PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATORS' RATING OF DIGITAL PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS REQUIRED FOR THE EMPLOYABILITY OF BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES OF UNIVERSITIES IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study investigated programme administrators' ratings of digital pedagogical skills required for the employability of business education graduates in universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 48 business educators (programme administrators) in three universities offering business education in Anambra State. A structured questionnaire titled "Business Educators' Rating of Digital Skills Required for Employability of Business Education Graduates Questionnaire" (BERDSREBEGQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts and had a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.858 for the digital pedagogical skills cluster. Data was analysed using the mean and standard deviation to answer the research question, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that all nine digital pedagogical skills items were rated as highly required, with a grand mean of 4.10. The highest-rated skill was "ability to create and deliver multimedia presentations" (mean = 4.22), while the lowest-rated was "ability to integrate social media into teaching" (mean = 3.93). The study found no significant difference in the mean ratings based on gender ($F = 0.124$, $p = 0.726 > 0.05$) and years of teaching experience ($F = 0.367$, $p = 0.695 > 0.05$). It was concluded that digital pedagogical skills are critical for enhancing the employability of business education graduates. The study recommended that curriculum planners should integrate digital pedagogical competencies into business education programmes, institutions should provide continuous professional development for educators, and adequate digital infrastructure should be provided to support effective teaching and learning.

Keywords: Digital pedagogy, employability, business education, programme administrators, multimedia presentations, learning management systems, Anambra State

Introduction

The 21st-century workplace has undergone a profound transformation driven by rapid technological advancement and digital innovation. In this evolving landscape, the skills required for employability have shifted significantly, with digital competencies now occupying a central position in the employability discourse (World Economic Forum, 2020; European Commission, 2017). Business education, as a vocational programme designed to equip students with practical skills for the workforce, must continuously adapt to these changes to remain relevant and effective in preparing graduates for the demands of the modern labour market (Osuala, 2021; CCMAS, 2023).

Digital pedagogy refers to the use of digital technology in teaching and classroom learning, encompassing the critical, creative, and reflective use of digital technologies to enhance teaching and learning experiences (Cronin, 2020; Dhakal, 2023). It is not merely about using digital tools but involves engaging in a critical examination of the tools, practices, and underlying values that shape educational delivery in the digital age (Morris and Jesse, 2018; Audrey and Watters, 2016). Digital pedagogy skills include the ability to design online learning materials, utilise learning management systems, create multimedia presentations, implement interactive teaching methods, use digital assessment tools, facilitate online discussions, integrate social media into teaching, apply data analytics to assess student performance, and understand digital copyright and ethical issues (Nanjunda et al., 2021; Babat et al., 2024). The importance of digital pedagogical skills for employability cannot be overstated. According to the World Economic Forum (2020), integrating digital skills into education prepares students for the workforce, where digital literacy is increasingly essential. Smith and Lee (2023) revealed that digital pedagogy skills have become essential for employability, as the modern workplace increasingly demands proficiency in digital tools and methodologies to effectively collaborate, innovate, and adapt. Kumar and Zhao (2022) noted that employers now prioritise candidates who demonstrate not only technical digital skills but also the ability to engage in digital pedagogical environments, which is vital for continuous learning and professional growth.

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (2023) emphasizes the importance of equipping students with relevant skills for employment and self-reliance. The Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS, 2023) for business education specifically outlines the need for digital competencies among graduates. However, there remains a significant gap between the digital skills possessed by graduates and those required by employers (Akudoluo and Onyeneke, 2022; Nwigbo, 2022). This gap is particularly concerning in Anambra State, which is known for its commercial vibrancy and educational excellence, yet faces the challenge of ensuring that business education graduates are adequately prepared for the digital economy.

Digital pedagogy is defined as the use of digital technology in teaching and classroom learning, which may be applied using online environments, hybrid, or face-to-face environments (Dhakal, 2023). It has roots in the theory of constructivism and involves the critical, creative, and reflective use of digital technologies in teaching and learning (Cronin, 2020). According to Babat et al. (2024), digital pedagogy encompasses a wide array of tools and strategies such as online platforms, interactive multimedia, and virtual collaboration, which have the potential to create dynamic and immersive learning environments. Digital pedagogy is not simply about teaching with digital tools but about approaching teaching and learning in a digital age in a way that is

informed by the possibilities and limitations of those tools (Audrey and Watters, 2016). It involves understanding the various methods and the use of 21st-century digital technologies to modify, enhance, and transform teaching and learning practices (Dhakal, 2023). The seven pedagogical principles of digital pedagogy include learning content and curriculum mapping, learning objectives, learning resources, learning activities/assignments, learning communication and discussion, learning feedback and support, and learning assessment/evaluation (Dhakal, 2023).

