Digital Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Self-Empowerment of Postgraduate Business Education Student in Rivers State Universities

Okiridu, O.S. F. & Smart, Iyada

Department of Business Education Rivers State University Port Harcourt

DOI: 10.56201/wjeds.v9.no2.2024.pg67.77

Abstract

This study investigated digital entrepreneurial skills acquisition and self-empowerment of postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities. Two specific objectives, research questions and hypotheses guided the study. Correlational research design was used for the study. The population of the study consist of 166 Postgraduate Business Education students of 2022-2023 academic session made up of 92 and 74 respondents from Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education respectively. There was no sampling nor sampling technique hence the entire population of 166 Postgraduate Business Education Students served as the sample size of the study, due to the small size of the population. The instruments used for data collection were two sets of questionnaires developed by the researchers and was validated by two lecturers from the Department of Business Education and one Measurement and Evaluation expert, all of Rivers State University. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and a coefficient of 0.73 and 0.86 were obtained. Out of the 166 copies of the questionnaires distributed, 154 was retrieved and used for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions and test the formulated hypotheses at P>0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study show that data visualization skill, and app development skill acquisition enhance self-empowerment of Postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that data visualization skill, and app development skill acquisition should be encouraged to close the gap between theory and practice to give Business Education Students competitive advantage in the labour market, Curriculum planners should be encouraged to add some these skills in the Business Education curriculum to enable Business Education graduates acquire the requisite knowledge for self-empowerment, States and federal governments should ensure that there are good policies and adequate implementation, conducive teaching and learning environment likewise funding for the programme.

Keywords: Digital Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition, Self-Empowerment, Business Education, App Development, Data Visualization

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship refers to having the ability to discover and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources, initiate appropriate actions to ensure success, and take action to take advantage of opportunities for a rewarding outcome. It is the engine driving the economy of any nation. Entrepreneurship is the capacity to harness the right quantity, quality, and combination of resources that are consistent with profit while undertaking risk and uncertainty. It is a confirmation of special knowledge and skills that pulsates an entrepreneur into innovative and creative ideas that are crystallized into quick and risky business decisions that result in sustainable profitability. Entrepreneurship has been proven to be a veritable instrument for stimulating economic growth and a means of employment generation, especially in developing countries (Harper & Afolayan, 2016). Entrepreneurship means- self-empowerment, which comes with the ability to get your own schedule and work where you want, and ability to follow your passion. If your innovative idea is related to your passion, entrepreneurship enables you to make a career out of what you love.

Digital Entrepreneurial Skills give entrepreneurs the ability to find, evaluate, utilise, share, and create content using information and communication technologies and the internet anywhere, anytime, and any day to sell their products and services. Digital entrepreneurial skills involve the use of automation in managing to achieve effective communication, branding, marketing, and getting the targeted audience for the supply of products and services (Afrodigital, 2021). Digital entrepreneurial skills are a core part of a business owner's toolkit, whether you are in charge of a multinational corporation or operating a local business from home. The five (5) top digital entrepreneurial skills needed to succeed by today's entrepreneurs and acquire decent work are cloud computing, cyber security, data analysis, social media marketing, and user experience (UX) design skills (Martinez, 2021). However, the scope of this study is limited to data visualization skill, and app development skill. Davidson and Vaast (2010) defined digital entrepreneurship as an act of identifying and utilizing new business opportunities which are offered by new media and internet technologies. It is same as traditional entrepreneurship in the sense that financial profits can be created through digital ventures and are directly associated with economic activities like new business establishment or commercialization of a business or innovation. Hair, Wetsch, Hull, Perotti and Hung (2014) stated that in case of digital entrepreneurship, all the activities of business are digitally operated instead of traditional layout. Hair in Vineela (2018) said that the major difference between digital and traditional entrepreneurship is the business models and strategies that are followed by the companies for marketing and distribution of products. According to Reuber and Fische in Vineela (2018), a digital enterprise is termed as a person or a business that utilizes ICTs in order to communicate between customers and partners. This involves activities with a main aim of selling products or services which are digitalized. Simmons, Armstrong and Rosenbloom in Vineela (2018) opined that digital entrepreneurship involves large firms like hardware, software and network technologies to small firms which utilize information and communication technologies to organize their business activities.

