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ASSESSMENT OF DIGITAL ECONOMY COMPETENCIES REQUIRED BY BUSINESS EDUCATORS FOR DRIVING MODERN BUSINESS PRACTICES IN ONDO STATE

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Abstract

The study examined the digital economy competencies required by business educators for driving modern business practices across Ondo State. Two research questions were raised to guide the study and two research hypotheses were formulated for the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 39 business education lecturers in two public universities offering business education programme in Ondo State of Nigeria. The population was manageable as a result, no sampling was carried out. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire which was validated by two experts from Business Education Department, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo. Reliability of the study was determined using Cronbach Alpha which yielded a co-efficient value of 0.79. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that business education lecturers generally possess proficiency in various digital skills relevant to effective teaching and learning. It was also revealed that business educators in universities do face high challenges at implementing digital economy practices. The study therefore recommended among others that, various universities management and administrators should prioritize huge investment on ICT infrastructure in order to place their institution at per foreign ones, especially in developed countries.

Key Words: Assessment, Business Educators, Competencies, Digital Economy Practices

Introduction

The digital economy is redefining the global business setting by integrating digital technologies into all sectors. According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2019), digital economy is defined as the full range of economic, social and cultural activities supported by the internet related information and communication technologies. Health and Micallef (2021) noted that digital economy is the economic activity that results from billions of every day online connections among people's businesses, devices, data and processes. This simply means that digital economy is the economic activities that is

driven or enabled by digital technologies and the internet. It encompasses the vast array of transactions and interactions that occurs through billions of daily connections among people, businesses, devices, data and processes. In essence, it is the part of the economy that operates primarily through digital means. At its core, the digital economy involves using digital platforms, tools and networks to produce, distribute, and consume goods and services. This includes activities such as e-commerce, that support remote operations, digital marketing, online banking, cloud computing, remote work, digital content creation, and data analytics. However, the foundation of the digital economy is built on technologies such as the internet mobile connectivity, artificial intelligence (AI), block chain, the Internet of Things (IoT). All these technologies enable faster communication, automation, innovative and access to digital markets. Ultimately, the digital economy plays a critical role in national development by promoting economic growth, innovation, job creation and global competitiveness.

As nations strive to adapt to rapid technological advancement, universities are expected to produce graduates equipped with digital competencies that are vital for achieving competitiveness and relevance in the digital age and world of work.

Business education refers to the teaching and learning process that equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies needed to function effectively in various business environments. Njoku (2006) defined business education as an educational programme that equips an individual with functional and suitable skills, knowledge, attitude and value that would enable him/her operate in the environment he/she finds himself/herself. The recent definition of business education spring up as the aspect of educational training which an individual receives with the primary motive of enabling him to acquire adequate attitudes, concepts, knowledge, understanding and skills in business activities for vocational usage in careers as an administrator, manager or teacher wherever he may find himself in the business world (Okoye and Ashibogwu, 2018).

As years go by, the definition of business education continues to change, and the result is that business education is not static in nature as they evolve to meet the demands of the modern technology-driven economy and support for innovation and entrepreneurship. As business education equips individuals with the skills, knowledge and mindset needed to thrive in the rapidly evolving digital economic environment that promotes digital literacy data analysis, and e-commerce knowledge needed to thrive in the world of economy, it has become imperative for professionals business educators to possess some level of competencies in using new technology effectively, especially in the areas or relevant digital skills such as information and data literacy, communication and collaboration skills, digital content creation, cloud computing and storage, cyber security awareness, social media for professional use, e-commerce and digital marketing and ICT proficiency which prepare students for the demands of the modern workforces.

On the other hand, business education prepares students to use digital tools for business operations, as well as develop skills needed for digital marketing and financial technology. However, it is the responsibilities of business education lecturers to update their knowledge to reflect current trends in technology and digital business. Lecturers must incorporate digital tools such as learning management systems (LMS), virtual collaboration platforms, and online assessment tools in their instructional delivery. They must also be in position to expose students to practical applications of e-commerce, digital marketing and fintech. It is the duties of business educators to train students in data analysis, business intelligence, and the use of business software as well as promoting 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and digital communication with ability to collaborate with industry partners to provide real-world digital economy experiences. However, upon this

transformation, it is required of business educators who serve as the main drivers of instructional delivery for the effective implementation of digital economy practices within the university educational system to possess the necessary competencies for effectively integrate digital economy practices into teaching and learning processes. This will enable business education programs remain responsive to the evolving demands of the 21st- century economy.

Statement of the Problem

Business education in Nigeria tertiary institutions have the prospective of playing a vital role in driving modern business practices, by equipping students with essential skills required in the digital economy. Through a well structured curricula, it may enable students acquire digital literacy, data analysis, financial technology and e-commerce competencies that are crucial for driving in today's technology-driven business environment.

