenger apps such as Whatsapp and Facebook to help in the individualization of instruction.	2.94	0.94	Agreed
2.	Ability to use CD-ROM, flash drives containing prepared lessons materials for teaching.	3.00	1.04	Agree
3.	Ability to use internet for academic research purposes.	3.45	1.0	Agree
4.	Ability to use computer projector effectively which tend to reduce time wasted by writing on chalkboard.	3.44	1.0	Agree
5.	Ability to use power point package for lecture presentation.	3.32	0.9	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.23</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>Agree</b>

*Source: Researcher's field survey data, 2021.*

Analyses on Table 1 reveal that the mean scores range from 2.94 – 3.45. This indicates that the respondents agreed to the statements in items 1-5. Data in Table 1 further shows that the grand mean for the entire item is 3.23, which falls within the response option of agreed. This indicates that the statements in table 1 are the communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world.

**Research Question 2:** How effective is the problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates?



**Table 2:** Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Responses on the effectiveness of problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates.

S/N	STATEMENTS	$\bar{x}$	SD	REMARK
6.	Student centered strategy used by business educators is effective in enhancing the acquisition of digital skill among business education graduates.	3.23	0.6	Agree
7.	Demonstration method used by business educators is effective in enhancing the acquisition of digital skill among business education graduates.	3.53	0.7	Agree
8.	Inquiry and observing strategies used by business educators is effective in enhancing the acquisition of digital skill among business education graduates.	3.90	0.5	Agree
9.	Business education graduates are advised to carry out a real task with actual equipment and other facilities that apply to digital skill acquisition and this is effective in enhancing the acquisition of digital skill among business education graduates.	3.99	0.1	Agree
10.	Regular excursion strategy used by business educators is effective in enhancing student’s practical skills acquisition of digital skills.	3.76	0.6	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.68</b>	<b>0.50</b>	Agree

Source: Researcher’s field survey data, 2021.

Analyses on Table 2 reveal that the mean scores range from 3.23 – 3.99. This indicates that the respondents agreed to the statements in items 6-10. Data in Table 2 further shows that the grand mean for the entire item is 3.68, which falls within the response option of agreed. This reveals that the strategies employed by business educators that will enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world are effective.

**Hypotheses**

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers on communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates based on gender.

**Table 3:** Analysis of t-test on the mean and standard deviation responses of male and female business education lecturers on communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates based on gender.

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	S <sup>2</sup>	Df	t.cal	t.crit	$\alpha$	Remark
Male	79	1.35	0.71	106	0.07	1.98	.05	<b>Retain Ho</b>
Female	31	1.34	0.60					

From the t-test table, since t-cal (0.07) < t-crit (1.98), we retain Ho. The null hypothesis is hereby retained that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education



lecturers on communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates based on gender.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship in the mean ratings of business education lecturers on the problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates based on location.

**Table 4:** Analysis of t-test on the mean and standard deviation responses of business education lecturers on the effectiveness of the problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates.

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	S <sup>2</sup>	Df	t.cal	t.crit	$\alpha$	Remark
Urban	103	1.35	0.71	106	0.03	1.98	.05	<b>Retain Ho</b>
Rural	5	1.34	0.60					

From the t-test table, since t-cal (0.03) < t-crit (1.98), we retain Ho. The null hypothesis is hereby retained that there is no significant relationship in the mean ratings of business education lecturers on the problem solving strategies used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates based on location.

### Discussion

Research question 1 sought to ascertain the communication digital skills used by business educators to enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates. The findings of the study reveal that business educators possess the ability to use email and instant messenger apps such as Whatsapp and Facebook to help in the individualization of instructions; make use CD-ROM, flash drives containing prepared lessons materials for teaching; use internet facilities such as modern for academic research purposes; use computer projector effectively which tend to reduce time wasted by writing on chalkboard; and they also make use of power point packages for lecture presentation.

Research question 2 revealed that the problem solving strategies used by business educators which will enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates are effective. This is true because student centered strategy, demonstration method, inquiry and observing strategies, regular excursion as well as encouraging students to carry out a real task with actual equipment and other facilities that apply to digital skill acquisition is effective in enhancing the acquisition of digital skill among business education graduates.

### Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to determine business educator's perceived strategies for acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world. Digital technology is an indispensable tool that could enhance effective teaching and learning in Business Education programme. Therefore, it is important that all business educators and students should be acquainted with relevant skills and competencies that digital technology provides to the recipient. The study concludes that business educators employ problem solving strategies that will enhance the acquisition of digital skills among business education graduates for self-reliance in a changing world and they also possess the ability to make use of digital communication tools.



### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made from the findings of the study.

- The Federal and State Governments should make adequate budgetary allocation for the provision of digital communication facilities such as hardware, software, internet and projectors in the Colleges of Education for the improvement of teaching process.
- Business educators should create an enabling environment that will ensure the use of innovative and motivational strategies in enhancing Business Education graduates acquisition of digital skills for self-reliance in a changing world.
- Business educators in colleges of education and other tertiary institutions should be given the lucrative opportunity to be armed with more effective contemporary teaching strategies through regular conferences, workshops, seminars, lectures and symposium. This will enable them to be more knowledgeable and at home with those innovative and effective strategies that are potent enough to improve business education students acquisition of digital skills.

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