# INTEGRATING EMERGING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS INTO UNIVERSITY BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA FOR UNEMPLOYMENT REDUCTION IN DIGITAL ECONOMY

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## Abstract
This study determined the integration of emerging employability skills into university business education programme in Nigeria for unemployment reduction in digital economy. Descriptive survey design was carried out in 9 public Universities offering Business Education programme and 95 industries having more than 50 employees in their pay rolls across the country. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The participants comprised of 105 Lecturers and 95 industrial based Managers across the country. A 37-item structured questionnaire validated by two experienced Business Education Lecturers and one Measurement and Evaluation Lecturer all from University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The overall reliability index of 0.89 was established using Cronbach Alpha Statistics Tool. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The two null hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that Technical skills such as: creative multimedia skills, information and technological skills, share service and outsourcing skills, coding skills, digital record keeping skills, accounting and marketing skills, computer programming skills, system design and development skills among others were emerging employability skills needed to be integrated in business education programme in Nigerian Universities. The curriculum planners should review and redesign the curriculum of business education at the university level to include all the emerging employability skills identified. This will accord the business education undergraduates to encounter the real and modern skills that will align them to actual and desirable skills for the real-world of work practices and enhance their opportunities for employment at graduation.

**Keywords:** Integrating, Emerging Employability Skills, Business Education Programme, Unemployment
Reduction, and Digital Economy

## Introduction
The evolution of electronic technology attracted rapid growth and consistent expansion of business organizations; changing people access to information, human interaction and communication. That results in economy that encompasses businesses that sell goods and services via the internet, digital platforms that connect spare capacity and demand, adoption and proliferation of digital computers, digital communication, digital marketing, digital accounting and record keeping, leadership and many others for business growth and sustainability that has continued to the present day. To be successful in these businesses, employees' economic activities attract specialized skills that will enable them cope within the digital economy. As stated by the World Economic Forum and the group of Twenty (G20)

(2018), digital economy is a broad range of economic activities comprising all jobs in the digital sector as well as digital occupations in non-digital sectors. Bukht and Heeks (2017) opine that digital economy has enabled fast revenue growth for many firms; encouraged the shift from tangible flows of physical goods to intangible flows of data and information; enabled firms in developing economies to connect across borders and has facilitated a surge in cross border data flows. Digital economy have transformed various businesses and impacting global society across nations.

Nations of the world exist because of the businesses within and around them. Their survival and development depend on the extent of the management, development, success and sustainability of their businesses which is the function of skills possessed and environment. Practical knowledge or ability gotten within a specific period for a certain purpose and geared towards performance of a defined job or activity is skill. Skill is an important part of business education training. It is the ability to carry out a task with minimum outlay of time and energy. Skill is a personal quality with three key features: productive, expandable and social. Skill is used to produce values utilized in the economy, it is enhanced through training and development and it is socially determined. Skills are the abilities to perform expertly or they can be described as a manual dexterity to perform a task through repetitive performance of an operation. Nakayama and Sutcliffe (2017) noted that: skill is not innate, it is acquired through training; skill behaviour is goal directed, that is, it is developed in relation to some demand imposed by desired environmental task. When there is need or behaviour highly integrated and purposively organized and anchored in a programme skill is acquired. The components of the behaviour become structured into coherent patterns through experience. As skill is acquired, cognitive demands are reduced. Business education trains its students to acquire soft and hard skills for the purpose of employment.

Hard skills also called technical skills are used for practical activities, it attends to practical jobs. It is learned abilities acquired and enhanced through practice, repetition and education (Kagan & kindness, 2021). They are teachable abilities that can be quantify and are learned in the school through training programmes, online courses, certificate programmes and on the job training. Technical skills are specific abilities that cannot be transferred from one industry to another (cheary, 2020). It includes proficiency in a foreign dialect, degree, typing speed, machine and equipment operation and computer programming (Doyle, 2020). It also includes computer, information and communication technology skills; coding ability, bookkeeping, accounting and marketing skills. Technical skills as stated by Kapur (2018) embraces: Creative multimedia: creative multimedia includes: creative content pre-production, creative content production, creative content post-production and creative content management. System design and development: covering architectural design, system design and software engineering. Information technology (IT): covering software development, database management, technical support, IT consultancy, IT sales and marketing and IT management. Shared service and outsourcing includes contact center, human resources, finance and accounting. Technical skills are complemented by the soft skills for effective performance of tasks.