Employability refers to the capability of an individual to gain and maintain employment, to move within the labour market between jobs, and to possess the skills and attributes that make them attractive to employers (Sin and Amaral, 2017; Mcheng et al., 2022). It encompasses a range of factors including education, skills, experience, attitude, and adaptability that enable individuals to secure and retain employment. The European Commission (2020) defines employability as a set of achievements, understandings, and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations. In the context of business education, employability extends beyond technical business knowledge to include digital competencies that enable graduates to function effectively in technology-driven workplaces (Babalola, 2017; Ore, 2024). The concept of employability has become increasingly important in higher education policy and practice, with institutions expected to demonstrate the employability outcomes of their graduates (Riddeppa, 2019; UKCES, 2020).

Business education is an educational programme that equips recipients with functional and suitable skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values that enable them to operate effectively in their environment (Njoku, 2016). According to the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS, 2023), business education is a programme of study that provides students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to understand and participate effectively in the world of business. The programme covers a wide range of subjects including accounting, finance, marketing, management, entrepreneurship, and business communication. The aims and objectives of business education include equipping students with practical skills for entrepreneurial development and self-reliance, developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, instilling ethical and professional values, equipping students with proficiency in various business tools and technologies, and promoting effective communication and teamwork skills (CCMAS, 2023; National Policy on Education, 2023). Business education is expected to produce graduates who are not only job seekers but also job creators (Ezoem et al., 2024; Ore, 2022).

This study is anchored in Human Capital Theory, primarily conceptualized by Adam Smith (1776) and later developed by economists such as T.W. Schultz and Gary Becker in the 1960s. The theory posits that individuals and groups can invest in their own education, training, and health to enhance their productivity and economic value. It suggests that the skills, knowledge, and experience that individuals acquire through education and training are forms of capital that can lead to higher earnings and improved economic outcomes (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961). Human Capital Theory is relevant to this study because it explains that investment in digital skills training is crucial for graduates to increase their human capital and improve their job prospects in a technology-driven economy. The theory supports the idea that investment in digital skills training, including digital pedagogical skills, is essential for enhancing the employability of business education graduates. By measuring the impact of digital pedagogical skills on employability, this research provides insights into the returns on investment in education and training in the field of business education.

Several studies have investigated digital skills and employability in various contexts. Katrina (2021) conducted a study on pedagogical digital competence and its acquisition in a teacher education programme, developing a concept model of pedagogical digital competence. Sonia and Susan (2023) carried out a bibliometric analysis of digital pedagogies in higher education, revealing that scientific output concerning digital pedagogy has evolved significantly over the last decade. In the Nigerian context, Okoli and Okolo (2024) examined digital skills acquired by business education lecturers for curriculum implementation in colleges of education in Delta State. Nwoke et al. (2023) investigated the influence of gender on educators' competence and the use of digital technologies in higher education, finding that gender had no significant influence on digital competence. These studies provide a foundation for understanding the current state of digital pedagogical skills in Nigerian higher education institutions.

Programme administrators, including heads of departments, deans, and curriculum coordinators, play a pivotal role in shaping the direction of academic programmes. Their ratings and perceptions of the digital pedagogical skills required for employability are crucial for curriculum development and programme improvement. Understanding their perspectives can provide valuable insights into how business education programmes can be structured to better prepare graduates for the demands of the modern workplace. Despite the growing recognition of digital pedagogical skills in enhancing employability, there is limited empirical evidence regarding programme administrators' perceptions of these skills in the context of Nigerian universities, particularly in Anambra State. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by investigating programme administrators' ratings of digital pedagogical skills required for the employability of business education graduates in universities in Anambra State.

Methods

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. According to Nworgu (2015), descriptive survey research is a study that aims at collecting data and describing data systematically about a given population. This design is suitable for the study as it uses a questionnaire to collect data from a specific population to provide quantitative data that can be statistically analysed.

The study was carried out in Anambra State, South-Eastern Nigeria. Anambra State, commonly referred to as the "Light of the Nation," was created on August 27, 1991, with its capital at Awka. The state is known for its commercial vibrancy, educational excellence, and numerous educational institutions. The choice of this area was influenced by the large concentration of industries in the state and the need for business educators to rate digital skills to know those mostly needed for employability after graduation.

The population of the study comprised all 48 business educators (programme administrators) in the three universities in Anambra State that offer business education. The distribution was as follows: 25 business educators at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; 11 at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam; and 12 at Madonna University, Okija. The entire population was used for the study as it was manageable.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Business Educators' Rating of Digital Skills Required for Employability of Business Education Graduates Questionnaire" (BERDSREBEGQ). The instrument was developed by the researcher from insights gained from related literature reviewed and in line with the specific objectives. Section A contained items on biodata (gender and years of teaching experience), while Section B

contained items on digital skills. The digital pedagogical skills cluster (B4) comprised nine items rated on a 5-point scale: Very Highly Required (5), Highly Required (4), Moderately Required (3), Lowly Required (2), and Very Lowly Required (1).

