

## **Skills Acquisition Required in Business Education Programme for Successful Business Operation in Kogi State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*The study was aimed at examining the skill acquisition in Business Education programme required for successful business operation in Kogi State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. Three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study comprised 76 lecturers in two Polytechnics and three colleges of education in Kogi State. Thirty-two questionnaire items relating to hard skills area, innovative skills area, and e-commerce skills area were developed and validated by panel of experts. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient measure of internal consistency was used to test the reliability value of the instrument. The results of the reliability test were as follows: 0.83, 0.89 and 0.86 respectively. The Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the three research questions. The t- test was used to test null hypotheses. The findings revealed that the three skills area of business education programme assessed, all were required for successful business operation. This implies that for business education graduates to successfully operate business, these skills should be possessed by them. The findings further show that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers in Polytechnics and Colleges of education regarding the skills area required for successful business operation except e-commerce skills area which the finding revealed a significant difference between the lecturers' mean ratings. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that the government should adequately provide modern ICT facilities in business education resource centres, computer rooms and classrooms to enhance the teaching and learning of ICT skills among teachers and students of business education. There should be both short-term training and retraining packages for teachers to enhance their ICT skills and onward utilization for pedagogical purposes. This would help the teachers to keep abreast of new innovations in ICT based instructions and further inculcation of the hard skills to learners; Business education lecturers should ensure that innovative skills are thought through demonstration and practical to ensure that students graduate with relevant skills and competence to set up a business and manage it effectively in this era, and that business education curriculum be reviewed to include the e-commerce skills required by business graduates for successful business operation.*

**Keywords:** Skills Acquisition, Business Education Programme, Business Operation Kogi State, Nigeria

### **Introduction**

Education is widely accepted as the instrument for human capital development. It achieves this through the impartation of knowledge, attitudinal value and skills in line with the current trends. The acquisition of skills depends on the type of education understudy as well as the method of delivery of such education. The acquisition of relevant skills is a tool of increasing and boosting the productive power-base of the nation. Akpan and Naboth-Odums (2018) opined that education is a tool through which a person is taught by means of a set of instructions (formal and informal) to bring about beneficial changes in the learner's actions and allow him/her to lead a useful and appropriate life in society. Thus, education serves as a tool that allows people to solve their problems and fulfill their needs.

Basically, Business Education is a programme for skill acquisition that individual acquire for successful business operation. According to Okpara in Iwuoha and Peter (2019) Business Education is a component of vocational education which involves the acquisition of skills, knowledge and competencies which makes its recipients proficient. Business Education comprises activities that are aimed at planning, teaching and development through experience that provide individual with the ability to become entrepreneur for self-reliance.

Skill acquisition is the process of possessing effective and ready knowledge in developing one's aptitude and ability in a particular field. Skill acquisition is essential for increasing the productivity and sustainability of enterprise and improving working condition and performance of workers (Mshelia & Shua, 2022). The acquisition of skills by business education graduates will help to enrich the Nigerian economy as well as making it possible for sustainable development (Udoh, 2015). For this to be sustained there is the need to have quality business education to deliver maximum practical skills to produce skilled manpower for sustainable national. To buttress this, Magus and Dahel in Oladeji and Afolabi (2021) noted that practical skill acquisition helps business education students politically, socially and economically.

Moreover, several skills such as hard, managerial, accounting, interpersonal, innovative, technical, information and communication technology, marketing skills, e-commerce among other are needed by graduates of business education to be able to run any kind of business enterprise. This study focus on hard skills which are the technical skills individual use each day to perform the job expected of them, like computer skills or procedural knowledge applied in job. Technical elements or hard skills are used as basis for the development educational curriculum and future profiling of jobs and the technical functions that, public and private organisations desire most (Noe, Hollenbeck & Gerthart, 2015). Odia and Odia in Chinwe (2021) identified some innovative skills as introduction of a new business and methods, ability to access new source of raw material, ability to motivate and understand others in the business environment. Meanwhile, Komarkova, Gagliardi, Conrads and Collado (2015) admitted that skills and opportunities is the key to examining entrepreneurial innovation capabilities.

Okeke (2022) opined that the business environment is experiencing rapid changes in its processes and procedures. These changes have led to the competitiveness of the global business environment. This is because advancement in technology has aided the removal of barriers witnessed in the traditional business environment. Anil (2019) defined e-commerce as the use of computer, Internet and general software to send and receive product specifications and drawings; applications, purchase orders and invoices; and any other type of data that needs to be passed on to customers, suppliers, employees or the public. Similarly, Oguejiofor (2020) described e-commerce as the buying and selling of goods and services, or transmitting of funds or data, over an electronic network, primarily the internet.