Behaviour and personality traits which aid performance efficacy on tasks are referred as soft skills. Soft skills are self-developed attributes that are not necessarily developed for the sake of a particular job or assignment but for lifelong usage. Soft skills are difficult to teach and less tangible but very essential for successful accomplishment of every task in work place. Soft skills include but not limited to: creativity skills, higher-order thinking skills such as Meta cognitive, critical thinking, clinical reasoning, expert judgment, creative thinking, vision, and analytical skills; team building, problem-solving and brainstorming skills; organizational behavioural skills; Business skills:- information and communication skills, decision making skill, human relation skill and industrial relation skill; inventive skill, management skill, risk

taking skills; independent thinking skill, financial management skill, continuous learning skill, project control and accountability skills; accounting and marketing skills; and all which are essential for leadership development. These skills are paramount to every activity perform in organization. Add to those skills business education graduates need e-marketing skill, e-commerce skill, digital marketing skill, original content creation skill, social media marketing skill, programming and coding skills, network and information security skills, virtual reality-based interactions with connected processes and artificial intelligence, human-robot interaction, voice control command systems skills and others. Precise, business education graduate interest should mostly anchor on e-commerce, digital business analysis and communicating skills (Kehinde and Olatunde, 2022). The above listed skills are highly employable by varying organizations in the world of work, because they find match in their activities.

Relevant attributes knowledge and abilities possessed by individual that facilitate the gaining, maintenance and sustenance of worthwhile employment in organization is employability skill. Kehinde and Olatunde, (2022) citing Akinbode, et al (2020), defined the concept of employability as possession of relevant knowledge, skills and other attributes by individuals that have facilitated the gaining and maintaining of worthwhile employment. Employability can be circumscribed as a multidimensional concept about individual capabilities of retaining a self-rewarding job, in employers' organizations as human resources requirement for fulfilling operational tasks to function effectively in order to meet up in the society (Oluwalola, 2019). Potential employers are consciously seeking for applicants with employability skills in selecting employees for their organizations (Akinbode, et al 2021). As noted by Ikpesu, (2017), employability is an idea that individuals are now increasingly responsible for their own welfare and that of the society hence they must acquire specific knowledge and skills employers need. Employability skills circumscribe the ability to identify, acquire, adapt and continually enhance the skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to find and create meaningful paid or unpaid job for their benefits; and benefits of the workforce, community and the nation at large. Employability skills are those skills, which an individual acquired before seeking or entering into a job. Ugbe, (2018), defined employability as the establishment of clear mechanisms by which students can develop their abilities to use and deploy a wide range of skills and opportunities to enhance their own academic, learning and enable them to become more employable. Business education graduates are trained to set up, develop and run businesses successfully, that involves proper acquisition of skills through education and training (Uloko, & Ejinkonye, 2010 in Olori, Asuquo and Kanu, (2020). A business education graduate has every opportunity to set up business and be employed in absence of white collar job. Job seekers are now considered employable based on the set of skills and competences possessed. Employability in modern times is also not based on certificate awarded but possession of extra attributes that make one competitive with other job seekers. Employability, however, may not be clearly understood without a clear understanding of what is meant by employable. Employable refers to any individual who can be offered a job on merit because he has acquired relevant skills for the job. Therefore, a graduate of business education who is not engaged in any work activities is unemployed because the graduate has not acquired the work relevant skills taught by business education. Employment does not end with white collar job activities but includes self employment. Self employment refers to active engagement on any legally planned self activity, deliberately structured and systematically carried out for productivity to earn a living. Employability on the other hand refers to the condition or situation of being ready for employment or ready to be employed, having acquired the necessary skills. This means that employability into a relevant occupation cannot be divulged from acquisition of skills. Business education programme is geared towards attainment of the goal of professionally qualified business practitioner and