The questionnaire was subjected to face validation by three experts in Business Education from the Faculty of Technology and Vocational Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The experts examined the items in terms of content relevance, suitability, clarity, and coverage of the dimensions of the study. The instrument was trial-tested on 25 business educators in Enugu State, and Cronbach's alpha was used to determine internal consistency. The reliability coefficient for the digital pedagogical skills cluster (B4) was 0.858, indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study.

The researcher administered copies of the instrument to the respondents through Google Forms with the aid of research assistants. Out of the 48 copies distributed, 45 were retrieved and used for data analysis, representing a response rate of 93.75%. Data were analysed using the mean and standard deviation to answer the research question. The decision rule for the mean ratings was as follows: 4.50-5.00 (Very Highly Required), 3.50-4.49 (Highly Required), 2.50-3.49 (Moderately Required), 1.50-2.49 (Lowly Required), and 1.00-1.49 (Very Lowly Required). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Research Question

What are the digital pedagogical skills required for the employability of business education graduates of universities in Anambra State?

Table 1: Digital Pedagogical Skills Required for Employability of Business Education Graduates (N=45)

S/N	Items digital pedagogical skills	VHR	HR	MR	LR	VLR	Total	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Ability to design online learning materials.	19	17	8	1	0	45	4.20	0.81	Highly Required
2	Ability to utilize learning management systems (LMS) model, blackboard.	17	17	7	3	1	45	4.02	1.01	Highly Required
3	Ability to create and deliver multimedia presentations.	18	21	4	2	0	45	4.22	0.79	Highly Required
4	Implementing interactive teaching methods examples quizzes, polls.	17	16	10	2	0	45	4.07	0.89	Highly Required
5	Ability to use digital assessment tools like Google form, kohoot.	19	13	12	1	0	45	4.11	0.88	Highly Required

6	Ability to facilite online discussions and forums.	22	12	9	1	1	45	4.18	0.98	Highly Required
7	Ability to integrating social media into teaching.	14	18	10	2	1	45	3.93	0.96	Highly Required
8	Ability to apply data analytics to assess student performance.	17	19	5	4	0	45	4.09	0.92	Highly Required
9	Ability to understand digital copyright and ethical issues.	15	19	9	2	0	45	4.04	0.85	Highly Required
							Grand/ mean	**4.10**	**0.07**	**Required**

Data in Table 1 showed that all nine items on digital pedagogical skills had mean ratings ranging from 3.93 to 4.22, all falling within the "Highly Required" category (3.50-4.49). The standard deviations ranged from 0.79 to 1.01, indicating that respondents were not widely apart in their ratings, which suggested homogeneity of responses. The cluster grand mean of 4.10 indicated that digital pedagogical skills were highly required for the employability of business education graduates in Anambra State. The highest-rated skill was "ability to create and deliver multimedia presentations" (mean = 4.22, SD = 0.79), followed closely by "ability to design online learning materials" (mean = 4.20, SD = 0.81) and "ability to facilitate online discussions and forums" (mean = 4.18, SD = 0.98). The lowest-rated skill, though still highly required, was "ability to integrate social media into teaching" (mean = 3.93, SD = 0.96).

