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Greekline JOURNAL OF BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Impact of Digital Literacy on Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Universities

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of digital literacy on business education students' employability in Rivers State Universities. Three objectives, three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive research design. The population of the study were drawn from level 400 students (2024/2025) academic session in the department of Business Education from Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The population of the study was 170 level 400 students comprising 123 students from Ajuru University of Education and 47 from Rivers State University. There is no sampling due to the size of the population which is considered manageable by the researchers. The instrument for data collection for this study was a self-structured questionnaires titled Digital Literacy on Business Education Students Employability Questionnaire (DLBESEQ). The instrument was face and content validated by three experts, two from Business Education and one Measurement and Evaluation all in faculty of Education and the reliability index of 0.843 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method. The researchers with the help of two research assistants, administered the instruments. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while t-test analysis was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The study's findings indicated that digital literacy is a critical factor influencing the employability of Business Education students in universities owned by Rivers State. Bases on the finding, it was recommended amongst others that Rivers State owned Universities should integrate comprehensive computer skills training into the Business Education curriculum to ensure students develop proficiency in essential software and digital tools, thereby increasing their employability in the modern workplace, organize workshops, seminars, and hands-on sessions that expose students to new and emerging technologies.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Business Education, Students Employability

Introduction

Business education programme is concerned with teaching the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for a successful career in office and business world. It is an educational programme that enriches basic education for teaching career, entrepreneurship, business understanding, office understanding, office environment and vocational practices (Koko 2019). In the view of Oyerinde, Onajite and Aina (2016), business education encompasses education programme for business, office occupation, economic understanding, entrepreneurship and it seeks to develop in the learners' basic skills for personal use in the future. Mohamedbhai (2014) opined that business education programme involves training students in topics relevant to the business world such as accounting and marketing. According to Ubulom, Kayii and Dambo (2016), rapid advances in information technology have provided new learning methods and environments. This transformation is particularly significant in the context of Business Education, where the integration of digital tools and platforms has redefined how students acquire knowledge and develop skills relevant to the modern workplace. The traditional classroom model has evolved into a more dynamic, interactive, and flexible learning environment, characterized by e-learning platforms, virtual simulations, and real-time data analysis.

According to Yo (2021), digital literacy is the availability of the knowledge and abilities required for students to use digital technologies and Internet resources in a secure and efficient manner. Digital literacy includes a broad range of abilities, such as the capacity to use digital tools and resources, explore the Internet, assess the accuracy of online information, and successfully interact via digital media. For university students to be able to access different digital resources offered by university libraries, digital literacy is a necessary ability (Hague & Payton, 2020). With the development of digital technology, students now have access to a wide range of online tools that can improve their academic experience, such as online learning platforms, libraries, e-books, journals, and other digital resources. Amesi and Allison (2023) considers digital skills to be vital in teaching and learning as the technology assists the achievement of basic skills, expose students to practical workplace environment, supplement and consolidate what is read in textbooks and journals.

The advancement of technology has transformed the global job market, making digital literacy a prerequisite for employability (Kolajo & Agbetuyi, 2021). For Business Education students in Rivers State universities, acquiring computer proficiency, access to digital resources, understanding cybersecurity, familiarization with new technologies and digital communication skills are critical in preparing for the dynamic demands of modern workplaces (Koko, 2016). These elements contribute to equipping students with essential skills, enhancing their confidence, and ensuring competitiveness in a technology-driven economy (Ebijuwa, 2018). Computer proficiency is foundational to employability in today's workforce. It equips Business Education students with the ability to effectively use productivity tools such as Microsoft Office Suite, Google Workspace, and specialized software like QuickBooks and SPSS (Livingstone & Helsper, 2017). These tools are essential for performing tasks such as data analysis, creating business reports, and managing projects. Similarly, DeNisco and Barker (2023) opined that proficiency in computer skills fosters problem-solving and decision-making, as students learn to navigate and troubleshoot software efficiently. A study by Liasu and Bakrin (2022) shows that computer literacy increases productivity and career prospects, as most roles now require a basic understanding of digital tools. In the contemporary knowledge economy, employability transcends the mere acquisition of a university degree. It entails the possession of a dynamic set of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and personal attributes that make an individual capable of gaining and maintaining employment, as well as adapting to the ever-changing demands of the labour market.

Digital literacy has emerged as a vital employability skill, particularly for students in Business Education. Digital literacy goes beyond the basic ability to use computers; it encompasses a broad set of competencies including the ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share, and create content using digital technologies (Martin, 2018). For students of Business Education, these competencies are especially important, as today's business environment is heavily shaped by technology and depends on digital tools for tasks such as communication, marketing, financial management, data analysis, and managing customer relationships.

Access to digital resources such as e-books, online journals, and research databases—significantly broadens learning opportunities for students, especially those in Business Education. These resources offer up-to-date industry insights, enabling students to acquire specialized skills that extend beyond the traditional classroom setting. Platforms like Coursera, Khan Academy, and Google Scholar support continuous learning and professional development by promoting independent study, enhancing critical thinking, and equipping students with the capacity to address real-world business challenges (Gakibayo, Ikoja-Odongo, & Okello-Obura, 2023). Mastery in navigating these digital tools is increasingly valued by employers who seek innovative and well-informed graduates. According to Marliana and Nurhayati (2020), it was asserted that insufficient digital literacy may lead to deficient research skills. To perform excellent research, one must locate, evaluate, and efficiently utilize digital resources. Students who encounter difficulties with these tasks may engage in unproductive research and generate inferior academic output. Moreover, insufficient digital literacy may hinder collaboration (Gakibayo, Ikoja-Odongo, & Okello-Obura, 2023).

According to Oni (2016), the ability to cooperate and communicate with others through digital tools and platforms constitutes a facet of digital literacy. In the absence of these skills, students may struggle to collaborate efficiently with peers or educators, leading to diminished teamwork and learning outcomes. Universities play a crucial role in encouraging and enabling the development of these crucial abilities, as digital literacy is generally necessary for university students to flourish in today's digital environment. It is based on this background that this study investigates the impact of Digital Literacy on Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Universities.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the acknowledged significance of these digital competences, evidence indicates that considerable deficiencies remain in the training and readiness of students, potentially hindering their capacity to obtain employment and contribute effectively to the workforce. A significant issue is the disparity in computer skills among Business Education students. The lack of competency in software applications, data analysis tools, and digital communication platforms among certain graduates adversely affects their flexibility and relevance in technology-driven workplaces.

Reports from the McKinsey Global Institute (2021) and the International Labour Organisation (2020) underscore a continual disparity between the digital communication abilities possessed by students and those anticipated by employers. This disparity frequently leads to restricted engagement in virtual work settings and diminished employability. Considering these challenges, it is essential to investigate the extent to which digital competencies namely computer proficiency, access to digital resources, and digital communication affect the employability of Business Education students in universities within Rivers State

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of digital literacy on business education students' employability in Rivers State Owned Universities. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the impact of computer proficiency skills on Business Education student's employability in Rivers State Universities.
2. Investigate the impact of digital resources on Business Education students' employability in Rivers State Universities.
3. Identify the Impact of familiarization with new technologies on Business Education student's employability in Rivers State Universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. To what extent does Computer Proficiency Skills Impact Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Universities?
2. To what extent does Access to Digital Resources Impact Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Universities?
3. To what extent does familiarization with new technologies impact Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Universities?

Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Students on the extent to which Computer Proficiency Skills enhances Employability in Rivers State owned Universities.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Students on the extent to which Digital Resources enhances Employability in Rivers State owned Universities.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Students on the extent to which familiarization with new technologies enhances Employability in Rivers State owned Universities.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. According to Dike (2017), descriptive survey research design is an attempt to gather and interpret data about a social institution, an event, a group or an area. The survey research design is considered appropriate for the study because the researcher did not have any direct control over the independent variables as their manifestations have already occurred. The study was carried out in the two Rivers State owned universities; the Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education all located in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The population of the study consists of level 400 students (2024/2025) academic session in the department of Business Education from both universities. Field survey showed that Ignatius Ajuru University of Education had more students in year 4 as it had a total of 123 while Rivers State University has 47 students. The population of the study is therefore 170 students**.** The sample size of the study was 170 students which comprised 47 Rivers State Business Education Students and 123 Business Education students at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. There is no sampling due to the size of the population which is considered manageable by the researcher. Hence, entire population of 170 business education students was also used as the sample size using census method. The instrument for data collection for this study was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Digital Literacy on Business Education Students Employability Questionnaire (DLBESEQ)". The questionnaire is divided into two sections namely Section A and B. Section A of the questionnaire generates demographic information, while Section B has questionnaire items addressing the Impact of Digital Literacy on Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Owned Universities. The instrument was face and content validated by three experts, two from Business Education and one Measurement and Evaluation all in faculty of Education. To establish the reliability of the instrument, a test of internal consistency was carried out using Cronbach Alpha method which gave a reliability index of 0.843. Out of the 170 copies that were administered, 164 (96.4%) comprising 47 RSU and 117 IAUE students were retrieved. All the 164 copies were properly completed, hence used for the study. The data collected were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation and t-test analysis. The Mean and Standard deviation was used to answer the three research questions, while the three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test analysis. To determine the mean cut-off score (criterion mean) for scoring the questionnaire, all the points from the alternative responses were added up and divided by four (i.e. $4+3+2+1 \div 4) = 2.50$. For the research question, the decision rule for mean ≥ 2.50 is "high extent" while item < 2.50 is denoted "Low Extent". For the test of hypothesis, the decision rule is to accept the null hypotheses where the calculated t-calc is less than critical t-critical value of ± 1.97, but reject the null hypotheses where the calculated t-calc is greater than critical t-critical value of ± 1.97.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does computer proficiency skills impact Business Education students' employability in Rivers State Universities?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent to which Computer Proficiency Skills impact Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Owned Universities.

S/No.	Item	RSU (n = 47)			IAUE (n = 117)		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1.	Employers in business-related fields expect students to be proficient in using essential software applications like Microsoft Office Suite	3.00	1.16	High Extent	3.52	0.92	High Extent
2.	Efficiency in computer usage demonstrates to employers that students can contribute to organizational goals with minimal supervision.	3.02	1.13	High Extent	3.47	0.91	High Extent
3.	Proficiency in computer usage positions business education students to meet evolving industry standards and gain a competitive edge.	2.64	1.05	High Extent	3.46	1.02	High Extent
4.	Students proficient in computers can access global job opportunities that require virtual collaborations.	3.28	0.94	High Extent	3.52	0.88	High Extent
5.	Students proficient in computers are positioned to thrive in roles that require critical thinking and decision-making.	3.34	0.94	High Extent	3.35	1.15	High Extent
	Grand $\bar{X}$	**3.06**	1.04	High Extent	**3.46**	0.98	High Extent

Source: Field Data, 2025.

The result Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation on the extent to which Computer Proficiency Skills impact Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Universities. The result shows that Students in IAUE reported the highest response level on the item that said Employers in business-related fields expect students to be proficient in using essential software applications like Microsoft Office Suite (Mean = 3.52, SD = 0.92) while RSU students (Mean = 3.00, SD = 1.16) also reported a high extent. The result shows that Students in IAUE reported the highest response level on the item that said Efficiency in computer usage demonstrates to employers that students can contribute to organizational goals with minimal supervision (Mean = 3.47, SD = 0.91) while RSU students (Mean = 3.02, SD = 1.13) also reported a high extent. The result shows that Students in IAUE reported the highest response level on the item that said Proficiency in computer usage positions business education students to meet evolving industry standards and gain a competitive edge (Mean = 3.46, SD = 1.02) while RSU students (Mean = 2.64, SD = 1.05) also reported a high extent. The result shows that Students in IAUE reported the highest response level on the item that said Students proficient in computers can access global job opportunities that require virtual collaborations (Mean = 3.52, SD = 0.88) while RSU students (Mean = 3.28, SD = 0.94) also reported a high extent. The result shows that Students in IAUE reported a response level on the item that said Students proficient in computers are positioned to thrive in roles that require critical thinking and decision-making (Mean = 3.35, SD = 1.15) while RSU students (Mean = 3.34, SD = 0.94) also reported a high extent. The grand mean shows that IAUE students ($\bar{X}$ = 3.46, SD = 0.98) and RSU students ($\bar{X}$ = 3.06, SD = 1.04) both reported that Computer Proficiency impact employability to a high extent, with IAUE students holding a stronger perception than their RSU counterparts.

Research Question 2: To what extent does Access to Digital Resources impact Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Universities?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on extent to which Access to Digital Resources impact Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Owned Universities

S/No.	Item	RSU (n = 47)			IAUE (n = 117)		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
6.	Digital resources, including industry reports, case studies keep students updated on current trends and practices in business	2.85	1.21	High Extent	3.63	0.81	High Extent
7.	Many platforms offer certifications which enhance students' resumes and validate their skills for prospective employers.	2.98	1.19	High Extent	3.70	0.67	High Extent
8.	Digital resources provide access to tutorials and practice materials that help students master essential workplace technologies.	2.60	1.06	High Extent	3.71	0.67	High Extent
9.	Resources such as LinkedIn provide opportunities for students to connect with professionals, build their network, and stay visible to recruiters.	3.38	0.90	High Extent	3.49	1.01	High Extent
10.	Digital resources allow students to learn at their own pace, bridging knowledge gaps and ensuring mastery of subjects critical to their field.	3.19	0.88	High Extent	3.49	1.01	High Extent
	Grand $\bar{X}$	**3.00**	1.05	High Extent	**3.60**	0.83	High Extent

Source: Field Data, 2025.

The result Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation on the extent to which Access to Digital Resources impact Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Universities. The result shows that Students in IAUE reported the highest response level on the item that said Digital resources, including industry reports and case studies, keep students updated on current trends and practices in business (Mean = 3.63, SD = 0.81) while RSU students (Mean = 2.85, SD = 1.21) also reported a high extent. The result shows that Students in IAUE reported the highest response level on the item that said Many platforms offer certifications which enhance students' resumes and validate their skills for prospective employers (Mean = 3.70, SD = 0.67) while RSU students (Mean = 2.98, SD = 1.19) also reported a high extent. The result shows that Students in IAUE reported the highest response level on the item that said Digital resources provide access to tutorials and practice materials that help students master essential workplace technologies (Mean = 3.71, SD = 0.67) while RSU students (Mean = 2.60, SD = 1.06) also reported a high extent. The result shows that Students in RSU reported the highest response level on the item that said Resources such as LinkedIn provide opportunities for students to connect with professionals, build their network, and stay visible to recruiters (Mean = 3.38, SD = 0.90) while IAUE students (Mean = 3.49, SD = 1.01) also reported a high extent. The result shows that Students in both IAUE (Mean = 3.49, SD = 1.01) and RSU (Mean = 3.19, SD = 0.88) reported a high extent. The grand mean shows that IAUE students ($\bar{X}$ = 3.60, SD = 0.83) and RSU students ($\bar{X}$ = 3.00, SD = 1.05) both reported that access to digital resources skills impact employability to a high extent, with IAUE students holding a stronger perception than their RSU counterparts.

Research Question 3: To what extent does familiarization with new technologies impact Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Universities?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on extent does to which familiarization with new technologies impacts Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Owned Universities

S/No.	Item	RSU (n = 47)			IAUE (n = 117)		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
11.	Understanding cloud platforms like Google Cloud, Microsoft Azure, or AWS prepares students for modern business operations and remote jobs.	2.85	1.22	High Extent	3.61	0.79	High Extent
12.	Proficiency in data analysis tools such as Microsoft Excel (advanced), Power BI, or Tableau is highly sought after in by several organisations.	2.83	1.25	High Extent	3.33	1.08	High Extent
13.	Business Education students with blockchain proficiency are better positioned for roles in compliance, auditing, and digital innovation.	3.06	1.03	High Extent	3.44	1.02	High Extent
14.	AI's application across industries expands the job opportunities available to business education students.	3.53	0.91	High Extent	3.49	1.01	High Extent
15.	Familiarity with collaboration tools like Zoom and Slack positions students for success in global job markets.	2.91	1.16	High Extent	3.49	1.01	High Extent
	Grand $\bar{X}$	**3.04**	1.11	High Extent	**3.47**	0.98	High Extent

Source: Field Data, 2025.

The result Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation on the extent to which familiarization with new technologies impacts Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Universities. The result shows that Students in IAUE reported the highest response level on the item that said Understanding cloud platforms like Google Cloud, Microsoft Azure, or AWS prepares students for modern business operations and remote jobs (Mean = 3.61, SD = 0.79) while RSU students (Mean = 2.85, SD = 1.22) also reported a high extent. The result shows that Students in IAUE reported the highest response level on the item that said Proficiency in data analysis tools such as Microsoft Excel (advanced), Power BI, or Tableau is highly sought after by several organizations (Mean = 3.33, SD = 1.08) while RSU students (Mean = 2.83, SD = 1.25) also reported a high extent. The result shows that Students in IAUE reported the highest response level on the item that said Business Education students with blockchain proficiency are better positioned for roles in compliance, auditing, and digital innovation (Mean = 3.44, SD = 1.02) while RSU students (Mean = 3.06, SD = 1.03) also reported a high extent. The result shows that Students in RSU reported the highest response level on the item that said AI's application across industries expands the job opportunities available to business education students (Mean = 3.53, SD = 0.91) while IAUE students (Mean = 3.49, SD = 1.01) also reported a high extent. The result shows that Students in IAUE reported the highest response level on the item that said Familiarity with collaboration tools like Zoom and Slack positions students for success in global job markets (Mean = 3.49, SD = 1.01) while RSU students (Mean = 2.91, SD = 1.16) also reported a high extent. The grand mean shows that IAUE students ($\bar{X}$ = 3.47, SD = 0.98) and RSU students ($\bar{X}$ = 3.04, SD = 1.11) both reported that familiarization with new technologies impact employability to a high extent, with IAUE students holding a stronger perception than their RSU counterparts.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Students on the extent to which Computer Proficiency Skills enhances Employability in Rivers State owned Universities.