educator who can efficiently establish and manage self own business and as well impart technical and vocational business knowledge to others in diverse areas and contribute to the economic development of the country. It is a functional educational programme that provides individuals with functional and suitable skills, knowledge, understanding, values and attitudes that enable the individual fit in the world of work. Skills are said to be functional and suitable as the acquired skills find match activities to engage on and perform suitably and accurately for effective attainment of goals. As noted by Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), (2013), Business Education leads to acquisition of practical skills, attitude and basic scientific knowledge whose goals are embedded in general goals and objectives of vocational education. Graduates of business education hold effectively administrative positions in the public and private sectors of the nation's economy; and are ready and willing to upgrade academic qualification in any business field. Okon, Eminue and Leema (2016), noted that vocational and technical skills training have positive impact on alleviation of unemployment. Business education curriculum is all embracing and not bias to a field or period as to retard employment opportunity. Invariably Olori et al., (2020) affirmed that Business education curriculum is centered on the acquisition of skills for gainful employment by its recipients. In spite of the business education laudable skilled curriculum, a good number of business education graduates among other graduates are unemployed.

A healthy person who has relevant qualifications, skills, interest and willingness to work but unable to find work is unemployed. In affirmation, Olori et al. (2020) defined Unemployment as a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable employment. As stated by National Bureau of Statistic, (2017) general unemployed youth as at the third quarter of 2017 ranged from 14% to 18.88%. It is as a result of this deplorable condition of youths that National Planning Commission (2005) stated that empowering the Nigeria people towards wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation is a foremost cardinal point for strategic macroeconomic framework. The assertion of National Planning Commission identified abnormality in economic sector. Youths must be empowered for economic enhancement through education. That can only be achieved by repackaging business education curriculum to meet the present needs and development in industries and labour markets. The business education curriculum should be redesign to integrate emerging employability skills for enhancement of employment for economic growth. Quality of business education graduates to meet needs of the present day competitive environment depends largely on the quality of reorientation given to the students, that is, what is taught and learnt by the graduates. That refers to curriculum contents. Curriculum contains the goals and objectives of a particular course of study, the subject matter, the content, the learning experiences and evaluation. As noted by Yusuf, (2012) Curriculum is a policy statement about a piece of education to indicate the ways in which the policy is to be realized through programme of actions. It is a legal plan of actions, deliberately structured set of learning objectives concerned with results and values.

The current business education programme in Nigeria as observed is highly theoretical and rhetorical in nature (Okoli et al., 2021; Azubuike, 2023 ). The graduates of business education lack the skills and competences needed for actual performance in the office. The current business education programme must be adjusted to face the current demand in the office, work place and enterprise. It is imperative to integrate the curriculum of business education and inculcate in business education students knowledge and skills that will enable them meet up with current skills need and demand by industries and organizations. The redesigned curriculum should in house current topics needed to provide the requisite knowledge, attitude, skills and competence that will accord business education graduates opportunity to access profitable employment in global work industries and world of work. Redesigning business education curriculum is essential for upgrade of the curriculum to meet

