

BASIC DIGITAL SKILLS AS DETERMINANTS OF BUSINESS EDUCATORS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

This study examined basic digital skills as determinants of business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions. Two research question were raised and one hypothesis was tested in the study. The study used a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 216 business educators in government owned colleges of education and government owned universities in South west, Nigeria. Two hundred and sixteen questionnaires were administered. Only 183 one hundred and eighty-three were retrieved and used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire tagged 'Basic Digital Skills as Determinant of Business Educators Job Performance' (BDSDBEJP) designed by the researcher with 4-point rating scale. The instrument went through face and content validation by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was ensured using cronbach alpha which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.91. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data collected to answer the research question. The hypothesis was tested using linear regression at 0.05 level of significance. The research questions revealed that business educators in tertiary institutions are rated high in their level of basic digital skills, with a grand weighted mean and standard deviation of ($\bar{x} = 2.99$; $SD = 0.66$), business educators in tertiary institutions possessed a high level of job performance with a grand weighted mean and standard deviation of ($\bar{x} = 3.13$; $SD = 0.61$). the found among others that there was a significant positive relationship between basic digital skills and business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions ($F_{181} = 206.58$ $p = 0.001$). Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that basic digital skills significantly determine the job performance of business educators and it was recommended among others that business educators should maintain and improve their basic skills to enhance their job performance.

Keywords: *Basic digital skills, business educators and job performance.*

Introduction

Digital skills are becoming increasingly important as a result of the ways that technology has taken over various facets of life and the workplace. The world is rapidly transitioning from analogue to digital, with the educational system appearing to be the most impacted in terms of pedagogy. In order to be relevant, educators and learners must stay up to date on this trend. This is due to the fact that technology significantly boost business productivity and performance, certain institutions use digital capabilities to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and quality in their work. Therefore, business educators are required to possess skills that will enable them perform their jobs well. This is so because both public and private institutions worldwide are embarking on digitalization of their services. The danger of becoming digitally excluded poses a threat to all individuals who do not have the necessary skills to handle the digitalization of the various spheres of human endeavours. It is therefore necessary to acquire the right skills to make use of the new technologies in the work place. Digital skills according to World Bank in Umoru (2020) are separated into three, namely: basic, intermediate and advance digital skills

Basic digital skills are the fundamental skills needed to use digital technologies such as using a browser, connecting to the internet, and keeping password secure. The skills are necessary

for using ICT systems, tools, and devices to support tasks and functions in an efficient manner. Proficiency in using fundamental digital technologies is fostered by having basic digital abilities. In order to use a variety of technological assets, including computers, smartphones, software (word processors, applications), online operations (internet, search engines, social networks, e-commerce, privacy), and communication media, one must have a basic understanding of both hardware and software (Laar et al, 2020). In 2015, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defined digital basic skills as informational, communication, safety, and problem-solving abilities as well as digital foundation skills. One of the qualities of a digital educator is the ability to communicate with available digital devices. It involves the ability to teach, research, send messages, evaluate and gather feedback from other school personnel using available devices. Digital foundation skills are the abilities to turn on electronic device, use the keyboard, mouse to perform operation skills, open the internet, create password and keep login details safe (Dixon, 2019). Digital information skills are the ability in using search engines and accessing content across devices. Digital communication makes it easy for the educators to share ideas with other educational stakeholders within or outside the school environment. Digital communication also makes it easy for the teacher to be able to use any form of devices and understand how these devices are used in the most efficient manner for the goals and objectives of teaching and learning to be achieved. If educators are to be digitally literate and proficient, the need for digital safety cannot be overemphasized. Just as digital devices are proliferated on regular basis, so also are cases of digital fraud on the rise. Digital problem-solving skill is the ability to find solutions to problems using digital technology.

According to the Business Dictionary (2017), job performance is the sum of an employee's expected work-related activities and the quality of their execution. It's a personal assessment based on the work of a single individual. According to Alamdar et al (2016), perception, abilities, values, competences, and attitudes have significant impact on how well an employee performs. In the workplace, it is so important that it cannot be disregarded. Higher productivity and profitability are the actual outcomes that the organisation hopes to achieve, and these are brought about by attitude and action. It calls for talent, a readiness to do duties as given, the willingness to work extra hard to get things done, creativity, and inventiveness. Productivity will inevitably increase when there is effective job performance, and the organisation will function better. Job performance is, therefore, very important because it leads to high productivity. Business educators' job performance is the extent to which they perform their duties so as to achieve the institutions' objective. Ezenwafor and Hafsat (2017) noted that business educators' job performance could be measured through annual report of their teaching activities such as lesson preparation, mastery of subject matter, commitment, effective supervision and monitoring of students' work, motivation and class management among others. Digital technologies have the potential to change the way we work and interact, which is likely to create new opportunities also secure our job.

