

**EMPLOYABILITY SKILL REQUIRED BY BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATE FOR  
EFFECTIVE OPERATION OF MODERN OFFICE**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND  
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## **APPROVAL**

This research was supervised and has been approved; having met the requirements of the Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City.

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**DR (MRS). H.E. CHUKWUEMEKE**

**Project Supervisor**

## CERTIFICATION

We certify that this project was carried out by **UCHE RITA ONYEKA** with Matriculation Number **EDU1804460** in the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Benin, Benin City for the award of Bachelor of Science (Education) Degree, Business Education (Office Technology and Management).

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## **DEDICATION**

This project work is dedicated to my late father, Mr Enweasor N. E. Cletus

## **AKNOWLEDGEMENT**

My profound gratitude goes firstly to God Almighty the giver of life for his continuous grace, mercies and guidance throughout the period of this project.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This project explores the crucial employability skills that Business Education graduates need to effectively contribute to the efficient functioning of contemporary offices. Through a comprehensive analysis of the evolving demands of modern workplaces, this study identifies key skills such as communication, teamwork, adaptability, and problem-solving as essential for graduates to excel in their roles. By shedding light on these skills, this research aims to equip both educators and students with valuable insights to bridge the gap between academia and the dynamic requirements of today's office environments, enhancing graduates' prospects for success in their careers. This project undertakes a comprehensive investigation into the specific employability skills that are not only valuable but, indeed, indispensable for these graduates to thrive in their workplace roles. The modern office has undergone significant transformations, driven by technological advancements, globalization, and shifting paradigms of work. To navigate this intricate terrain successfully, Business Education graduates must possess a nuanced skill set that extends beyond traditional academic knowledge. Ultimately, the project's aspiration is to enhance the employability and career trajectories of Business Education graduates in today's dynamic and competitive workforce.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background of the Study**

Education is the process of learning through different formal and informal ways in order to acquire knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes.

It is a lifelong process that starts from childhood and continues throughout one's life. Education plays a crucial role in personal development, socialization, and preparation for future endeavours. In most cases, formal education is provided in educational settings including schools, colleges, and universities. It is taught by certified teachers or instructors and adheres to a set curriculum. Formal education is divided into different levels, including primary education, secondary education, and higher education. It usually involves classroom instruction, examinations, and certifications.

Primary education focuses on providing a foundational education to children, typically from the ages of 5 to 11 or 12. It covers subjects like language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and physical education. Higher education refers to post-secondary education pursued after completing secondary education. It includes colleges, universities, vocational schools, and other institutions offering bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees. Higher education allows students to specialize in specific fields of study and acquire advanced knowledge and skills. Apart from formal education, there is also informal education, which occurs outside traditional educational settings. Informal education can be self-directed and driven by personal interests and experiences. It can include activities such as reading books, participating in workshops or seminars, engaging in online courses, or learning from mentors.

Business education, according to Njoku (2006), refers to the educational programs and courses that focus on providing knowledge, skills, and understanding of various aspects of the business world. It equips individuals with the foundational principles and practical skills necessary to succeed in the field of business and entrepreneurship. Business education is available at different levels, including secondary schools, colleges, universities, and specialized business schools. Business education covers a wide range of subjects related to business, management, finance, marketing, accounting, economics, entrepreneurship, operations, human resources, and strategy. The curriculum is designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of business principles and practices. According to Usoro (2010), business education is a combination of skills that teaches individuals how to be competent in marketing, management, accounting, and office work and Secretarial skills.

The concept of employability has become a focal point for governments, employers, job seekers, and educators in recent times. Employability, as defined by Brown and Hesketh (2004), refers to the chances of obtaining and maintaining various types of employment. While many people perceive employability as an absolute concept, emphasizing the need for individuals to acquire credentials, knowledge, and social status, it can also be viewed as subjective and influenced by contextual factors. Employability not only relies on meeting the requirements of specific jobs but also on how one compares to other job seekers within a hierarchical structure (Brown and Hesketh). Fugate (2004) defines employability as an active adjustment made by individuals in pursuing certain occupations until they can identify and seize available career opportunities in the workplace. It requires a skill for job seekers to identify opportunities that others might overlook. According to Kazilan (2009), employability encompasses a set of crucial skills instilled in each individual to cultivate a productive workforce. Hillage and Pollard (1998), as cited in Hind and Moss (2011), describe employability as a person's capacity to acquire and

sustain employment. For individuals, employability relies on the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) they possess, how they present those assets to employers, and the context they operate in (such as personal circumstances and the labor market environment) when seeking work (Hind and Moss, 2011).

