

## The Extent of Acquisition of Digital Marketing Skills Among Business Education Students in Colleges of Education for Economic Development in Anambra State



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**ABSTRACT:** The study examined the extent of acquisition of digital marketing skills among business education students in colleges of education for economic development in Anambra state. Two specific objectives and corresponding research questions guided the study. The study was strictly descriptive. The population of the study was 214. This comprised 400 and 300 level bus education students of NOCEN and FCETU as at 2022/2023 academic session. The study made use of 5% of the entire population which is 107 respondents. Thus, a proportional sampling method was used to select the sample. A 20 items self structured questionnaire was designed and validated by two business educators. The content consistency of the instrument was carried out using test retest study and through comparison using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, a coefficient of 0.28 was obtained. Data analysis was done using cluster mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that business education student have acquired digital content and social media marketing skills but to low extent. Based on the findings, it recommended that lecturers who handle marketing course and digital marketing courses should improve on their digital skills in order to be able to expose the students as well as social medial platform to promote their marketing concepts.

**KEYWORDS:** Business Education, Digital Marketing and Digital Marketing Skills

### INTRODUCTION

Business education is one of the skill based discipline that is studied in the colleges of education. It has gained ground as a core vocational education course with the capacity to equip its recipient with various employable and entrepreneurial skills, needed attitude and knowledge in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Ordu and Abulkarim (2020) maintain that the recipients of business education are opportune to receive skill relating to business such as office technology and management, marketing or distribution trade, accounting and entrepreneurship skills when properly guided. To Umoru (2020), when the students acquire vocational business education skills and general business skills, it will enhance their ability to fit into different careers within the business world. Hence, acquiring skills through business education course is seen as very vital to empowering of the recipients to be self employed.

There are many skills that can be acquired through the study of business education. One of such skills is marketing of or distributive trade skills if properly guided. According to Clechawaki (2022), marketing skills is the ability of a marketer to drive a business to grow and prosper, he maintained that marketing skills are set of potentials that help to persuade, sell and build customers relationships. It is simply the ability to promote market share and customer's patronage for long term result in terms of loyalty. It is expected that business education courses that are exposed to its students is capable to develop their marketing potentials. Abdulkarim (2019) opine that skills required for marketing of goods that are acquired through business education are supposed to help students to identify consumers' needs, preside and win them. Thus, the student will build customer relationship and sustain such relationship for entrepreneurial success.

There is no doubt that virtually everything in this 21<sup>st</sup> century has been digitalized. This is no exception with the marketing practices in many firms and industries and this is why there is need for acquisition of these digital marketing skills by business education students. McKinley marketing partners (2019) in agreement of this view assert that marketing jobs today are digital technology friendly in implementation of marketing strategies. This goes to proof that it is only business education students who have acquired requisite digital marketing skills that can conveniently compete locally and globally to secure meaningful marketing jobs or become successful business entrepreneurs.

Digital marketing is an attempt by marketers and business to bring their product at the doorstep of the consumers through different social media platform. Accordingly, financial times (2017), digital marketing is an aspect or branch of marketing which uses the

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internet and other online based digital technology such as desktop computer, mobile phone (SMS and MMS), and other digital media and platform to promote product and service.

Obviously, digital marketing has become so prevalent in the business world today such that many firms have resorted to employ combinations of Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Content Marketing (CM), Campaign Marketing (CAM), Data Driven Marketing (DDM), E-commerce Marketing (EM), Social Media Marketing (SMM), Social Media Optimization (SMO), E-mail Direct Marketing (EDM), Display Advertising (DA), E-Books (EB) and many more. Digital marketing, also- extends to non internet channels that provide digital media service such as television, call backs and on hold mobile ringtones (Nelson, 2016). According to Chaffy and Smith (2017), the basic objective of digital marketing is to increase market share cost and sales, add value, generate brand awareness, maintain customers' relationship, gain global coverage. These objectives and the relevance of digital marketing has compelled many firms to sought after personnel that posses digital marketing skills to boost their marketing practices in today's' business world.

Digital Marketing Skills (DMS) are those abilities that enhance online marketing and they are numerous. In the context of this paper, they are those talents and competencies which entrepreneurs and businesses require to successfully promote a brand, product or services online through digital communication. These skills could be a combination of hard and soft skills. According to Mckinley Marketing Partners (2019), the digital marketing skills that are mostly sought out for by firms include digital content creation, digital analysis, search engine optimization, e-mail and social media and cloud computing. This informs that it is only students with such digital marketing skills that could easily get employed on graduation. No wonder the digital marketing institute (2022) posit that DMS provide students with the opportunities of instant employment on graduation. According to them, such skills range from social media marketing skills, search engine marketing skills, content creator marketing skills, e-mail marketing skills, mobile marketing skills, social selling marking skill, pay-per-click marketing skills, video creation skills, strategic planning skills and digital analytic skills. They maintain that these skills would be able to drive sales for both micro and small scale business owners.