Business educators are business education graduates that are trained to perform the task of equipping recipients at the secondary and post-secondary school levels with skills and knowledge to confidently pursue entrepreneurial career and lifelong learning tasks. Business educators' are usually faced with the responsibility of teaching the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes as well as undertaking researches for both personal and national growth in addition to performing other administrative duties. One of the ways by which the multiple natures of the duties of academics may be effectively tackled is the application, adoption and use of digital skills. Digital technology has permanently affected the performances of the business educators especially in public tertiary institutions. With the continued development of digital skills, business educators in public tertiary institutions should now be prepared to learn basic digital skills. Thus, business educators need to be digitally compliant in order to cope with the new challenges. In institutions, lecturers are the backbone of educational institutions, contributing significantly to the achievement of institutional objectives.

Tertiary institutions play a key role in the digital transformation of our societies, particularly in addressing the need for adequate skills. According to Okute and Agomuo (2016) tertiary institutions are the third tier of learning that provide training in an ever-increasing number of specialized knowledge and skills for modern society. It is incumbent on all business educators as stakeholders in education to pay greater attention to educating their students for sustainable development. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2014), education for sustainable development allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitude and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. For business education programme to be sustainable, its recipients at the tertiary level are expected to be equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills for global competitiveness in a digital era that is highly dominated with technology. The researcher observed that public tertiary institutions are not making the most use of digital technologies. Lack of skills and other challenges may be inhibiting the institutions from tapping into this opportunity fully. In Nigeria, there are state owned tertiary institutions and federal owned tertiary institutions. In other words, business educators are expected to adequately acquire these skills to enable them fit into the digital work environment, if they must be relevant and compete favourably with their counterparts in a highly competitive global marketplace where knowledge and skills are the major commodities for survival in any endeavour. Therefore, it is based on this background that the study focused on basic digital skills as determinants of business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions.

Statement of the Problem

Digital skills enhance educational processes by allowing business educators to discharge their duties easily with the help of digital tools. Digital technology particularly in public tertiary institutions in Nigeria faces various challenges. Most business educators have not been making effective use of digital resources in their work performance. The hindrances and constraints come as a result of human resource shortage, shortage of technological facilities, lack of knowledge and use of digital technologies. Could it be because most digital facilities are not available in the tertiary institutions or where they exist, they are either not functional or inadequate for business educators? Therefore, for effective and efficient use of digital technologies by business educators in order to improve their performance in administrative duties, there is need to examine the critical and important areas where digital skills are required by business educators. Hence, it is on this premise that the researcher intends to examine basic digital skills as determinants of business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions.

Research Questions

In line with the study, two research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. what is the level of basic digital skills of business educators in tertiary institutions?
2. what is the level of job performance of business educators in tertiary institutions?

Research hypothesis

One null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. H₀₁: Basic digital skills do not significantly determine business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design for the study. The researcher sought the opinion of the respondents on basic digital skills as determinants of business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions. The population of this study comprised 216 business educators in tertiary institutions in South West, Nigeria. A total population of 216 business educators were chosen for the study. Census sampling technique was adopted by the researcher where all business educators in each tertiary institutions were allowed to participate in the study. A structured questionnaire designed by the researcher was used in gathering data which is tagged 'Basic Digital Skills and Business Educators' Job Performance Questionnaire' (DSBEJPQ). The questionnaire was made of 30 items. The questionnaire items were placed on four-point rating scale of Very High Level (3.25 –

4.00), High Level (2.50 – 3.24), Low Level (1.75- 2.49) and Very Low Level (1.00-1.74). The instrument was validated by three experts. Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability coefficient which yielded 0.91. The researcher with the aid of research assistants administered 216 copies of questionnaire where 183 copies were retrieved and used. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data collected to answer the research questions raised. Linear regression was used to test the hypothesis.

Results

Research Question One: what is the level of basic digital skills of business educators in tertiary institutions?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of responses on basic digital skills of business educators in tertiary institutions

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to turn on electronic devices	3.39	0.55	Very High Level
2	Ability to open connect to the internet,	3.28	0.66	Very High Level
3	Ability to create a quality résumé using word processor	3.07	0.63	High Level
4	Ability to organize digital information	3.00	0.65	High Level
5	Ability to create digital messages across a range of digital media for example graphics, text, audio, animation	2.83	0.71	High Level
6	Ability to use digital devices to share content among colleagues	3.13	0.61	High Level
7	Ability to comply with organizations’ security protocols when accessing email or working remotely	2.93	0.64	High Level
8	Ability to use power point package for presentation.	2.96	0.71	High Level
9	Ability to identify a problem with digital tools.	2.93	0.70	High Level
10	Ability to determine the technicalities in solving a problems with digital tools.	2.71	0.72	High Level
11	Being innovative in solving problems.	2.86	0.64	High Level
12	Being able to gather resources to solve problems.	2.83	0.64	High Level
13	Ability to use data storage	3.09	0.71	High Level
14	Ability to keep password secured	3.09	0.63	High Level
15	Ability to take precautions against viruses.	2.72	0.75	High Level
Grand Weighted Mean		2.99	0.66	High Level