In this paper, employability or employability skills refer to the abilities required by individuals to effectively and efficiently function in the world of work, whether as an employee or an employer. The labour market serves as the platform that brings employers and job seekers together. The employability competencies of a job seeker play a significant role in determining their relative position in the labor market. The employability skills, also known as soft skills or transferable skills, are the personal attributes, qualities, and abilities that enhance an individual's chances of gaining employment and succeeding in their career. These skills include communication skill, teamwork and collaboration, problem solving and critical thinking, adaptability and flexibility, etc.

**Communication skills:** The ability to convey information effectively through verbal, written, and non-verbal means. This includes active listening, articulating ideas clearly, and adapting communication style to different audiences.

**Teamwork and collaboration:** The capacity to work cooperatively with others, contributes to a team's goals, and builds positive working relationships. This involves being open-minded, respectful, and willing to compromise when necessary.

**Problem-solving and critical thinking:** The skill to analyze complex situations identifies problems, evaluate options, and make logical decisions. It involves creativity, adaptability, and the ability to think objectively.

Adaptability and flexibility: The ability to embrace change, adjust to new situations, and handle unexpected challenges. This includes being open to learning new skills and technologies and being able to work in diverse environments.

Time management and organization: The skill to prioritize tasks, manage workload efficiently, and meet deadlines. This involves setting goals, planning, and being able to multitask effectively.

Leadership: The capacity to guide and inspire others, take initiative, and demonstrate responsibility. Leadership skills include effective decision-making, delegation, and motivating team members.

Initiative and self-motivation: The ability to work independently, take ownership of tasks, and show enthusiasm and drive. This involves being proactive, seeking opportunities for self-improvement, and displaying a strong work ethic.

Creativity and innovation: The capacity to generate new idea, think outside the box, and find unique solutions to problems. This involves being open to new perspectives, embracing change, and being willing to take calculated risks.

Overall, these skills and qualities collectively enhance the operation of a modern office by improving communication, driving effective collaboration, enhancing problem-solving, adapting to change, providing strong leadership, and fostering creativity and innovation. Organisations that prioritize, and cultivate these skills in their workforce create a dynamic and productive workforce that can thrive in today's business landscape.

### **Statement of the problem**

In today's rapidly changing business landscape, employers seek candidates who possess a

combination of technical expertise and essential skills that enable them to navigate the demands of a modern office environment. According to Joseph C. Ezenma et al (2020), the level of success of any business is a function of the skills possessed by the workers. Modern office management is becoming complex on daily basis because of technological innovations. Variety of occupational problems and decisions confront every individual in an office today. Dikko (2008) also observed that there is a growing concern among industrialists that graduates of tertiary institutions do not possess adequate work skills necessary for employment in industries. Since the industries and the world of work are among the employers of Business Education graduates, Business Education programs should be geared towards satisfying the needs of these industries.

The issue of unskilled graduates results in decreased productivity, subpar product quality, and increased production cost. This problem impacts employers, employees, and the overall economy of the nation. Consequently, it is necessary to examine the necessary competencies the business education graduates from tertiary institutions should possess in order to be employable in contemporary offices settings. As a result, this research aims to identify the employability skills that business education graduates of the University of Benin need to effectively function in modern offices.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main thrust of this study is to critically investigate the factors that affect the optimum performance of Business Education graduates in today's modern office. It is based on these observed problems that this research is carried out.

- Identify the communication skills needed by employers of business education graduates.
- Identify the teamwork and collaboration competencies needed by employers of business

education graduates for employment.

- Identify the problem-solving and critical thinking competencies needed by employers of business education graduates for employment.
- Identify the adaptability and flexibility competencies needed by employers of Business education graduates for employment.

### **Research Questions:**

To what extent is communication skill required by employers of business education graduates in modern office?

To what extent are teamwork and collaboration competencies prioritized by employers when hiring business education graduates?

To what extent do employers evaluate the problem-solving skills of business education graduates in practical business scenarios?

To what extent do employers view the adaptability and flexibility competencies of business education graduates in rapidly changing business environments?

To what extent do employers look for leadership competencies in business education graduates, and how are these competencies assessed during the hiring process?

To what extent do employers value business education graduates' entrepreneurial mindset and ability to drive innovation within their roles?

