

Digital Entrepreneurial Marketing Skills as Panacea for Unemployment among Business Education Graduate Students in Rivers State Universities

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Abstract

The study investigated Digital Entrepreneurial Marketing Skills as Panacea for Unemployment among Business Education Students in Rivers State Universities. This study adopted a correlational research design. The population of this study is 125 Business Education graduate students of 2022/2023 academic session, 57 from Rivers State University and 68 from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The total population was used for the study since it is of a manageable size and as such the census sampling technique was adopted. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire structured on a four-point rating scale. The instrument was validated by three experts. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument the test re-test method was adopted; scores obtained were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and it yielded a reliability coefficient index of 0.82 and 0.79 respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to answer the research questions and t-transformation was used to test the hypotheses and to establish the relationship between the two variables at 0.05 levels of significance and decision was made based on the r-value. The study revealed a positive low relationship between social media marketing and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduates in rivers state universities. It was recommended that Students should utilize their social networking handles for marketing purpose as it has proven to be very beneficial in marketing product in the digital era.

Keywords: Digital, Entrepreneurial, Marketing, Skills and Unemployment

Introduction

Unemployment situation in the country has assumed a critical stage as it has brought about untold hardships on the lives and wellbeing of Nigerians. This scenario has assumed a disturbing dimension posing great concern to graduates and the entire Nigerian populace. Anum, Makanjuola and Shaibu (2021) stated that the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in March, 2021 revealed that Nigeria's unemployment rate rose from 27.1 percent in the second quarter of 2020 to 33.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2020. This revelation is worrisome as the rate of unemployment keeps rising geometrically with its attendant consequences culminating in poverty, crime, abuse among others. The present situation of Nigeria's economy has seriously affected organizational workforce which has resulted to unemployment amongst graduates.

Unemployment is the situation in which people that are able and willing to work cannot find any job to be engaged in. Individuals who are unemployed are often more susceptible to several challenges including difficulty in finding future employment and decrease in income (Anum & Shaibu 2021). In an attempt to tackle this problem of unemployment the federal governments introduce entrepreneurship in higher institutions in order to equip students with the requisite skills to be self-reliant.

Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in economic development through creation of utilities and generation of employment within a short period (Amesi & Akpomi, 2014). Amesi (2021) stated that entrepreneurship is the ability to set up a business enterprise as different from being employed. This ability according to them ought to be acquired and to enable a person obtain an employment. Entrepreneurship involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and abilities necessary for self-reliance. Amesi (2021) viewed entrepreneurship as the ability to create and build something from practically nothing through digital marketing.

Marketing skills are requisite skills that involve thinking about how to reach the targeted audience for product and service produce by an entrepreneur, Oyerinde and Kalen, (2016).

They further opined that any entrepreneurs who acquire these marketing skills will be able to cross the bar of unemployment as these skills will enable him or her sell product at profits, that is to say that marketing is a key factor in entrepreneurial skills development because it determines the success or failure of a business in the same direction. Ademiluyi, (2017) opined that the development of marketing skills offer the entrepreneurs the unique strategy of success in business, he further identified area of marketing skills to include; salesmanship and negotiation, sale records keeping, pricing, advertising channels, advertising media, consumer behaviour appreciation and transportation.

Marketing is one of the major areas of Business Education, which provides for the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and has as one of its mandate to graduate students who will become self-reliant. Business Education is designed to meet the need of persons who have interest or are preparing to become entrepreneur. In the view of Akpomi and Kayii(2020) Business Education is a programme originally designed to offer students the opportunity to develop the desire abilities, skills, and understanding of the vocational opportunities available in the world of work. Amesi and Nkoro (2020) sees Business Education as an important part of general education which emphasize on skills and competencies acquisition for use in office and business related occupation. Dambo and Pyagbara (2021) buttressed that, Business Education is a collaborative programme in which industrial sectors of any economy form partnership thereby preparing the individual to adequately fit into both industry and classroom as a professional.