The discourse so far has revealed the importance and need for possession of digital marketing skills by business education students who intend to be successful in the performance of 21<sup>st</sup> century marketing tasks. Olaniyi (2022) assert that for the success of business education students in the business world today, that there is need for them to acquire appropriate skills in school to enable them fit perfectly into different digital occupation areas. This means that there is serious need for business education students to be exposed to digital marketing skills. According to Crittenden and Crittenden (2015), business education students' needs to acquire different digital and social media marketing skills required of 21<sup>st</sup> century professionals. Gregorio etal (2019) supports this assertion by reporting that is for business education students to succeed after graduation, there is need for them to acquire digital marketing and technology skills such as knowledge of creative thinking and content creation skills, social media, mobile application, e-commerce and analytical skills to mention but a few.

However, Langan, Cowley and Nguyen (2019) laments that business education students lack needed digital skills to compete with their counter parts in the market arena. Therefore, it is absolutely important to expose them to topics like search engine optimization, content marketing and others to create an enabling ground for them to compete favourably with other students within and outside Nigeria.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Business education as a course is known to equip its recipients with needed occupational and business skills that will enable them become useful in the society. Nigeria today has become a technology driven country such that many are done through digital means. This is why it is important that for business education students to remain relevant, they also need to acquire digital marketing skills to fit into the business world as employers and employees. Nevertheless, it is sad to note that most courses including marketing courses in business education are still taught theoretically. Hence, it agitates one's mind on whether the students can acquire the needed digital marketing skills to meet up with the 21<sup>st</sup> century demand for digital skills in the business environment. It is on this basis that the researcher deems it necessary to ascertain the extent to which business education students acquire the required digital marketing skills needed for today's marketing practices in the business world.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The main purpose of the study is to determine the extent of acquisition of digital marketing skills among business education students in colleges of education in Anambra state. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the extent of acquisition of search engine optimization (SEO) skills among business education students in colleges of education in Anambra states.
2. Determine the extent of acquisition of digital content creation skills among business education students in colleges of education in Anambra states.

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3. Examine the extent of acquisition of social media marketing skills among business education students in colleges of education in Anambra State.

### RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research question guided the study:

1. To what extent do business education students in colleges of education in Anambra State acquire SEO skills?
2. What is the extent of acquisition of digital content creation skills among business education students in tertiary institution in college of education in Anambra States?
3. What is the extent of acquisition of social media marketing skills among business education students in colleges of education in Anambra States?

### METHODOLOGY

The Study adopted a descriptive survey research design to be able to elicit responses. The area of the study was Anambra state. The population for the study was 214 business education students which comprised of NOCEN and FCETU as at 2022/2023 academic session. The sample was 107 respondents and derived from 50% of the entire population. Thus, proportional sampling technique was used to select the sample. The major instrument used for the study was a self structured questionnaire designed in 4 point scale format of Very high extent-4, High extent -3, Low extent-2 and Very low extent-1. The instrument was given to three experts for face and content validation. Two business education lecturers that teach marketing courses and one measurement and evaluation lecturer all from Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe were given the instrument. For the content reliability test was carried out using Chronbach alpha to analyze data gathered from 20 business education students from Federal College of Education Technical, Asaba. Thus, a reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained and was seen as very reliability for the present study. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean rating, standard deviation and cluster mean to answer the research question raised and the decision was based on the bench mark of 2.50 and above as LG while below 2.50 as low extent.

### RESULTS

**Research question one:** To what extent do business education students in colleges of education in Anambra State acquire SEO skills?

**Table 1: Mean Rating of the extent business education students in colleges of education acquired SEO skills.**

N=107

S/N	Items	$\sum Fx$	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Ability to design website for marketing product/services.	184	1.72	0.72	LE
2	Ability to subscribe for website hosting to provide access marketing campaign.	158	1.48	0.82	LE
3	Ability to use search engines to locate online resources.	387	3.62	0.58	HE
4	Ability to create content that would attract traffic to marketing campaign websites.	162	1.51	0.80	LE
5	Ability to edit and update website marketing campaigns on product and services offerings.	153	1.43	0.77	LE
6	Ability to identity electronic communities with big potentials.	335	3.13	0.34	HE
7	Ability to identify and select a site for advertisement.	340	3.18	0.73	HE
	<b>Cluster mean and SD</b>		<b>2.30</b>	<b>0.68</b>	<b>LE</b>

Source: Field work. 2023

Table 1 showed that business education students' in colleges of education to a high extent utilize search engine to do some of the online marketing activities such as locating online resources, identifying electronic communities with high potentials and identifying advertisement sites. However, the students to a low extent can use the SEO to design website, subscribe for website hosting to provide access marketing, create content that would attract traffic, edit and update website marketing campaigns on product and services offerings.

**Research question two:** What is the extent of digital content creation skills among business education students in colleges of education in Anambra State?