the standard and demand of the global market which the current curriculum fails to meet. Orji et al. (2015) noted that digital skills are highly required in vocational education in tertiary institutions to boost the digital literacy of teachers and students. Okoye (2017) advocated that basic information and communication technology (ICT) skills should be embedded in the business education curriculum in high institutions in order to prepare students for global work competition. Ndubuisi et al. (2022) asserted that business educators should equip themselves with the new technological skills needed to train students to fit into the demands of modern business world. The new technological skills include among others computers, smart phones, software applications, online operations and communication media web-based initiatives. In affirmation with the above, Bakhshi et al. (2017) advanced that educational institutions and teachers should continue to incorporate strategies for providing technical, managerial, personal and social skills to create digital citizens, digital workers and digital makers for transformation of digital economy. Ajagu (2015) recommended a curriculum that integrates all aspects of technical, vocational and business studies subjects, project teams, peer exchange, individual counseling and workshops for a holistic education. High rate of technological change in business world in recent time highlights the need to adequately equip business education students with higher-order thinking skills, full business skills, leadership and comprehensive managerial skills, project control, accountability skills and ICT skills to enable them be successful future drivers of the economy. The world is going digital; as such it is essential that business education students move with current trends in technological advancement which is reflected in the changing patterns of business education curriculum. Policymakers, researchers and educational stakeholders alike are beginning to recognize that closing the digital skills gap is essential for preparing the nations' educational sector (especially business education) for development of digital economy (Ndubuisi et al., 2022). No study has been carried out on broad heading of integrating emerging employability skills into University business education programme in Nigeria for unemployment reduction in digital economy. The absence of that created a gap in research which the present study "Integrating emerging employability skills into University business education programme in Nigeria for unemployment reduction in digital economy addresses with determining emerging employability skills needed to be integrated in university business education programme in Nigeria for unemployment reduction in the digital economy, and the extent to which the emerging employability skills identified suitable for unemployment reduction in digital economy in focus.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the emerging employability skills needed to be integrated in university business education Programme in Nigeria for unemployment reduction in digital economy?
2. To what extent are the emerging employability skills identified to be integrated in university business education programme in Nigeria suitable for unemployment reduction in digital economy?

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

**$Ho_1$**: There is no significant difference in mean responses of the University Lecturers and Industrial based Managers on emerging employability skills needed to be integrated in university business education Programme in Nigeria for unemployment reduction in digital economy.

**$Ho_2$**: There is no significant difference in mean responses of the University Lecturers and Industrial based Managers on the extent of the suitability of the emerging employability skills

identified to be integrated in university business education programme in Nigeria for unemployment reduction in digital economy.

## Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey is suitable for this study because it makes use of the same information gathered from unbiased representative group of interest using questionnaire, interview and observation (Azubuike, 2023). The population for the study was 200 respondents made up of 105 business education lecturers from difference universities across the country that offer business education: University of Nigeria, Nsukka Enugu State 15, Federal university Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State 10, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Abia State 10, Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka, Anambra State 15, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State 15, River State University, Port Harcourt 10, University of Maiduguri, Bornu State 10, Modibo Adama University, Yola Adamawa State 10, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi, Bauchi State 10. And 95 industrial based managers managing organizations with not less than fifty employees on their pay roll in the areas. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the entire population; because of its manageable size the entire population were studied. The instrument for data collection was the researchers structured questionnaire titled, "Integrating Emerging Employability Skills into University Business Education Programme in Nigeria, (IEESUBEPN).

The structured questionnaire containing 37 items designed on a four-point rating scale of strongly agree/highly suitable (4-points), to strongly disagree/strongly not suitable (1-point) was used for data collection. The instrument was face validated by three highly experienced lecturers; two from the Department of Business Education, and one from measurement and evaluation unit of Science Education Department, all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The instrument was subjected to reliability test using 20 lecturers from Alvan Ikuku Federal University of Education, Owerri, Imo State and 25 Industrial Based Managers in Imo and Lagos States. Reliability coefficient values of 0.90 and 0.87 were obtained for statement clusters A and F respectively using the Cronbach Alpha Statistics Tool, while the overall reliability index was 0.89. Hundred percent of the questionnaire administered to 200 respondents through the help of 3 research assistants were retrieved. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation. The real limit of number was used as decision rule for the items in the questionnaire. This was classified as follows: (3.50-4.00) – strongly agree/highly suitable, (2.50-3.49) – agree/suitable, (1.50-2.49) – disagree/not suitable and (1.00-1.49) – strongly disagree/strongly not suitable. T-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, 26). The condition for not rejecting a null hypothesis is where p-value is greater than 0.05 level of significance; implying the presence of no significant difference, but where p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected; implying the existence of significant difference.

