African Journal of Integrated Knowledge and Technology Vol. 4 No. 2 December, 2024
Print ISSN: 2814-2802 Online ISSN: 3027-0553 www.ajikt.org

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS EDUCATORS IN A DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

Juliet Ekemma Oko[1]
Chinyere Jessica Eze-Desy[2]
Hilary Anayochukwu Eke[3]
[1,2] Department of Office Technology and Management,
[3]Department of Social Sciences,
[1,2,3]Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana.
[1]julietekemma@gmail.com
[2]jessydesy4@gmail.com

Abstract

The global labour market has been reshaped by rapid technological revolution, creating new roles, modifying existing ones, and rendering some positions obsolete. Graduates of our tertiary institutions face unique employment challenges and opportunities in this digital age. This study examines the employment opportunities available to business educators in a digital environment and explores the areas where their knowledge and skills are most applicable. The research was guided by two questions: (1) What employment opportunities are available for business educators in the digital age? and (2) In which digital roles can Business Education graduates be effectively employed? A survey research design was employed, targeting 172 graduates currently employed as business administrative officers at Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, who hold qualifications in Business Education and Office Technology and Management (OTM). Data were collected using a validated structured questionnaire and analysed using mean ($\bar{X}$) and standard deviation (SD) to answer the research questions, with a cut-off mean score of 3.0 indicating acceptability. The findings reveal that business educators and OTM graduates can secure employment in diverse roles, including business centre operations, call centre management, data analysis, etc. It also identifies key areas where graduates' digital competencies are most relevant. The study concludes that Business Education and OTM graduates are highly adaptable to digital workplaces, with skills that ensure lifelong employability. Recommendations include aligning curriculum offerings with digital labour market requirements, continuous exposure to emerging digital technologies, and training programmes designed to enhance graduates' practical skills in dynamic technological environments.

Keywords: Business Education, Office Technology and Management, Digital Skills, Employment Opportunities, Knowledge Worker, ICT, Nigeria

Introduction

One of the foremost aspirations of any nation is to ensure that its citizens are gainfully employed and self-reliant. This is corroborated in several recent works including Ofoego, et al. (2013) and Ogar and Atanda (2019). Unemployment remains a critical socio-economic challenge globally, and education is widely recognised as a vital tool for mitigating this phenomenon (Anao, 2019). Among educational disciplines, Business Education has emerged

as an essential pathway for equipping individuals with practical skills and knowledge required to thrive in business and information technology environments (Ayoola, 2023).

Business Education prepares graduates for professional roles in enterprises, ranging from entrepreneurship to employment as administrative officers, data analysts, and knowledge workers (Eze, 2020). In today's digital economy, businesses rely heavily on information to maintain competitive advantage. Knowledge workers, as defined by Ile (2021), are professionals who manipulate, manage, and apply information using digital technologies to create value for organisations. This highlights the critical role that Business Education graduates play in digital workplaces.

Furthermore, training in Business Education equips graduates with competencies in office technology, digital communication, and information management. These competencies are essential in modern workstations, where computers, software applications, e-commerce platforms, and cloud-based collaboration tools are ubiquitous (Ade, 2022). Consequently, graduates with this training are positioned to exploit emerging employment opportunities in diverse sectors of the digital economy, contributing to both organisational productivity and personal employability.

This study aims to ascertain the employment opportunities available to Business Education and Office Technology and Management graduates in digital environments. It also seeks to identify areas where these graduates' skills and knowledge are most relevant and applicable. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What employment opportunities are available for business educators in the digital age?
2. In which digital roles can Business Education and OTM graduates be most effectively employed?

Literature Review

Business Education and the Digital Economy

Business Education is concerned with vocational and professional preparation for careers in commerce and information management (Anao, 2019). The discipline equips individuals with competencies necessary for roles as entrepreneurs, employees, or knowledge workers, thereby fostering self-reliance. The integration of digital technologies into business operations has expanded the scope of employment opportunities for Business Education graduates. As Eze (2020) notes, organisations that leverage information and digital tools gain a strategic advantage, creating roles for graduates skilled in ICT applications, data processing, and network management.