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**Table 2: Mean rating of the extent of acquisition of digital content creation skills among Business education in colleges of education in Anambra State.**

N=107					
S/N	Items	$\sum Fx$	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
8	Ability to design graphics for promoting products/services using Corel draw application	147	1.37	0.61	VLE
9	Ability to use themes to assist customers to navigate to interested marketing messages to appeal to customer needs	159	1.49	0.73	LE
10	Ability to interpret and create designs for subject of marketing campaigns	159	1.49	0.73	VLE
11	Ability to use short and medium online messages to convey information about products/ services to consumers	236	2.21	0.98	LE
12	Ability to analyze information and ideas based on critical thinking	284	2.65	0.85	HE
13	Ability to create and edit video that are very alluring to customers	380	3.55	0.50	VHE
14	Ability to create and edit digital marketing campaign messages to correct errors before publishing	338	3.16	0.42	VHE
	<b>Cluster Mean and SD</b>		<b>2.27</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>LE</b>

Sources: Field work, 2023

Table 2 above reveal that business education students responded to a very high extent to items 13 and 14, high extent to item 12 but to a very low extent and low extent to items 8,10 and 9, 11 respectively. Meanwhile, the cluster mean indicates to a low extent with the value of 2.27 as the extent the students have acquired digital content creation skills among in colleges of education in Anambra State.

**Research question three:** What is the extent of acquisition of media of social media marketing skill among business education students in colleges of education in Anambra State?

**Table 3: Mean rating of the extent of acquisition of social media marketing skills among business education students in colleges of education in Anambra State.**

N=107					
S/N	Items	$\sum Fx$	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
15	Ability to create list of customers and correct using social media platforms	348	3.25	0.47	VHE
16	Ability to use social media platforms to create video messages for awareness	380	3.55	0.50	VHE
17	Ability to communicate very well in order to sale ideas and campaigns to the consumers with ease	373	3.49	0.62	VHE
18	Ability to use and navigate the internet to reach out to the consumers via social media	297	2.78	0.83	HE
19	Ability to use magnetic and captivating words to create headlines for marketing campaigns	232	2.17	0.49	LE
20	Ability to use short appealing messages to attract customers to product/service offerings	304	2.84	0.83	HE
	<b>Cluster Mean and SD</b>		<b>3.01</b>	<b>0.62</b>	<b>VHE</b>

Source: Field work, 2023

Table 3 shows that the students responded that to a very high extent that they have acquired social media skills as indicated by the mean values of 3,25, 3.55, 3.49 on items 15,16,17 and 2.78, 2.84 for high extent on items 18 and 19. Also, the cluster mean reveals same with the value of 3.01 in spite of the response of low extent on tem 19.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDING

The findings from research question one show that business education students to a low extent acquired search engine optimization skills needed for digital marketing. This is because the students responded that to a low extent, they can perform the activities that relate to creating websites and many others. This finding agrees with the position of Gregorio etal (2019) when they reported the need for business students to develop digital and technical skill such as internet and software knowledge and SEO skills.

The result from research from research question two reveal that business education students in colleges of education in Anambra State to a low extent acquire digital content creation skill needed for digital marketing. This finding is in random with the view of O'Brien (2016) who asserted that students lack digital marketing skill. More so, the finding relates to the position of Lagan, Cowley and Nguyen (2019) on their view that business education student lack requisite digital skills to compete in the digital market environment.

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The result relating to research question three show that business, education students in college of education in Anambra State to a high extent acquired social media marketing skills through application of social media platforms. This finding contradicts the view of Crittenden (2015) and Langan, Cowley and Nguyen (2019) when they reported that there is need to expose business education students to topic such as social media platforms and content marketing for digital marketing purposes.

### CONCLUSION

The study has shown that business education students in colleges of education in Anambra State lack the needed digital marketing skills such as SEO, digital content creation and social media skills for marketing on the globe. However, it can be concluded that though, the study revealed that business education students to a high extent acquired social media skills; they may not have acquired them through marketing classes but maybe due to constant use of social media such as Face book, Whatsapp, Telegram, Instagram and the likes. Therefore, there is need for business educators to improve on the implementation of marketing courses and topics especially those relating to digital marketing. This will enhance students ability to acquire requisite digital skills that will enable them compete favourably in the business world.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on the findings and conclusion drawn from the study:

1. The colleges' management and the government should improve on provision of digital technologies for easy access and application by both the lecturers and students.
2. The colleges' management should give both the lecturers and students access code to digital libraries to enable them utilize and navigate the web during marketing and e-learning related courses class.
3. The tariff charged for surfing as well as navigating the internet should be reduced and regulated by the government.
4. Business education lecturers handling digital marketing and other related courses should design learning activities that allows students to regularly use the internet and software, search engine optimization, and social media platforms to promote their marketing concepts.
5. There is need for lecturers especially those who teach marketing courses to upgrade their knowledge and skills on website development so as to be able to guide the students in development of marketing website, blog and short videos.

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