Table 4: Summary of t-test Analysis on the impact of Computer Proficiency Skills on Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State OwnedUniversities.

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	A	Remark
RSU Business Students	47	3.06	1.04	163	-2.26	1.97	0.05	Accepted
IAUE Business Students	117	3.46	0.98					

Source: Field Data, 2025.

From the results in Table 4, it can be observed that at 0.05 level of significance and 163 degree of freedom, t-calculated value = -2.26 and t-critical value = 1.97. Since the t-calculated value of - 2.26 < t-critical value of 1.97, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Students on the extent to which Computer Proficiency Skills enhances Employability in Rivers State owned Universities was therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Students on the extent to which Digital Resources enhances Employability in Rivers State owned Universities.

Table 5: Summary of t-test Analysis on the impact of Digital Resources on Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Owned Universities.

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	A	Remark
RSU Business Students	47	3.00	1.05	163	-3.50	1.97	0.05	Accepted
IAUE Business Students	117	3.60	0.83					

Source: Field Data, 2025.

From the results in Table 5, it can be observed that at 0.05 level of significance and 163 degree of freedom, t-calculated value = -3.50 and t-critical value = 1.97. Since the t-calculated value of – 3.50 < t-critical value of 1.97, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Students on the extent to which Digital Resources enhances Employability in Rivers State owned Universities was therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Students on the extent to which familiarization with new technologies enhances Employability in Rivers State owned Universities.

Table 6: Summary of t-test Analysis on familiarization with new technologies on Business Education Students Employability in Rivers State Owned Universities.

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	A	Remark
RSU Business Students	47	3.04	1.11	163	-2.32	1.97	0.05	Accepted
IAUE Business Students	117	3.47	0.98					

Source: Field Data, 2025.

From the results in Table 6, it can be observed that at 0.05 level of significance and 163 degree of freedom, t-calculated value = -2.32 and t-critical value = 1.97. Since the t-calculated value of - 2.32 < t-critical value of 1.97, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Education Students on the extent to which familiarization with new technologies enhances Employability in Rivers State owned Universities was therefore accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The results in Table 1 indicate the mean scores of the respondents (RSU and IAUE) on five items (1, 2, 3, 4, and 5). The overall mean scores of 3.06 for RSU respondents and 3.46 for IAUE respondents exceeded the mean cut-off point of 2.50. Consequently, it can be inferred that Computer Proficiency Skills significantly impact the employability of Business Education students in universities within Rivers State.

Correspondingly, the findings in Table 4 indicate that at a significance level of 0.05 and 163 degrees of freedom, the computed t-value is -2.26, while the critical t-value is 1.97. Given that the t-calculated value of -2.26 is less than the t-critical value of 1.97, the null hypothesis, which posits no significant difference between the mean ratings of students from Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education regarding the impact of Computer Proficiency Skills on the employability of Business Education students in Rivers State Universities, was accepted.

This finding is in relation with that of Olumese and Awoleye (2012) where digital literacy was identified not only as a fundamental requirement for employment but also a tool that enhances productivity and adaptability in the workplace. Their study on Nigerian undergraduates revealed that students with advanced computer skills were more likely to secure employment upon graduation. Similarly, Agomuo (2015) emphasized that computer literacy forms a core component of business education programs, enabling students to handle office tasks like word processing, spreadsheet management, and data analysis, which are critical in today's technologically driven work environments.

The findings for research question 2, as presented in Table 2, indicated the mean scores of the respondents across all five questions (6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). The overall mean scores of 3.00 for RSU students and 3.60 for IAUE students exceeded the mean cut-off point of 2.50. Consequently, it is determined that access to digital resources significantly influences the employability of business education students in universities within Rivers State.

Correspondingly, the data in Table 5 indicates that at a significance level of 0.05 and 163 degrees of freedom, the estimated t-value is -3.50, whereas the critical t-value is 1.97. Given that the t-calculated value of -3.50 is less than the t-critical value of 1.97, the null hypothesis, which posits no significant difference between the mean ratings of students from Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education regarding the impact of Digital Resources on Business Education Students' Employability in Rivers State Universities was accepted.

This finding was in conformity with the study by Amadi and Eze (2017) on the availability and utilization of digital resources in business education departments in selected public universities. Their findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between the use of digital learning tools and students' acquisition of job-relevant competencies. The authors argued that students who had access to e-resources such as learning management systems (LMS), online business simulations, and digital content repositories were more confident and capable during job interviews and industrial training placements.

The findings from research question 3, as illustrated in Table 3, indicate the mean scores for items 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. The grand mean scores of 3.04 for RSU students and 3.47 for IAUE students exceed the mean cut-off mark of 2.50. Consequently, it is concluded that familiarity with new technologies significantly influences the employability of Business Education students in Rivers State Universities.

Furthermore, the results in Table 6 demonstrate that at a 0.05 level of significance and with 163 degrees of freedom, the t-calculated value is -2.32, while the t-critical value is 1.97. Since the t-calculated value of -2.32 is less than the t-critical value of 1.97, the null hypothesis, which posits no significant difference between the mean ratings of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education students regarding the impact of technology familiarity on Business Education students' employability was accepted.

The findings are confirmed by previous studies. According to Olatunji and Akinyemi (2018), students who are familiar with new technologies such as enterprise software, online business applications, and digital communication platforms tend to exhibit higher employability outcomes. Their study conducted across universities in southern Nigeria, including those in Rivers State, revealed that students who had practical exposure to tools like Microsoft 365, QuickBooks, and cloud-based project management platforms were better positioned for internships, job interviews, and entrepreneurship. Adebayo and Ajiboye (2019) discovered that students' frequent interaction with educational technology and professional simulation software, such as SPSS, Sage, and online trading platforms, significantly improved their analytical skills and job-readiness. They argued that business education departments must embed new technologies into their curricula not just for theoretical purposes but for hands-on experience that mirrors workplace demands.

In a broad study by the World Economic Forum (2020), digital awareness and familiarity with current technology trends were identified as key predictors of employability for university graduates. The study found that students who engage with digital innovations such as cloud computing, cybersecurity tools, artificial intelligence, and data analytics have a higher likelihood of gaining employment within six months of graduation. Ogbuanya and Esezobor (2017) argued that practical knowledge of new technologies significantly boosts students' entrepreneurial potential. Their study showed that graduates who were introduced to mobile business apps, online marketing tools, and social media advertising platforms while in school were more likely to start successful ventures or secure digital marketing jobs upon graduation.

Conclusion

The study revealed that digital literacy plays a very strategic role in the employability of Business Education Students of Rivers State owned universities. Digital literacy encompasses the ability to use digital tools and platforms to access, evaluate, create, and communicate information effectively. For Business Education students in Rivers State-owned universities, being digitally literate is no longer a luxury but a necessity for navigating and thriving in the competitive labor market. Moreover, digital literacy improves students' ability to collaborate and communicate effectively in remote or hybrid work settings. With the COVID-19 pandemic accelerating the shift to digital workspaces, graduates are now expected to participate in virtual meetings, manage cloud-based files, and use collaborative project tools. Business Education graduates who can confidently utilize these platforms stand a better chance of being employed and retained in dynamic job roles.

Recommendations

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

1. Rivers State owned Universities should integrate comprehensive computer skills training into the Business Education curriculum to ensure students develop proficiency in essential software and digital tools, thereby increasing their employability in the modern workplace.

2. Educational institutions should provide students with greater access to digital resources, including online databases, e-libraries, and learning management systems, to strengthen their research, analytical, and practical skills relevant to employment.

3. Universities should organize workshops, seminars, and hands-on sessions that expose Business Education students to new and emerging technologies, ensuring they remain competitive and adaptable in a rapidly evolving digital business environment.

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Relevance of Business Law in Business Education Curriculum in Nigeria

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Abstract
The presence of business law study within undergraduate business education curriculum is continuously growing, there seems to be a lack of understanding and appreciation for the true relevance of the study of business law in business education curriculum in Nigeria. This research aims to highlight the relevance business law course provides to an undergraduate business education students in Nigeria. The research provides categories of Nigerian business laws such as laws relating to compliance, laws governing transactions, laws on dispute resolutions, laws on criminal liability and how these laws help the business education students develop relevant skills such as transferrable non-legal skills, problem-solving skills and analytical skills. It was recommended that the business education curriculum should be adjusted to accommodate the teaching of business law for at least four semesters before the graduation of a business education student, for it will assist the student learn different aspects of business laws which will equip the student face the dynamics of business transactions in Nigeria.
Keywords: Business, Education, Business Law, Business Education, Curriculum.

Introduction
For many years now, numerous colleges and universities have integrated business law course into their undergraduate business education curricula (Buchanan, 1983; Childers, 1977; Klayman &Nesser, 1984; Siedel, 2000). There is actual need to verify the importance of business law study within the business education as well as examine how exposure to legal studies truly benefits the undergraduate business student following graduation (Siedel, 2000; Tanner et al., 2004). It is also important to identify whether specific non-legal skills are strengthened by legal studies courses more so than other business courses. There is a need for this research because it is important for both students and institutions to know whether business law studies coursework provides value to business students beyond mere content knowledge so they can better utilize this subject area to their advantage. More specifically, institutions may alter the way they integrate business law studies into their curricula, and students may complete business law study course with more care if they are aware of its other benefits.

Business Education in Nigeria
Business education refers to a programme of instruction that offers various skills in accounting, marketing, office technology and management (OTM) and entrepreneurship. Core areas include, office practice, bookkeeping, business mathematics, business communication, secretarial duties, word processing and advertising (Ajisafe, Bolarinwa&Edeh, 2015). Business education is a programme of instruction that equips recipients with the requisite attributes for job creation and further education. Despite these dual missions, available evidence has shown that Nigeria is handling this sector with levity (Ekpenyong & Nwabuisi, 2003; Obunadike, 2015; Oladunjoye, 2016). This situation has consequently starved business education of proper funding, qualified staff, modern facilities, and quality curriculum, coupled with proper attention. This situation has devalued the image and reputation of business education both in the education and labour market and has contributed to the high rate of unemployment and poverty among business education graduates.

Business education programmes in Nigeria institution requires a positive and effective evaluation that can bridge the gap between theory and practice. This will ensure the correlation between skills and competency display by graduates of business education and the certificate they obtain in looking for jobs in the digital world. Edokpor & Egbri, (2017) viewed that the actual goals of business education shall be to:

1. Prepare students for specific career in office occupation
2. Equip students with the requisite skills for job creation and entrepreneurship; and
3. Expose students with knowledge about business such as computer technology, laced with good information and communication technology (ICT).

According to their explanation, the first two goals involve education for business, which aimed at equipping recipients with the right attributes (knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes) for a white-collar job and the lather addresses education 'about business' which provide a basis for furthering education or studies at graduate and postgraduate levels.

Objectives of Curriculum Development in Nigeria
It is not a simple task trying to define a curriculum. This is because definitions of curriculum are often influenced by modes of thoughts, pedagogies, political as well as cultural experiences (Uomustansiriyah, 2020). However, a curriculum refers to the total learning experiences of individuals provided by schools. In addition, the curriculum typically refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, which includes the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet.

A good curriculum undergoes periodic innovations to accommodate changes that may occur overtime. With this, Ikpesu (2017) suggested that every meaningful curriculum especially business education curriculum should not only be systematically developed, nor be static or irrelevant. As a result of the increasingly complex nature in the business world/organization, there is need for business educators to look into the current curriculum and facilities of teaching and learning programme of business education. Thus, business education curriculum should be relevant and meet its objectives in the world that is dynamic.

Sources of Nigerian Business Law

The laws governing the doing of business in Nigeria are numerous, ranging from those that grant legislative powers through general laws to specific laws.

The Nigerian Constitution

Nigeria operates federalism, and the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN, as amended) establishes three arms of government at both the federal and state levels. The legislature makes the laws; the executive implements it; and the judiciary interprets it in the course of settling disputes. The CFRN also sets out some economic objectives as part of the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policies; the Nigerian economic laws and policies are therefore supposed to be tailored towards achieving these objectives. It is inevitable that a business will interact with all three arms, directly or indirectly, to enjoy legitimacy, claim benefits and seek redress. (Salman 2021).

Federal Statutes (Acts)

Federal statutes, also known as “Acts”, are born out of the powers conferred on the National Assembly by the CFRN Section 4(1). The National Assembly, being the federal legislature, makes laws applicable to the whole of Nigeria, to only the Federal Capital Territory or to any other part of Nigeria. It is empowered to legislate on matters contained in the Exclusive Legislative List and on any matter the CFRN allows it to make laws on. Such matters include aviation; bankruptcy and insolvency; banking; commercial and industrial monopolies; copyright; customs and excise duties; export duties; insurance; maritime; taxation; creation of private corporations; trade and commerce; labour.

The exercise of federal legislative powers has led to the enactment of the following core business statutes: Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020; Copyrights Act of 1988; Trade Marks Act of 1967; Patents and Designs Act of 1971; Banking and Other Financial Institutions Act 2020; Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission Act of 1995; Labour Act of 1971; Personal Income Tax Act of 1993; Companies Income Tax Act of 1977; Land Use Act of 1978; Finance Act of 2020; Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Act of 2019; Investment and Securities Act of 200.

State Statutes (Laws)

A State House of Assembly is a state legislature, and it is empowered to make laws applicable only in the relevant state or any part thereof. While a State House of Assembly shares legislative powers with the National Assembly with regards to matters on the Concurrent Legislative List, only the former can legislate on matters on the residual list i.e. matters not contained in both the Exclusive Legislative List and the Concurrent List Section 4(7) (a) CFRN. Matters on which a State House of Assembly can legislate include: collection of certain taxes, fees or rates; supply of electricity to areas of the state not covered by the national power grid; censorship of cinematograph films; industrial, commercial and agricultural development in the state; ownership and control of business enterprises in the state; regulation and establishment of institutions for the purpose of university, technological or professional education. (Salman 2021)

Nigerian Case Law

The judiciary, in the exercise of its powers of dispute resolution, employs certain legal principles as guidelines in applying legislation to disputes (cases) or filling in the gap where legislation is silent. These principles, also called *rules of law* or *rationesdecidendi* (sing. *ratio decidendi*), are the reasons why cases are decided one way or another, and they help the judiciary to arrive at the same or similar resolutions in similar cases through a system called *stare decisis*. Stare decisis has its roots in Section 287 of the CFRN, and it means that the decision of a higher court binds a lower court, hence, *case law* i.e., laws from cases. Nigerian case law is the repository of the Nigerian common law. Case law can shape commerce in terms of enforceable contracts or contractual clauses, remedies for breach of contract, duty of care, regulatory compliance.

Others

There are other sources of law in Nigeria, apart from the ones explained above. These sources, too, can be sources of Nigerian business law. They include English Common law, Doctrine of Equity, International law, customary law, Islamic law, law publications (other than statutes and decisions of courts). Customary law is a body of rules based on the custom of a community, and it is largely unwritten. It is only applied when it passes the repugnancy test and if it does not conflict with any existing legislation (***AGBAI & ORS V. OKOGBUE (1991) LPELR 225 SC***). While the CFRN recognizes only Islamic personal law, Islamic commercial law is also recognized as part of the custom of some northern communities and of Muslims and because of the allowance of Islamic banking in Nigeria. Law publications, other than legislation and judicial decisions, are often consulted in cases where the law is silent.

Category of Nigerian Business Law

Nigerian business law can be categorized into four: laws relating to compliance; laws governing business transactions; laws relating to dispute resolution; and laws on criminal liability. While it is not uncommon for some laws to cut across one or more of the categories, there are those limited to only one. Each of the categories is discussed below.

Laws Relating to Compliance

These are rules and regulations which a business entity, corporate or not, must adhere to from its formation through management to cessation. These laws are also necessary for a business entity to remain a going concern and avoid imposition of penalties which may gravely affect its business operations. Business laws relating to compliance are to ensure competence, to prevent the abuse of the recognition given by the government to businesses, especially the corporate veil given to companies, to prevent the commission of crimes, to allow free and fair business competition. Compliance laws may be general or sector specific.

For instance, the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) 2020 requires entities registered under it to give the Corporate Affairs Commission notice of resolutions or transactions affecting their corporate structures, assets, liabilities etc., to hold meetings, to file annual returns as a way of updating their profile (Section 417-420 Companies annual returns 562 (receivership) of CAMA 2020). Also, Nigerian financial institutions are required to notify both the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission of banking transactions exceeding certain threshold amounts. Real estate agents are required to be licensed in Lagos State. Tax laws are also compliance laws.