## Results

The result in Table 1 depicts the mean responses and standard deviations of the business education lecturers' and the industrial based managers' ratings on the emerging employability skills needed to be integrated in University Business Education Programme in Nigeria for unemployment reduction in Digital Economy. The grand mean values ranged from 2.79 to 3.64, grand standard deviation ranged from 0.48 to .0.96, cluster mean 3.32 and cluster standard deviation 0.70. The values of the SDs were very low and that depicts that the respondents' ratings clustered around the mean. Judging from the mean values, it is clear and obvious that all the identified items are the emerging employability skills needed to be integrated in

University Business Education Programme in Nigeria for unemployment reduction in Digital Economy.

**Table 1.** Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents Ratings on the emerging employability skills needed to be Integrated in University Business Education Programme in Nigeria for Unemployment Reduction in Digital Economy

| S/N | Emerging Employability Skills Needed to be Integrated in University Business Education Programme in Nigeria for Unemployment Reduction in Digital Economy: | **Business Education Lecturers_** | | **Industrial Based Managers** | | **Grand** | | **Remark** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | $\bar{X}_1$ | $SD_1$ | $\bar{X}_2$ | $SD_2$ | $\bar{X}_G$ | $SD_G$ | |
| **A** | **Technical Skills**:- | 3.44 | 0.55 | 3.44 | 0.60 | 3.44 | 0.58 | **Agree** |
| 1 | Creative multimedia skills | 3.45 | 0.67 | 3.46 | 0.66 | 3.46 | 0.66 | Agree |
| 2 | Computer usage skills | 3.39 | 0.50 | 3.26 | 0.66 | 3.31 | 0.60 | Agree |
| 3 | Information and technology skills | 3.57 | 0,51 | 3.69 | 0.47 | 3.64 | 0,48 | SA |
| 4 | Shared service and outsourcing skills | 3.04 | 0.64 | 3.30 | 0.73 | 3.20 | 0.70 | Agree |
| 5 | Coding skills | 3.52 | 0.51 | 3.37 | 0.55 | 3.43 | 0.53 | Agree |
| 6 | Digital record keeping skills | 3.55 | 0.51 | 3.40 | 0.69 | 3.46 | 0.63 | Agree |
| 7 | Accounting skills | 3.30 | 0.56 | 3.34 | 0.59 | 3.33 | 0.57 | Agree |
| 8 | Marketing skills | 3.57 | 0.51 | 3.49 | 0.56 | 3.52 | 0.54 | SA |
| 9 | Computer programming skills | 3.61 | 0.50 | 3.46 | 0.56 | 3.52 | 0.54 | SA |
| 10 | System design and development skills | 3.43 | 0,59 | 3,60 | 0.55 | 3.53 | 0,57 | SA |
| **B** | **Digital Business Skills:** | 3.11 | 0.76 | 3.18 | 0.62 | 3.14 | 0.69 | Agree |
| 11 | Data analytics skills | 3.39 | 0.50 | 3.26 | 0.66 | 3.31 | 0.60 | Agree |
| 12 | Business analysis skills | 3.24 | 0.62 | 3.14 | 0.51 | 3.19 | 0.67 | Agree |
| 13 | Design and data visualization skills | 3.20 | 0.70 | 3.44 | 0.39 | 3.09 | 0.84 | Agree |
| 14 | Product management skills | 3.27 | 0.77 | 2.29 | 0.66 | 3.41 | 0.71 | Agree |
| 15 | Copyright and plagiarism skill | 2.55 | 0.96 | 3.5 | 0.94 | 2.79 | 0.96 | Agree |
| **C** | **web-based initiatives** | 3.09 | 2.51 | 3.27 | 0.61 | 3.25 | 0.71 | Agree |
| 16 | Having behavioural norms in online interactions ability | 2.74 | 0.92 | 2.94 | 0.62 | 3.00 | 0.77 | Agree |