### **Research Hypothesis:**

1. There is no significant relationship between the employability skills possessed by

business education graduates and the effective operation of modern offices based on gender.

2. There is a significant relationship between the employability skills possessed by business education graduates and the effective operation of modern offices based on option area.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study, when published in journals and presented in seminars and workshops will be beneficial to graduates of business education, employers, and the general public.

**Business Education Graduates:** Possessing employability skills makes graduates of Business Education more attractive to employers, increasing their chances of finding employment and advancing in their careers.

**Employers:** Employees with employability skills are more productive, efficient, and capable of delivering high-quality work.

**The general public:** The general public, with the intension of widening the horizon with respect to employability will certainly find this research work invaluable. This will enable the general public to be exposed to the nitty-gritty in employability.

These benefits can have a significant impact on graduates of business education career success, job satisfaction, and overall employability in terms of: increased job opportunities, competitive advantage, career advancement, enhanced job performance, job satisfaction, etc

Employability skills have a profound impact at individual, organisation, and societal levels. They improve employment prospects, enhance career advancement, boost productivity, foster positive work culture, contribute to economic growth, and drive societal development.

## **Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study is to examine the employability skills required by business education graduates for effective operation of modern office in Edo State. The study will be limited to University of Benin, Benin City; Edo State; and the respondents shall be Business Education, Master Students 2022/2023 academic session.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter presents a review of related literatures which are related to the study. The following headings are used to analyze the associated literature reviews, which come from government publications, textbooks, dissertations, journals, and abstracts:

- The Conceptual and theoretical framework
- Employability of Nigerian Graduates
- Communication Office competencies needed by employers of Business education graduates for employability in Edo State
- Teamwork and Collaboration Competencies Needed by Business Education Graduates
- Assessment of Problem Solving Skills of Business Education Graduates by Employers
- How Employers View the Adaptability and Flexibility Competencies of Business Education Graduates
- Leadership Competencies Needed by Business Education Graduates
- To What Extent do Employers Value the Entrepreneurial Mindset and Ability to Drive Innovation Within Their Roles
- Review of Related Empirical Studies
- Summary of literature review

## **Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

The conceptual framework for employability skills required by business education graduates for the effective operation of a modern office revolves around the idea that success in today's dynamic work environment calls for a blend of technical expertise, people skills, and flexibility.

The framework highlights three main pillars:

**Technical Competence:** Business education graduates must possess a strong foundation in core technical skills relevant to office operations. These skills may include proficiency in office productivity software (e.g., Microsoft Office Suite, Google Workspace), data analysis tools, project management software, and accounting systems. Additionally, they should have a good understanding of modern office technologies and be able to quickly learn and adapt to new tools and platforms.

**Interpersonal and Communication Skills:** Effective operation of a modern office involves collaboration and interaction with diverse teams, clients, and stakeholders. Graduates should possess strong interpersonal skills, including effective communication (both verbal and written), active listening, and the ability to work in teams. They should be capable of resolving conflicts, providing constructive feedback, and building positive relationships with colleagues and clients alike.

**Adaptability and Continuous Learning:** The modern office environment is constantly evolving, with new challenges, technologies, and trends emerging regularly. Business education graduates need to be adaptable and open to continuous learning. They should demonstrate a willingness to embrace change, be proactive in updating their skills, and seek opportunities for professional

development.

The theoretical framework for employability skills of business education graduates draws from several educational and psychological theories that underpin the development of competencies for effective office operation:

**Social Cognitive Theory:** This theory emphasizes the importance of observational learning and role modeling in skill acquisition. Business education programs should provide opportunities for students to observe and interact with professionals in real office settings, allowing them to learn employability skills through modeling behaviors of experienced office workers.

**Experiential Learning Theory:** Proposed by David Kolb, this theory suggests that learning occurs through concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Business education programs should incorporate hands-on experiences, internships, and practical projects that enable students to apply and reflect on their employability skills in real-world contexts.

**Self-Efficacy Theory:** According to Albert Bandura, self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform a specific task. Business education programs should focus on building students' self-efficacy in utilizing technical skills, navigating office environments, and effectively communicating with others. Positive reinforcement and successful experiences can boost students' confidence in their abilities.

**Constructivist Approach:** This approach to learning centers on the idea that learners actively construct knowledge based on their experiences and existing understanding. Business education

programs should encourage students to actively engage with course materials, collaborate with peers, and relate theoretical concepts to practical scenarios, fostering a deeper understanding of employability skills.