Laws Governing Transactions

These types of business law can also apply generally or to specific transactions or sectors of the Nigerian economy. They determine the nature of business transactions an individual or an entity may engage in, the acceptable terms to govern such transactions, conditions for their validity and available remedies in the event of disputes. For instance, while CAMA 2020 now allows a company to engage in any business even if not expressly stated in its memorandum of association, all Nigerian businesses are forbidden from carrying on businesses on the negative list. Some states have enacted legislation to govern general contractual agreements and specific types of transactions such as mortgages (Salman 2021). Similarly, contracting with the government requires fulfillment of conditions under public procurement laws.

Laws on Dispute Resolution

These are applied by courts and tribunals established for general dispute resolution or alternative dispute resolution. These laws determine the bodies or panels with the power to resolve business disputes, the procedure or method for resolving such disputes and the remedies available to aggrieved parties. Dispute resolution in courts takes the form of litigation, and an aggrieved party may institute an action in the appropriate court or tribunals.

For example: tax assessment disputes under federal tax laws are resolved by the Tax Appeal Tribunal; labour and employment disputes are resolved by the National Industrial Court; disputes concerning the enforcement of certain federal laws, such as CAMA 2020, or the administration, management and control of the federal government or its agencies are resolved by the Federal High Court; and all other types of disputes are resolved by State High Courts and High Court of the Federal Capital Territory (Ogundu 2025). The decisions of these courts can be challenged at the Court of Appeal and then the Supreme Court of Nigeria. Remedies granted by these courts include declaration of rights and obligations; damages (monetary compensation); mandatory and prohibitory injunctions.

Likewise, where parties have opted to settle disputes through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, Nigerian courts will enforce such an agreement. ADR mechanisms recognized in Nigeria include arbitration, which is governed by the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, mediation, conciliation etc. Some states also have Multi-door Court Houses for alternative dispute resolution.

Laws on Criminal Liability

These types of business law do two things. First, they pronounce acts or omissions done in the course of private or public business as criminal offences and prescribe punishments by way of fine, imprisonment or both. Such laws are substantive criminal laws, and the crimes are known as business or white-collar crimes. Examples of these laws include the Criminal and Penal Codes, the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act, the Money Laundering Act, the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act.

Second, they regulate the investigation of and prosecution for such crimes. These other laws are known as procedural criminal laws, and examples include: the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, the Administration of Criminal Justice Laws of various states, Criminal Procedure Laws of various states, Criminal Procedure Codes of various states.

It should be noted that some other laws, though not addressing crimes, may contain criminal provisions. For instance, Section 668 of CAMA 2020 provides for offences antecedent to or in the course of winding up of companies. Also, various other general or sector-specific laws, such as those relating to taxation, public procurement, license procurement etc. contain criminal provisions.

For criminal liability to exist the law must have clearly stated it to be so and attach a punishment thereto – anything short of that will be a violation of the right to fair hearing. A person accused of having committed a crime in Nigeria is presumed innocent until proven guilty. The burden of proving the guilt rests on the Federation or the States which have monopolies of criminal prosecution, and that burden is only discharged when the offence is proved against the accused person beyond reasonable doubt i.e. beyond a doubt that is no more than a possibility rather than a probability.

Business Law within the Business Education Curriculum

One of the most important purposes of teaching business law to undergraduate business students is to provide them with legal knowledge so they are better prepared for legal matters they may encounter in their future careers (Tanner et al., 2004). Taking business law course can even be beneficial to business people years after graduation to help update, refresh, and strengthen their legal knowledge (Siedel, 2000). Both current undergraduate students, as well as alumni, benefit from the topics they covered in business law course, it provides valuable knowledge to business people throughout their careers (Siedel, 2000; Tanner et al., 2004). The value of business law study within an undergraduate business education continues to grow and is in need of greater appreciation. The value of business law knowledge in business becomes increasingly helpful after graduation and throughout students' careers in the business world. There is clear proof that the content knowledge and legal skills learned in business law course contribute to the importance of legal studies in undergraduate business education (Siedel, 2000; Tanner et al., 2004).

There is also evidence on how the knowledge of business law course likely provides non-legal skills. Legal studies courses can provide many important skills necessary for business students such as critical thinking and complex problem-solving skills (Bird, 2018; Bird &Kirschner, 2020).

Problem-Solving

Before exploring business students' problem-solving skills and whether business law study coursework enhances business students' problem-solving abilities, it is important to first examine what skills and characteristics lead to successful group and individual problem solving. Problem-solving skills are used by people in many different contexts ranging from informal situations, such as games, to formal situations, such as the workplace. Problem solving follows a cycle of inquiry, and collaboration is key to enhancing this cycle and leading to group problem-solving (Jacques, 2020). However, skill level contributes to the effectiveness of group collaboration when problem-solving (Jacques, 2020). It is more effective for the communication to come from a less skilled person with a higher skilled person as the listener (Jacques, 2020). When people at a higher skill level communicate with people at a lower skill level, it tends to be more instructional and less explanatory (Jacques, 2020). As a result, if the more skilled person was communicating and the less skilled person was listening, the communication may not provide explanations, and therefore would be beneficial to group problem-solving (Jacques, 2020).

Research conducted by Herron and Hennessey (2019) further supported how inquiry benefits group problem-solving through the process of sharing knowledge with one another. Active participation by all group members is merely the first step to achieving problem-solving success. Additional literature provides further explanation of specific aspects of communication that contribute to the effectiveness of a group's problem-solving abilities, such as the quality of the content being communicated (Dowell et al., 2020). Groups containing people who take on more productive roles are more likely to succeed because they communicate through negotiation by comparing multiple ideas and discussing the rationale behind those ideas (Dowell et al., 2020). The presence of negotiation and conflict enhances the quality of the content being communicated among the group (Dowell et al., 2020). Merely discussing superficial information about the problem at hand is not enough to generate highly effective group problem-solving. Without the contribution and comparison of each group member's knowledge, ideas, and reasoning, a group's communication will lack purpose and be less likely to succeed (Dowell et al., 2020). The role that students tend to take on in a group is also beneficial when determining whether business law study coursework enhances group problem-solving skills because students may learn to become more comfortable with conflict and negotiation through business law study course (Dowell et al., 2020).

In addition to communication, the presence of a leader within a group contributes to greater efficiency in coming to a solution (Herron & Hennessey, 2019). People who tend to take on a leadership role possess and contribute many valuable skills to group problem-solving. However, these people may focus so much on managing the communication of the other group members' ideas that they fall short in developing and integrating their own ideas (Herron & Hennessey, 2019). The roles students tend to take on in a group setting are not only important to understand when examining a group's problem-solving performance, but also important when examining what specific characteristics of students lead to both individual and group problem-solving success (Dowell et al., 2020; Herron & Hennessey, 2019). When determining how business law study coursework impacts students' problem-solving abilities it is important to consider that exposure to business law study may strengthen some students' problem-solving skills more than others.

Business Students and Problem-Solving

Next, it is necessary to determine the importance of problem-solving skills for business students before examining whether business law study coursework enhances business students' problem-solving skills. Business people are frequently confronted with problems and have to work with colleagues to generate a solution. To prepare business students for life after graduation, it is important for business students to develop strong problem-solving skills during their undergraduate education. Having high levels of problem-solving abilities is an extremely valuable skill for business students (Jones & Davidson, 2007). Students with high levels of problem-solving abilities are more competent in solving unstructured problems (Jones & Davidson, 2007). Having a strong ability to solve unstructured problems is more valuable to business students than having the ability to solve structured problems because a person who demonstrates high performance in solving complex problems provides more value to a business than a person who can only perform well when solving simple problems (Jones & Davidson, 2007).

In addition to exploring the importance of problem-solving skills for business students, this research is also interested in exploring the interpersonal and cognitive skills possessed by undergraduate business students that lead to successful group and individual problem-solving. The existing literature has identified many interpersonal skills that lead to successful group problem solving including collaboration, communication, leadership, and negotiation skills (Dowell et al., 2020; Herron & Hennessey, 2019; Jaques, 2020).

Business law Study and Problem-Solving

Business law study course often requires students to utilize problem-solving skills to analyze and better understand different legal topics and situations. Solving legal problems is often a difficult skill for students to grasp and certain teaching methods may be more helpful to students when trying to strengthen this skill (Frantz & Wilson, 2004; Nathanson, 1994).
According to Nathanson (1994) he suggested that legal problem solving is unique as it differs from general problem solving, and it should be taught in a way that promotes the transfer of skills between varying contexts. Promoting the transfer of skills between varying contexts is essential for business students' success in undergraduate business law study course (Nathanson, 1994). As previously mentioned, the skills which can be learned from a business law study course hold great value to business students, but only if the students are able to grasp and develop those skills (Siedel, 2000; Tanner et al., 2004).

Learning to think analytically

Beyond the substance of any course for example, what consideration of federal and state laws actually does is to improve students' ability to reason and analyze. These skills emerge in several distinct and equally important ways. They include appreciating how consequences flow from actions, honing interpretive skills, and improving logic by identifying and overcoming biases in reasoning.
Law courses often use real cases, condensed and simplified, to help students learn how to evaluate actions on the basis of their likely consequences. In business law classes, students learn how certain decisions made in the workplace might give rise to various legal claims. By studying cases, they come to understand how executives have resolved various factual situations and the legal consequences of their choices. Good law teachers help students put themselves in the shoes of the parties – plaintiff and defendant. Through case studies, students consider what alternatives were available to the parties and how their decisions affected both the individuals and the companies involved.

For example, one of the first cases Bentley University first-year students read is 1964's *Heart of Atlanta Motel*, in which a small business owner challenged the federal government's right to tell him – via the passage of the Civil Rights Act – whom he could and could not allow in his motel. We teach this case not only because it makes the important historical point that racial discrimination was legal only 50 years ago. It also helps students grasp the larger point that even small businesses are almost always subject to federal as well as state regulation. They can put themselves in the shoes of the motel owner who simply wants to make his own call about what kind of guests he will rent to (although it's doubtful any of them would want to run a racially restrictive business of their own) (Brown 2013).

The Role of Law in Business Education

One of the first things we teach first-year students in their introductory law and ethics course at Universities in Nigeria is that they will use business law throughout their careers, even if they never go to law school or interact with an actual lawyer. (Brown 2013) Business law courses help students develop critical thinking skills in three equally important ways. These courses focus firstly on teaching students the substantive legal basics of law that inform every aspect and stage of industry. By understanding the legal principles that determine, for example, whether a company can stop others from copying its products, whether its contracts are enforceable, and whether it can hire only male executives, business students learn how to identify and head off potential legal problems. In doing so, these students get a competitive edge over students who have only a vague idea of how law works. As a result, they are more valuable to and valued by their employers.

More importantly, law courses teach students how to think in ways that are essential to a successful business career. Law courses require students to sharpen their analytical skills and evaluate their own thought processes more carefully. In most law courses, students read case summaries that illustrate the plaintiff's arguments and defendant's counter-arguments, as well as the court's ruling on the issue at hand. By analyzing why one side or the other prevailed, students improve their own ability to develop arguments and to anticipate what the counter-arguments might be. Learning how to think critically and argue persuasively should form part of any business education. Business leaders who have studied law – even a single semester of business law – use that training almost every day.

Finally, business law course enhances the value of business education by grounding executives in the ethical consequences of the decisions they make as well as their legal consequences. Laws such as the EFCC Act and the ICPC Act address, in part, the ethical behavior of senior executives. Violating them can result in serious penalties for individuals as well as corporate entities. Employers benefit from hiring people whose knowledge of ethics extends beyond the simplistic. In exploring the ethical frameworks that guide business decisions, business law courses ground students in short term and longer-term benefits of ethical action as well as the principles behind corporate social responsibility.

Conclusion

This research work highlights the relevance of business law in business education curriculum in Nigeria. It provides the important skills a business education student who attends a business law class will acquire in the course of his education, such as problem-solving skill and learning to think analytically. It equally demonstrated one thing, that virtually every aspect of doing business is regulated in one way or another by the law, and a business which is unwary of the legal and regulatory frameworks governing its operations will soon violate the law. Like in most other countries, the Nigerian business sector is fairly regulated. It works because of the interplay of the laws, the regulators and the businesses, and an understanding of it is crucial for the survival of a business. Therefore, a business education student, who is being prepared to face the future and the dynamics of business, must learn and appreciate the importance of the laws regulating business activities within his domain.

Recommendations

1. The curriculum of business education should be adjusted in such a manner that students of business education should be exposed to learn business law at least for four semesters before graduation. This adjustment will enable students learn more business law courses before their graduation.
2. The universities should endeavour to ensure that business law is handled by lawyers. It will assist in instilling professionalism in the education as a profession.

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Challenges of Business Education Programme in Nigeria

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Abstract

Business education is that type of education that inculcates in its recipients' attitudes, knowledge, skills, values that is required in the business world. Business education, being one of the vocational programmes in Nigeria, is targeted at empowering students with skills for the world of life and creates employment opportunities for them. In recent time, graduates from the nation's tertiary institution of learning most especially the business education graduates have been plagued by the inability to get jobs in corporate industries and companies in Nigeria. Many authors and researchers have related this problem to the quality of training received by these graduates while in school which is devoid of skills required to meet up with the demands of the business world. It is in seeking a solution to this problem that the authors delved through literature to determine the fundamental challenged facing business education in Nigeria. Some of the challenges includes; inadequacies in the curriculum content, non-relevance of the course content, poor implementation of curriculum, time allocation, current issues and debates, qualification and quality of teachers, lack of training facility, poor remuneration of teachers. It was recommended that experts in business education should be drafted into the curriculum, business educators must constantly improve their skill especially in (ICT), the remuneration of teachers should be a priority, adequate facilities provided for effective and efficient learning.

Keywords: Business, Education, Programme, Business Education.

Introduction

Business Education is a conglomerate of courses/subjects that is concerned with the acquisition, development and inculcation of proper value for the survival of the individual and the society, the development of intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate environment; the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community, the acquisition of an objective view of local and external environments (National Policy on Education 2004). The poor implementation and consequent positioning of Business Education worsen the dwindling situation of myriads of problems experienced in Nigeria today. As a result, the poverty and unemployment rates in Nigeria remain on the high side (NEEDS, 2004:6). As noted by Osuala (2000), the success or failure of any economy depends on the functionality of its Business Education system. It is in recognition of the desire to create job-makers out of Nigeria, through Business Education, which makes them acquire employable and saleable skills that this paper intends to stress the urgent need to identify the myriads of challenges facing business education teachers and proffer solutions to same, which if applied to the latter will reposition the Business Education through its implementation.

Concept of Business Education

In order to be able to understand the concept of business education, it would be necessary to look at the definitions of business education in the past and present time. This is because technology has helped to change definitions of certain things. It therefore, implies that business education, as a course of study has to move with time. Popham (1975) said when a group of people were asked what business education is? The reply was as follows: A business executive replied, "Business Education is education to produce goods and services". A radical retorted: It is the avenue to make enormous profit. One teacher responded: Economic concepts necessary for living in a business economy. Another teacher answered: Learning skills to enter a business or distributive job. A person on the street said "Shorthand and typing, that's it". After looking at the different views of business educators, Popham came to a conclusion that: Business education is a course that prepares students for entry into and advancement in jobs within business and it is equally important because it prepares students to handle their own business affairs and to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. Nolan, Hayden & Malsbary (1967) defined business education as those business programmes and courses taught ordinarily at the secondary school level. Osuala E.C. (1989) defined Business education as an essential part of the preparation of youths for live and living.

In 2004, Osuala, gave another definition as a programme of instruction which consists of two parts (1) Office education - a vocational programme of office careers through initial, refresher and upgrading education and (2) General business education - a programme to provide students with information and competences which are needed by all in managing personal business affairs and in using the services of the business. Still on the definition of business education, Njoku (1997) defines business education as that facet of educational training that helps the individual to acquire relevant skills needed for living. However, in 2006 Njoku gave another definition as an educational programme that equips an individual with functional and suitable skills, knowledge, attitude and value that would enable him/her operates in the environment he/she finds himself/herself. It can be seen from the foregoing discussions that as the years go by; the definitions of business education continue to change. This means that business education is not static. Therefore, any worthwhile programme has to move with time. However, business educators have always accepted that change is a fact of life. From the typewriter to the transistor, business curriculum has continually shaped itself to meet the needs of business. As a result, the success and survival of business education constantly depend on its ability to adapt and keep pace with the needs of its recipients. These changes present challenges for both the learner and instructor. Nevertheless, it is the business educator that must be willing to adapt and manage these challenges to ensure successful programs for the future. It is essential that business education be a useful and vital component of transformation agenda if the curriculum of business programs across the country is to continue to meet the needs of its students.