| 17 | Digital marketing skills | 3.43 | 0.66 | 3.42 | 0,51 | 3.46 | 0.57 | Agree |
| 18 | Social media skills | 3.09 | 0.93. | 3.45 | 0.69 | 3.28 | 0.79 | Agree |
| **D** | **Comprehensive Managerial Skills:** | 3.10 | 0.86 | 3.24 | 0.67 | 3.17 | 0.77 | Agree |
| 19 | High-order thinking skills | 2.74 | 0.92 | 2.94 | 0.62 | 3.00 | 0.77 | Agree |
| 20 | critical thinking, | 3.3 | 0.7 | 3.43 | 0.71 | 3.4 | 0.70 | Agree |
| 21 | clinical reasoning, | 3.09 | 0.85 | 3.11 | 0.77 | 3.25 | 0.81 | Agree |
| 22 | expert judgment, | 3.09 | 0.93. | 3.45 | 0.69 | 3.28 | 0.79 | Agree |
| 23 | team building and brainstorming skills; | 3.22 | 0.85 | 3.40 | 0.61 | 3.34 | 0.71 | Agree |
| 24 | industrial relation skills | 2.74 | 0.92 | 2.94 | 0.62 | 3.00 | 0.77 | Agree |
| 25 | Full business skills | 3.22 | 0.85 | 3.40 | 0.61 | 3.34 | 0.71 | Agree |
| 26 | Project control skills | 3.09 | 0.93. | 3.45 | 0.69 | 3.28 | 0.79 | Agree |
| 27 | Accountability skills | 2.74 | 0.92 | 2.94 | 0.62 | 3.00 | 0.77 | Agree |
| 28 | Credit sourcing skills | 3.3 | 0.70 | 3.43 | 0.71 | 3.40 | 0.70 | Agree |
| 29 | Human relation skills | 3.09 | 0.85 | 3.11 | 0.77 | 3.25 | 0.81 | Agree |
| **E** | **Problem Solving Skills:** | 3.16 | 0.81 | 3.89 | 0.73 | 3.53 | 0.19 | SA |
| 30 | Innovative and creative technology response skills | 3.17 | 0.78 | 3.47 | 0.61 | 3.32 | 0.69 | Agree |
| 31 | Communication skills | 3.00 | 0.93 | 3.35 | 1.00 | 3.02 | 0.96 | Agree |
| 32 | Identifying digital competence gaps skills | 3.26 | 0.69 | 3.03 | 0.73 | 3.24 | 0.71 | Agree |
| 33 | New leadership strategized skills | 3.14 | 0.73 | 3.10 | 0.71 | 3.33 | 0.73 | Agree |
| **F** | **Safety skills** | 3.18 | 0.83 | 3.34 | 0.70 | 3.32 | 0.76 | Agree |
| 34 | Protecting device skills | 3.09 | 0.92 | 3.40 | 0.69 | 3.28 | 0.80 | Agree |
| 35 | Protecting personal data skills | 3.22 | 0.85 | 3.40 | 0.61 | 3.34 | 0.71 | Agree |
| 36 | Protecting health skills | 3.3 | 0.7 | 3.43 | 0.71 | 3.40 | 0.70 | Agree |
| 37 | Protecting the environment skills | 3.09 | 0.85 | 3.11 | 0.77 | 3.25 | 0.81 | Agree |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Cluster Mean** | **3.32** | **0.70** | **Agree** |

*Keys: $X_1$ = Mean of Business Education Lecturers, $X_2$ = Industrial based Managers, $X_G$ = Grand Mean, $SD_1$ = Standard Deviation of Business Education Lecturers, $SD_2$ = Standard Deviation of Industrial Based Managers; $SD_G$ = Grand Standard Deviation.*

The result in Table 2 reveals nonexistence of significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents on the emerging employability skills needed to be integrated in University business education programme in Nigeria for unemployment reduction in digital economy. The summary of the t-test result for hypothesis one shows t-calculated value of.581 and a p-value of .250 are greater than 0.05 level of significance at 198 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. It was established that the 37 skills enumerated on Table 1 were the emerging employability skills needed to be integrated in university business education programme in Nigeria for unemployment reduction in digital economy.