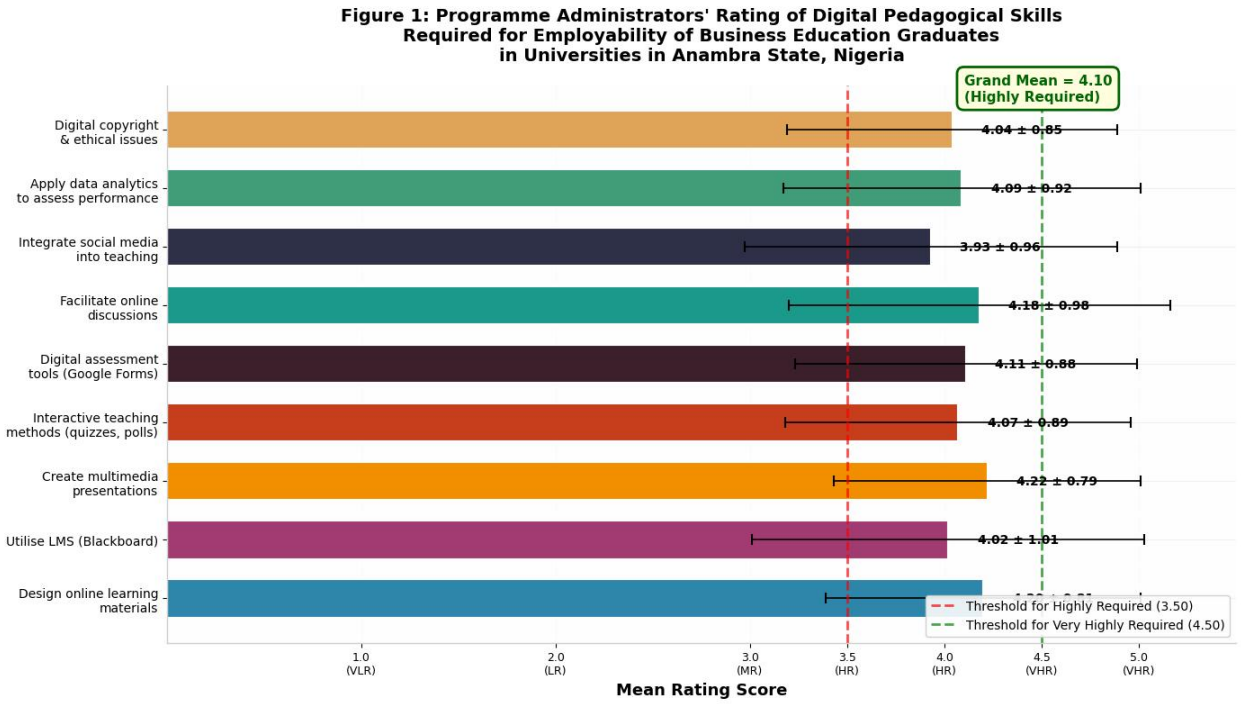


Figure 1 presents a horizontal bar chart illustrating the mean ratings of nine digital pedagogical skills required for the employability of business education graduates, as rated by programme administrators (N = 45) in three universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. The skills are ranked from highest to lowest mean rating. Error bars represent standard deviations. The vertical dashed red line at 3.50 indicates the threshold for "Highly Required," while the vertical dashed green line at 4.50 indicates the threshold for "Very Highly Required." All nine skills exceeded the 3.50 threshold, with mean ratings ranging from 3.93 (ability to integrate social media into teaching) to 4.22 (ability to create and deliver multimedia presentations). The grand mean of 4.10 (SD = 0.07) is annotated, indicating that digital pedagogical skills are collectively rated as "Highly Required" for graduate employability. The standard deviations ranging from 0.79 to 1.01 suggest homogeneity in respondents' ratings.