For any country to foster genuine economic growth and development, its educational system must be considered as the bedrock of any meaningful development for economy to be balanced or be at the average level, it must make sure that the entrepreneurship education is functional and the various facilities needed for proper skills acquisition must be at the disposal of the ready mind in other to properly achieve the aim of the programme and making sure that efficiency and competency is actualized (Ohaka, Nnokam & Akpomi, 2018). Entrepreneurship equips individuals with better marketing skills to function effectively and be self-reliant. Today, marketing activities has changed with the help of digital technologies. The use of these technologies to carryout marketing activities is known as digital marketing. It involves the use of digital channels to market product and services in other to reach the final consumers. The term digital marketing refers to the use of websites, app, mobile devices, social media and other digital means to promote and sell products and services (Adam, 2023). It is worthy to note that the emphasis of this study was placed on social media marketing, content marketing and data analysis as Digital entrepreneurial marketing skills.

The term content marketing refers to a method of marketing that includes creating and sharing online content that doesn't just promote a brand, but rather is designed to encourage its audience to visit a brand websites. Content marketing is a marketing strategy used to attract, engage, and retain an audience by creating and sharing relevant articles, videos podcasts and other media. Content marketing is the development and distribution of relevant useful content blogs, newsletters, white papers, social media posts, emails and videos (Marketing Library, 2023). Adobe (2023) stated that content marketing is a strategy and business process that uses valuables and relevant digitals assets like texts, images and videos to attract and retain a clearly defined audience. It's a type of inbound marketing strategy that delivers values to a business audience through entertaining, educational or informative content. Content marketing is a technique of creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience (Roi, 2023).

Content marketing comes in four basic forms; written, audio, videos, and image. Most businesses use several forms of content to engage with their audiences across platforms like social media websites and ads (Adobe, 2023). Content marketing is a marketing strategy that puts the customer at the heart of a brands messaging. Rather than spamming customers with advertising-laden messaging, it provides them with valuable content and engages them throughout the customer journey. In the view of Liu and Huang (2015) content marketing is considered as pull marketing strategy rather than pushing where it creates content that can add more value to what a consumer is searching for.

Omar and Bryan (2021) stated that content marketing deals with an invitation from businesses or marketers to undertake consumer at the right time during their buying process, it includes generating, allocating, sharing, and approach content to create an urge for consumer to purchase a products or services.

Social media marketing is a form of digital marketing that leverages the power of popular social media networks to achieve your marketing and branding goals. Adam (2023) stated that Social media marketing is the use of social media the platforms on which users build social networks and share information to build a company's brand, increase sales, and drive website traffic. As platforms like WhatsApp, TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram took off, social media transformed not only the way we connect with one another but also the way businesses are able to influence consumer behavior from promoting content that drives engagement to the extracting of geographic, demographic, and personal information that makes messaging resonate with users. In the view of Ukata and Clifford (2022), Social media marketing (SMM) are forms of internet marketing skills that use social media apps as marketing tools for products and services. Social media platforms enable brands to connect with their audience to build a brand, increase sales, drive traffic to a website, and build a community of followers to share and engage with the business contents. These are done through the five pillars of social media marketing vis-a-vis social strategy in determining the goals, selecting social media platforms and contents mix. The next is planning and publishing the contents, listening and engaging customers, be analytic and reporting to management for decision making, and finally do advertising (La-fleur, 2022).

Data analysis is the process of inspecting, cleansing, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information, informing conclusions and supporting decision-making. Coursera (2023) stated that data analysis is the practice of working with data to glean useful information, which can be used to make informed decision. That is, data are made available to organization as they continue to grow both in amount and complexity. Data analysis deals with the process of cleaning, analyzing, interpreting, and visualizing data using various techniques and business intelligence tools. Shea (2023) stated that data analysis tools help you discover relevant insights that lead to smarter and more effective decision making. That is, it is a way of examining, filtering, adapting and modeling data to help solve problems. Organizations use data analyzed to determine what is and what is not working, so as to aid them to make the necessary changes needed to achieve your business goals.