According to Avolio, Benzaquen and Pretell (2019), the business education programme has been internationalized because of the changes occurring in the global business environment. The pace of change in the business environment is becoming so alarming such that skills training should be imparted on the students in our academic institutions to make them valued. This is because acquiring certificates in this 21<sup>st</sup> century seems not to be the major criteria for jobs and for business take off, but what matters is the ability to deliver. Skill upgrade is therefore very vital for business success in our society today. Degree results and certificates are no longer enough in today's competitive, fast paced, technology-driven society, but to acquire needed skills to meet purposeful movements that are necessary to complete or master a particular task (Termmerman, 2019).

According to Utebo and Enwemasor (2021), the process of skills acquisition entails that business education teachers are properly prepared and equipped with the teaching method and teaching resources necessary for ensuring successful transfer of skills and competencies. Business Education teachers needed to have the necessary professional qualification and experience as well as the availability of teaching resources for ensuring quality education service delivery. However, the situation in tertiary institutions in Kogi state has greatly impeded the

successful transfer of business skills. Saidu and Hope reiterated (2020) the need for skill acquisition in business education as a veritable tool for sustainable national development cannot be over emphasized.

Unemployment among the youth today is on the increase and the situation is particularly pathetic as the number of youths from our tertiary institutions looking for employment opportunities increase day by day because they lack the skills that will enable them to be self-employed after graduation for successful business operation. This view has not been empirically proven to be the case among business education graduates in Kogi state. It is against this background that this study was conducted to determine the skills acquisition in Business Education programme required for successful business operation in Kogi State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The prevailing economic conditions have compelled many youths and students to look for programmes that would ensure their future on the face of unemployment. Skill acquisition in business Education is imperative as it provides equal opportunities for youths and adults to become employable and maintain their employable status regardless of the economic and social change that inevitably affects them. Business Education is of unique nature which deals with acquisition of skills for and about business which are necessary for efficiency of the economic system. The fulcrum of the policies of the government, which are dictated by the prevailing economic situation particularly widespread unemployment of able-bodied men and women who have graduated from schools, is to empower the people with requisite skills and knowledge that would enable them to be self-employed and at the same time become employers of labour.

Owing to the current economic situation, skills acquisition will help to improve business operation and in the absence of adequate skills, graduates will start to think about many filthy activities they will engage in order to make money since they do not have anything that they can call their own jobs or businesses. Currently, it has become increasingly difficult for young people to find work. The reason seems to be the fact that there are no enough jobs and partly because the young do not have the skills that are in demand in the labour market for successful business operation. Hence, this study examined skill acquisition in business education programme required for successful business operation in Kogi State, Nigeria.

### **Synoddy Model of Skills Acquisition (1926)**

The theory upon which this work is built is the skill acquisition theory propounded by Synoddy (1926). Synoddy hypothesized that the number of repetitions was the primary parameter that affected the course of learning. The theorist explained that skill learning is a two-stage process which comprised of adaption stage in which the learner acquires the neuromuscular pattern required to perform the movement, and a facilitation stage, in which the efficiency of the movement pattern is improved. The theory explains that knowledge developments are in declarative, procedural and automaticity stages. The more interaction with learning environment and resources, the more learning outcomes are achieved. Skill acquisition is student-oriented. It is expected that students will be actively involved in the process of learning those vocational skills in the field of business education which is distinct from rote learning in which the learner plays passive role. The uniqueness and practicality of business education programme give justification for the use of this theory, since it holds the view that skill acquisition is task-oriented and the goal of business education can be only be achieved through demonstration of dexterity of the skills acquired in today's work environment.

### **Objectives of the study**

The following are the objectives of the study. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify hard skills area of Business Education required for successful business operation in Kogi State.

2. Identify innovative skills area of Business Education required for successful business operation in Kogi State.
3. Identify e-commerce skills area of Business Education required for successful business operation in Kogi State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the hard skills area of Business Education required for successful business operation in Kogi State?
2. What are the innovative skills area of Business Education required for successful business operation in Kogi State?
3. What are the e-commerce skills area of Business Education required for successful business operation in Kogi State.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education lecturers in Polytechnics and Colleges of Education in Kogi State on hard skills area of business education programme required for successful business operation in Kogi State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education lecturers in Polytechnics and Colleges of Education in Kogi State on Innovative skills area of business education programme required for successful business operation in Kogi State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education lecturers in Polytechnics and Colleges of Education in Kogi State on e-commerce skills area of business education programme required for successful business operation in Kogi State.