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Analysis of data in Table 1 reveals the mean ratings and the standard deviation of the respondents regarding the level of basic digital skills of business educators in tertiary institutions. The respondents rated to a very high level, the ability to turn on electronic devices and ability to open connect to the internet (mean =3.39 and 3.28). Similarly, the respondents rated to a high level in the ability to create a quality résumé using word processor, ability to organize digital information and create digital messages across a range of digital media for example graphics, text, audio, animation (mean =3.70, 3.00 and 2.83). Table 3 reveals further, the high level of business educators in tertiary institutions in their ability to use digital devices to share content among colleagues, ability to comply with organizations’ security protocols when accessing email or working remotely and ability to use power point package for presentation (mean =3.13, 2.93 and 2.96) respectively. Equally the respondents rated to a high level, their ability to identify a problem, ability to determine the technicalities in solving a problem and being innovative in solving problems (mean = 2.93, 2.71 and 2.86) respectively. Also, the respondents rated their digital skills to a high level, which include being able to gather resources to solve problems, ability to use data storage, ability to keep password secure and ability to take precautions against viruses (mean =2.83, 2.72, 3.09 and 3.09). The standard deviations of the items are low, ranging from 0.55 to 0.75 indicating that their responses are not too widespread. In summary, business educators in tertiary institutions rated high in their level of basic digital skills, with a grand weighted mean and standard deviation of (\bar{x} =2.99; SD = 0.66).

Research Question Two: what is the level of job performance of business educators in tertiary institutions?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of responses on job performance of business educators in tertiary institutions

S/N	Items	Mean	Std	Remarks
16	Ability to use CD-ROM, flash drives containing prepared lessons materials for teaching.	2.12	0.66	Disagreed
17	Ability to supervise student project or seminar creditably	3.39	0.56	Strongly Agreed
18	Ability to use digital technology in sharing ideas among student and many more	3.21	0.66	Agreed
19	Ability to use internet for academic research purposes	3.26	0.67	Agreed
20	I use MS power point presentation for my lectures	2.86	0.75	Agreed
21	Ability to share ideas with others business educators through social media platform to collaborate on problem solving.	3.08	0.68	Agreed
22	Ability to create new products or services	2.79	0.68	Agreed
23	Ability to create relevant course material that align with the curriculum	3.03	0.66	Agreed
24	Ability to supervise the programme activities	3.15	0.61	Agreed
25	Punctuality in attending lectures	3.61	0.52	Strongly Agreed
26	Preparation of professional document	3.18	0.59	Agreed
27	Ability to guide student in their academic pursuit as a mentor when needed	3.42	0.53	Strongly Agreed
28	I prepare the student for industrial training	3.29	0.51	Strongly Agreed
29	Ability to work collaboratively with colleagues to enhance the overall quality of business education within the institution	3.27	0.56	Strongly Agreed
30	Incorporating relevant tools to enhances the learning experiences	3.22	0.50	Agreed
Grand Weighted Mean		3.13	0.61	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Analysis of data in Table 2 reveals the mean responses and the standard deviation of the respondents regarding the level of job performance of business educators in tertiary institutions. The respondents disagreed on their ability to use CD-ROM, flash drives containing prepared lessons materials for teaching (mean = 2.12), but strongly agreed on their ability to supervise student project or seminar creditably (mean = 3.39). The Table reveals further that respondents agreed more on their: ability to use digital technology in sharing ideas among student and many more (mean = 3.21), ability to use internet for academic research purposes (mean = 3.26) ability to use MS power point presentation for my lectures (mean = 2.86), ability to share ideas with others business educators through social media platform to collaborate on problem solving (mean = 3.08), also, ability to create new products or services(mean = 2.79) and that they have ability to create relevant course material that align with the curriculum and ability to supervise the programme activities (mean = 3.03 and 3.15). Furthermore, the Table reveals that the respondents strongly agreed that they are punctuality in attending lectures (mean = 3.61) as well as agreed to their abilities in preparing professional document (mean = 3.18), while strongly agreed to their ability to guide students in their academic pursuit as a mentor when needed and I prepare the student for industrial training (mean = 3.42 and 3.29). Similarly, the respondents strongly agreed on their ability to work collaboratively with colleagues to enhance the overall quality of business education within the institution (mean = 3.27) and agreed to incorporate relevant tools to enhance the learning experiences (mean = 3.22). The standard deviations of the items are low, ranging from 0.50 to 0.75 indicating that their responses are not too widespread. In summary, the overall responses of the respondents show that they agreed with the construct. This implies that business educators in

tertiary institutions possessed a high level of job performance with a grand weighted mean and standard deviation of (\bar{x} = 3.13; SD = 0.61).