**Table 2.** t-test Analysis of no significant difference in the Mean Responses of the respondents on the emerging employability skills

| S/N | Respondents | N | Mean | SD | Significant Level | df | t -cal | P-val | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Lecturers | 105 | 3.20 | 0.60 | 0.05 | 198 | .581 | .250 | NS |
| 2 | Industrial based Manage | 95 | 3.29 | 0,66 | | | | | |

*Key: N = Population, SD = Standard Deviation, df = degree of freedom, t-cal = Calculated t-test value, P-Val = 2-tail significant value, NS = Not significant.*

The result in Table 3 shows that the mean responses and standard deviations of the business education lecturers' and the industrial based managers' ratings on the extent of suitability of emerging employability skills identified to be integrated in University Business Education Programme in Nigeria for unemployment reduction in Digital Economy is highly suitable. The grand mean values ranged from 3.10 to 3.88, grand standard deviation ranged from 0.49 to .0.74, cluster mean 3.57 and cluster standard deviation 0.60. The values of the SDs were very low and that depicts that the respondents' ratings clustered around the mean. Judging from the results, it is clear and obvious that all the emerging employability skills identified are highly suitable for unemployment reduction in Digital Economy.

**Table 3.** Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents' Ratings on the Extent of suitability of the Emerging Employability Skills

| S/N | Emerging Employability Skills Suitability for Unemployment Reduction in Digital Economy. | Business Education Lecturers | | Industrial Based Managers | | Grand | | Re Mark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Clusters | $\bar{X}_1$ | $SD_1$ | $\bar{X}_2$ | $SD_2$ | $\bar{X}_G$ | $SD_G$ | |
| A | Technical Skills | 3.44 | 0.65 | 3.44 | 0.57 | 3.88 | 0.74 | HS |
| B | Digital Business Skills | 3.11 | 0.63 | 3.18 | 0.56 | 3.74 | 0.54 | HS |
| C | **web-based initiatives** | 3.09 | 2.51 | 3.27 | 0.61 | 3.25 | 0.71 | S |
| D | Comprehensive Managerial Skills | 3.10 | 0.48 | 3.24 | 0.48 | 3.10 | 0.50 | S |
| E | Problem Solving Skills | 3.16 | 0.54 | 3.89 | 0.57 | 3.08 | 0.49 | S |
| F | Safety Skills | 3.14 | 0.56 | 3.10 | 0.40 | 3.76 | 0.67 | HS |
| | **Cluster Mean** | | **3.70** | | **0.60** | HS | | |

*Keys: $X_1$ = Mean of Business Education Lecturers, $X_2$ = Mean Industrial based Managers, $X_G$ = Grand Mean, $SD_1$ = Standard Deviation of Business Education Lecturers, $SD_2$ =*

*Standard Deviation of Industrial Based Managers; $SD_G$ = Grand Standard Deviation. HS = Highly Suitable, S = Suitable.*

Data in Table 4 depict the nonexistence of significant difference in mean ratings of the Lecturers' and Industrial based Managers' responses on the emerging employability skills needed to be integrated in University business education programme in Nigeria for unemployment reduction in digital economy. The summary of the t-test analysis (hypothesis 2) revealed that t-calculated value of .520 and p-value of .231 are greater than 0.05 level of significance at198 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. It was established that the six skill clusters enumerated on Table 3 were the emerging employability skills highly suitable for unemployment reduction in Digital Economy.