Recent research highlights the increasing relevance of digital literacy and technological proficiency in business roles. Odah and Ago (2023) argue that Business Education and OTM graduates possess the requisite problem-solving, organisational, and critical thinking skills necessary to function as knowledge workers. These competencies are vital in roles that require data management, digital communication, and the deployment of business software applications.

Methodology

Research Design

Print ISSN: 2814-2802 Online ISSN: 3027-0553 www.ajikt.org

The study adopted a survey research design to investigate employment opportunities for Business Education and OTM graduates in digital environments. A survey allows for the systematic collection of data from a large group of participants, providing quantitative insights into trends and perceptions regarding employability.

Population and Sampling

The population comprised 172 graduates of Business Education and OTM employed as administrative officers at Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents with experience working in digital business environments, ensuring that participants had direct relevance to the research objectives. A sample size of 120 participants was determined to provide sufficient representation while allowing for practical data collection.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire, validated by three academic staff, was used to elicit respondents' perceptions regarding:

1. Employment opportunities in the digital environment.
2. Areas where graduates' skills can be effectively applied in digital workplaces.

The instrument employed a four-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree. A cut-off mean score of 3.0 was used to determine acceptability.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using mean (X) and standard deviation (SD). Tables were constructed to present the findings, highlighting which roles were considered viable employment opportunities and where graduates' skills were most useful.

Considerations

Participants provided informed consent, and confidentiality was maintained. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could withdraw at any point.

Findings

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities for Business Education and OTM graduates have diversified significantly with the rise of digital workplaces. Traditional roles such as secretarial and administrative functions have evolved to incorporate ICT competencies. Recent studies indicate that graduates can be gainfully employed in the following capacities: business centre operations, call centre operations, data analysis, network administration, information management, desktop support and IT operations. Managing digital transaction hubs, customer service, and e-commerce platforms; Handling customer inquiries using digital communication tools and CRM software; Analysing business and operational data using software such as Excel, SPSS, and other data processing tools; Managing digital networks and ensuring secure and efficient information flow; Acting as knowledge workers, responsible for the collection, storage, and dissemination of digital information; Maintaining office technology infrastructure,

troubleshooting software/hardware issues, and supporting digital collaboration platforms. Table 1 summarises the roles identified as viable employment opportunities for Business Education and OTM graduates in digital environments. These roles, identified in Table 1, reflect the convergence of traditional business functions and digital technology competencies.

Table 1: Employment Opportunities for Business Education/OTM Graduates in Digital Environments

S/N	Role	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	Decision
1	Business Centre Operations	3.61	0.96	Accept
2	Call Centre Operations	3.53	0.67	Accept
3	Data Analyst	3.42	0.81	Accept
4	System Analyst	2.41	0.60	Reject
5	Secretary	3.52	0.78	Accept
6	Salesmanship	3.51	0.49	Accept
7	Information Manager	3.64	0.58	Accept
8	Desktop Officer	3.72	0.71	Accept
9	Data Processing Officer	3.18	0.83	Accept
10	Public Relations Officer	3.62	0.58	Accept
11	Network Administrator	3.59	0.49	Accept

Summary of Findings

Respondents in Table 1 agreed that most digital roles are suitable for Business Education/OTM graduates, except for the system analyst role, which was rejected. Let us delve deeper into the findings.

The overall acceptance with the grand mean of 3.43 (SD = 0.68) indicates that respondents generally agree that the listed roles are viable employment opportunities for Business Education/OTM graduates in the digital environment. High employability roles go to Desktop Officer ($\bar{X}$ = 3.72), Information Manager ($\bar{X}$ = 3.64), and Public Relations Officer ($\bar{X}$ = 3.62) which are identified as the most promising roles. This implies that graduates are most employable in positions requiring digital proficiency, organisational management, and communication skills. These high means reflect the increasing demand for graduates who can handle office automation, manage digital resources, and communicate effectively within a business setting (Eze, 2020; Odah & Ayo, 2023).

Taking a queue from the angle of moderate employability roles, we discover that roles like Data Analyst ($\bar{X}$ = 3.42) and Salesmanship ($\bar{X}$ = 3.51) show moderate employability. Graduates possess transferable skills applicable in these areas, particularly analytical thinking and customer engagement, but these roles may require additional specialisation or on-the-job

Print ISSN: 2814-2802 Online ISSN: 3027-0553 www.ajikt.org

training in advanced data analytics or digital sales platforms. This takes us to the rejected role, the system analyst role.