Objectives of Business Education

The focus of Business Education is orientation of recipients which enhances wealth creation, employment generation and poverty reduction is very important in people's life. All of which reduce and indeed, capable of eliminating, youth restiveness, promote societal peaceful co-existence and cohesion and unmoulding responsible citizenry. All these are indices of development of a nation's economy and the absence of which portend under-development of the economy. This is necessarily so because with responsible citizenry, less restive youths and peaceful societal coexistence, nationalism and the desire for higher productivity are embraced by all and sundry. Hence, the aims/objectives of Business Education, as contained in section 6, sub-section 49 of the National Policy on Education (2004) are as follows:

i. To provide the business knowledge and vocational skills necessary for industrial, commercial and economic development.
ii. To provide trained manpower in applied technology and commerce, particularly at sub-professional grades.
iii. To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of economic and environmental problems for the use and convenience of man.
iv. To enable our young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

Furthermore, Aina (1994) posited that the objectives of Business Education broadly include:

i. To contribute to goal attainment of the total educational programme. ii. To provide basic and business knowledge for all students.
iii. To develop their economic understanding, personal consumer competency and personal-use competency.
iv. To provide vocational skills for persons preparing for a business occupation, i.e. business competency.

Challenges in Business Education

Inadequacies in the Curriculum Content of Business Education: the content of business education curriculum has been reported as inadequate at all levels. An example of such could be seen in a study by Njoku, 1997 on tertiary institutions, Njoku (1997) on Junior Secondary Schools and Nwosu, 1999 on private secondary schools. Most of the courses do not cover the scope of knowledge and skills required for the effective preparation of business education teachers today. Highly needed courses are not available in the curriculum. Typewriting, Administrative office management and Transcription are not included in the curricula of some institutions. Such inadequacies in the curriculum could lead to the production of half-baked graduates. That is, they would not acquire the necessary skills for effective performance. Such teachers cannot compete with business education graduates elsewhere. A probable reason for the above inadequacies may be that business education experts and relevant stakeholders are not often invited to participate during the development of the curriculum. Today, some ministries handpick people to develop the curriculum for teachers at certain levels. This could generate lots of problems, not only for the institutions, but also for their products.

Non-Relevance of the Course Content: a business education programme should include courses that would prepare the student for saleable skills, help them have an understanding of the economic system and how a business operates. It was also to be geared towards helping people to acquire knowledge, and attitude/value that would enable them function in the world they live. To this end, subjects that would meet the objectives or goals must be in the content of the curriculum. A good curriculum should also be geared towards helping the students to acquire knowledge, attitudes and values that would enable them function efficiently in the world of work. To this end, subjects that would meet the objectives or set goals must be included in the curriculum. Again, the content of traditional business education curriculum is geared towards the choice of the person at the head.

Poor Implementation of the Curriculum: today the training of business educators tends to deviate from what is contained in the curriculum. Industrial training is no longer carried out the way it was originally done. Should the ITF allow students to look for places to do their industrial attachment or should the college provide them with establishments for SIWES? This is a critical question for discussion. Should the institutions visit the students to find out whether they are properly placed or should the students report back to the school on how they were placed?

Time allocation: another aspect that shows inadequacies is the time allocated to the subjects on the school timetable. In some schools, Njoku (1997) and Nwosu (1999) observed that inadequate number of hours allotted to business education subjects at all levels was considered a major issue that needed proper attention.

Selection of Subjects: at the different levels of education, the selection of subjects to be offered was to a large extent influenced by the person at the head, the time (space) available on the time-table and the competence of the teachers available in some cases. For instance, in most vocational schools, office practice; shorthand; typewriting; commerce and book-keeping were offered, but a few others offered secretarial studies as a major course. Although the state ministries of education approved the courses for them the schools were still selective in what they teach. At the JSS level, business education subjects are put under Group B as Vocational electives. This becomes a source of concern to all of us. Nwosu (2005) reported that not all the schools studied offered most of business education subjects. This can show that the programme at this level is not uniformly taught by schools.

Current issues and debates: a lot of discussions are currently going on as to why people in related areas of business education should not be allowed to teach core business education subjects. The following arguments were put forward by some business educators that business education is highly specialized hence should be taught by experts who possess the required skills. That no matter the residual skills acquired by non-experts in core business education, they are not qualified to teach, since they are not professionally qualified in the business teaching business education. The following were put forward by those in related areas, that those in related areas studied courses like personnel management, office management, typewriting and others, hence, are competent to teach the subjects; that having studied business education at the NCE and HND levels before branching off is enough to qualify one to teach business education; that having studied economics or educational management at the Bachelor's degree level and then Business education at the master's level is adequate to be admitted into the profession. The teacher should take a stand immediately on issues and debates of this nature in order not to block critical thinking in students. It is a way of accommodating all the learning styles-theorists, pragmatists, activists and reflectors as well as the different teaching methods.

Qualification and quality of teachers: A Business education teacher is a person who holds a degree in business education from a recognized University or an NCE (National Certificate of Education). Holders of NCE from the recognized colleges of education in business education are competent to teach the five components of the JSS business studies programme. He is a person who is constantly aware of the state of art in Business Education and has a thorough knowledge of the requirements of a business education programme. The business education teacher ought to have 3 qualifications. Business qualities; personal qualities for him/her to do the job as a trained business education teacher and professional qualities, i.e. a business education teacher should belong to a professional association. But what do we have today? Individuals who lack the requisite qualification in business education, teachers that are not professionally trained and use of non-existing professional bodies for the purpose of gaining accreditation status.

Facilities: facilities for teaching and learning in any programme are usually given a prominent position in the field of instructional technology. Just as Nolan said, it is not possible to achieve the objectives of a well-designed programme without adequate facilities. This means that facilities must be adequate and functional. Facilities in Business Education are as important as the business education teachers. The facilities you will need for your business education courses would depend on:

- the content of each course.
- the objective of the programme for each course
- in some cases, the method of teaching.
- the level and number of students.
- adequacy - this means that facilities needed for instruction must be capable of taking care of all those who need them. For instance, in a class of 30 students, 36 computers must be made available. So that the teacher would have 1 for demonstration and the rest would be left as stand-by.
- relevant - how relevant are the facilities to the course content and objectives as well as societal needs?

Lack of Training Facilities: The facilities needed in the workshop are grossly inadequate. Not only that, they are few in number but also most of them lack spare parts. This makes practical aspect of business education to be relegated to the background as situations as most business organization to which the students are attached cannot provide them with enough exposure to the relevant modern equipment.

Inadequate Funding: Business Education is a highly capital-intensive programme. Funds are required to acquire numerous machineries necessary to equip the learner effectively. Infrastructures, workshops and to retain highly qualified teachers, demonstrators, laboratory assistants and other personnel needed. Funds are also needed for procuring workshop materials, stationeries, hand tools, books and other reading materials and ensure regular maintenance of equipment. Most times budgetary allocation tends to be discouraging. This hampers the effectiveness of the programme.

Wrong Perception of the Course: Some parents/guardians do not want their children/wards to study Business Education. They believe that it is meant for drop outs, dullards and less brilliant individuals. Instead, they opt for courses like Law, Medicine, Pharmaceuticals, Engineering, Architecture, and Political Science and so on. Of course, they may not fit in per say.

Students' Laziness/Poor Attitude: Business Education is an educational programme it requires efforts and dedication. Most students of today do not want to exhaust their energy in the development of manipulative skills demanded in the course. This is one of the major problems of Business Education today.

Organizational Problem: Vocational Education is meant to prepare an individual for gainful employment. To do this, the necessary subjects with the right number of instructional materials or facilities like typewriters, adding machines, filing cabinets, perforators etc. need to be in place. Unfortunately, there is gross inadequacy or decay of same in our schools. The result is to make the recipients become half-baked and render them unemployable since they have not been adequately empowered.

Government Discriminatory Attitude in Funding: There are so many new sophisticated office equipments that have appeared in the market such as electric typewriters, dictating machines, computers, etc. which are conspicuously absent in Nigerian schools due to inadequate funds for their acquisition. Ironically, government seemed to be funding heavily on Science and Science-related Education programmes at the detriment of Business Education. This does not augur well for the intended empowerment of Business Education graduates for them to play their roles in national development.

Non-use of Appropriate and Approved Methodology: One other outstanding constraint in the teaching of Business Education is the non-use of appropriate and approved methodology. In addition to normal lectures, the teaching of vocational subjects requires the use of variety of teaching methods and techniques some of which are simulation, discussions, role playing, demonstrations, study trips (Field trips) etc. it is sadly noticeable that while some teachers adhere faithfully to these professional practices, a number of others do not. It is either that they are unaware of ' these methods or are indifferent to their use.

Social Appraisal of Business Education: It is unfortunate fate of Business Education in Nigeria that its products are held in low esteem by both individual and society. There is no denying the fact that many parents do not prefer their children to go into business education except when they are unable to secure admission into other prominent courses like medicine, law and engineering etc. in the university.

Textbooks Production: Relevant locally developed Business Education textbooks are scarce. This is mainly because book publication is expensive and companies do not consider it, a profitable venture for the size of the sector.

The issue of poor remuneration and motivation of teachers: Teachers constitute a critical element in any educational set up. The problem however remains that generally in Nigeria; teachers are poorly remunerated and ill motivated. This situation also affects business education teachers. Poor remuneration and lack of motivation of business education teachers, no doubt, kill their morale and adversely affects their job performance. Poor teacher performance is a major cause of falling standard of education in Nigeria.

The issue of orientation of administration: One issue that business educators need to address is the question of who should administer business education programme. What happens in many cases is that those who administer educational institutions are ignorant of the value and potentials of business education in national competitiveness and development. Hence, Ahmed (2019) stated that business education in such school may not have the level of support it needs to gain acceptance among students and staff.

Inaccessibility of digital and internet technology: Modern business operation is IT-driven. Any business concern in the present technological age that lacks access to ICT will be groping in the dark. For business education to achieve its mission of producing youth with relevant and competitive employability skills access to digital and ICT facilities is imperative in the classroom. For digital and internet facilities in a business education classroom to be effective, the following conditions must be met.

1. Business education teachers must have the knowledge and skill to use the new digital tools and resources to help students achieve high academic standard.
2. Students and business educators must have sufficient access to digital technologies and internet in their classrooms and business education institutions.
3. High quality, meaningful and culturally responsive digital contents must be available for both business educators and learners.

Conclusion

Education is the pivot around which other spheres of Nigeria development revolve. Unfortunately, education in Nigeria has suffered unpardonable and unforgivable neglect over the decades with Business education having more than its fair share of the deplorable phenomenon. Business education remains the foundation of human resource development which provides knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding needed to perform in the business world as a producer or consumer of economic goods and services that business offers. To ensure national transformation as being emphasized as slogan on daily basis, there is immediate need to tackle the challenges of business education programme headlong to pave way for the fulfilment of its roles in national development.

Recommendation

The following recommendations where made;

1. Experts in Business education should be immediately drafted into the curriculum review to ensure that the contents to be recommended and taught are in tandem to what is obtainable in the modern-day organizations practices to deliver national transformation assurances.
2. The government should be courageous enough in insisting that only professionally qualified, competent and qualified teachers are involved in the teaching of Business Education courses as to improve the quality of the programme
3. There is need to motivate business educators adequately through improved remuneration and conditions of service by their employers.
4. Business education curriculum at every level should undergo constant evaluation and review in order to keep it up to date with current technological realities.
5. Business educators should improve their personal skills in the area of Information and Communication Technology to enable them impact skills effectively and efficiently to their students
6. Career guidance and public enlightenment should be provided by business educators and other education stakeholders to improve positive public perception (PPP) of business education by students, parents and the society.
7. There is also the urgent need to replace obsolete equipment used in business education studios and laboratories with modern ones.
8. Government should ensure adequate remuneration of business education teachers.
9. There should be adequate provision of teaching and learning facilities.

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Assessment of Electronic Records Storage and Retrieval Management Practices for Effective Administration in Higher Institutions.

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Abstract

The research determined the assessment of electronic records storage and retrieval management practices for effective administration of administrative officers and Information communication Technology (ICT) experts in higher institutions. The study was conducted in 5 tertiary institutions in Abia State, Nigeria and two specific objectives, research questions and null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The researchers adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study is 91 respondents associated with the electronic records management practices in the five (5) higher institutions. The researchers adopted census method by using the entire population for the study. Out of the 91 copies of the instruments distributed only 85 was retrieved and used for analysis. To collect data for analysis of the study a self-structured questionnaire titled 'Electronic Records Storage and Retrieval Management Questionnaire (ERESREMAQ) was used. The instrument was validated by two Business Educators and a Psychometrician. Reliability of the instrument was ensured where twenty copies of the validated instrument were administered to 10 administrative officers and 10 ICTs experts in Rivers State University which is outside the area of the study. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while 't' test statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at 0.95% alpha level. The findings of the study revealed that there is no significant difference in the view and responses of administrative officer and ICT experts on the extent electronic storage and retrieval practices enhance effective management practices of administrative officers and ICT experts in higher institutions in Abia State, Nigeria. The result also showed that the calculated 't' value in the two null hypotheses is lesser than the 't'-critical value therefore all the hypotheses were retained indicating no significance difference in the mean response of the respondents. Consequently, the study recommended among others that management should implement a secured and centralized records management system ensure proper record classification and indexing.

Keywords: Electronic record, e-management practice, record storage, record retrieval, effective administration

Introduction

In the recent past, records were kept in paper form, this method was used for the dissemination of information, communication and record keeping. This form of keeping record has been reduced and in some organization discarded due to its limitations as paper files requires enough physical space that are cost intensive, searching and retrieval of papers in large volumes are difficult, slow, inefficient and hard to manage. This paper records kept in locker, floors or shelves are exposed to theft, destroyed by thermites, water, fire and are easy to deteriorate overtime. Okiridu and Onwudike (2024) assert that the usage of paper record keeping has been minimized to the barest level in organizations and institutions because it is inefficient, space consuming, very risky and not environmentally friendly. Retrieval of records is time consuming, delays in issuance of certificate and transcript processing, missing of students' examination scores, records loss or damage due to instability of storage system. These shortcomings of paper record keeping calls for a system that can take care of these anomalies, which is keeping of records electronically. Electronic records are information created, stored, and used in digital form that serve as evidence of business activities and transactions. According to the International Organization for Standardization [ISO] (2016), records are "information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business".

Electronic Record Management (ERM) refers to the systematic control of records in digital formats, from their creation and receipt through processing, distribution, maintenance, and eventual disposition. With the explosion of digital data and the increasing reliance on Information and Communication Technology (ICT), ERM has become crucial for both public and private organizations in ensuring efficient recordkeeping, regulatory compliance, data security, and service delivery (Akor & Udensi, 2013). Electronic Record Management, therefore, is the application of management principles and practices to electronic records to ensure their integrity, reliability, and usability over time.

It involves the use of software tools such as Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS) to capture, store, and manage digital content efficiently (Ngulube, 2004). The preference of electronic record-keeping over paper record keeping stems on the features it presents to human such as fastness to access, safer from theft and damages, cheaper to store, reduces physical storage space, reduces paper, ink and physical materials, retrieve instantly using keywords easier to manage. and electronic files are easily or automatically backed up to the cloud for easy storage and retrieval. In today's fast paced digital world the adoption of electronic management (E- Management) practices has become essential for ensuring efficient and effective administration in organizations including higher institutions. These practices leverage digital tools and systems to automate processes, improve communication and enhance decision making. The higher education sector which is responsible for molding future leaders and innovators, requires robust administrative systems to meet the demands of modern governance, accountability and transparency.

Higher institutions in Nigeria face numerous challenges in their administrative processes, including efficiency, creation, storage, retrieval, control, disposal and accuracies in handling records. Paper recording systems often fail to meet the increasing demand for timely and accurate service delivery. To address these challenges many institutions have adopted electronic management systems to streamline administrative tasks such as student registration, staff payroll, academic record-keeping and communication with stakeholders (Okiridu, Ogwunte & Godpower; 2024). The advent of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has transformed the way many tertiary institutions create, store, disseminate, and use information. Institutions world over are currently and mostly conducting their records management functions using different ICT platforms. Ezenwafor and Okeke (2024) are of the opinion that adoption of electronic management systems in Nigeria tertiary institutions has ensured quality service delivery, this has resulted in quicker generation, storage, and retrieval of records. These records exist in the form of word processing documents, spreadsheets, e-mail, text messages, voicemail, web content, or other forms. The records need to be properly managed for effectiveness and efficiency. Geoffrey (2024) emphasizes that records should be seen as 'persistent representations of activities' encompassing their abilities to serve as evidence and information. This approach recognizes records not just as static artifacts but as dynamic tools that support various affordances of users. Electronic storage systems include encryption, access controls, audit logs, and retention management. These ensure that confidential employee records are protected, unauthorized access is prevented, and compliance with laws such as GDPR, HIPAA, and Nigeria's NDPR is maintained (Ambira, Kemoni & Ngulube, 2019).

The Records Life Cycle (RLC) describes the stages a record goes through from its creation to its eventual destruction. It includes the processes of creating, maintaining, storing, and disposing of records over the course of their useful lifespans. The RLC is an important part of any organization's operations, as it helps to ensure that all documents are properly stored, preserved, and disposed off in a timely manner. The RLC process ensures that information is not lost, is up to date, is available when needed, and is prevented from being misused. In the evolving digital landscape, electronic storage technologies play a pivotal role in managing workforce operations. Organizations leverage systems such as cloud storage, Enterprise Content Management (ECM), and Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) to maintain secure personnel records, streamline HR processes, and foster data-driven employee administration. For the purpose of this paper the researchers will dwell only on two indices of the record life cycle which is electronic record storage and disposal practices as it affects effective administration of workers (Caroline; 2022).