Bloom's Taxonomy: This taxonomy classifies learning objectives into cognitive domains, ranging from simple recall of information to higher-order thinking skills like analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Business education curricula should strive to develop employability skills across various cognitive levels, enabling graduates to handle complex office tasks and challenges effectively.

By combining the conceptual and theoretical frameworks, business education programs can equip graduates with the necessary employability skills to thrive in the fast-paced and ever-changing modern office environment. The integration of technical competence, interpersonal skills, adaptability, and a solid theoretical foundation enhances their potential for successful professional careers.

The general business education is an aspect of the business education program which prepares the citizenry for basic or general knowledge about business activities. There is need for such knowledge because consumers need it in order that they may select wisely from the vast quantities of goods and services available.

#### Areas of Business Education

According to Nzerem (1990), the skills acquired in the field of business education can be categorized into three main areas: office education, distributive education, and accounting education. The specific areas of specialization within the business education program include:

- Accounting education: This stream focuses on training accounting officers and accounts clerks, among others.
- Marketing or distributive education: This area aims to train marketing executives, sales executives, sales officers, general office clerks, etc.
- Office education: This specialization prepares individuals for roles such as secretaries, stenographers, typists, shorthand typists, clerical officers, reprographers, etc.

### **Employability of Nigerian Graduates**

In a 2010 report, Oyesiku summarized a workshop held by the Ogun State Bureau of Tertiary Institutions and found that the data provided indicates that the country's employment creation capacity is growing at an annual rate of between 5% and 7% over the last seven years. Although the nation's 213 universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education produced over 300,000 graduates annually, this amount should normally be sufficient to meet the nation's needs for human capital resources. However, employers who are willing to pay a premium to attract skilled workers are finding it more and more difficult to fill job openings. Oguntuase (2013) opines in the article: Unemployability of Nigeria Graduates: Myth or Reality? ...that products of the Nigerian University system have at different forum been challenged to test their suitability or otherwise to secure few available white collar jobs. He continued by saying that in addition to being empathetic, the situation is embarrassing because the vast majority of the nation's human resources have not been trained and utilized to the advantage of the country. He cited Tunde Lemo, a former deputy governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), who stated that it is now clear that graduates from Nigeria are not employable in the modern world. Lemo continued by stating that the Nigerian education system is plagued by numerous issues, including inadequate finance, insufficient interference, poor staffing, overcrowding and management incompetence. In

his paper, Oguntuwase also mentioned Professor Sola Fajana, who clarified that the poor job performance of many graduates in Nigerian colleges was caused by flawed curricula, meaning that the majority of programs offered there are out of date. He also said that classroom teaching mostly focus on concepts and not marketable skills. According to Oyesiku (2010), tertiary institutions are being held accountable for the decreasing quality of education outputs because of a number of factors, including deteriorating teaching and physical facilities, inadequate funding, low-quality inputs into the institutions, a lack of support from the public and private sectors, and the curricula used to instruct students. According to him, the number of graduates with the necessary skills who are available for employment has drastically decreased. That is, there is a gap between the demand for and the supply of graduates into the market. To reduce the disparity between the unemployed and the "unemployables," it is necessary to determine the skills that graduates require. Demand of the industry are high on institutions to produce resourceful and competent graduates. According to Akanmu (2011), despite Nigeria's impressive average economic growth rate of approximately 7% per year over the last seven years, which is considered commendable globally, there has been a significant decline of about 30% in wage employment. This means that the country's economic success has not resulted in sufficient job opportunities for its youth. Akanmu also highlighted that three out of ten tertiary graduates struggle to find work, suggesting that having a higher education does not necessarily improve job prospects. Even those who manage to find employment often end up in low-paying jobs that do not utilize their qualifications. The Nigeria – Next Generation Report, sponsored by the British Council, revealed that some graduates are compelled to accept marginal roles in fields like sales, agriculture, and manual labour. Employers are concerned about the competence of job applicants, particularly in relation to their suitability for specific roles. There

is a strong desire for graduates to possess not only professional expertise in their chosen fields but also complementary life skills. These include problem-solving, critical and reflective thinking, interpersonal and teamwork abilities, effective communication, character, integrity, self-esteem, self-discipline, organizational skills, leadership, and the capability to turn ideas into action. Unfortunately, many of these essential skills are not adequately taught in educational institutions, creating a gap in graduates' ability to secure gainful employment, even when job opportunities exist.