The system analyst role was rejected ($\bar{X}$ = 2.41, SD = 0.60). This suggests that respondents perceive system analysis as requiring specialised IT knowledge beyond the standard Business Education/OTM curriculum. System analysts often require advanced coding, software development, or systems integration expertise, which may not be comprehensively covered in the Business Education/OTM programme. This implies that the core competencies that enhance employability as highlighted by the data shows the importance of digital literacy, ICT proficiency, and office technology skills.

Educational institutions should consider incorporating modules on advanced IT and analytics to expand the employability range of graduates, potentially making roles like system analyst more accessible in the future (Nwode & Obikpe, 2021).

Areas of Digital Relevance

Table 2 shows where graduates' skills are most applicable.

Table 2: Application of Skills in Digital Environments

S/N	Area	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	Decision
12	Sharing resources on the Internet	3.71	0.89	Accept
13	Sharing information in real time	3.82	0.59	Accept
14	Knowledge worker	2.59	0.72	Accept
15	Visual workstation	3.61	0.80	Accept
16	Use of electronic mail	3.60	0.69	Accept
17	E-commerce applications	3.45	0.74	Accept
18	File access tools	3.32	0.76	Accept
19	E-government	1.82	0.60	Reject
20	E-education	1.91	0.72	Reject

Graduates are particularly effective in digital communication, e-commerce, and knowledge management tasks, while specialised government and educational applications are less applicable.

Table 2: Areas Where Business Education Graduates Can Be Useful in the Digital Environment

Area	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	Decision
Sharing resources on the Internet	3.71	0.89	Accept
Sharing information in real-time	3.82	0.59	Accept
Knowledge worker	2.59	0.72	Accept
Visual workstation	3.61	0.80	Accept
Use of electronic mail	3.60	0.69	Accept
E-commerce applications	3.45	0.74	Accept
File access tools	3.32	0.76	Accept
E-government	1.82	0.60	Reject
E-education	1.91	0.72	Reject
Remote login	1.72	0.49	Reject
Offline client-based communication	2.10	0.39	Reject

Further findings (Table 2) show that high-relevance digital skills include sharing resources on the Internet ($\bar{X}$ = 3.71), real-time information sharing ($\bar{X}$ = 3.82), and visual workstation operations ($\bar{X}$ = 3.61) where graduates are particularly effective. These activities align with the concept of the modern knowledge worker (Ile, 2021), where managing, disseminating, and utilising digital information efficiently is critical.

While "knowledge worker" ($\bar{X}$ = 2.59) and e-commerce applications ($\bar{X}$ = 3.45) are recognised as relevant, the slightly lower mean indicates that graduates may require additional practical experience or specialised training in commercial IT systems and knowledge management tools to fully maximise these roles. This shows that knowledge worker and e-commerce may be interpreted here as moderate skills. Note that e-government ($\bar{X}$ = 1.82), e-education ($\bar{X}$ = 1.91), remote login ($\bar{X}$ = 1.72), and offline client-based communication ($\bar{X}$ = 2.10) were rejected. These roles demand specific ICT knowledge, regulatory understanding, and system-level expertise beyond what is typically provided in Business Education/OTM curricula. For instance, e-government involves cybersecurity, database management, and public sector systems that may not be covered in detail (Odah & Ayo, 2023).

Some implications for curriculum development include the fact that that the results suggest that graduates' employability is strongest in core business and ICT operations, while specialised digital government or education platforms require additional training or certification. Universities and polytechnics could enhance employability by integrating modules on cloud collaboration tools, digital governance, e-learning platforms, and remote access technologies into the Business Education/OTM curriculum.

Print ISSN: 2814-2802 Online ISSN: 3027-0553 www.ajikt.org

Grand Mean Analysis

Grand mean of 3.48 (SD = 0.83) indicates that, overall, Business Education and OTM graduates are highly relevant in the digital business environment. This reinforces the study's conclusion that graduates possess skills for lifelong employability in ICT-driven workplaces.