Test of Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

H₀1: Basic digital skills do not significantly determine business educator’s job performance in tertiary institutions.

Table 3: Summary of Regression Analysis of the Basic digital skills as the determinant of business educators’ job performance in tertiary institutions.

Model	N	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F-cal.	P-value
1	183	0.728	0.529	0.527	206.58	0.001

Dependent Variable: Jobperformance

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 3 summarizes the regression results of basic digital skills as a determinant of business educators’ jobperformance in tertiary institutions. The result indicated that there was a positive relationship between basic digital skills and jobperformance of business educators in tertiary institutions (R = 0.728) while R-squared is 0.529 which means that the independent variable (Basic digital skills) explained 53.3% variations of the dependent variable (Job performance). Thus, this is an accurate reflection that, there is a significant positive relationship between basic digital skills and business educators’ jobperformance in tertiary institutions ($F_{181} = 206.58$ $p = 0.001$).

Table 4 Test of significance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lo/Bound	Up/Bound
1 (Constant)	1.297	.135		9.604	0.001	1.030	1.563
Basic digital skills.	0.636	.045	.728	14.27	0.001	0.548	0.724

Dependent Variable: Job performance

Source: Field Survey 2024

The test of significance results presented in Table 4 shows that, basic digital skills significantly determine jobperformance of business educators in tertiary institutions (B = 0.636; $t_{(181)} = 14.27$, P = 0.001). It indicated that at 5% level of significance, it is evidenced that the regression equation specified that of basic digital skills significantly determine business educators’ jobperformance. Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that Basic digital skills significantly determine business educators’ jobperformance in tertiary institutions

Discussion of Findings

Research question one determined the level of basic digital skills of business educators in tertiary institutions. The study revealed that business educators in tertiary institutions rated high in their level of basic digital skills. This is in line with the report of the International Telecommunication Union (2020), that digital skills are highly required to participate in the labour market and recommended that digital skills should be embedded in education and training, to enable individuals participate fully in the modern digital economy, whether as technology specialist, leaders of digitally enabled businesses, educationist or worker in digitally enabled jobs across the economy. This finding also concurs with the opinion of Nnaji and Okoro (2020) who reported that business educator teacher is expected to be competent in performing their duties with basic digital skills acquired while using technology gadget. Therefore, the researcher in agreement with International Telecommunication Union (2020) deduced that business educators who possess digital skills are in high demand and also considered valuable human assets to any organisation or

institutions because basic skills are those skillsets necessary for getting, keeping and doing well on the job. Therefore, the researcher in agreement with ITU deduced that business educators who possess digital skills are in high demand and also considered valuable human assets to any organisation or institutions because basic skills are those skillsets necessary for getting, keeping and doing well on the job.

Research question two sought to determine the level of job performance of business educator in tertiary institutions. Table two revealed that respondents agreed with the construct, which means that business educators in tertiary institutions possessed a high level of job performance. This finding is supported with Aninye Ranor (2019) who revealed that educators in some establishments were seen to be adequate in terms of managerial function or skills in Information and communication technology (ICT) skills were seen to be impressive as their job performance on the job indicated. Thus, business educator required high level of job performance such as ability to use internet for academic research purposes, punctuality in attending lectures and ability to use digital technology in sharing ideas among others.

Result of hypothesis one revealed that basic digital skills significantly determine business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions which implies that the null hypotheses was rejected. These findings support Ajise and Faghola (2017) who reported that digital tools are available and acceptable to the high level in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This finding concurs with the opinion of Nnaji and Okoro (2020) who reported that a business educator teacher is expected to be competent in performing his duties with digital skills acquired while using technology gadgets. The result is also supported by the findings of James (2017) who found that the usage of computer, internet network positively and significantly improved the job delivery of public sector secretaries' in Bayelsa State, Nigeria However, Azih and Ama (2019) agreed that competence is required in modern offices as a result of advancement in technology.

Conclusion

It was concluded based on the findings of this study that basic digital skills is on high level of business educators job performance in tertiary institutions. Therefore, there was positive relationship between digital skill and job performance. Hence, business educator needs to keep updating their digital skills in other to remain relevant in the digital world. This is so because the use of digital skills is what would make business educator perform well in the world of work.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings the following recommendations were made:

1. Business educators should improve their basic skills to enhance their job performance. This will instill confidence in them, thereby promoting their career.

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