Despite the foregoing, it appears that some business educators in public universities in Ondo state lack the digital economy competencies necessary to effectively drive modern business practices.

Additionally, in an era where technology innovation and entrepreneurship are critical to national development, business educators are expected to possess and transfer relevant digital skills that align with the evolving demands of the modern business environment. It appears under the study of institutions that the integration of digital tools, data-driven-teaching, and other essential digital economy skills into business education curricula, remains limited. Many educators still rely on traditional methods of teaching, which may not adequately prepare students for the realities of modern business operations, poses a threat to the employability, innovation capacity and entrepreneurial readiness of graduates.

It also appears that there is limited access to digital infrastructure and insufficient professional development opportunities which may hinder business educators from acquiring and applying relevant digital economy skills. It is on the foregoing background that the research is worried, hence, the need to assess the digital economy competencies required by business educators in driving modern business practices in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to assess digital economy competencies required by business educators in driving modern business practices in Ondo State. The study specifically sought to:

1) examine the extent to which business education lecturers in public universities in Ondo State, possess digital economy competencies necessary for implementing modern business practices
2) identify the challenges faced by business education lecturers in public universities in implementing digital economy practices in Ondo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1) To what extent do business education lecturers in public universities in Ondo state possess digital economy competencies necessary for implementing modern business practices?
2) What challenges do business education lecturers face in public universities in implementing digital economy practices in public universities in Ondo State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses among business education lecturers in both Federal and State Universities in Ondo State on digital economy practices implementation.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business education lecturers regarding their competencies in implementing digital economy practices in Public universities in Ondo State.

Methods

The study adopted descriptive survey research design which involved gathering data through the use of questionnaire. The population of the study consisted of 39 business education lecturers in two selected universities offering business education in Ondo State. The whole population was used because it was manageable. The research instrument was titled: **"**Assessment of Digital Economy Competencies Required by Business Educators for Driving Modern Business Practices in Ondo State (ADECRBEDMBP)". The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by two experts from Business Education Department in Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo to ensure that the instrument measure what it supposed to measure. The study utilized a four point rating scale and assigned the following values of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 points, High Extent (HE) = 3 points, Low Extent (LE) = 2 points and No Extent (NE) = 1 point with a reliability of 0.79 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha reliability co-efficient to test the reliability of the instrument. The data collected from the study were analysed using the mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test statistics to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do business education lecturers in public universities in Ondo state possess digital economy competencies necessary for implementing modern business practices?

Table 1: Responses Mean Ratings on Digital Economy Competencies Necessary for Implementing Modern Business Practices? n = 39

S/N	Items	X	SD	Remarks
1.	I am proficient in the use of Microsoft office tools	3.62	0.55	Very High Extent
2.	I effectively use email for instant messaging and video conferencing tools e.g. zoom, Microsoft teams	3.51	0.59	Very High Extent
3.	I can critically evaluate online academic and business information	3.41	0.60	High Extent
4.	I use cloud-based platforms for collaboration like Google Drive, One Drive	3.38	0.64	High Extent
5.	I create digital teaching materials using design tools	2.76	0.81	High Extent
6.	I can use Google classroom effectively	3.15	0.70	High Extent
7.	I can analyze data using Excel, SPSS or PowerPoint	2.89	0.72	High Extent
8.	I follow cyber security best practices and ability to recognizing cyber threats such as phishing, malware, and scams	3.05	0.74	High Extent
9.	I integrate digital marketing/social media into my teaching	3.35	0.65	High Extent
10.	I adapt quickly to new and emerging digital	2.74	0.83	High Extent

	technologies like using AI tools, blockchain			
	Grand Mean	**3.19**	**0.68**	**High Extent**

Source: Field survey, 2025.

Table I shows the mean responses of business education lecturers in Public universities in Ondo State on digital economy competencies necessary for implementing modern business practices. Item by item analysis revealed that, all ten items indicated that there was high extent of digital economy competence necessary for implementing modern business practices among business educators with mean ratings scores ranging from 2.74 to 3.62 and grand mean score of 3.19.

Research Question 2: What challenges do business education lecturers face in public universities in implementing digital economy practices in public universities in Ondo State?