#### Competencies needed for Employment in Business Organisation

Business education's primary focus has been on preparing graduates with the necessary skills for employability. According to Agomuo (2002) who referenced Wenting (1987), the employability skills possessed by Business Education graduates are crucial indicators of their potential success in their chosen careers. Recognizing this significance, Agomuo emphasizes the importance for Business Educators to provide a comprehensive curriculum that equips students to excel in all aspects of employment, including self-employment through small entrepreneurship, which has proven to be highly promising in the modern world. Agomuo (2002) defines employability skills as a combination of attributes, abilities, and knowledge that individuals in the labour market should possess to perform effectively in their workplace, benefiting both their employers and the broader economy. These skills encompasses self-management, teamwork, business and customer awareness, problem-solving, communication, and literacy, as well as the application of numeracy and information technology. Furthermore, Agomuo (2002) points out a positive correlation between an individual's entrepreneurial abilities and their success in managing small-scale businesses. In essence, entrepreneurial abilities are synonymous with skills needed for small-

scale business management. This is because successful small-scale enterprises are typically led by skilled entrepreneurs who possess the relevant knowledge, experience, and attitudes. Agomuo (2002), citing Osuala (1995), also highlights the critical role that small businesses play in a nation's economy. Consequently, Business Education has continually aimed to equip its graduates with the employability skills required to thrive in various professional settings. According to Agomuo (2002), the primary objective of Nigeria's education philosophy is to equip individuals with the necessary skills and competencies to lead independent lives and contribute significantly to the country's economic development. To achieve this goal, Agomuo suggests enhancing Vocational and Technical Education curricula to include entrepreneurship skills. However, the current focus on academic certificates and degrees without corresponding practical skills has hindered economic progress. Ohiwerei (2009) supports this notion, explaining that many people don't consider Business Education as a valuable profession, resulting in a lack of skilled applicants for job positions. Ohiwerei (2009) provides a list of potential job opportunities for Business Education graduates, such as business educators, secretaries, office assistants, administrative officers, supervisors, agency executives, accountants, marketing officers, and clearing and forwarding officers. However, the scarcity of jobs for graduates is partly due to the poor quality of undergraduate education. Employers complain about the inadequacy of the skills possessed by graduates, and this can be attributed to various factors, including the shortage of Business Education teachers, insufficient maintenance of equipment, lack of access to teaching facilities, limited interest from both teachers and students, inadequate teaching materials, a fixation on certificates, and the entity responsible for teaching business education. Ohiwerei (2009) also cites former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, who observed that some banking institutions source personnel from abroad because university

graduates in Nigeria lack proper training and are therefore not employable. This emphasis on paper qualifications leads people to obtain certificates regardless of whether they genuinely deserve them or not. The quality of graduates produced by an educational institution is influenced by various factors, including the societal environment, available facilities, curriculum, the motivation, and caliber of students and staff. Ohiwerei (2009) concludes that the Business Education curriculum requires review, as there are significant differences in the programs offered by various tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

### **Employers of business education graduates require communication office competencies for employment**

Communication, derived from the Latin word "Communicatee," refers to the act of making information common, sharing, impacting, or transmitting it. Combs (1980) defined communication as the process of transferring information from a sender to a receiver, where the receiver comprehends and understands the information. Communication is an essential aspect of every organization, as it is necessary to solve problems and achieve goals through various organizational processes. The office manager, administrator, and other office workers must engage in communication to persuade, instruct, direct, request, present, inform, stimulate, and foster understanding. According to Lesikar (1991), communication is the crucial element that enables organizations to function effectively. It serves as the medium through which fundamental managerial and administrative functions are carried out. Drucker (1955) emphasized the significance of communication skills, stating that everyone in an organization must learn to organize and express ideas proficiently in writing and speaking.