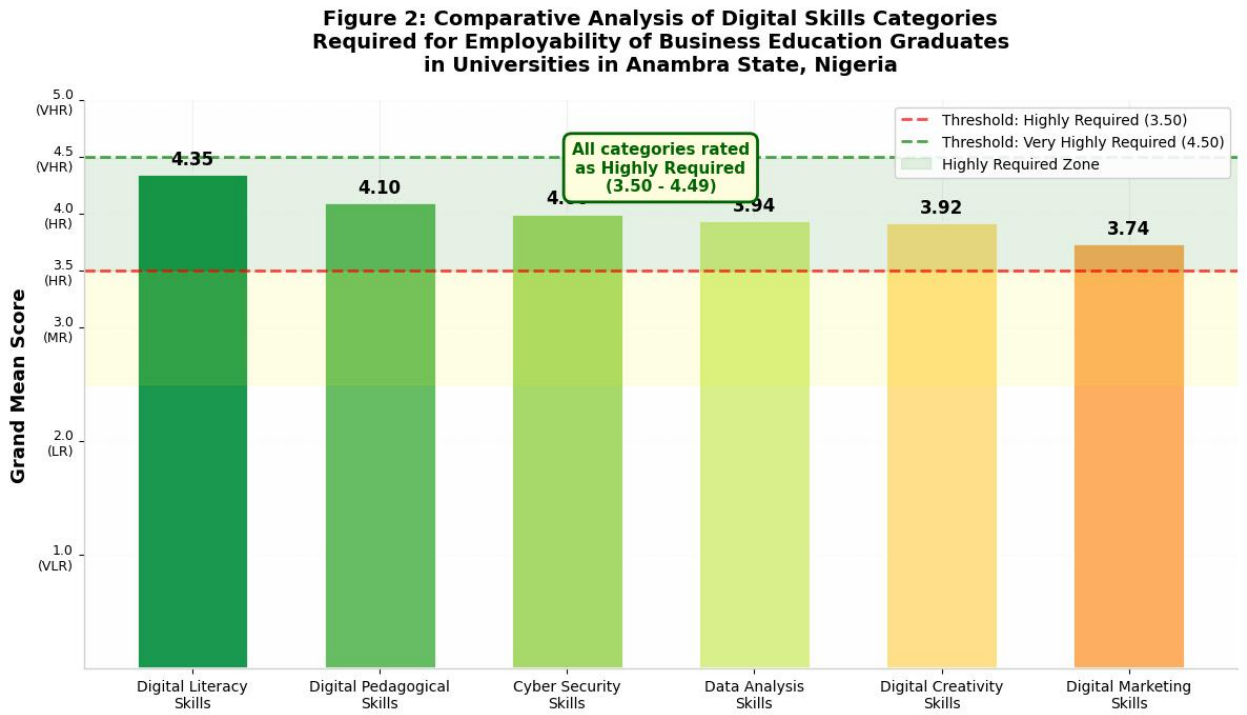


Figure 2 displays a vertical bar chart comparing the grand mean scores of six digital skills categories rated by programme administrators (N = 45) for the employability of business education graduates in Anambra State, Nigeria. The categories are arranged in descending order of mean rating from left to right. The horizontal dashed red line at 3.50 marks the threshold for "Highly Required," while the horizontal dashed green line at 4.50 marks the threshold for "Very Highly Required." The green shaded zone (3.50 – 4.49) represents the "Highly Required" category. All six categories exceeded the 3.50 threshold. Digital literacy skills received the highest rating (M = 4.35), followed by digital pedagogical skills (M = 4.10), cyber security skills (M = 4.00), data analysis skills (M = 3.94), digital creativity skills (M = 3.92), and digital marketing skills (M = 3.74).

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of programme administrators on digital pedagogical skills required for employability of business education graduates based on gender (male and female).

Table 2: Summary of ANOVA on Programme Administrators' Rating of Digital Pedagogical Skills Based on Gender

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.053	1	.053	.124	.726
Within Groups	18.308	43	.426		
Total	18.360	44			

Table 2 showed that the calculated F-ratio was 0.124 with a significance value of 0.726, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This

means there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female programme administrators on digital pedagogical skills required for employability.

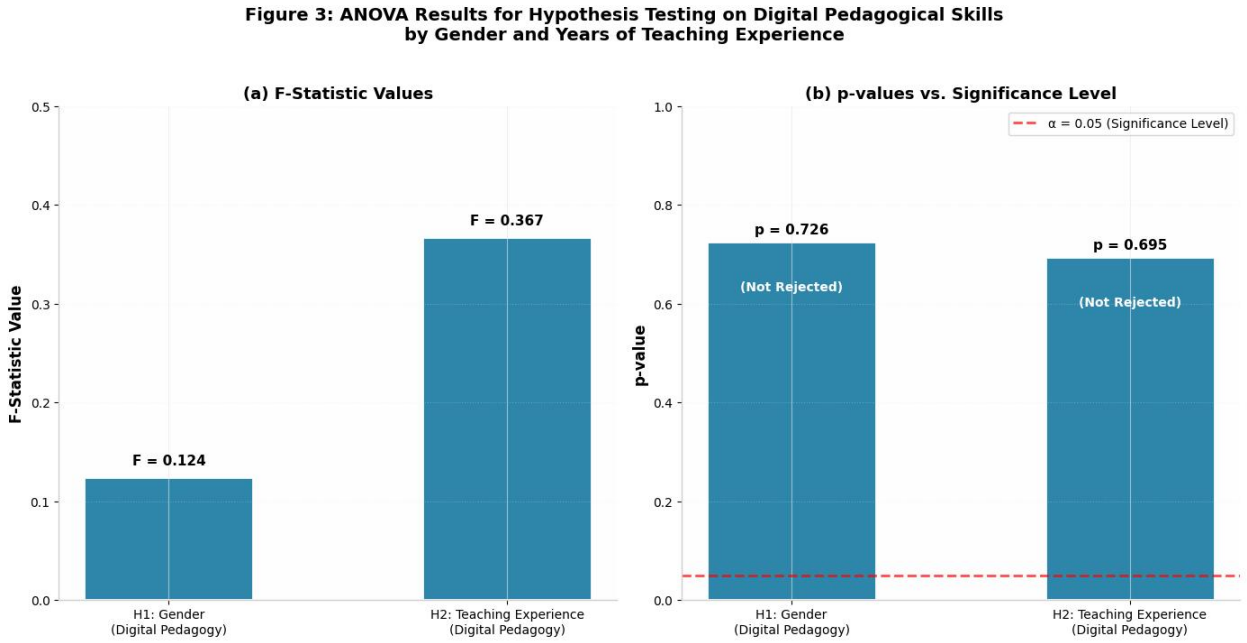


Figure 3 presents a two-panel chart summarising the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results for testing two null hypotheses regarding programme administrators' ratings of digital pedagogical skills. Panel (a) displays the F-statistic values, while Panel (b) displays the corresponding p-values compared against the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$ (indicated by the horizontal dashed red line). For Hypothesis 1 (gender difference), the F-statistic was 0.124 with $p = 0.726$. For Hypothesis 2 (teaching experience difference), the F-statistic was 0.367 with $p = 0.695$. Both p-values exceeded the 0.05 significance level, leading to the non-rejection of both null hypotheses. The figure visually confirms that neither gender nor years of teaching experience significantly influenced programme administrators' ratings.

Hypothesis 2: Programme administrators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital pedagogical skills based on their years of teaching experience (0-5 years, 6-10 years, and above 10 years).