### **Methods**

Structured questionnaire was employed to generate data for the study. The questionnaire is titled "Skills Acquisition Questionnaire" (SAQ). The instrument was developed by the researcher after extensive review of literature on the required skills acquisition in business education programme for successful business operation. The questionnaire items sought to provide information to answer the three research questions and test the three hypotheses raised for the study. The SAQ consisted of two Sections. Section A was designed to obtain background information on type of institution of the respondents. Part B contained 32 items on the areas of skills area of business education programme under three sections. Section B1 focused on information on the hard skills required in business education programme for successful business operation and contained 12 items. Section B2 solicited information on the innovative skills area in business education programme for successful business operation with 10 items, section B3 elicited information on the e-commerce skills area of business education programme for successful business operation with 10 items, The questionnaire adopted a five point response scale of Highly Required (HR) 5, Required (R) 4, Moderately Required (MR) 3, Lowly Required (LR) 2 and Not Required (NR) 1. To ascertain the consistency of the items, trial testing method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument using 20 business education lecturers outside the study area who were not part of the study. The reliability of the instrument was ensured using test re-test technique. Data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha coefficient measure of internal consistency. The reliability value for the entire instrument is 0.83. These results were considered high enough to regard the instrument as reliable. Copies of the questionnaire for data collection were administered to the subjects by the researcher and with the help of 4 research assistants. Out of 79 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 75 Copies representing 93% were duly completed and returned. The data generated was analyzed through descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard deviation to answer the research questions. Inferential statistics (t-test) was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Any item with a mean scores of

4.50-5.00 shows highly required, a mean score between 3.50 - 4.49 suggests required, a mean value of 2.50 - 3.49 indicates moderately required, a mean scores of 1.50 - 2.49 indicated lowly required and a mean score of 1.00 - 1.49 suggest not required.

### Research Question 1

What are the hard skills area of Business Education required for successful business operation in Kogi State?

Data collected in respect of research question 1 were analyzed and presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Respondents' mean ratings on the hard Skills area of business education required for successful business operation in Kogi state.**

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Ability to access, start and boot the computer system	4.65	0.47	Highly Required
2.	Ability to operate word processing applications	4.59	0.50	Highly Required
3.	Ability to prepare accounting information effectively	4.60	0.50	Highly Required
4.	Ability to operate Microsoft excel packages	4.59	0.49	Highly Required
5.	Ability to protect documents using code	4.51	0.50	Highly Required
6.	Ability to use power point for presentation	4.43	0.49	Required
7.	Ability to use desktop publishing	4.50	0.50	Highly Required
9.	Ability to use graphic and design flyers	4.36	0.48	Required
9.	Ability to organize online video conference	4.40	0.49	Required
10.	Ability to mail merge documents	4.47	0.50	Required
11.	Ability to use data base management package	4.41	0.49	Required
12.	Ability to use scanning machines	4.48	0.50	Required
<b>Grand Mean and Standard Deviation</b>		<b>4.50</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>Highly Required</b>

Source: Field Research (2023)

Table 1 revealed that the mean ratings of the respondents to items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 are 4.65, 4.59, 4.60, 4.59, 4.51 and 4.50 respectively indicated highly required. It was also showed that the mean ratings of the respondents to items 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 showing 4.43, 4.36, 4.40, 4.47, 4.41 and 4.48 respectively indicated required. This was also signified by the grand mean and standard deviation of 4.50 and 0.49 respectively. The implication was that hard skills areas of business education programme are required for successful business operation in Kogi State.

### Research Question 2

What are the innovative skills area of Business Education required for successful business operation in Kogi State?

Data collected in respect of research question 3 were analyzed and presented in Table 3.