Electronic Records Storage Practices and Effective Administration

Electronic records are useless if not properly stored for future access. Storage is the physical or digital repository of records while electronic records storage practice is a process by which electronic data is stored in digital form in order to ensure the usability and durability of the information contained therein. Storing electronic records is an activity that stabilizes and protects electronic records in forms that are retrievable, readable and useable over time Electronic record storage improves operational efficiency and supports timely service delivery in both public and private organizations. Storage is essential to electronic records management as it ensures that records are secured, kept intact, accessible for as long as they are needed (Shepherd & Yeo, 2003).

Storage refers to both the physical space and use of dependable media. Records require good storage conditions and handling processes that will consider the physical and chemical properties, no matter the format. The record should be stored in media that, guarantees their accessibility, usability, reliability, authenticity for as long as they are needed. In storing electronic files, folders are created to group related files and unique name given to it using institutions recognized abbreviation, for example 'Dept' for department. Some operating systems limit the length of a filename to eight characters. Records are stored in a secured databases or cloud storage solutions. Modern ERM systems enable quick search and retrieval using keywords, tags, or filters (Ngoepe, 2018). Electronic records can be stored in the institution in many of ways such as databases, hard drives, shared folders, email accounts, magnetic media, optical disks, CD-ROM, and DVD, flash, zip drives, among others. Storage systems are organized alphabetically or numerically, each disk, tapes, CD or DVD labelled so that it can be located quickly as captions are given to the information to help address this. Often, the labels are colour coded to indicate how long the data in the media are kept. Magnetic disks are widely used and information on magnetic disk coded in magnetic spot which can develop read-errors, this is less expensive and can hold more data in a given surface area. (Ibezim (2006).

However, optical storage system can fail completely after a few years especially when not stored in the proper environment. Data stored and retrieved from CD's are slower than data on magnetic disks. CDs and DVD holds more data and they are good for active records. Different media have different storage methods and characteristics, for instance CD-ROM, and DVD recorded one time only, after which the media becomes read-only. Flash memory devices are the most popular portable digital devices but prone to virous problems (Yusof, & Chell; 2000). It is a memory chip that can be rewritten and hold its content without electric power. Information stored in the storage system could be unreadable because of scratches, in some cases the CDs are not properly or carefully handled or kept in the desk drawers, cabinets. IRMT (2012) The internal storage system for most computer system is hard drive. which is used to store programs that run the system and data files, primary and secondary storage system. Primary storage is temporary or working storage while secondary storage is relatively permanent storage. There are storage options namely online, nearline, and offline. Online is to store in the computer system and provide full access to appropriate users this means that the record is accessible immediately through the network to maintain greatest functionality. Nearline includes storage in a system that is not a direct part of institutions' network and accessed through the facility like optical disk, media jukebox that has moderate functionality. Offline refers to storage that is not accessible through the network for example, removable media, such as magnetic tape, flash drive (Hunter, 2000). This retains the least amount of functionality, while still keeping records in an electronic format. Qandle, (2023) asserts that data files can be expensive to create or replace if damaged and no longer usable. Loss of important files, such as students' result, transcripts, receipt can cause serious problems for tertiary institution. Therefore, there is need to back up files in a hard drive, tape, or disk should be labelled in the same manner as their original, perhaps with the word backup added to the label Views on electronic records storage cannot be concluded without reference to how the stored data can be retrieved.

Electronic Records Retrieval Practices and effective administration

Retrieval is a process of locating a file or document and withdrawing a record from a filing system or record centre. It is also the action of accessing information stored on a computer system. Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) also noted that processed data in the electronic system can only make sense when made available to the intending users. In data operating system files and sub-directories in a given directory, are view by changing to that directory using the c/d command and typing the dir command. According to Comwell Management Consultants (2001), retrieval practices are the ability of the user to search, retrieve files and records from an electronic records management system. The electronic records management system must be able to retrieve an electronic file using implemented naming principles, including file name, file identifier (classification code), unique identifier which is accessible to the user to make it relevant. Furthermore, knowing the specific location of a record makes retrieval easy. Ezeali and Ewulonu (2011) state that records retrieval refers to the activities involved in locating and removing tangible records from the files or storage medium. The record is returned to the storage control area when no longer needed

Electronic records retrieval practices according to IRMT (2012) is seen as an operation that entails searching out and gaining access to specific data element from an electronic system where records are stored. Retrieval is of two stages, first a search for appropriate address in the storage system and second recognition of the item; if the record search is at the wrong category the item may not be contacted. To have a good filing structure a general filing system that has a consistent filing structure should be encouraged and maintained. This consistency will help the higher institutions to coordinate the creation, use and retention of records that will ease retrieval and access of information throughout the institution (Tsabedze; 2022).. Just as documents or records may be organised into files, files may be organised into series. Record series is the arrangement of the files and other records of a higher institution that brings together those relating to the same function or activity or having a common form or some other relationship arising from their creation, receipt or use. Records in a series are linked together because the records are related to the same functions and activities. When electronic records based on series are well devised and consistently applied it facilitates retrieval of records. The methods adopted for retrieval will depend on speed, cost, quality and quietness which may reduce disruption, for example during COVID-19, ERMS allowed staff to access records securely from any location, ensuring uninterrupted administrative processes even when working off-site and cloud-based record storage enhances resilience and enables continuous operational delivery (Pillen & Eckard, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

Electronic records system due to its viability and being a vital asset in ensuring that day to day activities of the organisation is carried out effectively and efficiently especially in the higher institutions replaced the traditional or manual method of record keeping. Electronic records support decision- making, organize documents, provide evidence of transactions and activities of higher institutions by adopting electronic records management practices (ERMP). Electronic records management practices by administrative officers in higher institutions are still in a pathetic state due to its management by mediocre and untrained personnel. Records are misplaced because creation practices are inadequate; there are no well-defined or clear practices to guide the creation of records. There is instability in the storage system as a result of these the retrieval of electronic system is time consuming, inefficient and records are loss or damaged due to instability of storage system. These anomalies begat poor decisions making as a result of inaccurate and incomplete records, time inefficiencies, backlog of students as a result of incomplete result which delays student's graduation. The management of electronic records is a challenging issue and concerns have been raised that if records are not properly managed, it may be difficult to retrieve and access

Electronic records management practices are not yet fully adopted in the higher institutions, that most times relevant records are missing, .while available records are retrieved with slow rate, because students' data are still processed and kept manually in the higher institutions, while the ones in the electronic system are not securely maintained, students' spend extra years after graduation looking for their results that were declared missing or incomplete because of improper documentation. This scenario brings to doubt the level of ERM practices adopted in those higher institutions in Abia State. In realization of the existing situation of inadequate electronic records management practices in higher institutions, the risk is that the higher institutions will continuously experience delay in provision of needed records, inefficiency in administrative process and backwardness in electronic records keeping. It therefore, becomes necessary to determine how electronic storage and retrieval enhances effective administration of workers in higher institutions. It is expected that with electronic records management system in place effectiveness and efficiency in records keeping would be attained.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which adoption of electronic records storage and retrieval management practices enhance effective administration of workers in higher institutions in Abia State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the extent electronic records storage practices enhance effective administration of workers in higher institutions in Abia State.
2. Determine the extent electronic records retrieval practices enhance effective administration of workers in higher institutions in Abia State.

Research Questions

The study is guided by two research questions formulated based on the specific purposes of the study.

1. To what extent does electronic records storage practices enhance effective administration of workers in higher institutions in Abia State?
2. To what extent does electronic records retrieval practices enhance effective administration of workers in higher institutions in Abia State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of administrative officers and Information and communication technology experts on the extent electronic records storage practices enhance effective administration in higher institutions in Abia State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of administrative officers and Information and communication technology experts on the extent electronic records retrieval practices enhance effective administration in higher institutions in Abia State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to ascertain the opinions of the administrative officers and Information communication technology experts using questionnaire on electronic records management practices adopted for effective administration in tertiary institutions. The study was conducted in five tertiary institutions in Abia State, namely Abia State University (ABSU), Uturu; Abia State Polytechnic, Aba; Abia State College of Education (Tech.), Arochükwu; Micheal Okpara University of Agriculture, Umuahia, and Trinity College Umuahia (Affiliated to University of Calabar). The institutions in the State were chosen because it is identified that they must keep records, store them and retrieve information for smooth running of administration. The population for the study comprised 91 respondents associated with the electronic records management practices in the institutions under study. The researchers adopted census method by using the entire population for the study. The justification for the adoption of the entire population for the study is that the researchers considered the population manageable for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire generated from literature by the researchers in line with the objectives of the study. The structured questionnaire was titled Electronic Records Storage and Retrieval Management Questionnaire (ERESREMAQ). The questionnaire items were organized in a 4-point rating scale with a response options of High Extent (HE) Moderate Extent (ME) Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) with corresponding values of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts. Two Business Educators and one Psychometrician all from Department of Business Education, Rivers State University. To establish the reliability of the instrument for the study, a pilot study was conducted. Twenty copies of the validated instrument were administered to 20 workers in Rivers State University, Rivers State which is outside the area of the study. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument used for the study. A coefficient index of 0.89 was obtained indicating that the instrument was reliable. Out of the 91 copies of the instrument administered to the respondents by the researchers and assistants only 85 copies were retrieved and used for analysis. The information gotten from the filled instrument represented the opinions of the respondents out of the available response alternatives provided in the questionnaire which were used for the analysis. Mean ($\bar{X}$) and Standard deviation was used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Any score up to 2.5 and above was considered 'high' while lesser than 2.5 were considered 'low'. The null hypothesis was retained when the t-calculated value is less than critical t-value at 0.05 level of significance otherwise not retained.

Results

Research Question 1 To what extent does electronic records storage practices enhance effective administration of workers in higher institutions in Abia State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Respondents on the Extent electronic records storage practices enhance effective administration of workers in higher institutions in Abia State (N=85)

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Admin. Officer (60)			ICT Experts (25)		
		$\vec{X}$	SD	RMK	$\vec{X}$	SD	RMK
1.	Electronic storage of records improves the security of administrative data	3.01	0.44	HE	3.22	0.36	HE
2.	Electronic record storage makes administrative information more accessible when needed...	3.24	0.27	HE	3.05	0.55	HE
3.	Storing records electronically reduces the risk of data loss or damage	3.00	1.69	HE	3.21	0.64	HE
4.	Electronic storage helps in organizing administrative records more efficiently	2.45	1.39	ME	3.06	0.80	HE
5.	Electronic record storage supports compliance with regulatory and auditing requirements in administration	3.55	0.14	HE	3.45	1.19	HE
	Total Mean/SD	15.25	3.93		15.99	3.54	
	Grand Mean/SD	**3.05**	**0.78**	**HE**	**3.19**	**0.71**	**HE**

Source: *Research Data (2025).*

Data presented in Table 1 above had a grand mean of 3.05 and 3.19, this reveals that electronic record storage practices among administrative staff and ICT experts in the 5 higher institutions under study is to a high extent. And there is no deviation in the opinions of the two groups because they had a standard deviation of 0.78 and 0.71.

Research Question 2 To what extent does electronic records retrieval practices enhance effective administration of workers in higher institutions in Abia State?

Table :2 Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Respondents on the Extent electronic records retrieval practices enhance effective administration of workers in higher institutions in Abia State (N=85)

S/N	**Questionnaire Items**	**Admin. Officer (60)**			**ICT Experts (25)**		
		$\vec{X}$	**SD**	**RMK**	$\vec{X}$	**SD**	**RMK**
1.	Electronic record retrieval allows for faster access to needed administrative information.	3.21	0.64	**HE**	3.00	0.36	**HE**
2.	Efficient retrieval of electronic records improves the quality of administration	3.28	0.97	**HE**	3.06	0.55	**HE**
3.	Electronic retrieval systems reduce the time spent searching for documents	2.90	0.72	**ME**	3.45	0.64	**HE**
4.	Retrieving records electronically enhances decision-making in administrative operations.	2.85	0.58	**ME**	3.11	0.50	**HE**
5.	Electronic record retrieval supports effective tracking and monitoring of administrative activities.	3.15	0.26	**HE**	3.25	1.19	**HE**
	Total Mean/SD	**15.40**	**3.17**		**15.87**	**3.24**	
	Grand Mean/SD	**3.08**	**0.63**	**HE**	**3.17**	**0.65**	**HE**

Source: *Research Data (2025).*

Data presented in Table 2 had a grand mean of 3.08 and 3.17, this implies that data electronic record retrieval practices among administrative staff and ICT experts is to a high extent. And there is no deviation in the opinions of the two groups which had a standard deviation of 0.63 a and 0.65.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Administrative officers and Information and communication technology experts on the extent electronic records storage practice enhances effective administration in higher institutions in Abia State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of t-Test Analysis on the extent electronic records storage practice enhances effective administration of Administrative officers and Information and communication technology experts in higher institutions in Abia State, Nigeria.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Df.	P. Value	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision	Remark
Admin. Officers	60	3.05	0.78						
				83	0.05	-0.49	2.00	Retained	Not Significant
ICT Expert	25	3.19	0.71						

Source: *Research Data (2025).*

From table 3 above, it is observed that the calculated t-value of -0.49 was below the critical t-value of 2.00 at 0.05 levels of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained meaning that the mean responses of Administrative officers and Information and communication technology experts on the extent electronic records storage practice enhances effective administration in higher institutions in Abia State, Nigeria is not significant.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Administrative officers and Information and communication technology experts on the extent electronic records retrieval practice enhances effective administration in higher institutions in Abia State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Summary of t-Test Analysis on the extent electronic records retrieval practice enhances effective administration of Administrative officers and Information and communication technology experts in higher institutions in Abia State, Nigeria.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Df.**	**P. Value**	**t-cal.**	**t-crit.**	**Decision**	**Remark**
Admin. Officers	60	3.08	0.63						
				83	0.05	0.45	2.00	Retained	**Not Significant**
ICT Expert	25	3.17	0.65						

Source: *Research Data (2025).*

Discussion of Findings

From table 4 above, it is observed that the calculated t-value of 0.45 was below the critical t-value of 2.00 at 0.05 levels of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained meaning that the mean responses of Administrative officers and Information and communication technology experts on the extent electronic records retrieval practice enhances effective administration in higher institutions in Abia State, Nigeria is not significant.

Electronic record storage practices among administrative staff and ICT experts enhances effective administration of Administrative officers and ICT experts. There responses are to a high extent. The hypotheses result revealed no significant difference. The grand mean responses of the respondents are 3.05 and 3.19 on a 4-point rating scale. Thus, with the grand average mean of 3.05 and 3.19, this implies that data electronic record storage practices among administrative staff and ICT experts is to a high extent. From table 3 it is observed that the calculated t-value of -0.49 was below the critical t-value of 2.00 at 0.05 levels of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained meaning that the mean responses of administrative officers and Information and communication technology experts on the extent electronic records storage practice enhances effective administration in higher institutions in Abia State, Nigeria is not significant.

The grand mean of 3.08 and 3.17, indicates high extent which implies that data electronic record retrieval practices among administrative staff and ICT experts enhances their effective administration and there is no deviation in the opinions of the two groups, this implies that data electronic record retrieval practices among administrative staff and ICT experts is to a high extent. From table 4, it is observed that the calculated t-value of 0.45 was below the critical t-value of 2.00 at 0.05 levels of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained meaning that the mean responses of administrative officers and Information and communication technology experts on the extent electronic records retrieval practice enhances effective administration in higher institutions in Abia State, Nigeria is not significant.

From the study of Beagrie and Jones (2008) is in line with the study as they assert that successful digital preservation involves managing a combination of policies, strategies and technologies to ensure digital objects remain authentic and accessible, including preserving the software and hardware environments necessary to interpret them. The findings of this study is in line with the assertion of Zhang (2023) who averred that retrieval of historical performance records helps with evaluation, training plans, and promotion decisions. AI tools automatically surface relevant documents when needed. Retrieval logs and version history support audit trails and control verification during inspections or legal reviews. Studies in Nigeria and other settings show that digital skills especially in database management and electronic retrieval are essential for secretaries and HR administrators to perform effectively and that lack of staff training hampers retrieval efficacy and slows adoption (Zhang 2023). Research on EHR systems in Malaysia underscores that poor system interface or slow performance undermines user adoption and retrieval efficiency, which degrades overall administrative performance. A similar principle applies in HR systems: intuitive design and fast response times are prerequisites for effective retrieval usage.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers conclude as follows: that that electronic record storage practices, enhance effective administration of Administrative Officers and Information Communication experts in the five higher institutions in Abia State, secondly electronic record retrieval practices, enhance effective administration of Administrative Officers and Information Communication experts in five higher institutions in Abia State. The two groups share the same views because there was no deviation in their opinions.

Recommendations

In view of the findings made in this study, the following were recommended:

1. Implement a secure and centralized records management system to avoid duplication and improve access.
2. Ensure proper record classification and indexing, this will help to develop a standardized classification and indexing system to make it easy to search and retrieve records.