Table 3: Summary of ANOVA on Programme Administrators' Rating of Digital Pedagogical Skills Based on Years of Teaching Experience

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.316	2	.158	.367	.695
Within Groups	18.045	42	.430		
Total	18.360	44			

Table 3 showed that the calculated F-ratio was 0.367 with a significance value of 0.695, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This

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Figure 4: Distribution of Programme Administrators by Institution and Questionnaire Response Rate

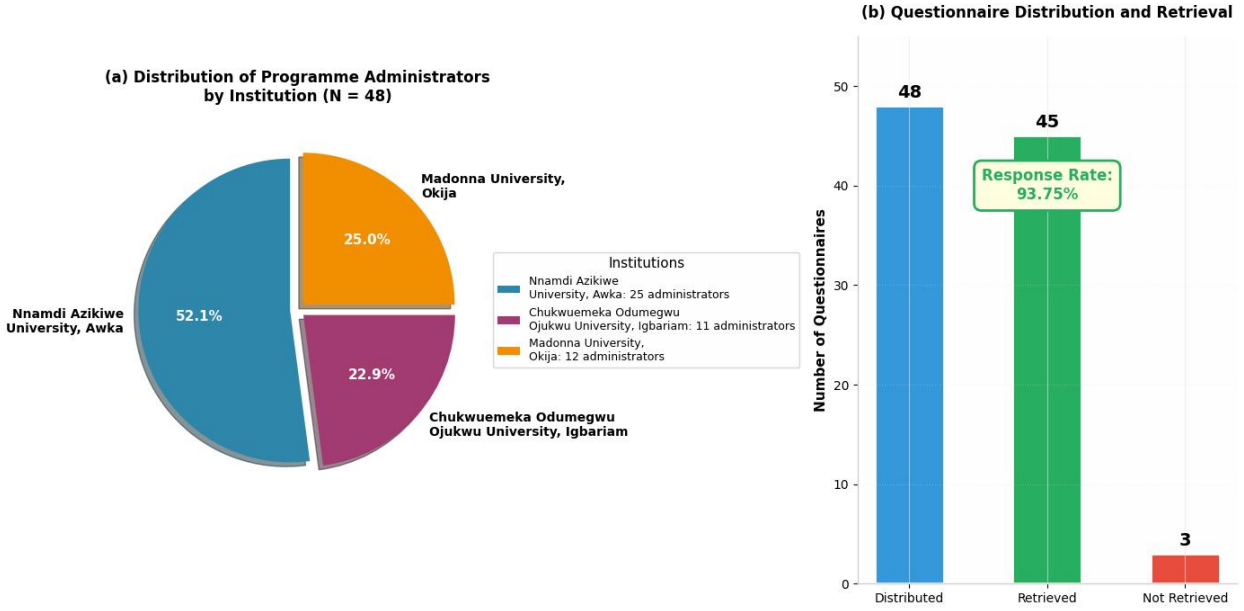


Figure 5 consists of two panels presenting the sample characteristics. Panel (a) is a pie chart showing the distribution of programme administrators across the three universities offering business education in Anambra State, Nigeria. Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka contributed the largest proportion (52.1%, n = 25), followed by Madonna University, Okija (25.0%, n = 12), and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam (22.9%, n = 11), for a total population of N = 48. Panel (b) is a vertical bar chart showing questionnaire distribution and retrieval outcomes. Of the 48 questionnaires distributed, 45 were successfully retrieved and used for analysis, yielding a response rate of 93.75%.