When data are gathered they are converted into knowledge that will aid decision-making process. Data driven decisions are decisions that made based on the available data, which has been analyzed and interpreted. Organizations rely on relevant, reliable, accurate and timely data to elevate their performance. To leverage on the benefits of data analysis, social media marketing and content creation Business Educations graduates need to invest in various aspect of digital entrepreneurial skills to curb the challenges of unemployment (Ojo-Agbo, Idowu & Adebayo 2022). Digital entrepreneurial marketing if leverage upon by Business Education students will serve as a remedy to the issue of unemployment. It is against this background that the study sought to examine Digital Entrepreneurial Marketing as Panacea for Unemployment among Business Education Graduate Students in Rivers State Universities.

Statement of Problem

Today, without exaggerating information and communication technology has become a model of innovation and competitiveness all round the world. Information communication technology has introduced a new form of entrepreneurship known as digital entrepreneurship. This entrepreneurship is gradually replacing the traditional entrepreneurial activities as there is a continuous innovation of technology and entrepreneurs are leveraging in technology. So many graduates are adopting digital practices for entrepreneurial purposes as a means of self-employment and as such there is need for digital entrepreneurial marketing. Digital entrepreneurial marketing provides graduates with opportunities to develop important skills, create job opportunities and innovate in a rapidly changing global society. Digital marketing offers many opportunities for the graduates to become self-employed.

Regardless of the benefits of digital marketing, it appears that some graduates of Business Education seems not to take full advantage of digital entrepreneurship skills to become self-reliant as the number of unemployed graduates including Business Education graduates continues to increase in the society. To affirm this, Ukata and Edwin (2021) stated that there is high unemployment and poverty rate among Business Education graduates as they barely utilize their digital skills upon graduation for business purposes thus becoming self-employed. Considering the technological era and the ever increasing business opportunities that is made available due to digital technologies, the researcher wonders if Business Education graduates utilize digital entrepreneurial marketing skills for business activities in order to reduce unemployment? This study therefore was carried out to determine the relationship between digital entrepreneurial marketing and unemployment reduction among Business Education students in Rivers state universities.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate Digital Entrepreneurial Marketing as Panacea for Unemployment among Business Education Graduate Students in Rivers State Universities. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the relationship between content creation and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities.
2. Determine the relationship between social media marketing and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities.
3. Determine the relationship between data analysis and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study;

1. What is the relationship between content creation and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities?
2. What is the relationship between social media marketing and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities?
3. What is the relationship between data analysis and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities?

Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant relationship between content creation and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities.
2. There is no significant relationship between social media marketing and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities.
3. There is no significant relationship between Data analysis and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities.

Methodology

This study adopted a correlational research design and the area of the study was Universities in Rivers State. The population of this study consists of 125 Business Education graduate students of 2022/2023 academic session; 57 from Rivers State University and 68 from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The total population was used for the study since it is manageable and as such the census sampling technique was adopted. The instrument used for this study was two self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. There was no sample due to the small population of the study. The first was to determine the digital entrepreneurial marketing skills and the second questionnaire was to ascertain it as panacea for unemployment among Business Education graduate students in Rivers state universities.

The questionnaire was structured on a four-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE -4 points), High Extent (HE -3 points), Moderate Extent (ME -2 points), and Low Extent (LE -1 point). The first instrument was tagged “Digital Entrepreneurial Marketing Skills Questionnaire” and the second tagged “Digital Entrepreneurship Marketing for Unemployment Reduction Questionnaire”. The instrument was validated by three experts; Two from Business Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation. Corrections and inputs made by the experts were taken into consideration by the researcher before the final copy of the instrument was produced for administration to the respondents. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument that was used for the study, test re-test method was adopted, scores obtained were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and it yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.82 and 0.79 respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to answer the research questions and t-transformation was used to test the hypotheses and to establish the relationship between the two variables at 0.05 levels of significance and decision was made based on the r-value.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between content creation and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities?