Self-empowerment is the process of increasing the strength of individuals, teams, or communities. It covers spiritual, political, social, and economic strength; it can also include developing confidence in one's own capacities. It encourages people to gain skills and knowledge that will allow them to overcome obstacles in their lives or work environments and

ultimately help them develop within themselves and in society (Ikegwu, Ajiboye, Aromolaran, Ayodeji & Okorafor, 2014). Empowerment can also be defined as an interactive process through which people gain or experience personal and social change, enabling them to take decisions to achieve influence over the organisations and institutions that affect their lives and the communities in which they live. It includes encouraging and developing the skill of self-sufficiency in the individual or group to do their jobs magnificently, with a focus on eliminating future needs for charity or welfare (Ikegwu, Ajiboye, Aromolaran, Ayodeji, & Okorafor, 2014). It is also defined as the process of obtaining basic opportunities for marginalized people. Empowerment emphasizes encouraging and developing the skills of self-sufficiency aimed at eliminating the future needs of the individual or group concerned (Ikegwu, Ajiboye, Aromolaran, Ayodeji & Okorafor, 2014). Empowerment helps individuals or groups fully access personal or collective power through knowledge, skills, and motivation for proper functioning in their society and contribution to the economy (Ikegwu, Ajiboye, Aromolaran, Ayodeji & Okorafor, 2014).

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Application development is the process of creating a computer programme or a set of programmes to perform the different tasks that a business requires. From calculating monthly expenses to scheduling sales reports, applications help businesses automate processes and increase efficiency. Every app-building process follows the same steps: gathering requirements, designing prototypes, testing, implementation, and integration. Application development is the process of gathering business requirements, designing, prototyping, coding, testing, and ongoing improvements and debugging of software. The programming and markup languages used for this kind of software development include Java, Swift, C#, and HTML5. App development is rapidly growing, from retail, telecommunications, and e-commerce to insurance, healthcare, and government, organisations across industries must meet user expectations for real-time, convenient ways to conduct transactions and access information. Today, mobile devices and the mobile applications that unlock their value are the most popular way for people and businesses to connect to the internet. To stay relevant,

responsive, and successful, organisations need to develop the mobile applications that their customers, partners, and employees demand (International Business Machine, 2023).

Business Education is an integral part of vocational education aimed at equipping students to become entrepreneurs with relevant digital entrepreneurial skills for the purpose of making them functional in society. Business Education focuses on skills acquisition in different areas such as office technology and management, management information systems, management, marketing, digital marketing, entrepreneurship, cooperative studies, insurance, and accounting, among others. It is therefore expected that the various components of Business Education courses that formed different skills are effectively delivered to the learners to enable them to become entrepreneurs via digital entrepreneurial skills (Oyerinde, Onajite & Aina, 2020). Okiridu and Godpower (2020), assert that Business Education Courses help in building skills, knowledge, ethics, values and attitude that will help an individual to be able to face life challenges around them and function effectively as an entrepreneur, professional teachers and function as operators in organizations such as: Accountants, Entrepreneurship, Managers, Marketers, and Secretaries etc. Business Education courses teaches students how to be discipline, manage resources and maximize their potential, develop needed skills, improve their performance and become abreast with modern technologies. According to Ezenwafor and Onokpaunu (2017), Business Education programme is a branch of vocational education concerned with exposing its students to the internal and external foundations and functioning of the school and workplace digital skills needed in the society. Business Education is that aspect of general education that prepares students for employment and advancement in a digital era for office occupations, accounting professions, entrepreneurship, marketing occupation, teaching profession and entrepreneurship ventures (Onokpaunu, 2016).