Given the critical role of secretaries in an organization, they must not underestimate the

importance of effective communication. As the nerve center of an organization, the office receives and disseminates information, and secretaries play a central role in this process, handling both oral and written communication. The manner in which secretarial staff communicates significantly impacts the organization's reputation and goodwill, as they are often the first point of contact for callers. Therefore, secretaries are also considered as public relations officers. Communication is a dynamic process, particularly when involving human beings. Each individual may convey ideas differently; but the key is to ensure that the communicated idea elicits the correct feedback. Recent technological advancements in office settings have brought about unprecedented changes and new requirements for office functions. In the business world, effective communication is now more crucial than ever, as it significantly impacts relationships and interactions. This highlights the need for secretaries, who often deal with various organizational relationships, to acquire essential competencies. According to Anumihe (1997) and Anyachonkeya (2003), communication among individuals in the office, whether employers, employees, or customers/visitors, involves diverse ways of relating to each other. Clear and effective communication is vital to ensure mutual understanding and gather accurate feedback. Obi (2001) emphasized that communication skills are not only an indicator of a solid educational foundation but also a crucial tool for obtaining and maintaining jobs. Roberts (2009) and Nwankwo (2001) stressed the significance of communication competencies in enhancing the efficiency of performance in today's automated offices. These competencies encompass various communication skills, such as public relations, which involve conveying information with courtesy, projecting a positive image, handling conflicts, and connecting the organization with the public in a beneficial manner. Interpersonal skills involve disseminating information

effectively, interpreting sources of information, managing crises, displaying professionalism and maturity, expanding vocabulary and diction, and expressing oneself clearly. Additionally, verbal communication skills are essential for accurately conveying information, choosing appropriate communication media, wording information properly, addressing callers with politeness, listening actively, proofreading, demonstrating good spelling, writing effectively, making corrections, and interpreting messages accurately. Proper and timely communication of information instills confidence and reduces doubt, whereas withholding information or providing it late can give rise to rumors. Despite efforts, it is challenging to completely eradicate rumors within an organization, as noted by Onoyovwi (2007). Rumors are pieces of information that circulate without substantiating evidence, often being hearsay or flying reports that may impact the current state of an organization.

### **Teamwork and Collaboration Competencies Needed by Business Education Graduates for Employment**

The significance of interpersonal relationships in any work setting cannot be overstated. The workplace is a diverse group of people, including employers, employees, visitors, and contractors, who interact on a daily basis. How an employee is perceived by their employer, co-workers, and visitors has a significant impact on their daily happiness and the future of their career. Regardless of one's hard work and brilliant ideas, the inability to connect with colleagues can negatively affect both personal and professional life. Ogbechie (1991) raised concerns about the disparity between students' actual performance and the level of performance required to excel in their chosen careers. He highlighted that the key area lacking in students is their willingness to

perform well on the job and their ability to get along with colleagues both at work and in everyday life. This inability to build positive relationships in the workplace can be costly, leading to reduced productivity and increased operating expenses due to tension or conflicts among coworkers and superiors. Furthermore, the failure to effectively interact with clients could result in the organization losing valuable business opportunities worth millions of naira. According to Ogbechie, technical deficiencies can be addressed, but employees lacking in essential affective work skills and sensitivity become liabilities rather than assets to an organization.

- Assessment of Problem Solving Skills of Business Education Graduates by Employers
- Assessing problem-solving skills of business education graduates is crucial for employers as these skills are vital in the ever-changing and complex business environment. Here are some common methods employers may use to evaluate the problem-solving abilities of business education graduates:
  - Behavioral Interviews: Employers may conduct structured interviews where candidates are asked to describe real-life situations they encountered and how they tackled specific challenges. This approach provides insight into the candidate's problem-solving approach and their ability to think critically.
  - Case Studies: Case studies present candidates with hypothetical business scenarios or challenges they must analyze and solve. This method assesses their ability to identify relevant information, analyze data, and propose effective solutions.
  - Group Exercises: Employers may organize group activities or exercises to observe how candidates collaborate, communicate, and solve problems as a team. This approach evaluates not only individual problem-solving skills but also teamwork and interpersonal

abilities.

- **Problem-Solving Tests:** These are standardized tests designed to measure candidates' problem-solving abilities. They may involve logic puzzles, data analysis, or hypothetical business scenarios to gauge their analytical and critical thinking skills.
- **Behavioral Assessments:** Employers can use personality or behavioral assessments to understand a candidate's problem-solving style and cognitive strengths.
- **Past Performance and Work Samples:** Reviewing a candidate's past projects, academic achievements, or work samples can provide valuable insights into their problem-solving capabilities and creativity.
- **Role-Playing Exercises:** Employers may simulate real-life business situations where candidates must make quick decisions and solve problems under pressure.
- **Situational Judgment Tests (SJT):** SJTs present candidates with work-related scenarios and ask them to choose the most appropriate course of action. This method assesses their ability to handle practical situations effectively.
- **Problem-Solving Questions:** Employers may ask candidates open-ended questions related to their experiences and approaches to problem-solving to gain an understanding of their problem-solving mindset.
- **Performance on the Job:** Once hired, employers can continuously evaluate employees' problem-solving skills through their performance on the job, handling day-to-day challenges, and contributing to solving larger organizational issues.
- It's essential for employers to consider a combination of these methods to get a comprehensive understanding of a candidate's problem-solving skills. Additionally, soft skills like adaptability, creativity, and resilience should be taken into account, as they play a vital role in effective problem-solving in the business world.