Table 1: Respondent Rating of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on the relationship between content creation and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities

Variables	N	$\sum X$	$\sum Y$	X^2	Y^2	$\sum XY$	r	Remark
Content creation	105	292.4		817.44		778.96	-0.38	Negative low
Unemployment reduction	105		281.16		787.65			

Source: Field Survey Data (2024)

The analysis in Table 1 showed that ($r = -0.38$) indicating that a negative low relationship exist between content creation and unemployment reduction. This connotes that an increase in content creation tends to decrease unemployment among Business Education graduates in Rivers state universities. However, the relationship is not strong.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between social media marketing and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities?

Table 2: Respondent Rating of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on the relationship between social media marketing and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers state universities

Variables	N	$\sum X$	$\sum Y$	X^2	Y^2	$\sum XY$	r	Remark
Social media marketing	105	269.6		723.96		723.67	0.05	Positive low
Unemployment reduction	105		281.16		787.65			

Source: Field Survey Data (2024)

The analysis in Table 2 showed that ($r = 0.05$) indicating that a positive low relationship exist between social media marketing and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduates in rivers state universities. This connotes that there is a slight decrease in unemployment among Business education graduate students with the increase in social media marketing. This also does not show a strong relationship.

Research Question 3

What is the relationship between data analysis and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities?

Table 3: Respondent Rating of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on the relationship between data analysis and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers state universities

Variables	N	$\sum X$	$\sum Y$	X^2	Y^2	$\sum XY$	r	Remark
Data analysis(X)	105	284.25		792.06				
						758.9	-0.08	Negative low
Unemployment reduction(Y)	105		281.16		787.65			

Source: Field Survey Data (2024)

The analysis in Table 3 showed that ($r = -0.08$) indicating that a negative low relationship exist between data analysis and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduates in Rivers State Universities. This implies a strong negative correlation and that an increase in the effectiveness of data analysis is associated with a significant decrease in unemployment among Business education graduates in rivers state universities.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between content creation and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities.

Table 4: t-transformation Result for Test of the Significance between content creation and unemployment reduction among Business education graduate students in rivers state universities.

Variable	N	$\sum X$	$\sum Y$	X^2	Y^2	$\sum XY$	R	Df	t-cal	t-crit	α	Remark
Content creation	105	292.4		817.44								
						778.96	-0.38	103	-4.17	2.00	0.05	Retained
Unemployment reduction	105		281.16		787.65							

Source: Field Survey Data (2024)

The analysis in Table 4 revealed that the t-calculated is lesser than t-critical ($t\text{-cal} < t\text{-crit}$). Hence the hypothesis was retained. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between content creation and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers state universities.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between social media marketing and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities.

Table 5: t-test of Difference in the mean rating of Business Education Graduate Students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent to which Social Media Marketing is a Panacea for Unemployment

Variable	N	$\sum X$	$\sum Y$	X^2	Y^2	$\sum XY$	r	Df	t-cal	t-crit	α	Remark
Social media marketing	105	269.6		723.96								
						723.67	0.05	103	0.51	2.00	0.05	Retained
Unemployment reduction	105		281.16		787.65							

Source: Field Survey Data (2023)

The analysis in Table 5 revealed that the t-calculated is lesser than t-critical ($t\text{-cal} < t\text{-crit}$). Hence the hypothesis was retained. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between social media marketing and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers state universities.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between Data analysis and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities.