Synthesis Across Both Tables

Employment Opportunities vs Skill Relevance: Roles with high employment potential (Desktop Officer, Information Manager, Business Centre Operator) correspond to areas where graduates' skills are highly applicable (resource sharing, email, knowledge work). Roles requiring specialised IT expertise (System Analyst, E-government) are currently beyond the immediate skill set of graduates, suggesting gaps that can be addressed through targeted professional development. One can notice that digital skills is a career advantage since graduates' proficiency in ICT, office technology, and digital communication positions them to function effectively in modern organisations.

The findings underscore the importance of digital literacy as a core employability skill, aligning with global trends in workforce development (Nwode & Obikpe, 2021; Ada, 2021). In curriculum implications, business education programmes must continuously evolve to include emerging digital technologies, practical ICT applications, and problem-solving in virtual environments. Exposure to e-commerce, video conferencing, and digital collaboration tools should be intensified to bridge the gap between academic preparation and workplace expectations. Business Education/OTM graduates have a broad spectrum of employment opportunities in digital business environments. Core employable roles include desktop support, network administration, data management, and information management, reflecting the graduates' strengths in ICT and office technology.

Graduates' skills are most relevant in digital communication, resource sharing, knowledge management, and e-commerce, demonstrating adaptability in modern workplaces. Specialized roles like system analyst, e-government, and e-education require additional IT training, indicating potential curriculum enhancement areas. The study validates that Business Education and OTM graduates are well-positioned for lifelong employability in digital environments, provided that continuous professional development and digital skills training are embedded in their educational trajectory.

Discussion

The findings confirm that Business Education and OTM graduates possess transferable digital skills that are highly relevant for the modern workplace. Roles such as data processing officers, network administrators, and information managers are well-suited to their training. These findings align with Nwode and Obikpe (2021), who emphasised that ICT competencies are critical for employability in digital organisations.

Furthermore, the study highlights the adaptability of graduates to evolving digital demands. Skills acquired through Business Education and OTM programmes—including electronic communication, resource sharing, and knowledge management—equip graduates to function effectively in digital workplaces (Odah & Ayo, 2023; Obayi, 2019). Additionally, interpersonal,

teamwork, and leadership skills acquired through these programmes ensure that graduates are competent in collaborative and dynamic business environments (Ada, 2021).

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that the digital economy provides numerous employment opportunities for Business Education and OTM graduates. The skills acquired through their training—including ICT competencies, knowledge management, and office technology—ensure lifelong employability and adaptability. Graduates are equipped to contribute effectively in diverse digital roles, fostering self-reliance and enhancing organisational productivity.

Recommendations

1. Curricula should align closely with the digital labour market to ensure lifelong employability.
2. Students should receive continuous training in emerging digital technologies.
3. Professional development and ICT certification programmes should be offered to enhance graduate skills.
4. Collaboration with industry partners should be strengthened to expose students to real-world digital environments.

References

Ada, C. R. (2021). *Information trends and application in science and business.* Lagos: Concept Publication.

Anao, A. R. (2019). The role of business education in a developing economy. *Business Education Journal, 1*(1), 19–24.

Eze, U. S. (2020). *Modern Office Technology for Tertiary Institution.* Aba: Education Press.

Odah, T. N., & Ayo, A. O. (2023). E-records management practices in the Directorate of Continuing Education Centre – AIFPU. *Journal of Science and Technology Education, 2*(1), 34–43.

Obayi, A. O. (2019). *Essentials of Office Automation.* Enugu: Concept Press.

Obikpe, R. A. (2021). *Fundamentals of Information Technology.* New Delhi: Eon Vikas.

Ofoego, O. C., Odionye, A., & Ebebe, I. E. (2013). Education for self-reliance and national development in Nigeria: A philosophical perspective. In *World Educators Forum. http://www. globalacademicgroup. com/journals/world% 20educators% 20forum/EDUCATION* (Vol. 20).

Ogar, C. E., & Atanda, L. A. (2019). Strategies in economic diversification for self-reliance in Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural Education and Practices. 23 (6) 45*, *53*.

Ayoola, O. O. (2023). Innovative Teaching Strategies Required in Business Education for Sustainable Development. In *Lead City University Postgraduate Multidisciplinary Conference Proceedings* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 152-162).