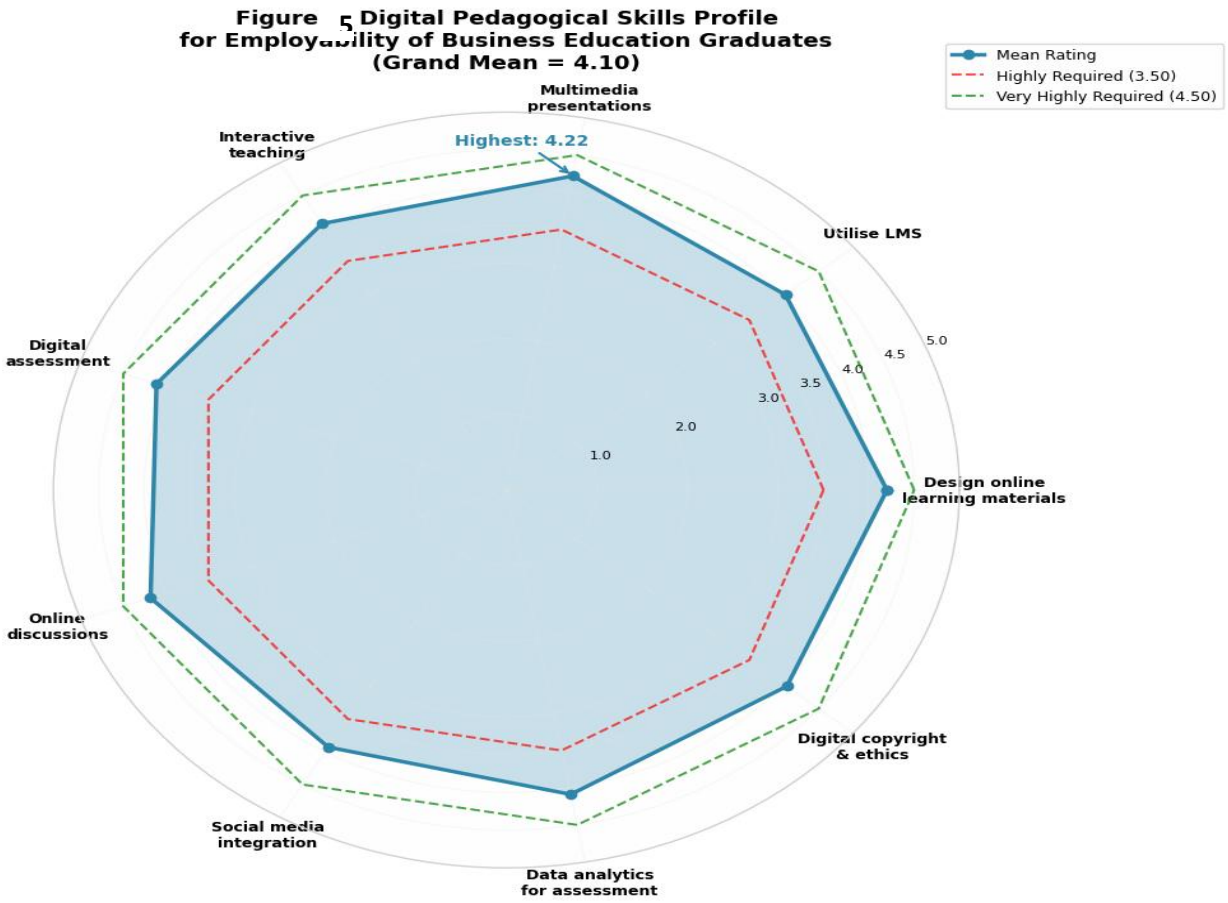


Figure 5 presents a radar (polar) chart depicting the profile of nine digital pedagogical skills rated by programme administrators (N = 45). Each axis represents one skill, with concentric circles indicating rating scores from 0 (centre) to 5 (outer edge). The blue polygon connects the mean ratings for all skills, with the shaded area representing the overall skills profile. The red dashed circle at 3.50 marks the "Highly Required" threshold, while the green dashed circle at 4.50 marks the "Very Highly Required" threshold. All nine skills extend beyond the 3.50 threshold, with the polygon peaking at "create and deliver multimedia presentations" (4.22) and reaching its lowest point at "integrate social media into teaching" (3.93).

Figure 6: Reliability Coefficients of Questionnaire Clusters (BERDSREBEGQ Instrument)