**Table 2: Respondents' mean ratings on the innovative Skills area of business education required for successful business operation in Kogi State.**

S/No	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
23.	Ability to introduce new products	4.33	0.47	Required
24.	Ability to introduce new methods	4.21	0.41	Require
25.	Ability to turn ideas into reality	4.53	0.50	Highly Required
26.	Ability to create new wealth by diversifying or expanding the business area	4.47	0.53	Required
27.	Ability to be proactive decision making	4.43	0.49	Required
28.	Ability to relate with competitors	4.40	0.49	Required
29.	Ability to access new technologies and resources	4.29	0.45	Required

30.	Ability to add value to customers satisfaction	4.43	0.49	Required
31.	Ability to have self confidence	4.36	0.48	Required
32.	Ability to identify and exploit new business opportunities	4.31	0.47	Required
<b>Grand Mean and Standard Deviation</b>		<b>4.38</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>Required</b>

**Source: Field Research (2023)**

The data in Table 3 revealed that out of the 10 items on innovative skills area of business education required for successful business operation, 9 were required by the respondents as skills for successful business operation. The mean distribution ranges from 4.21 to 4.47 respectively. The items rated required are 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31 and 32. However, item 25 with mean score of 4.53 revealed highly required. The grand mean of 4.38 and standard deviation of 0.48 indicated closeness in the opinions of the respondents.

### Research Question 3

What are the e-commerce skills area of Business Education required for successful business operation in Kogi State?

Data collected in respect of research question 3 were analyzed and presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Respondents' mean ratings on the e-commerce skills area of business education required for successful business operation in Kogi State.**

S/No	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
43.	Ability to make online-shopping and order tracking	4.28	0.45	Required
44.	Ability to make domestic and international payment	4.30	0.46	Required
45.	Ability to secure electronic tickets	4.40	0.49	Required
46.	Ability to make online banking	4.38	0.49	Required
47.	Ability to use digital wallets	4.38	0.49	Required
48.	Ability to make document automation in supply chain and logistics	4.36	0.48	Required
49.	Ability to manage enterprise content	4.43	0.49	Required
50.	Ability to use shopping software messaging	4.33	0.47	Required
51.	Ability to make group buying instant messaging	4.29	0.46	Required
52.	Ability to print on demand	4.33	0.47	Required
<b>Grand Mean and standard deviation</b>		<b>4.35</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>Required</b>

**Source: Field Research (2023)**

Information in Table 4.5 revealed the responses of the respondents on e-commerce skills area of business education programme for successful business operation in the new normal. All items on e-commerce are considered required by business educators. The grand mean of 4.35 and standard deviation of 0.48 respectively also showed that they are unanimous agreement in the responses.

### Results of Test of Hypotheses

The three null hypotheses formulated for this study were tested in this section. The t-test statistical tool was used to analyze data relating to hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

#### Hypothesis 1

There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of Lecturers in Polytechnics and Colleges of Education on hard skills area of business education required for successful business operation in Kogi state.

**Table 4: t-test statistics on mean scores of Lecturers in Polytechnics and Colleges of education on hard skills area of business education required for successful business operations in Kogi State.**

Variables (Institutions)	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
Polytechnic	24	4.65	0.48	74	1.43	1.96	Not Sig.
Coll. of Edu.	55	4.48	0.50				

Data in Table 4.6 of the t-test analysis showed that the t-cal value of 1.67 is less than the t-tab value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 74 degrees of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significance difference in the mean ratings of Lecturers in polytechnics and Colleges of education on hard skills area of business education required for successful business operations in Kogi state is accepted.

### Hypothesis 2

There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of Lecturers in Polytechnics and Colleges of education on innovative skills area of business education required for successful business operations in Kogi state.

**Table 5: t-test statistics on mean scores of Lecturers in Polytechnics and Colleges of education on innovative skills area of business education required for successful business operations in Kogi State.**

Variables (Institutions)	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
Polytechnics	24	4.33	0.47	174	1.67	1.96	Not Sig.
Coll. of Edu.	55	4.30	0.46				

Data in Table 5 of the t-test analysis showed that the t-cal value of 1.67 is less than the t-tab value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 74 degrees of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significance difference in the mean ratings of Lecturers in polytechnics and Colleges of education on innovative skills area of business education required for successful business operations in Kogi state is accepted.

### Hypothesis 3

There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of Lecturers in Polytechnics and Colleges of education on e-commerce skills area of business education for successful business operations in Kogi state.

**Table 6: t-test statistics on mean scores of Lecturers in Polytechnics and Colleges of Education on e-commerce skills area of business education required for successful business operations in Kogi State**

Variables (Institutions)	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
Polytechnic	24	4.48	0.50	174	-3.25	1.96	Sig.
Coll. of Edu.	55	4.52	0.51				

Data in Table 6 of the t-test analysis showed that the t-cal value of -3.25 is less than the t-tab value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 74 degrees of freedom. Hence, the null hypotheses that there is no significance difference in the mean ratings of Lecturers in Polytechnics and Colleges of education on e-learning skills area of business education required for successful business operations in Kogi state is rejected.