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Employers' Perception of Skill Gaps for Employment of Accounting Graduates in Public Universities in Rivers State

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Abstract
The study investigated employers' perception of skill gaps for employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Two research questions corresponding with two hypotheses were postulated. The population of the study consisted of 1,312 academic and administrative principal officers while the sample size consisted of 307 principal officers. The Taro Yamane's formula and stratified random sampling techniques were used to select 203 academics and 104 administrative principal officers from the three public universities in Rivers State.A self-structured instrument titled "Employers Perception of Skills Gap for Employment of Accounting Graduates Questionnaire" (EPSGEAGQ) was used to gather data for the study. The three experts (two from the Department of Business Education and the other from Measurement and Evaluation both in Rivers State University) validated the instrument while Cronbach alpha was used to obtain the reliability index of 0.82 from the computation of the reliability co-efficient of the two clusters of the instruments respectively. The mean and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions; the z-test inferential statistics was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. Major findings showed that both academic and administrative principal officers perceived that internship and mentoring programmes enhanced employment of accounting graduates in public universities in Rivers State to a high extent. It was recommended that the three public universities in Rivers State through the department of accountancy should come up with key areas that students should be exposed to during internship in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. Such a programme should also indicate tentative duration per key areas. Also, the Institutions should strive to align employees' career goals and aspirations with the institution's objectives to facilitate employees' workplace mentorship. This can be achieved by offering clear pathways for career progression, providing opportunities for professional growth and development, and promoting a culture of continuous learning.

Keywords: Perception, Skill Gaps, Employment, Accounting, Internship and Mentoring Programmes.

Introduction
In today's dynamic business environment, employers seek for employees with a wide range of skills and accounting knowledge. They are expected to possess a large range of skills that meet the expectations of their employers. The rapid development and ever-changing needs of the global environment have resulted in revolutionary changes in the skills required by accountants to add value for their clients, in the current globalized world, accounting graduates are expected to possess a wide set of knowledge, technical and generic skills and professional ethics to meet the requirements of the workplace. Industries are in constant need for a consistent and reliable supply of educated and skilled accounting education graduates' prospective employers. Accounting education programmer is design to produce graduates that will meet the market needs or the requirements of the industries. However, Chakraborty (2019) maintained that accounting education programme is lagging in producing graduates that will meet the needs of the industries. Accounting education graduates being unproductive and not being employed because the required employability skills to work effectively in the industries are lacking, this in return creates serious problem of unemployment to them. Perceptions of external stakeholders such as employers regarding these skills are important to educators, researchers, and students. Educators are interested in creating programs that are responsive to market demands. Researchers want an instrument for comparing knowledge and skills. Students wish to acquire those skills that maximize career opportunities.

Accountancy is a very important profession to organizations in developed and developing economies all over the world. This requires the production of high-level manpower, men and women of excellent qualities, who are key players in the management of the financial institutions and business organizations. Okolie and Izedonmi in Ikpesu and Appah (2021) opined that the field of

Accounting is highly dynamic and in the business environment, the contemporary role of accountants has presently shifted from accounting processes to decision support, business strategies, strategic framework and balanced scorecard involving both financial and non-financial performance measures, risk management and corporate governance, and a culture of prospecting into the future. Thus, it is expected that accountants with the right skills are engaged for better performance in the world of business. The perception of employers toward accounting graduates in view of Koko (2019) is that they lack the requisites skills and competencies to be employ, this perceived notion lacks moral and ethical standing. Accounting Education worldwide has come under criticism for failing to address the skill requirements in today's dynamic business environment. Thus, Norman, Latiff and Said (2018) asserted that the quality of accounting graduates is below employers' expectation and lacks the necessary skills. The bottom line is that employers are looking for job applicants who not only have technical skills that can be applied in the workplace but also those who can communicate effectively, discipline, respect authorities with good planning skills, can solve problems; have good information and communication technology skills and are flexible in their approach to work. Private and public sectors are becoming conscious of the need for good quality of accounting graduates and expresses concern about the need to improve the quality. To buttress this, accounting graduate have the potentials to excel in their chosen career, most accounting graduates are chattered accountant holding strategic position in the various organizations and making great impact in their endeavors (ILO 2016). These accounting graduates have the skills and competences to manager any organization in achieving the organizational objectives.

A skills gap is a significant gap between an organization's skill needs and the current requirement of Industry. It is the point at which an organization can no longer grow or remain competitive in its industry because its employees do not have the right skills to help drive business results and support the organization's strategies and goals. Skill gap is the difference in the skills required on the job and the actual skills possessed by the employees. Skill gap presents an opportunity for the company and the employee to identify the missing skills. To address the skill gap organization should have adopted the following measures such as internship programme, mentoring programme, reskilling programme, soft skills and core competences. Internship programmes are popular options for employers looking to bridge skills gaps and invest in the development of their employees. These programmes are typically designed for undergraduates or recent graduates from universities seeking practical experience in their field of study. Internships and trainee programmes provide a unique opportunity for employers to identify and fill skills gaps in their organization. Employers are able to evaluate the talents of prospective employees and discover the top candidates for their organization by utilizing these programs. Internships and trainee programmes allow companies to expand their employees' abilities and ensure that they are current with the newest trends and innovations in their sector (Mihnea, Frey & Moritz, 2022). However, as Morris, Vanino and Corradini (2019) noted, some challenges are associated with these programmes. One of the main challenges is the expense involved in running the programmes. These programmes can be costly, both in terms of direct expenditures and the loss of revenue from diverting personnel from billable work to participate in the programmes. This can be particularly challenging for smaller companies or groups with limited resources. Another challenge associated with internships and trainee programs is the required time. These programmes can be time-consuming, both for the participants and for the instructors or facilitators. This can result in scheduling issues and may require additional resources to cover absent workers. Despite these challenges, internships and trainee programmes continue to be valuable options for employers looking to bridge skills gaps and invest in the development of their employees. By providing practical experience and skill development opportunities, these programmes can prepare graduates for the demands of the global market and help ensure that they remain competitive in their field.

Business Educators in (accounting option) can use more creative pedagogical methods such as sharing content, conceptual mapping and project–based learning particularly in the active conceptualization stage of the learning cycle (Koko, 2019). The goal here will be the usage of appropriate pedagogies that motivate students to know how to think and not what to think as regards entrepreneurial related goals. Gibb in Olokundun (2017) argued that accountants are considered as individuals who are action-oriented, whose learning is typically problem solving based. The learning cycle when viewed holistically, illustrates that the two dimensions of grasping and transforming information culminates in four ways of learning and creating novel knowledge. As suggested by Stevens and Cooper (2015), the reflective observation stage of the Kolb 's learning cycle can be achieved through the adoption of pedagogical methods such as reflection practice, class discussions, and journal keeping. These approaches will strongly motivate critical reflection and keen observation of learning experiences and enhance the creation of a course of action for their ongoing entrepreneurial development.

Conceptual Reviews

Internships Programmes for Employment of Accounting Graduates

Internships programmes are popular options for employers looking to bridge skills gaps and invest in the development of their employees. These programmes are typically designed for undergraduates or recent graduates from universities seeking practical experience in their field of study. Internships programmes provide a unique opportunity for employers to identify and fill skills gaps in their organization. Employers are able to evaluate the talents of prospective employees and discover the top candidates for their organization by utilizing these programmes. Internships and trainee programmes allow companies to expand their employees' abilities and ensure that they are current with the newest trends and innovations in their sector (Mihnea, Frey & Moritz, 2022).

Internships have grown significantly in the accounting industry, especially when providing students with the knowledge and experience they require for future job opportunities. The study of Martin and Wilkerson (2016) showed that internships significantly build accounting students' understanding and abilities.

However, they may not significantly influence their motivation to study or interest in accounting. This indicates that internships are more valuable for improving a profession than schoolwork. An internship enables accounting students to establish substantial personal and social skills, emphasising the advantages of experiential education (Beck & Halim, 2018). In addition, Cord, Bowery, and Clements (2020) found that internships promote students' decision to seek accounting as a job by strengthening their knowledge of accounting concepts and assisting them in preparing for the job.

Mentoring programmes can play an important role in bridging skills gaps by providing students and early-career professionals with the targeted support and guidance they need to build the necessary skills and knowledge for success. Mentoring programmes can give mentees access to valuable industry information and practical experience, which is a key benefit. Mentoring programmes can provide students to obtain practical experience working on real-world projects and build skills such as programming and software development. Ojeaga, and Okolocha (2020) claimed that reverse mentoring are another benefit of mentoring programmes. This involves mentors and mentees exchanging knowledge and skills, with the mentor providing guidance and advice to the mentee. This can help bridge the gap between different generations and create a more collaborative and supportive environment.

Mentoring Programmes for Employment of Accounting Graduates

Mentoring programmes can also assist employees transitioning from other businesses to other fields. Mentoring partnerships connect these individuals with field-experienced mentors, enabling them to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for success. These programmes can aid in forming information about professional networks, which can be essential for career growth. Studies have discovered that mentoring programmes can give mentees access to a wide variety of professions and organizations, which can benefit them in securing employment and advancing their careers (Eby, Rhodes, and Allen, 2016) However, it is essential to emphasize that the structure, duration, and focus of the mentoring programme, as well as the selection procedure for mentees and mentors, might influence the outcomes. In addition, it is essential to track the results of mentoring programmes to verify their effectiveness and make any necessary improvements.

Mentoring programmes can play an important role in bridging skills gaps by providing students and early-career professionals with the targeted support and guidance they need to build the necessary skills and knowledge for success. Mentoring programmes can give mentees access to valuable industry information and practical experience, which is a key benefit. Mentoring programmes can provide students to obtain practical experience working on real-world projects and build skills such as programming and software development. Nair in Neck and Greene (2015) claim that reverse mentoring is another benefit of mentoring programs. This involves mentors and mentees exchanging knowledge and skills, with the mentor providing guidance and advice to the mentee. This can help bridge the gap between different generations and create a more collaborative and supportive environment. Mentoring is a crucial instrument for cultivating individuals inside firms. Mentoring is a process in which seasoned professionals offer direction, counsel, and assistance to less experienced persons in order to assist them in attaining their professional and personal objectives. Mentoring is a frequently employed practice at private universities to facilitate the growth of personnel, especially those who are either new to the business or in the first phases of their professional journeys. The impact of mentoring on employee performance has garnered significant attention from both researchers and practitioners. Multiple studies have demonstrated that mentorship yields a beneficial influence on the performance of employees, particularly those employed at private institutions (Madhavan, & Kumar, 2020). Research has shown that mentoring has a positive impact on several aspects of work, such as job happiness, employee engagement, and retention rates. Additionally, it has been proven to boost productivity, creativity, and innovation (Colquitt, 2023).

Universities are to contribute to national development through the training of highly skilled manpower, research, creating and disseminating knowledge. The training and production of accountants in Nigeria is anchored by both academic institutions and professional accounting bodies. Accounting is taught from the secondary education and studied as a professional course in the public institutions. The training and education of an accountant take a form that would mold him in such a way as to make him display such rare attributes as the maintenance of a strict standard of professional skill, expertise and ethics, as not to want to be associated with failure, fraud or embezzlement or unnecessarily wanting to rock the boat (Njoku & Inanga, 2017). Thus, there exists a wide gap between the employers' and accounting graduates' perception regarding their preparedness and perceived employability skills and this has been a matter of considerable discussions in the academic and industry circles (Hakim, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Accounting as a profession has a very important role to play in the economic development of any nation. Its usefulness is laudable to institutions and employers, as accounting graduates are further trained to acquire more skills to fit in competitive and turbulence global economic through internship programmes and mentoring programmes that enhanced employment of accounting graduates that are required in the 21st century world of work. Technically, most accounting graduates find it difficult to gain employment opportunity convincingly without favoritism and nepotism like the cases experienced in the various universities during recruitment (Visigah & Amadi, 2018). This could be attributable to lack of requisite technical skills to work in such firms. By implication, there is a gap between the skills acquired by these graduates and the skills required by the employers. Despite some impressive improvements in performance in the university institutions, many graduates still emerge from the education system ill-equipped to meet the challenges of life and employment. In this era of a new revolution in which employability skills and applied intelligence are rapidly becoming the key to national survival and success, marketable accounting education graduates are needed to help their organizations gain a competitive advantage.

Globally, the number of students graduating from university institutions keeps growing rapidly, and the skills mismatch also keeps rising. Possession of a degree in the world today is no longer a guarantee of a good job and university institutions are being blamed for failing to properly prepare graduates to meet the demands and expectations of the 21st century workplace. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2016), 13.5 million young people of employable age are not employable; of course the number would have increased in the last three years. It is obvious that accounting is important in preparing the graduates to be a successful entrepreneur, accountant and business tycoon.

In the current turbulent world, technical accounting competences are insufficient for educating professional accountants and needs to be complemented by the graduates' competencies such as internship and mentoring programmes. In line with this, Abraham and Iweyah (2023) revealed that the competencies that are imparted to graduates by university institutions and those required are not matching and thus there is a lot of gap between supply and demand, hence an understanding of the broad and complex set of skills required is, therefore, very essential. It is against this background that this study was designed to determine the employers' perception of skills gap for employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to determine employers' perception of skills gap for employment of accounting graduates in public universities in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the extent to which perceived internship programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State.
2. Assess the extent to which perceived mentoring programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the conduct of the study:

1. To what extent does perceived internship programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State?
2. To what extent does perceived mentoring programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 significance levels:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of academic and administrative principal officers' perceptions regarding the extent to which internship programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of academic and administrative principal officers' perceptions regarding the extent to which mentoring programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive research design; this type of research design examined employers' perception of skills gap for employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State. The population of the study consisted of 1, 312 (one thousand three hundred and twelve) academic and administrative principal officers (Governing Council members, Vice Chancellors and all academic and administrative unit heads in the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education); 874 (eight hundred and seventy-four) Academic and 438 (four hundred and thirty-eight) Administrative Principal Officers as at the time of the study. Source: Registrars' Office and Academic Planning Office of the three Institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria, 2025. The sample size for this study consisted of 307 principal officers through Taro Yamen sample size determination formula in Public Universities in Rivers State. A stratified random sampling technique was adopted to randomly select 203 academics and 104 administrative principal officers. The instrument consisted of two sections; section A elicited information on demographic data of the respondents while section B contained a self-structured questionnaire titled "Employers Perception of Skills Gap for Employment of Accounting Graduates Questionnaire (EPSGEAGQ)" with 14 questionnaire items. The instrument was structured on a validated four-point rating scales response options such as: Very Low Extent (1 point), Low Extent (2 points), High Extent (3 points) and Very High Extent (4 points) arranged into 4 clusters. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation to determine its adequacy and appropriateness for the study and for its proper wordings. This was done by presenting it to three experts, their comments and suggestions; the instrument was modified to suit the study. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the researcher adopted a pilot study of 25 principal officers (15 academics and 10 administrative officers) outside the population size. The Cronbach alpha (r) reliability grand value obtained was 0.82. The researcher and his three research assistants administered the copies of the questionnaires (instruments) to their various universities. Data obtained was analyzed using the mean ($\overline{X}$) and z-test. Specifically, the mean ($\overline{X}$) was used to answer the research questions while the z-test was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does perceived internship programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean responses to the extent in which perceived internship programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State

S/N	Statements	Academic (N=203)			Admin. (N=104)		
		M	S.D.	RMK	M	S.D.	RMK
1	Through internships programme employers bridge skills gaps and invest in the development of their employees.	3.41	0.49	HE	3.40	0.49	HE
2	Employers are able to evaluate the talents of prospective employees and discover the top candidates for their organization	3.62	0.49	HE	3.47	0.50	HE
3	Internships programme allow universities to expand their employees' abilities and ensure that they are current with the newest trends and innovations in their sector.	3.55	0.50	HE	3.28	0.45	HE
4	Internship programme prepare graduates for the demands of the global market and help ensure that they remain competitive in their field.	3.61	0.49	HE	3.27	0.44	HE
5	Internship programme provide practical experience and skill development opportunities	3.46	0.50	HE	3.60	0.49	HE
6	Internship programme cannot be purposeful but time-consuming, both for the participants and for the instructors or facilitators	1.63	0.48	LE	1.51	0.50	LE
7	The internship programme is cost effective on the part of the participants	3.44	0.50	HE	3.30	0.46	HE
	Grand Mean ($\bar{X}$)	**3.27**		**HE**	**3.21**		**HE**

Field data, 2025 (HE=High Extent; LE=Low Extent; RMK=Remark)

Table 1 shows the finding to the extent in which perceived internship programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State. As shown in the table, grand mean responses of 3.27 and 3.21 for academic and administrative principal officers respectively. Therefore, these indicate that both academic and administrative principal officers perceived that internship programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State to a high extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does perceived mentoring programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean responses to the extent in which perceived mentoring programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State

S/N	Statements	Academic (N=203)			Admin. (N=104)		
		M	S.D.	RMK	M	S.D.	RMK
8	Mentoring programme provides students and early-career professionals with the targeted support and guidance they need to build the necessary skills and knowledge for success.	3.46	0.50	HE	3.47	0.50	HE
9	Mentoring programme give mentees access to valuable industry information and practical experience, which is a key benefit.	3.51	0.50	HE	3.42	0.49	HE
10	Mentoring programme cannot provide students to obtain practical experience working on real-world projects and build skills	1.48	0.51	LE	1.58	0.50	LE

11	Through the programme mentors and mentees exchange knowledge and skills, with the mentor providing guidance and advice to the mentee	3.46	0.50	HE	3.59	0.49	HE
12	Mentoring programmes can also assist employees transitioning from one department to other field.	3.49	0.50	HE	3.53	0.50	GE
13	The programme can aid in forming information about professional networks, which can be essential for career growth.	3.50	0.50	HE	3.47	0.50	HE
14	Mentoring programme can give mentees access to a wide variety of professions and organizations, which can benefit them in securing employment and advancing their careers	3.45	0.50	HE	3.56	0.50	HE
	Grand Mean ($\overline{X}$)	**2.93**		**HE**	**2.96**		**HE**

Field data, 2025 (HE=High Extent; LE=Low Extent; RMK=Remark)

Table 2 shows the finding to the extent in which perceived mentoring programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State. As shown in the table, grand mean responses of 2.93 and 2.96 for academic and administrative principal officers respectively. Thus, this indicates that both academic and administrative principal officers perceived that mentoring programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State to a high extent.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of academic and administrative principal officers' perceptions regarding the extent in which internship programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State.