Table 6: t-test of Difference in the mean rating of Business Education Graduate Students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education on the extent to which data analysis is a Panacea for Unemployment

Variable	N	$\sum X$	$\sum Y$	X^2	Y^2	$\sum XY$	r	Df	t-cal	t-crit	α	Remark
Data analysis	105	284.25		792.06								
						758.9	-0.08	103	-0.82	2.00	0.05	Retained
Unemployment reduction	105		281.16		787.65							

Source: Field Survey Data (2024)

The analysis in Table 6 revealed that the t-calculated is lesser than t-critical ($t\text{-cal} < t\text{-crit}$). Hence the hypothesis was retained. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between social media marketing and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers state universities.

Discussion of Findings

The researcher presented the discussion of findings as follows;

Relationship between content creation and unemployment reduction

The analysis in Table 1 showed that ($r = -0.38$) indicating that a negative low relationship exist between content creation and unemployment reduction. This connotes that an increase in content creation is likely to decrease unemployment among Business Education students in Rivers state universities. It is in line with thetha digital (2023) that revealed digital marketing as a means of creating job opportunities such as content creation which would subsequently help in reducing the rates of unemployment. Also as a means for unemployment reduction, Kehinde and Olatunde (2022) opined skills such as e-commerce which can be content creation as panacea for unemployment. The null hypothesis for research question 1 was retained indicating that there is no significant relationship between content creation and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers state universities. The researcher therefore is of the opinion that business education graduates ought to take content creation seriously as it will engage their time meaningfully and serve as a means for entrepreneurial activity, thereby reducing unemployment among them.

Relationship between Social Media Marketing and unemployment Reduction

Based on the data collated, findings in research question two revealed a positive low relationship between social media marketing and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduates in rivers state universities. This implies that there is a slight decrease in unemployment among Business education graduate students with the increase in social media marketing. These findings are in agreement with the view of Adam (2023) who stated that Social media marketing helps to share information to build a company's brand, increase sales, and drive website traffic as customers would be attracted to the brand leading to increase in sales of businesses, thus encouraging entrepreneurial activities and reducing the search for employment. The findings give credence to the view of Dalla (2020) who opined that unemployment can be reduced through engaging in social media forum for business activities. As a matter of fact, the media are available, not complex and can add value to students when effectively utilized. From the findings, it can be deduced that social media marketing usage for entrepreneurial activities can aid unemployment reduction and as such, business education graduates ought to explore and utilize its features for business thus a panacea for unemployment. The corresponding hypothesis 2 proved there is no significant relationship between social media marketing and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers State Universities.

Relationship of data analysis and unemployment reduction

Based on the findings in research question three, it proved that there is a negative low relationship between data analysis and unemployment reduction among business education graduate students in Rivers state universities. This finding buttresses the need for acquisition and application of data analysis skills among business education graduate students for unemployment reduction as the increase of data analysis have the tendency of reducing unemployment. This finding supports the view of Anudu (2019) who reported that skills such as data analysis being a digital marketing skill can reduce unemployment rate as it has the ability to keep graduates busy as well as giving them an opportunity for decent earning. This would equally enable Business education graduates to be in-tune with business opportunities as they carry out business analysis. The corresponding hypothesis 3 proved that there is no significant relationship between data analysis and unemployment reduction among Business Education graduate students in Rivers state universities.

Conclusion

Based on the results and findings of this study, the researcher concluded that digital entrepreneurial marketing is a Panacea for unemployment among Business Education Students as Students would be able to utilize digital marketing skills. It also creates jobs opportunities without borders to enable Business Education students to work from anywhere and with flexible working hours.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn from the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Students should develop content creation skills to build more awareness and generate more leads.
2. Students should utilize their social networking handles for marketing purpose as it has proven to be very beneficial in marketing product in the digital era.
3. Seminars should be organized for students periodically to update their knowledge as regards data analysis, communicate socially and professionally using email, messaging and social media.
4. Business Education graduates should be properly equipped with the following entrepreneurship skills, such as, organizational skills, money management skills, networking and people's skills.

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