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Research Article

Influence of Entrepreneurial Skills and Opportunities in the Digital Era on Economic Sustainability among Business Education Graduates in Ekiti State

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Abstract

This study investigated the Influence of Entrepreneurial Skills and Opportunities in the Digital Era on Economic Sustainability among Business Education Graduates in Ekiti State. The study had two specific objectives, two research questions and two null hypotheses. The study adopted the quantitative descriptive survey design. The sample comprised of 40 business education graduates who were selected using purposive sampling technique. The instrument used for collection of data was a structured questionnaire titled "Assessment of Entrepreneurial Skills and Opportunities Questionnaire (AESOQ)". Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using simple regression at 0.05 level of significance. All the hypotheses were rejected because their calculated p-values were less than the level of significance of 0.05. The findings of the study revealed that acquisition of entrepreneurial skills had significant influence on economic sustainability among business education graduates and utilization of entrepreneurial opportunities had significant influence on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Business Educators should create more awareness on acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and encourage every business education graduate should to embark on at least one entrepreneurial opportunity immediately after graduation; in order to improve economic sustainability; especially in Ekiti State.

Key words: Entrepreneurial skills, opportunities, economic sustainability, digital era and business education.

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Introduction

The contemporary economy is increasingly shaped by digital technologies, innovation, knowledge-based production and digitally enabled markets. Digital platforms such as e-commerce, social media, mobile financial services and other technologies have reduced some barriers to business creation while creating new forms of entrepreneurship and self-employment [1]. In Nigeria, digital infrastructure, digital platforms, digital financial services, digital entrepreneurship and digital skills constitute important pillars of the digital economy and can facilitate new business models, market access and employment creation [2]. These developments are closely linked to sustainable economic development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 8, which promotes sustained and inclusive economic growth, productive employment, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation [3].

Entrepreneurial skills, including opportunity recognition, creativity, innovation, problem-solving, financial management, networking and digital competence, are important for exploiting emerging opportunities [4] found that entrepreneurship education was positively associated with opportunity recognition, opportunity assessment, creative problem-solving, self-efficacy and networking, although it did not produce all entrepreneurial competencies. In the digital era, graduates also require digital skills to use online platforms, social media, digital payment systems and e-commerce effectively [5]. The [6] identifies digital skills and entrepreneurship capacity as important for sustainable economic growth and job creation, while [7] emphasises future-ready skills, entrepreneurship opportunities and decent work for young people.

Empirical studies among Business Education students and graduates further demonstrate the importance of these competencies. [8] found that Business Education undergraduates at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti possessed moderate entrepreneurial digital skills, high entrepreneurial digital knowledge and very good utilisation of entrepreneurial digital skills and knowledge. [9] found that Business Education students in Lagos State required improved digital marketing and e-content writing skills to effectively exploit e-commerce opportunities. Similarly, [10] found that Business Education graduates required both soft and hard entrepreneurial skills, including analytical and critical thinking, machine operation and software application, for successful entrepreneurial development. [11] further found low levels of e-entrepreneurship and cybersecurity skills among Business Education postgraduate students, highlighting the need to strengthen digital competencies for sustainable economic development.

Digitalisation has expanded entrepreneurial opportunities through e-commerce, digital marketing, online freelancing, digital content creation, fintech, software development and other technology-enabled activities [12]. However, access to opportunities does not necessarily guarantee their effective exploitation, as finance, infrastructure, electricity, internet connectivity, mentorship, business networks, markets and technical knowledge may constrain graduates' ability to establish sustainable enterprises. Entrepreneurship can therefore provide an alternative to conventional wage employment while enabling graduates to create employment for themselves and others [13]. Despite the growing importance of digital entrepreneurship, existing studies have largely focused on students, specific competencies or particular digital activities, with

limited evidence on Business Education graduates in Ekiti State and on the combined contribution of entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial opportunities to economic sustainability. This study therefore examines the influence of entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial opportunities in the digital era on economic sustainability among Business Education graduates in Ekiti State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by two research questions as follows:

1. What is the influence of entrepreneurial skills in the digital era on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State?
2. What is the influence of entrepreneurial opportunities in the digital era on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State?

Hypotheses

The study was guided by two research questions as follows:

H_{01}: Entrepreneurial skills in the digital era does not have a significant influence on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State.

H_{02}: Entrepreneurial opportunities in the digital era does not have a significant influence on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State.