However, the reliable medium, through which the mission and vision of Business Education programme can be achieved, stems from effective implementation of its curriculum (Ezenwafor & Onokpaunu, 2017). Okoro (2015) opined that Business Education curriculum entails educational training which an individual receives in order to acquire adequate attitudes, concepts, knowledge, understanding and skills in business activities for vocational usage in careers as an administrator, manager, and teacher or wherever he may find himself in the business world. It is believed that the curriculum of Business Education will expose students to educational and business-related experiences (Mong & Okolocha, 2020). Business Education is synonymous with Entrepreneurship Education as Okiridu (2017) asserts that Business Education can be presented with an acronym (TOS). That Business Education is a tripartite programme of instruction which prepares the recipient or learner to be a teacher, an operator or to be self-reliant as an entrepreneur. The acronym TOS, "T" stands for teacher, "O" stands for operator and "S" stands for self-reliant.

Data visualization Entrepreneurial skills involved in the competencies required for entrepreneurship include technical, human, and conceptual. Data visualization is the process of communicating and translating data and information in a visual context, usually employing a graph, chart, bar, or other visual aid. Visualization also uses images to communicate the relationships between various sets of data. Data visualization is also called information visualization, information graphics, and statistical graphics. It is a step in the process of data science, which tells us that after all the data has been collected, processed, and modelled, the information must be visualized so that users can use it to draw conclusions. Also, data

visualization is part of the broader discipline of data presentation architecture (DPA), whose purpose is to identify, find, manipulate, format, and deliver data in the best way possible. (Simplilearn, 2023). Data visualization is a powerful tool for communicating insights and findings. It can enhance how your data and research are communicated in a presentation or narrative, greatly helping your readers or audience understand what you want to communicate. Data visualization can be an occasional element in a business proposal, be used extensively in a keynote presentation or research report, or even serve as complete presentations unto themselves like an informational poster. Data visualization largely relies on tried-and-true chart types, knowing how to use the charts and communicate vital information to organisations which makes it more effective. Knowing the intended audience of a presentation or visualization showing data visually alongside text or numbers can give readers or audiences the ability to choose how they engage, whether it is a deep dive into a spreadsheet or table or a quick scan of graphs or charts where they can quickly discover important and relevant information.

However, visualizing data is not necessarily the path that will make it easy to understand or clear; sometimes a visualization can be misleading or confusing. On one hand, visualizing data can bring clarity, whereas improperly visualized data can be hard to interpret and even misrepresent information. Consider how a map of the world can distort the relative size of countries. Or think about how displaying too many segments in a pie chart make the data harder to read. However, working to create well-visualized data supports understanding and

insight across industries and sectors. For example, a team of automotive engineers will likely be more interested in viewing a complex presentation of engine performance metrics with nuances and details, whereas a team of marketing professionals might want the same data visualized in a way that would communicate only the engine's top features in simple and perhaps even bold graphics. Or consider how an infographic of one page with some of the data might be shared as a handout to top executives who need to scan for the most relevant points in their busy schedules. This can even mean that visualizing data goes only so far as a spreadsheet with some cells highlighted. So, you need to know both what you want to communicate and who you are communicating with. But remember that data visualization is about supporting the presentation and understanding of data as well as the related findings and insights of research.

Statement of the Problem

Business Education students in various institutions are prepared to acquire trending skills in the course of study and before graduation, these skills will give them edge for immediate paid job, establish their own businesses and be self-employed on graduation. This scenario keeps them above board to take care of their families and boost the gross domestic product of the nation. Unfortunately, Business Education students who do not acquire the skills in App development, Data visualization which may result to high-rate of unemployment among graduates in Nigeria, has cut across all discipline including Business Education. Chinwokwu (2016) bewailed that most graduates of vocational education (including Business Education) in Nigeria are not establishing and running their own small businesses for self-reliance as expected due to inadequate digital entrepreneurial skills. Therefore, there is a need to take appropriate measures to curb the menace of the high rate of unemployment among graduates through digital entrepreneurship skill acquisition, which is expected that the end result will

lead to self-empowerment. The acquisition of digital entrepreneurial skills is needed to enable students and graduates to establish and run their own small and medium scale business for self-reliance, once the necessary skills are acquired, it becomes very challenging in this digital era. It is based on the existing gap that the researchers embarking on this study was conceived.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the digital entrepreneurial skills acquisition and self- empowerment of postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities. Specifically, the study sought to:

- 1. Determine how app development skill acquisition relates to self-empowerment of postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities.
- 2. Determine how data visualization skill acquisition relates to self-empowerment of postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1. How app development skill acquisition does relates to self-empowerment of postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities?
- 2. How data visualization skill acquisition does relates to self-empowerment of postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- 1. There is no significant relationship between app development skill acquisition and self-empowerment of Postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities.
- 2. There is no significant relationship between data visualization skill acquisition and self-empowerment of postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities.