### Discussion of the Findings

Research question one sought to find out what hard skills area of business education programme are required for successful business operation in Kogi state? The respondents agreed that the 12

identified hard skills area are requested for successful business operation in the new normal. Some of the identified hard skills area include the following: ability to operate word processing applications; ability to access, start and boot the computer system; ability to mail merge documents; ability to operate Microsoft excel and prepare accounting information effectively; ability to protect documents using code; ability to use power point for presentation; ability to use graphic and design flyers; ability to use desktop publishing; and ability to organize online video conference.

The finding is in collaboration with the assertion of Ellah and Amasi (2020) that it is imperative because without ICT literacy, business educators would not be able to use ICTs for effective instructional delivery, and at the same time lack the ability to impart the skills on the learners. Avolio, Benzaquen and Pretell, (2019) concurred that the incorporation of new technology into the teaching and learning experiences of business education is an essential element in improving on the learning gains and subsequent opportunities in the world of work and business. In addition, Abdulkadir (2020) found in a study he conducted that business educators have to adopt with the use of new technologies (hard skills) in order to produce the relevant graduates that met the demand of the new era since the success and survival of business education constantly depends on its ability to adapt and keep pace with the needs of its recipients. From the study, it was found that the respondents agreed with all the 10 items in Table 3 as innovative skills required for successful business operation. This aligned with the study of Patrick, Obeten and Akputu (2021) that business education programme must constantly inculcate in its recipient the requisite skills to be able to increase productivity, improve product and service quality, develop new products and meet customer requirements and desires. The finding equally tallies with Ademiluyi, Bello and Akande (2020) that business education graduates must be constantly innovative, because the imperative of modern business is the improvement of the components of the enterprise's structure and business. Their study also revealed that education in the 21st-century requires innovation and creativity. One of the 21st-century learning skills needed today is the learning and innovation skills identified for 21st-century learning being developed from the input of educators, businesses and governments around the world.

Also agreed as required by the respondents are e-commerce skills required for successful business operation in the new normal. The identified items include the following: Ability to make online-shopping and order tracking; ability to make domestic and international payment; ability to secure electronic tickets; ability to make online banking; ability to use digital wallets; ability to make document automation in supply chain and logistics; ability to manage enterprise content; ability to use shopping software messaging; ability to make group buying instant messaging; and; ability to print on demand. The findings of this study agreed with the assertion of Nir in Oguejiofor (2020) who maintained that e-commerce has a potential to add a higher value to business and consumers in developing countries than in developed countries. Similarly, Oguejiofor (2020) stressed that development of a nation depends on the amiable technical knowhow yet most developing country-based enterprises have failed to reap the benefits offered by modern information technologies.

Nevertheless, it was found that there was no significant difference between the responses of business educators in the polytechnics and that business educators in colleges of education in Kogi state with respect to the skills area in business education programme required for successful business operation in the new normal, Kogi state mentioned in the study, except e-commerce skills area which the finding revealed a significant difference between the lecturers mean ratings.

## **Conclusion**

This study was carried out to assess the skills acquisition in business education programme required for successful business operation in Kogi state. Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that business education graduates require all the skills assessed in the study, such as hard skills, innovative skills, and e-commerce skills. Business education adequately equipped its recipients with the requisite skills and prepared them to survive and proffer solutions



in the world of work and business. Lack of necessary skills can render individuals who claim to be benefactors of business education incapacitated of utilizing the online business and economic opportunities. Hence, business education curriculum need a critical examination and overhauling of the traditional curriculum still in use in schools in the country, in order to incorporate the new trends in the global economy for its relevance in the new scheme of global economic events.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government should adequately provide modern ICT facilities in business education resource centres, computer rooms and classrooms to enhance the teaching and learning of ICT skills among teachers and students of business education. There should be both short-term training and retraining packages for teachers to enhance their ICT skills and onward utilization for pedagogical purposes. This would help the teachers to keep abreast of new innovations in ICT based instructions and further inculcation of the hard skills to learners.
2. Business education lecturers should brace up and ensure that the identified innovative skills from this study are diligently taught to enable the students graduate and arm themselves with the skills for opening and managing their entrepreneurship businesses.
3. Business Education curriculum be reviewed to include the e-commerce skills required by business graduates for successful business operation.

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