Methodology

A quantitative descriptive survey research design was used for the study's methodology. This approach was chosen because it aids in the description, inspection, documentation, analysis and interpretation of the study's variables. The sample was made up of 40 business education graduates who were selected using purposive sampling technique. A 18-item instrument titled "Assessment of Entrepreneurial Skills and Opportunities Questionnaire (AESOQ)" was used by the researchers in order to collect data. Three experts in Business Education in the Faculty of Education, Veritas University Abuja validated the instrument in order to ensure its face and content validity. Test re-test reliability was done to ensure the consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.87 which was high enough for the instrument's reliability. Two research assistants helped in the administration of the instrument. The collected data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while simple regression was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

The two research questions earlier raised in the study were answered descriptively using mean. The results of the two research questions are presented in Tables 1 to 2.

Research Question 1: What is the influence of entrepreneurial skills in the digital era on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State?

Table 1. Mean analysis showing influence of entrepreneurial skills in the digital era on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State.

S/N	Item	Level of Agreement				Mean	Std Dev.	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD			
1	My digital marketing skill enables me to attract and retain customers; thereby improving the sustainability of my business activities	16	13	6	5	3.00	1.04	Agreed
2	My financial management skill helps me to make effective use of digital financial services for sustainable business operations	19	13	6	2	3.23	0.89	Agreed
3	My creativity and innovation skills enable me to develop new products or services that improve economic sustainability	16	16	5	3	3.13	0.91	Agreed
4	My problem-solving skill helps me to overcome challenges associated with operating a business in the digital era	18	12	7	3	3.13	0.97	Agreed
5	My decision-making skill enables me to manage my business sustainably	18	11	6	5	3.05	1.06	Agreed
6	My ability to use digital technologies effectively enhances my capacity to create and sustain employment or self-employment	14	20	2	4	3.10	0.90	Agreed
	Average Mean/Standard Deviation					**3.11**	**0.96**	**Agreed**

Source: Field Survey, 2026 Scale Mean = 2.5, n=40

Table 1 shows the mean analysis of influence of entrepreneurial skills in the digital era on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State. From the Table, it could be observed that the mean values of 3.00, 3.23, 3.13, 3.13, 3.05 and 3.10 were in agreement with items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 respectively. The sectional mean of 3.11 was greater than the scale mean of 2.5 which indicated that virtually all the respondents agreed that their digital marketing skill enables them to attract and retain customers; thereby improving the sustainability of their business activities, their financial management skill helps them to make effective use of digital financial services for sustainable business operations, their

creativity and innovation skills enable them to develop new products or services that improve economic sustainability, their problem-solving skill helps them to overcome challenges associated with operating a business in the digital era, their decision-making skill enables them to manage their business sustainably and their ability to use digital technologies effectively enhances their capacity to create and sustain employment or self-employment.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of entrepreneurial opportunities in the digital era on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State?

Table 2. Mean analysis showing influence of entrepreneurial opportunities in the digital era on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State.

S/N	Item	Level of Agreement				Mean	Std Dev.	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD			
7	Access to e-commerce platforms provides me with opportunities to generate sustainable income	13	23	2	2	3.18	0.75	Agreed
8	Social media platforms provide me with opportunities to expand my market and improve the sustainability of my business activities	21	9	7	3	3.20	0.99	Agreed
9	Digital payment platforms provide opportunities that make it easier for me to conduct sustainable business transactions	18	12	5	5	3.08	1.05	Agreed
10	Online marketing opportunities provide me with additional sources of sustainable income	22	13	4	1	3.40	0.78	Agreed
11	Access to digital business networks creates opportunities for me to develop and expand my business	22	9	6	3	3.25	0.98	Agreed
12	The availability of digital technologies creates new entrepreneurial opportunities that contribute to my economic sustainability	18	12	7	3	3.13	0.97	Agreed
	Average Mean/Standard Deviation					**3.21**	**0.92**	**Agreed**

Source: Field Survey, 2026 Scale Mean = 2.5, n=40

Table 2 shows the mean analysis of influence of entrepreneurial opportunities in the digital era on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State. From the Table, it could be observed that the mean values of 3.18, 3.20, 3.08, 3.40, 3.25 and 3.13 were in agreement with items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 respectively. The sectional mean of 3.21 was greater than the scale mean of 2.5 which

indicated that virtually all the respondents agreed that access to e-commerce platforms provides them with opportunities to generate sustainable income, social media platforms provide them with opportunities to expand their market and improve the sustainability of their business activities, digital payment platforms provide opportunities that make it easier for them to conduct sustainable business transactions, online marketing opportunities provide them with additional sources of sustainable income, access to digital business networks creates opportunities for them to develop and expand their business and the availability of digital technologies creates new entrepreneurial opportunities that contribute to their economic sustainability.