**Table 4.** t-test Analysis of no significant difference in the Mean Responses of the Respondents on the extent of the suitability of the emerging employability skills

| S/N | Respondents | N | Mean | SD | Significant Level | df | t-cal | p-val | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Lecturers | 105 | 3.79 | 0.30 | 0.05 | 198 | .520 | .231 | NS |
| 2 | Industrial based Managers | 95 | 3.61 | 0.525 | | | | | |

*Key: N = Population, SD = Standard Deviation, df = degree of freedom, t-cal = Calculated t-test value, P-Val = 2-tail significant value, NS = Not significant.*

## Discussion

This study centered on integrating emerging employability skills into University Business Education Programme in Nigeria for unemployment reduction in Digital Economy. The findings tabulated on table 1 revealed that Technical skills such as: creative multimedia skills, information and technological skills, share service and outsourcing skills, coding skills, digital recording keeping skills, accounting and marketing skills, computer programming skills, system design and development skills are emerging employability skills need to be integrated in business education programme in Nigeria at university level for unemployment reduction in digital economy. That is in consonance with Ndubuisi, Ezeani and Ile (2022) who stated that digital technical skills are highly needed in business education programme in tertiary institutions for digital economy development. In affirmation to the importance of those technical skills to business education programme in university, they noted that business education as a skilled programme is expected to produce graduates fortified and prepared for digital economy development to avert unemployment. The study yielded to digital business skills like: data analysis skills, business analysis skills, design and data visualization skills, product management skills and others as shown on table 1, as emerging employability skills to be integrated in business education programme in the university. The findings are in line with Okoye (2017) assertion that basic ICT skills should be embedded in the business education curriculum in high institutions in order to prepare students for global work competition.

Comprehensive managerial skills involving: high-order thinking skills, human and industrial relations skills credit sourcing skills and problem-solving skills among others shown on the table 1 were also accredited to emerging skills necessary for inclusion in business education programme in the university. The findings are in consonance with the report of the International Telecommunication Union (2020), that emerging digital skills are highly required to secure employment and participate in the labour market; it recommended that digital skills should be embedded in education and training at university level to enable graduates participate fully in the modern digital economy as either technology specialists, leaders of digitally-

enabled businesses or workers in digitally-enabled jobs across the economy. All the emerging employability skills identified in the study were highly suitable for unemployment reduction in digital economy and should be integrated into business education programme in university to enable full training of business education graduates to enable them stand out in their competition in the job market and world of work. The training will as well enhance their knowledge and efficacy in the profession as future lecturers to train individuals in the profession, as well as workers, leaders and employers of labour in varying organizations and industries. Business educators should equip themselves with the new technological skills needed to train students to fit into the demands of modern business world (Ndubuisi, Ezeani & Ile (2022). That tallies with Bakhsi, Downing, Osborne and Schneider (2017) assertion that educational institutions and teachers should continue to incorporate strategies for providing technical, managerial, personal and social skills to create digital citizens, digital workers and digital makers for the transformation of digital economy.

**Conclusion:**

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that all the identified skills in the study are very essential and highly suitable in reducing unemployment. The skills are important and highly needed for the establishment development and running of every business in digital economy as employer of labour or employee. The skills can enable the business education graduate create job for self or create employment for others. The findings revealed that the emerging employability skills identified are highly essential for integration to business education programme in the university for competence and total unemployment eradication.

**Recommendation**

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusion made, the following recommendations were made:

1. The curriculum planners should review the curriculum of business education at the university level to include all the emerging employability skills identified. That will accord the business education undergraduates to encounter the real and modern skills that will align them to actual and desirable skills for the real-world of work practices and enhance their opportunities for employment at graduation.
2. The universities should liaise with industrial based managers to streamline the objectives, content and most suitable strategies for actual implementation of the students' industrial work experience. That will enable the students encounter and acquire the real skills and experiences intended for industrial work before graduation.
3. Retraining programmes should be mounted for one and all periodically in business education for skills and knowledge upgrading for both lecturers and old graduates of business education.
4. Capacity building in form of reorientations/refreshers course, workshops, seminars, conferences and long vacation skill acquisition programmes for students and staff should be organized periodically to equip them with various digital skills and security management techniques of the 21$^{st}$ century. That will enable them become more productive, have greater self-confidence, self-fulfilling and attain self-actualization.

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