Methodology

The correlational design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 166 respondents, made up of 92 post-graduate Business Education students of 2022-2023 academic year at Rivers State University and 74 post-graduate students of Business Education 2022-2023 academic year at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, both in Port Harcourt. There was no sampling hence the entire population of 166 Postgraduate Business Education Students was used as the sample size of the study. The instruments used for data collection were two sets of researchers made questionnaires titled "app development skill acquisition and self-empowerment' (ADSASE) and 'data visualization skill acquisition and selfempowerment (DVSASE)'. The two sets of questionnaires were validated by two lecturers from the Department of Business Education and one Measurement and Evaluation expert, all of Rivers State University. The questionnaires were structured on a four-point rating scale response patterned thus: Strongly Agree [SA-4points], Agree [A-3points], Disagree [DA-2points], and Strongly Disagree [SDA-1point]. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to determine the reliability of the instruments and a coefficient index of 0.73 and 0.86 were obtained. Out of the 166 copies of the questionnaires distributed, 154 were retrieved and used for analysis. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was

used to answer the research questions and test the formulated hypotheses at P>0.05 level of significance, and p-value test was used to test the strength of the hypotheses. The decision rule was that the null hypotheses were retain when the critical 'r' value is greater than the calculated 'r' value otherwise accepted.

Results

Research Question 1

How does app development skill acquisition relate to self-empowerment of Postgraduate Business Education students in River State universities?

Table 1: Relationship between App Development Skill Acquisition and Self-Empowerment of Postgraduate Business Education Students in Rivers State Universities (N=154)

| | | (11-131) | |
|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| | | | Self-empowerment of |
| | | | postgraduate Business |
| | | App Development | Education students |
| App Development | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .301 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .702 |
| | N | 154 | 154 |
| Self-empowerment | Pearson Correlation | .301 | 1 |
| of postgraduate | Sig. (2-tailed) | .702 | |
| Business | N | 154 | 154 |
| Education students | | | |

Data presented in Table 1 shows the calculated coefficient (r) value of responses of postgraduate Business Education students to determine whether there is a relationship between app development and self-empowerment. The table shows that the calculated r was 0.301, with a table value of 0.179. This means that since the calculated r-value is higher than the table value, a positive relationship exists between app development skill acquisition and self-empowerment of postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities.

Research Question 2

How data visualization skill acquisition does relates to self-empowerment of postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities?

Table 2: Relationship between Data Visualization Skill Acquisition and Self-Empowerment of Postgraduate Business Education Students in Rivers State Universities (N-154)

| | | (1) | (11-134) | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------------|--|
| | | | Self-empowerment of | |
| | | Data | postgraduate Business | |
| | | visualization | Education students | |
| Data visualization | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .209 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .180 | |
| | N | 154 | 154 | |
| self-empowerment | Pearson Correlation | .209 | 1 | |
| of postgraduate | Sig. (2-tailed) | .180 | | |
| Business Education | N | 154 | 154 | |
| students | | | | |

Data presented in Table 2 shows the calculated coefficient (r) value of responses from postgraduate Business Education students to determine whether there is a relationship between Data visualization skills acquisition and self-empowerment of Postgraduate Business Education Students of Rivers State Universities. The table shows that the calculated r was 0.209, with a table value of 0.179. This means that since the calculated r-value is higher than the table value, a positive relationship exists between data visualization skill acquisition and self-empowerment of postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between app development skill acquisition and selfempowerment of Postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities.