Table 3: Z-Test for academic and administrative principal officers' perceptions regarding internship programmes

Staff	N	M	S.D.	α	DF	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Academic	203	3.27	0.17	0.05	305	4.97	±1.96	Rejected
Admin.	104	3.21	0.14					

Field data, 2025

The finding of hypothesis 1 is presented in Table 3. As shown in the table, the academic principal officers have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.27 and 0.17 respectively while administrative principal officers have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.21 and 0.14 respectively with a degree of freedom of 305 at an alpha level of 0.05. Since the Z-calculated value of 4.97 was greater than the Z-critical value of ± 1.96 with 305 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis upheld which stated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of academic and administrative principal officers' perceptions regarding the extent in which internship programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of academic and administrative principal officers' perceptions regarding the extent in which mentoring programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State.

Table 4: Z-Test for academic and administrative principal officers' perceptions regarding mentoring programmes

Staff	N	M	S.D.	α	DF	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Academic	203	2.93	0.14	0.05	305	-2.07	±1.96	Rejected
Admin.	104	2.96	0.15					

Field data, 2025

The finding of hypothesis 2 is presented in Table 4. As shown in the Table, the academic principal officers have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.93 and 0.14 respectively while administrative principal officers have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.96 and 0.15 respectively with a degree of freedom of 305 at an alpha level of 0.05. Since the Z-calculated value of -2.07 was greater than the Z critical value of ±1.96 with 305 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis upheld which stated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of academic and administrative principal officers' perceptions regarding the extent in which mentoring programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Research question 1 sought to find out the extent in which academic and administrative principal officers perceived how internship programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State. From the research questions presented in Table 1, it was observed that through internships programme employers bridge skills gaps and invest in the development of their employees; employers are able to evaluate the talents of prospective employees and discover the top candidates for their organization; internships programme allow companies to expand their employees' abilities and ensure that they are current with the newest trends and innovations in their sector; internship programme prepare graduates for the demands of the global market and help ensure that they remain competitive in their field; internship programme provide practical experience and skill development opportunities; internship programme can be time-consuming, both for the participants and for the instructors or facilitators; and the trainee programme is cost effective. Besides, hypothesis 1 is presented in Table 3: revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of academic and administrative principal officers' perceptions regarding the extent in which internship programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State. Ballantine, Duff, and Larres (2018) reaffirmed that the most effective internship programmes is consensus before institutional goals achievement can be attained even though it takes a longer time for a good consensus. Also, some studies have illustrated the theoretical advantages of internships for accounting students, such as the research conducted by Gault, Leach, and Duey (2020). Ballantine et al., (2018) further argued that working experience is vital for undergraduate accounting students. Obtaining credit for an internship can offer opportunities that contribute to beneficial career choices while providing one with a competitive edge in the accounting employment sector. However, for students enrolled in the internship programme to obtain experience, they should prepare well. Internships have grown significantly in the accounting industry, especially when providing students with the knowledge and experience they require for future job opportunities.

Research question 2 sought to find out the extent academic and administrative principal officers perceived that mentoring programmes enhances employment of accounting graduates in public universities in Rivers State. From the research questions presented in Table 3, it was deduced that mentoring programme provides students and early-career professionals with the targeted support and guidance they need to build the necessary skills and knowledge for success; mentoring programme give mentees access to valuable industry information and practical experience, which is a key benefit; mentoring programme provide students to obtain practical experience working on real-world projects and build skills; through the programme mentors and mentees exchange knowledge and skills, with the mentor providing guidance and advice to the mentee; mentoring programmes can also assist employees transitioning from one department to other field; the programme can aid in forming information about professional networks, which can be essential for career growth; and mentoring programme can give mentees access to a wide variety of professions and organizations, which can benefit them in securing employment and advancing their careers. Besides, hypothesis 2 Table 4: revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of academic and administrative principal officers' perceptions regarding the extent in which mentoring programmes enhance employment of accounting graduates in public universities, Rivers State. Mentoring programmes can also assist employees transitioning from other businesses to other field. Mentoring partnerships connect these individuals with field-experienced mentors, enabling them to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for success. These programmes can aid in forming information about professional networks, which can be essential for career growth. Studies have discovered that mentoring programmes can give mentees access to a wide variety of professions and organizations, which can benefit them in securing employment and advancing their careers (Eby, et al., 2016) However, it is essential to emphasize that the structure, duration, and focus of the mentoring programme, as well as the selection procedure for mentees and mentors, might influence the outcomes. In addition, it is essential to track the results of mentoring programmes to verify their effectiveness and make any necessary improvements.

Conclusion

The empirical literature highlighted the facts that often employers and graduate students/employees/ have different perspective about the nature of the professional skills gap that are required for a successful accounting career. Conclusively, to void the skills gap is extremely important in the learning process as well as securing future work. Accounting graduates want to succeed in work as well as in study, in addition to professional knowledge and various skills; it will help graduates integrate well, have scientific learning methods that bring high results, and promote professional knowledge to achieve success.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made from thorough discussions on the findings. In the light of the conclusions drawn, it was recommended that,

1) The three universities in Rivers State through the department of accountancy should come up with key areas that students should be exposed to during internship in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. Such a programme should also indicate tentative duration per key area. One obvious disadvantage is where students are attached to a specialised division or are seen as relief staff but these should be exceptions. Academic supervisors should encourage employers to expose students to the identified key areas. The number of visits should be at least two, at vantage points during the duration of the attachment.
2) The three universities in Rivers State should strive to align employees' career goals and aspirations with the institution's objectives. This can be achieved by offering clear pathways for career progression, providing opportunities for professional growth and development, and promoting a culture of continuous learning. By facilitating employees' workplace mentoring within the university context, institutions can strengthen loyalty, and commitment, and ultimately enhance employees' performance or productivity.

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Determining Key Performance Indicators as a Tool in Managing Public Property Development Projects in The Niger Delta Region

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Abstract

Construction of public project is one aspect but the management of that project to handing over stage at the right time, within the initial budget and with the required quality is another aspect. For the management of government projects, it is required that project managers know about key performance. This paper accesses the key performance indicators as a tool that can be used in the management of public property development projects in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. The research adopted pragmatic research philosophy because it allows the use of multiple methods. Data was collected from professionals who have been involved in the development of public projects in the study area. One hundred and thirty semi-structured questionnaires were developed and distributed in the Niger Delta region; where Fifteen (15) persons were interviewed. Data collected was analysed with descriptive statistical tools using frequency, Relative Important Index and interpretative content analysis. The study established that there are different types of public property development projects in the study area and it also established methods of key performance indicators as a project management tools. The research observed that the understanding of these tools will reduce cost overrun, delay, and quality and increase the benefits in the built environment and sustain the contemporary public property development projects. The findings are valuable to policy makers, practitioners in Nigeria and scholars globally who are exploring performance measurement frameworks for public property development projects. The study recommends that government should go into the development of different types of public projects so as to increase the nation's economy and safe guide the citizens from suffering in any particular aspect of social needs. It also recommends that the adoption of key performance indicators as a tool in management pubic property development projects would reduce any challenges or difficulties that any project manager may face as the tool will enhance monitoring, evaluation and reporting of projects.

Keywords: Project management tools, public projects, key performance indicators tools, public projects.

Introduction

Project is defined as an endeavor in which human, material and financial resources organised in a novel way to undertake a unique scope of work. It comprises a given set of specifications within its cost and time constraints, thereby seeking to achieve a beneficial change which is defined by quantitative and qualitative objectives (Project Management Institute, 2019). According to Ali, (2010), project is a temporary endeavor (temporary means that the project has a definite ending point), undertaken to create a unique (unique means that the product or service differs in some distinguishing way) product or service. However, a project is said to be managed successfully when it is completed within the time, cost/ budget and expected quality delivery. According to Kuchta, Canonico, Capone and Capaldo, (2023), managing projects always have a lot of challenges and uncertainties and for these projects to be completed; tools used in managing these projects are required. Project management is one of the best tools needed in the development of property development projects, as it helps in ensuring the successful development of projects to completion (Kuchta, *et al.,* 2023). This is accomplished through the application and integration of the project management processes of initiation, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling and closing and the use of a project management tools (Mathenge, 2020).

Similarly, property development is referred to as the human-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activities, ranging in scale from personal shelter and buildings, to neighborhoods and cities that can often include their supporting infrastructure, such as; water supply or energy networks (Ogungbemi *et al*., 2016).

Unfortunately, the rate of project management failure in Niger Delta and its magnitudes, such as cost overrun, is a fact, and has become a matter of concern (Igwe and Ude, 2018). Also, Kamarudden, (2020), states that only 16 per cent of 8,000 development projects in Nigeria were completed within budget, on time and at the required level of quality. However, some projects are successfully completed while others failed because they are not properly assessed, use of the right management tools in their peculiar and complex contexts (Amoah, and Marimon, 2021).

Development is as a result of price signals from property markets which depend on the estimated rental values based on the letting market evidence and estimated yield is based on investment market evidence (Ikiroko, *et al.,* 2023). Similarly, development is the act or result of developing; it is the systematic use of scientific and knowledge to meet specific objectives or requirements. From the definitions above, it shows the characteristics of development and the general aim and use of development therefore, property development is seen as a defined space which generates cash flow throughout its economic life span. The perception of users is based on the quality of use, rental price and service, while developers aim is for returns, preservation of value and liquidity (Wiegelmann, 2012). Also Ikiroko et al., (2023), defined property development as a process that involves improvement or increase in land use to provide building for accommodation. Development process is seen as a strategy which involves several actions and plans geared to achieving development objectives and value. The public sector is an enterprise that is charged with the provision of services on a supporting basis such as municipal utilities that provide water, waste, transportation, health and other series (Wirick, 2011). The public sectors provide services in different ways, although it is observed that most of these property development projects are outsourced to outsiders to execute. Thus, these services are divided into different ministries and agencies in the public sector; which some agencies are responsible for other agencies complying with the laws, rules and process requirements that have been put in place in the states; while some are responsible for the development of public projects, and others are responsible for the acquisition of properties (Wirick, 2011). Despite this different agency in the public sector, they all have some shared characteristics, particularly with regard to the management of their projects.

Public property development projects are projects funded by government, and they are owned or operated by the government. Similarly, Gazik, (2022), stated that Public property development projects are implemented by the decision of the central level government institution and as such is a temporary endeavor, undertaken, managed or overseen by one or more publicly funded organisations to create a unique product of fulfilling public purposes and they include: road repairs and constructions, public residential accommodations, schools, funding and managing of construction of submarines, providing of social security, providing electricity's, regulating consumer products, keeping peace, protecting properties, preserving natural landscapes, paying retirees and even maintaining public parks. All these projects mentioned above are important as they help a society to function well, although, irrespective of these, there is much confusions and disagreements over the proper role of governments and their fulfillment of public expectations. Hence according to Gasik, (2016); Gasik, (2022); Kassel, (2016), the following are the types of public property development projects and they include:

Transportation project: it is a capital projects that involve the construction and development of highways, bridges, motor carriers, land side improvements, rams, signal systems, road beds, pedestrian walk way, motor vehicles, rail, and others related to transportation.

Educational projects: it involves the development of primary, secondary, tertiary institutions and the implementation of e-learning platforms.

Healthcare projects: it is the development of new hospitals, renovation of public hospitals, and the implementation of electronic medical record systems, development of telemedicine platforms or introduction of new medical technologies (Prasain, 2023).

Recreational projects: Recreational projects are buildings or places developed mainly for indoor recreation, whether or not operated for the purposes of gain, including a squash court, indoor swimming pool, gymnasium, table tennis Centre, health studio, bowling alley and ice ring.

Agricultural projects: Agricultural project is the acquisition of stocks (including seeds or seedlings) and the preparation, planting, care and harvesting, whether owned or leased real property of crops for use as feedstock for any industrial projects owned and developed by government.

Housing/Residential accommodation projects: Residential project is the development of houses for residential purposes, a structure for commercial purposes and a space to stay. This could be in form of block of flats, detached houses, duplexes or terrace building and tenement building.

Governments are responsible for the social welfare and growth of a nation and its constituents cannot hold their governments responsible without having an access to a periodic reporting on how the country is going. And as such, without an understanding and evaluation of key performance indicators, governments cannot fulfill their commitment and responsibility in spending and transparency, and also, the public cannot verify if the required services are adequately performed. Thus, key performance indicator is defined in two aspects such as: reporting of important information to the citizens, and providing of information that describes the government's activities. Secondly, key performance indicators are compilations of data measures used to assess the performance of a development operation so as to evaluate and compare the actual and estimated performance in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and quality, both in workmanship and product (Velimirovic, Velimirovic & Stankovi, 2011). Similarly, KPI is a useful framework used in measuring and comparing project performance as without the use of these tools it is difficult to see the progress and the goals that are achieved, and also it measure the project's success by evaluating how well every stage of the development project is performed (Chan and Chan 2002 as cited in Stanitsas, Kirytopoulos and Leopoulos, 2021).

Recently, managers used different types of Key Performance Indicators to execute projects successfully, but in public property development project it is advice that before any key performance indicators is implemented that is should be agreed upon by all involved stakeholders, and it should be done before initiation phase and then measured and monitored as a tool for decision-making during the project (Traammell, 2023); (Yuan, Zeng, Skibniewski and Li, 2009). Ishaq Bhatti, Awan, & Razaq, (2014) in their study identified eight (8) tools of Key Performance Indicators such a: Job cost reporting, Time overrun, Quality of work, Health & safety, Resource management, Cost per unit, Rework/ quality control, and Motivation. Similarly, Traammell, (2023) opined that there are four tools of Key Performance Indicators such as: Timeliness, Budget, Quality and Effectiveness. According to Dobrowolska, (2022), Key Performance Indicators in public projects are split into two categories such as; qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative focuses on the aspects of the project that can be taken from numbers like cost variance, or labour costs, while the quantitative focuses on the abstract aspects of the projects, such as customer satisfaction.
Therefore, based on the reviews above, the following have been identified as the tools of key performance indicators used in the management of public property development projects, they include:

BUDGET KPI: This KPI is crucial to a successful development delivery, as it is essential to keep track of spending as it focuses on the difference between planned and actual project budget (Dobrowolska, 2022). Budget KPI involves budget variance, budget creation cycle, line items, number of budget repetitions, planed value, and cost performance index.
TIME KPI: One of the primary requirements particularly to public sector is to be able to predict the time for completion with some degree of reliability. Time KPI is making sure that the project is done on time and if it is not, tracking where it is off-target is important so that one can always have an estimated completion (Traammell, 2023). Time KPI involves the following; cycle time, on time completion percentage, time spent, number of adjustments, full time equivalent vs. calendar days, planed hours vs. time spent, resource capacity and resource conflict.
QUALITY KPI: it ***implies*** the amalgamation of client's satisfaction, architectural excellence, standard of finish, standard of materials used for the construction process and utility value (Kediashi*et al*., 2012). It also implies how well the project has progressed, if those working on it or benefiting from it are satisfied (Traammell, 2023).

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT KPI: This metric helps the manager to organize the team members by comparing the number of employees working on the project vs. their available time (Dobrowolska, 2022). Resource management is a viable tool for monitoring the material waste, prior to a change and then comparing that amount to the waste incurred after the initial change.
Many projects in the Niger Delta region keep failing, which results to the loss of millions, and it is as a result of lack of managing the persisting challenges that occur during the development processes which this study seeks to systematically investigate the management tools (Key Performance Indicators) which can be used in managing property development projects in the Niger Delta Region.
This research will help project management in developing countries specifically by addressing the persistent challenges of public property development projects in the Niger Delta region. Also the study provides evidence based insight on how tools of Key performance indicators can be applied to enhance public project success. Thus the research bridges the gap between theoretical models of project success and practical realistic in a political and economically complex environment. Thus the aim and objective of the study is to access key performance indicators as a tool used in managing public property development projects in the Niger Delta Region.