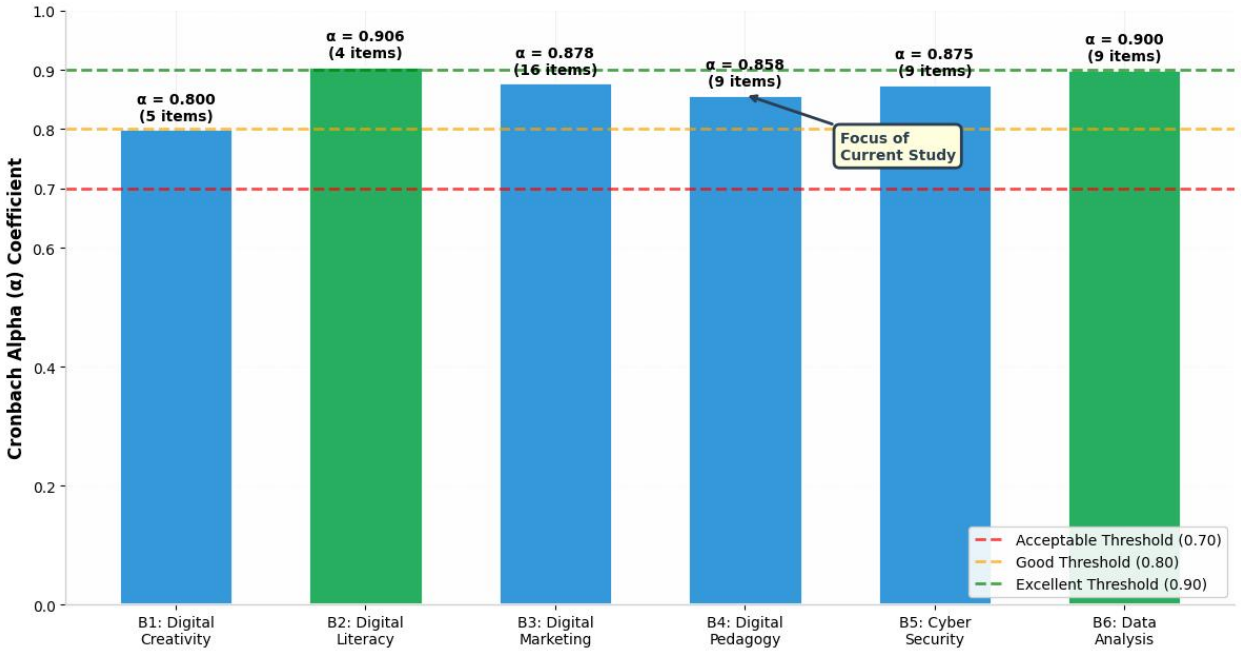


Figure 6 displays the internal consistency reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) for the six clusters of the BERDSREBEGQ instrument. The vertical bar chart shows alpha coefficients ranging from 0.800 (Digital Creativity, 5 items) to 0.906 (Digital Literacy, 4 items). The horizontal dashed lines indicate reliability thresholds: red at 0.70 (acceptable), orange at 0.80 (good), and green at 0.90 (excellent). All six clusters exceeded the 0.70 acceptable threshold. The Digital Pedagogy cluster (focus of the current study) achieved an alpha of 0.858 with 9 items, indicating good internal consistency.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that all nine digital pedagogical skills were rated as highly required for the employability of business education graduates, with a grand mean of 4.10. This finding is consistent with the broader literature on digital pedagogy and employability. Smith and Lee (2023) revealed that digital pedagogy skills have become essential for employability, as the modern workplace increasingly demands proficiency in digital tools and methodologies. Kumar and Zhao (2022) noted that employers prioritise candidates who demonstrate the ability to engage in digital pedagogical environments, which is vital for continuous learning and professional growth.

The highest-rated skill, "ability to create and deliver multimedia presentations" (mean = 4.22), aligns with the growing emphasis on visual communication and digital content creation in modern business environments. Martinez and Green (2024) stated that the shift towards digital learning has underscored the need for digital pedagogy skills as a core component of employability, enabling learners to navigate and thrive in technology-rich work environments. The ability to design online learning materials (mean = 4.20) and facilitate online discussions (mean = 4.18) also reflects the increasing importance of online and blended learning modalities, particularly in the post-pandemic era.

The finding that there was no significant difference in ratings based on gender (F = 0.124, p = 0.726) is consistent with Nwoke et al. (2023), who found that gender had no influence on the digital competence of educators in higher institutions. Similarly, Bailey (2022) observed that gender did not make a significant contribution to educators' technology self-efficacy. This suggests that both male and female programme administrators recognise the importance of digital pedagogical skills for employability, possibly due to similar professional development opportunities and exposure to digital technologies.

The absence of significant difference based on years of teaching experience (F = 0.367, p = 0.695) is noteworthy. While Okoli and Okolo (2024) found that business educators with longer teaching experience tended to be accustomed to analogue methods, this study found no such difference among programme administrators. This could be attributed to the fact that programme administrators, by virtue of their leadership roles, are more likely to engage with current trends and professional development activities that keep them abreast of digital innovations in education. The similarities in ratings across experience levels may also result from shared educational backgrounds and institutional training programmes.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that digital pedagogical skills are highly required for the employability of business education graduates in universities in Anambra State. All nine digital pedagogical skills investigated were rated as highly required, with no significant differences in ratings based on gender or years of teaching experience. This strong endorsement underscores the critical role that proficiency in digital pedagogical competencies plays in preparing graduates to meet the demands of the modern workforce. Programme administrators, as key decision-makers in curriculum development and programme implementation, recognise the importance of these skills and their potential to enhance graduate employability.

Recommendations

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

1. Curriculum planners should review and update business education programmes regularly to include digital pedagogical skills as core competencies, with clear learning outcomes and assessment strategies.
2. Educational institutions should organise continuous professional development workshops for business educators to enhance their capacity to teach digital pedagogical skills effectively and stay updated with current technological advances.
3. Educational institutions should strengthen partnerships with industries and businesses to facilitate internships, mentorship, and guest lectures that emphasise digital skill application in workplace settings.
4. Institutions should allocate resources to invest in necessary digital infrastructure, including the establishment of standard computer laboratories with adequate power supply, hardware, software, and learning resources to support effective teaching and learning of digital pedagogical skills.
5. The government and university management should collaborate to implement support mechanisms such as boot camps, peer tutoring, and online resources to help students master necessary digital pedagogical competencies before graduation.

6. Business education graduates should be encouraged to pursue lifelong learning and continuous professional development to keep pace with evolving digital technologies and maintain their employability in the dynamic labour market.

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