Table 3: Relationship between App Development Skill Acquisition and Self-Empowerment of Postgraduate Business Education Students in Rivers State Universities

| | | | Self-empowerment of |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| | | | postgraduate Business |
| | | App Development | Education students |
| App Development | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .301 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .702 |
| | N | 154 | 154 |
| Self-empowerment of | Pearson Correlation | .301 | 1 |
| postgraduate Business | Sig. (2-tailed) | .702 | |
| Education students | N | 154 | 154 |

In Table 3 shows the calculated coefficient (r) value of the significant relationship between app development skill acquisition and self-empowerment of Postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities. With N=154, df=152, P>0.05, the calculated r-value was 0.301 with a critical value of 0.179 at the P>0.05 level of significance, and since the calculated r value was statistically greater than the table value, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected, and the conclusion is that there is a relationship between app development skill acquisition and self-empowerment of Postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between data visualization skill acquisition and self-empowerment of postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities.

Table 4: Relationship between Data Visualization Skill Acquisition and Self-Empowerment of Postgraduate Business Education Students in Rivers State Universities (N=154)

| | (1, 10.) | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| | | | Self-empowerment of |
| | | Data | postgraduate Business |
| | | Visualization | Education students |
| Data Visualization | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .209 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .180 |
| | N | 154 | 154 |
| self-empowerment of | Pearson Correlation | .209 | 1 |
| postgraduate Business | Sig. (2-tailed) | .180 | |
| Education students | N | 154 | 154 |
| | | | |

Table 4 shows that the calculated r-value was 0.209 with a critical value of 0.179 at the P > 0.05 level of significance, and since the calculated r value was statistically greater than the table value, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected, and the conclusion is that there is a relationship between data visualization skill acquisition and self-empowerment of postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities.

Discussion of Findings

The first findings revealed that app development skills acquisition can make Postgraduate Business Education Students more prepared for self-empowerment, app development skill aid self-empowerment through having efficient user interface skills can help you design application interfaces, the ability to develop applications across different platforms and operating systems is a self-empowerment, app developers often have extensive business skills, including business management, marketing and customer service skills. This finding is in agreement with the view of Ofoye and Asarah (2015), app development is a crucial topic in the IT world that provides ample opportunities for growth and self-empowerment of both students and students also in the view of Chebanova (2023) application development is a special skill that has help many businesses and individual for self-employment.

Based on the first findings, a hypothetical test was conducted, which also indicated that a statistically significant relationship exists between app development skill acquisition and selfempowerment of Postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities. The study concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between app development skill acquisition and self-empowerment of Postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities, since the calculated correlation coefficient (r) value was statistically greater than the table value P>0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses, therefore, were rejected at the P > 0.05 level of significance. The strength of the relationship was ascertained with a pvalue test, which was concluded based on the calculated correlation coefficient value (r), which indicated that a statistically significant relationship exists between app development skill acquisition and self-empowerment of Postgraduate Business Education students. The second finding revealed that the calculated r value was statistically greater than the table value, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected, and the skills acquisition can make Postgraduate Business Education Students more prepared for self-empowerment. It is therefore concluded that there is a relationship between data visualization skill acquisition and self-empowerment of postgraduate Business Education students in Rivers State Universities. The findings is in agreement with the view of Alhadad (2018) which indicates that about 57% of businesses implement some form of data visualization as a way of generating business insights, revenue and success. The study got the support of Simplilearn (2023) who asserts that data visualization takes advantage of this human instinct and offers an easier way for people to see the information clearly and draw more accurate conclusions faster.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that digital entrepreneurial skills enable individuals' ability to translate ideas into action and reality. It encompasses creativity, innovativeness, pursuing opportunity, individual empowerment, taking calculated risks and responsibility. Digital entrepreneurial skills give entrepreneur the ability to share, find, and create content using the information and communication technologies and the internet anywhere at any time to sell products and services. The study reveals that knowledge of digital

entrepreneurship skills would encourage the acquisition of practical skills among students and graduate.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions made in the study, it was recommended among others that:

- 1. The teaching of digital entrepreneurship (app development and data visualisation) should be encouraged to link the gap between theory and practice to give Business Education Students competitive advantage in the labour market.
- 2. Management of tertiary institutions, States and federal governments should ensure that there are good policies and adequate implementation, conducive teaching and learning environment and funding of digital entrepreneurship skills for learners.

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