Methodology

This research study adopted pragmatic research philosophy, with a case study research design which allows the use of qualitative and quantitative methods. Data were collected through interview and self-administered semi-structured questionnaires to professionals involved in public property development projects in the three geographical states (Bayelsa state, Delta state and Rivers state) of Niger Delta Region. 255 questionnaires was distributed and sampled but 130 questionnaires were retrieved and used in analyzing the results which represents 51.1% of the respondent's rate and 15 real estate developers were interviewed. The distribution of questionnaires was done equally based on simple random sampling , a total of 85 each from Estate Surveyors and Valuers, Quantity Surveyors, Engineers, Architects, Project Managers especially those who are responsible for the development of public projects. Data was analysed using relative important index, descriptive statistics and interpretative thematic analysis using statistical package of social sciences (SPSS Var. 2021).

Results

From the review, interview and questionnaire, the following themes emerged from the result of the analysis and discussed below:

Public Property Development Projects

In this theme, the study considers the various types of public property development projects in the Niger Delta Region and the following are discussed below which were identified as the types of public property development projects in the Niger Delta Region and the results were generated using frequency analysis approach.

Types of public property development projects in the Niger Delta Region

1. ***Transportation projects***

In this section, the study seeks to underscore whether transportation projects are a type of public property development projects or not.

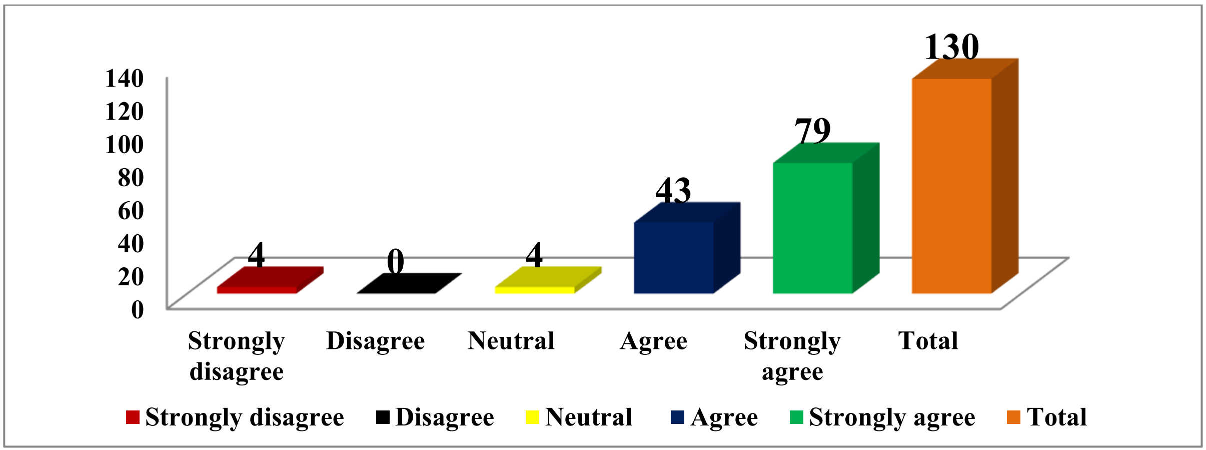

Figure 1.1 Transportation Projects
Source: Field Survey, (2025)

From the quantitative analysis in table 4.1 above, it shows that 96.9% of the respondents strongly agree or agree that transportation projects is a type of public property development projects in the Niger Delta region.
"…Transportation project, which comprises all of the means of transport, is a very important type of public project, and most elected governments in the Niger Delta region always include it in their agenda…" (Transcribed interview 2025)
Another interviewee explained that "…Good transportation system is counted in some countries as part of development, and therefore it is a public project, executed by most government in the Niger Delta region…" (Transcribed interview 2025)
Both quantitative and qualitative analyses revealed and confirmed that transportation projects are a type of public property development projects.

2 *Educational projects*
The study in this section seeks to underscore whether education projects are a type of public property development projects or not as shown below in figure 1.2

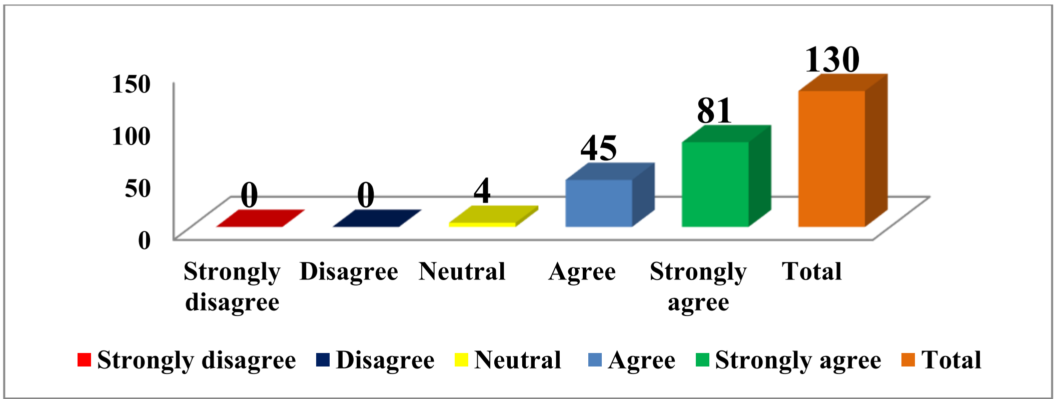

Figure 1.2 Educational Projects
Source: Field Survey, (2025)

The analysis shows that 100% of the respondents strongly agree or agree that Educational projects are a type of public property development projects.
"…Education is one of the most important sectors in every country, and as such it is a type of public property development project that are executed by governments in the Niger Delta Region..." (Transcribed interview 2025)
From both quantitative and qualitative analyses it is revealed and confirmed that education projects are a type of public property development projects.

3 *Recreational projects*
In this section, the study pursues to demonstrate whether the respondents consider recreational projects as a type of public property development projects or not as shown in figure1.3 below:

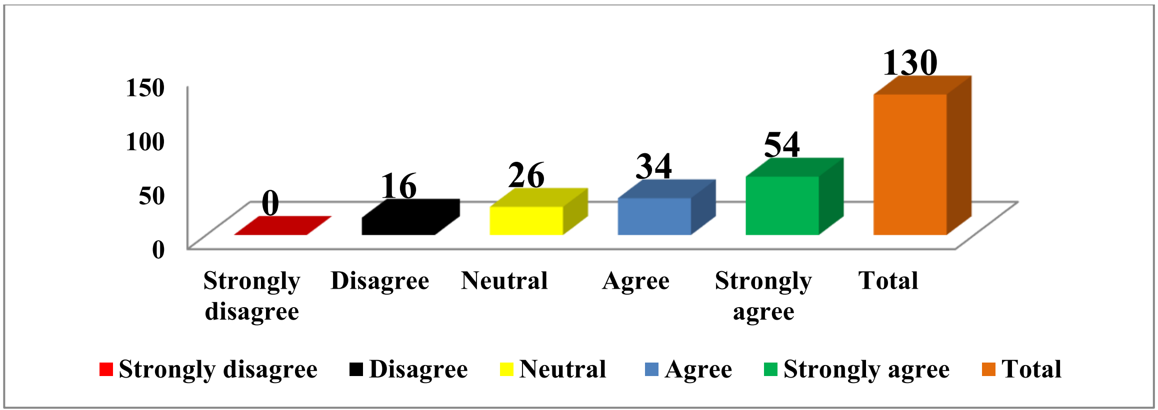

Figure 1.3 Recreational Projects
Source: Field Survey, (2025)

From the quantitative analysis, it shows that 87.7% of the respondents strongly agree or agree that recreational project is a type of public property development project in the Niger Delta Region.
However, from the qualitative analysis six (10) of the interviewees stated that recreational projects are a type of public property development projects which considered by governments, while four (5) of the interviewees said that they are a type of public projects, but that in the Niger Delta region they are not mostly developed that is why most of this type of projects are privately owned or through private and public partnership.
From both quantitative and qualitative analyses it is revealed and confirmed that recreational projects are a type of public property development projects.

4 *Agricultural projects*
In this section, the study seeks to underscore whether agricultural projects are a type of public property development projects or not as shown in figure 1.4 below:

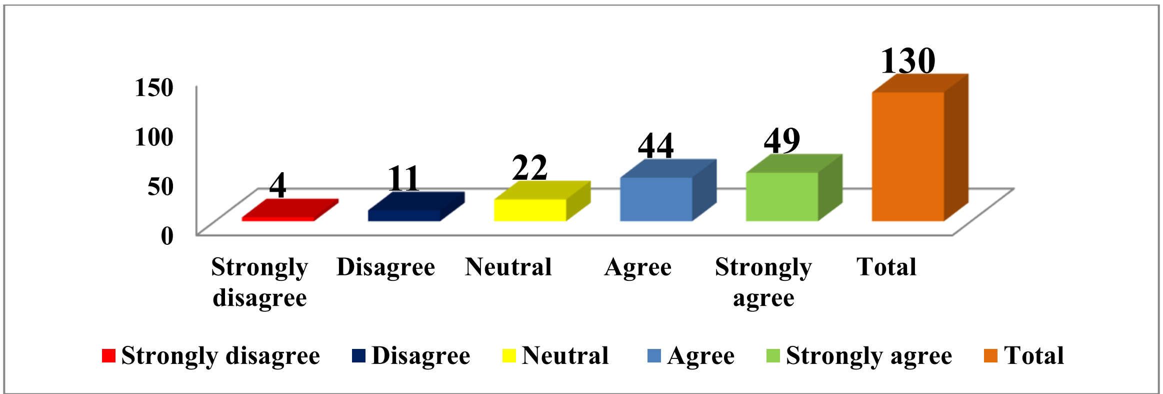

Figure 1.4 Agricultural Projects
Source: Field Survey, (2025)

From the quantitative analysis, it shows that 88.5% of the respondents strongly agree or agree that agricultural projects are a type of public property development projects.
"…Food is important in a particular nation, where there is hunger and starvation there is a problem. Agricultural project is one of the types of public property development project and they are always considered in every country budgets…" (Transcribed interview 2025) However, some interviewee opined that these types of property development projects are neglected by most government in the Niger Delta region.
From both quantitative and qualitative analyses it is revealed and confirmed that agricultural project is a type of public property development projects.

5 Housing/Residential Projects
The study in this section seeks to underscore whether residential projects are a type of public property development projects or not as shown below in figure 1.5.

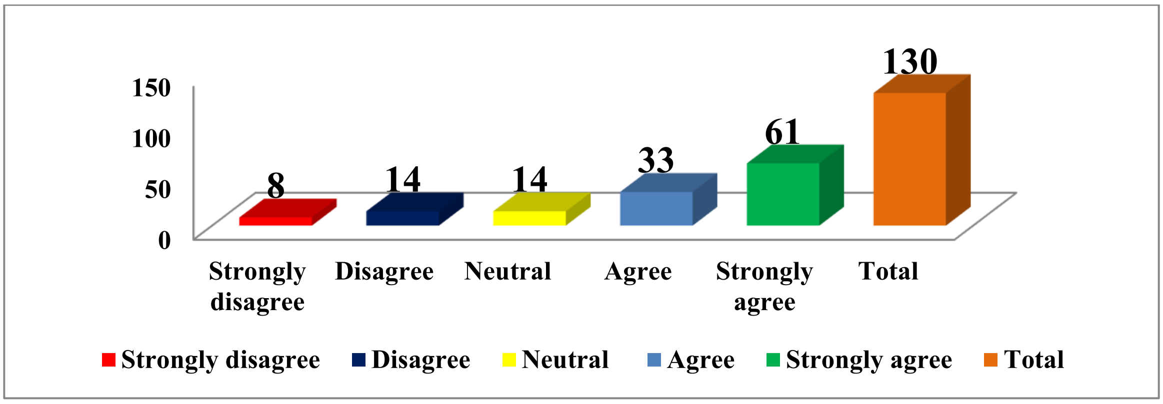

Figure 1.5Housing/Residential Projects
Source: Field Survey, (2025)

From the quantitative analysis it therefore shows that 83.1% of the respondents strongly agree or agree that accommodation projects are a type of public property development projects.
However, from the qualitative "…this sector is another area that government tend to consider by developing low cost accommodation for their staffs, but there is still need for more to be developed in the Niger Delta region… (Transcribed interview 2025)
From both quantitative and qualitative analyses, it is revealed and confirmed that accommodation project is a type of public property development projects.

Key performance indicators as a tool used in managing public projects
In this section, the study considers the various types of Key Performance Indicators as tools used in developing public property development projects in the Niger Delta Region and the following are discussed. The data presentation involves the use of relative important index for interpretation of result; Table1 below will be adopted in judging the strengths of the respondents and ranking (Pallant, 2013).
Ranking the Key Performance indicator tools used in managing public property development projects is emerged below, in table 4.2 was computed using the frequency analysis. Results were provided in a ranking order so as to determine which of the Key Performance indicator is more critical.
RII = (n1 + 2n2+3n3+4n4+5n5)/5N
Where:
n1 = number of respondents that answers strongly disagree;
n2 = number of respondents that answered disagree;
n3 = number of respondents that answered neutral;
n4 = number of respondents that answered agree;
n5 = number of respondents that answered strongly agree;
N = total number of respondents = 130.

Table 1 Guide to judgment strength of analysis

Range	Judgment
0.00- 0.29	Very weak
0.30 - 0.39	Weak
0.40 - 0.59	Moderate
0.60 - 0.79	Strong
0.80 - 1.00	Very strong

Source: Pallant, (2013) as cited in Orlu & Ihuah, (2021)

Types of Key Performance Indicators in Managing Public Projects	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	RII Values	Ranking
Budget KPI	2	8	12	168	390	0.892	1st
Quality KPI	0	8	66	112	380	0.871	2nd
Time KPI	0	24	36	192	290	0.834	3rd
Resource Management KPI	0	28	36	200	270	0.822	4th

Source: field survey (2025)

Table2 above, outlined the result on the key performance indicators as a tool that can be used in the management of public property development projects. The Table shows that Budget KPI with 0.892 RII Values, indicates that 89.2% of respondents very strongly agree that it is a type of Key Performance Indicators as it (ranked 1st). This showed that it is the most critical tool that can be used in managing public project

"…budget involves a lot of things in projects, it connotes finances, and cost which if implemented it will help in project delivery and controlling cost overrun…." (Transcribed interview 2025)

Another interviewer stated that "…budget KPI is the most critical tool that can be used in managing public projects as government projects in the Niger Delta region tend to be abandoned due to over budgeting or under budgeting …" (Transcribed interview 2025)

Quality KPI has an RII value of 0.834 which indicates that 83.4% of respondents very strongly agree that it is a type of Key Performance Indicators as it (ranked 3rd). This showed that it is the third on the list and it is considered as a tool used in managing public project based on the decision rule shown in Table 1.

"… If a project is not delivered in the quality that the owner requires it has a negative effect on the developer as the client was not satisfied with the work delivered. Therefore, quality KPI is another tool that every property developer should consider during the development of Public projects …" (Transcribed interview 2025)

Time KPI has an RII value of 0.871 which indicates that 87.1% of respondents very strongly agree that it is a type of Key Performance Indicators as it (ranked 2nd). This showed that it is the third on the list and it considered as a tool used in managing public project based on the decision rule shown in Table 1

"… Timing is efficient and effective in property development projects and this is seen as one of the problems that is faced in the development of public projects in the Niger Delta region. Adopting the Time KPI as a tool used in managing public projects, projects will be delivered on time…" (Transcribed interview 2025)

Resource management KPI has an RII value of 0.822 which indicates that 82.2% of respondents very strongly agree that it is a type of Key Performance Indicators as it (ranked 3rd). This showed that it is the fourth on the list and it considered as a tool that can be used in managing public project based on the decision rule shown in Table 1

"…Resource management KPI involves a lot of things in projects and is a tool that can be used in managing public projects. Most public projects are known for misappropriation of resources as proper records are not done but it shows inefficiency and lack of transparency. Therefore, implementation of this tool will help to stop those issues…" (Transcribed interview 2025)

The finding is supported with (Traammell, 2023); Kediashi*et al.,* (2012) who mentioned that the above are key performance indicators as tools used in the management of public property development projects.

Therefore, these will serve as a tool that can be used in managing public projects for successful implementation and development of public projects, thereby enhancing the decisions of all stakeholders involved.

Conclusion

The study established that there are five (5) types of public property development projects in the Niger Delta region, which are: *transportation project, educational project, housing/residential accommodation projects, recreational projects and agricultural projects.* These public projects are funded by governments; decisions are implemented by the central government institutions and managed by government agencies in charge of the development of public projects. However, the execution of public projects sometimes maybe undertaken by private sector. Also, the study identified four (4) Key performance indicators as a tool that can be used in the management of public property development projects in the Niger Delta region, which are *Budget KPI, Quality KPI, Time KPI, and Resource management KPI*. These tools can be used to improve delivery, eliminate under and over cost estimate, eliminate lackadaisical attitudes, and reduce corruption in the development of public projects.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Government should start an initiative to increase awareness of new project management tools such as the use of key performance indicators as a tool in managing public projects.
2. Development authorities should be given more autonomy to plan and develop pubic projects and it should be free of control from the government and politicians.
3. There should be an enhance leadership capability of project managers by educating and training government staffs in the area of using these management tools.

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