Table 2: Responses Mean Ratings on Challenges face Business Education Lecturers in Implementing Digital Economy Practices in Public Universities in Ondo State n = 39

S/N	Items	X	SD	Remarks
1.	I lack access to necessary digital infrastructure (difficulty accessing reliable internet, software, devices)	3.44	0.63	High Extent
2.	Lack of Industry collaboration	3.15	0.80	High Extent
3.	Irregular professional development on digital teaching	3.28	0.71	High Extent
4.	Time constraints limit my ability to incorporate digital economy topics into the course contents	3.05	0.80	High Extent
5.	My institutions provides adequate support for integrating digital skills into my teaching	3.28	0.72	High Extent
6.	There is limited training opportunities	3.28	0.71	High Extent
7.	Curriculum does not totally include digital economy concept	3.31	0.63	High Extent
8.	Student lack digital Literary	2.14	0.81	High Extent
9.	Inadequate funding for digital project	3.38	0.64	High Extent
10.	Poor internet services	3.05	0.82	High Extent
	Grand Mean	**3.26**	**0.69**	**High Extent**

Source: Field study, 2025.

Table 2, shows the mean responses on challenges faced by business education lecturers in implementing digital economy practices in public university in Ondo State. Item by item analysis revealed that ten items had the means scores that ranged from 2.76 to 3.38 and with a grand means of 3.26 and standard deviation of 0.69 respectively.

The mean response reflects a statistical analysis of Challenges faced by Business Education Lecturers in Implementing Digital Economy Practices in Public Universities in Ondo State. The findings revealed that business education lectures in public universities in Ondo state consistently face high challenges in implementing digital economy practices. Key barriers include limited access to digital infrastructure, irregular professional development/training, poor internet services, poor funding and lack of institutional support.

Testing of Hypothesis

Ho_1: There is no significance difference in the mean response among business education lecturers in both federal and state universities in Ondo State on digital economy practices implementation.

Table 3: Summary of t-test result analysis among business education lecturers in both federal and state universities in Ondo State on digital economy practices implementation

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	t-Cal	P-Value	Decision
Federal	16	3.80	0.50				
				37	0.884	2.026	Accepted
State	23	3.65					

Source: Field study, 2025.

From table 3, the calculated t-cal of 0.884 is less than p-value of 2.026 at 37 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significant. This indicates that the null hypothesis will not be rejected. It therefore shows that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference among business education lecturers in both federal and state universities in Ondo State on digital economy practices implementation, was accepted.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business education lecturers regarding their competencies in implementing digital economy practices in public universities in Ondo State

Table 4: Summary of t-test result analysis of male and female business education lecturers regarding their competencies in implementing digital economy practices in public university in Ondo State

Group	N	X	SD	DF	t-Cal	P-Value	Decision
Male	20	3.75	0.52				
				37	0.412	2.026	Accepted
Female	19	3.68	0.54				

Source: Field study, 2025.

From table 4, the calculated t-cal is less than the p-value of 2.026 at 37 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significant. This indicates that the null hypothesis will not be rejected. It therefore shows that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business education lecturers regarding their competencies in implementing digital economy practice in public universities in Ondo state was accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The study was conducted to determine the digital economy competencies required by business educators for driving modern business practices in public universities in Ondo State. On the aspect of digital literacy, the study revealed that business education lecturers generally agreed that they were proficient in various digital skills relevant to contemporary business

environment which can enhance their effectiveness and relevance in professional background. This was in line with Seyed, Roubollai and Abolfazi (2020) who all that observed that digital literacy among teachers significantly and positively influence on their job performance, They further stressed that any increase in digital literacy, will enhance the teachers core competencies and improve their job performance.

It was further revealed that the business education lecturers in public universities in Ondo state, consistently face high challenges in implementing digital economy practices. The key barriers include limited access to digital infrastructure, irregular professional development/training, poor internet services, poor funding and lack of institutional support. The findings is in line with Stephen (2010) who pointed out that the most commonly indentified problems of implementing digital economy related to lack of an ICT infrastructure, poor network, high cost associated with ICT equipment, software and ongoing support.

The result in table 3 revealed that there is no significant difference among business education lecturers in both federal and state universities in Ondo State on digital economy practices implementation.

Result in table 4, revealed that male and female business education lecturers in Public universities did not differ significantly regarding their competencies in implementing digital economy practice.

Conclusion

The advent of digital economy viz-a-viz the importance at advancing the economic, social and national development of a country cannot be overemphasized. It is therefore, imperative for every individual especially the teachers in tertiary institutions to tap into this and properly inculcate the skills. This will not only help them discharge their duties appropriately, deliver efficient and effective teaching, but also help expose them to the expectations in the world of work and put them at edge at competing with foreign academias.

The cumulative effects of the above, will help undergraduates acquire basic necessary skills needed after graduation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1) Institution should provide regular digital skills training for lecturers in order to improve their performance thereby meeting up with the expectations in the world of work as well as compete favourbaly with their counterparts across the globe
2) Business education curriculum should be revised to better reflect digital economy needs
3) There should be collaboration with industry experts to co-teach or guide lecturers on digital economy topical areas needed in the modern life.
4) Various universities management and administrators should prioritize huge investments on ICT infrastructure in order to place their institutions at par with foreign ones, especially in developed countries.

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