Tests of Null Hypotheses

The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using simple regression. The results of the two null hypotheses are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

H_{01}: Entrepreneurial skills in the digital era does not have a significant influence on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State.

Table 3. Regression analysis showing influence of entrepreneurial skills in the digital era on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State.

Model	**B**	Std. Error	T	R-cal.	R^2	Adjusted R^2	p-value	Decision
Entrepreneurial skills	0.733	0.023	31.844					
				0.847	0.718	0.717	0.000	Significant
	6.188	0.493	12.547					
Economic sustainability								

Source: Field Survey, 2026 **Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, $p < 0.05$; $R^2 = 0.718$

Table 3 shows regression analysis of influence of entrepreneurial skills in the digital era on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State. The result revealed that the calculated value of regression was 0.718. The p-value of 0.000 was less than level of significance of 0.05. Since the p-value was less than 0.05 (p**<***0.05)*, hypothesis 1 was therefore rejected; indicating that entrepreneurial skills in the digital era had significant influence on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State.

H_{02}: Entrepreneurial opportunities in the digital era does not have a significant influence on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State.

Table 4. Regression analysis showing influence of entrepreneurial opportunities in the digital era on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State.

Model	**B**	Std. Error	T	R-cal.	R^2	Adjusted R^2	p-value	Decision
Entrepreneurial opportunities	0.816	0.024	34.129					
				0.863	0.745	0.745	0.000	Significant
Economic sustainability	6.188	0.493	12.547					

Source: Field Survey, 2026 **Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, $p < 0.05$; $R^2 = 0.745$

Table 4 shows regression analysis of influence of entrepreneurial opportunities in the digital era on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State. The result revealed that the calculated value of regression was 0.745. The p-value of 0.000 was less than level of significance of 0.05. Since the p-value was less than 0.05 (p**<***0.05)*, hypothesis 2 was therefore rejected; indicating that entrepreneurial opportunities in the digital era had significant influence on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of null hypothesis one revealed that entrepreneurial skills in the digital era had significant influence on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State, with $R^2 = 0.718$, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05. This finding was in agreement with [8] who examined entrepreneurial digital skills, knowledge and utilisation among Business Education undergraduates at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria and reported that the respondents possessed a moderate level of entrepreneurial digital skills, a high level of entrepreneurial digital knowledge and a very good level of utilisation of entrepreneurial digital skills and knowledge. In addition, the findings agreed with [9] who investigated skills acquired by Business Education students for effective exploration of digital entrepreneurship opportunities among universities in Lagos State and pointed out that there was no significant difference in the level of skills acquired by Business Education students for effective exploration of e-commerce opportunities between the universities studied. However, [9] identified the need for students to improve their digital marketing and e-content writing skills and recommended appropriate training to enable them to take advantage of digital entrepreneurship opportunities.

The findings of null hypothesis two revealed that entrepreneurial opportunities in the digital era had significant influence on economic sustainability among business education graduates in Ekiti State, with $R^2 = 0.745$, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05. The findings agreed with [10] who investigated entrepreneurial

competencies required by Business Education graduates for successful entrepreneurial development in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria and opined that both soft and hard entrepreneurial skills were required for successful entrepreneurial development. Soft skills included analytical and critical thinking, while hard skills included machine operation and software application. The study also found no significant gender difference in respondents' ratings of the entrepreneurial competencies required. Furthermore, the findings agreed with [11] who examined the interplay between Business Education and sustainable economic sustainability through digital skills possessed by Business Education graduates in Anambra State and reported that the respondents possessed low levels of e-entrepreneurship and cybersecurity skills necessary for contributing to sustainable economic sustainability.

Conclusion

This study has shown that acquisition as well as possession of entrepreneurial skills could enhance the ability of Business Education graduates to identify and exploit emerging business as well as entrepreneurial opportunities in the digital age. Digital platforms such as social media, e-commerce, online marketing among others have reduced some of the traditional barriers to starting and expanding businesses. Therefore, the researchers concluded that entrepreneurial skills and opportunities in the digital era had significant implications for economic sustainability of business education graduates in Ekiti State. It was therefore recommended among others that educators should create more awareness on acquisition of entrepreneurial skills during curriculum implementation. Furthermore, every business education graduate should embark on at least one entrepreneurial opportunity immediately after graduation; in order to improve economic sustainability; especially in Ekiti State and in Nigeria at large.

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