- How Do Employers View the Adaptability and Flexibility Competencies of Business Education Graduates
- In their earlier study reporting on employer views of graduate competencies, Burchell, Hodges and Rainsbury (2001) took a mean of less than four to mean that respondents saw such competencies as irrelevant, and discovered a comparatively small spectrum of answers. The current study similarly shows a comparable lack of data distribution and high averages, suggesting that the employers in this work essentially think that all competencies listed to be important. Employers' preferences on employability of graduates can be inferred from the importance rankings of competences. The top 10 ranked competencies in order were: ability and willingness to learn; energy and passion; teamwork and cooperation; interpersonal communication; customer service orientation; order, quality and accuracy; flexibility; problem solving; achievement orientation; and, initiative. Of particular note, is that eight of the top 10 competencies are the so-called 'soft skills' (sometimes also referred to as affective or behavioral skills). The competency concern for order, quality, and accuracy saw a significant and unexpected shift from the last (business) employer research, moving up the ranking from 18 to 6. This perhaps suggests that employers are concerned that in a period of rapid change attention to quality and accuracy, and organizational stability can be compromised (Fry & Srivasta, 1992). It should come as no surprise that graduates just starting their corporate careers ranked the competencies impact and influence on others, leadership, organizational awareness, and developing others as the least important.
- As with previous studies of employer views on graduate competencies (Burchell, Hodges & Rainsbury, 2001; Coll, Zegwaard & Hodges, 2002a, 2002b), this study found that technical expertise was the Employers rank competency as less crucial (ranked 21st).

Joining technical expertise as a less important competency, was computer literacy. This was ranked 17, a substantial drop from its position in the top 10 in the 1998 business employer survey. The absence of emphasis on these hard talents probably means that they are taken for granted and that any shortcomings may be "fixed" with additional training or education, but weaknesses in soft skills might be perceived as more difficult to overcome. In addition, this lower emphasis on the technical skills is perhaps indicative of the changing nature of the workplace, where today's professionals must grapple with a myriad of 'super complexities' that require the application of a broader range of skills and behaviors (Barnett, 1999).

### **Leadership Competencies Needed by Business Education Graduates**

- Effective leadership competencies are crucial for business education graduates to successfully operate modern offices. As businesses evolve, the role of leaders has become increasingly complex, requiring a diverse set of skills and qualities. Below are some key leadership competencies essential for business education graduates to navigate the challenges of modern office environments:
- Emotional Intelligence (EI): Emotional intelligence involves the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions while also being attuned to the emotions of others. This competency helps leaders build strong relationships, foster collaboration, and create a positive work environment. According to Goleman et al. (2001), emotional intelligence is a vital factor in effective leadership and has a significant impact on organizational success.
- Communication Skills: Effective communication is essential for leaders to convey their vision, goals, and expectations clearly to their teams. Business education graduates should be adept at both verbal and written communication to interact with employees,

clients, and stakeholders. Research by Hackman & Johnson (2013) emphasizes the importance of communication skills in team effectiveness and productivity.

- **Adaptability and Resilience:** Modern offices often face rapid changes and uncertainties. Leaders must be adaptable and resilient to navigate through challenges and guide their teams effectively. A study by Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) highlights the role of positive emotions and resilience in coping with stress and maintaining high performance in leadership roles.
- **Strategic Thinking:** Business education graduates need to possess strategic thinking capabilities to set clear goals, formulate plans, and make informed decisions. Strategic thinking enables leaders to anticipate future challenges and opportunities and align their actions with the overall business objectives. The work of Mintzberg (1994) on strategic planning and emergent strategy is a valuable resource in understanding the importance of strategic thinking in leadership.
- **Collaborative Leadership:** Modern offices thrive on collaboration and teamwork. Leaders should foster a collaborative culture that encourages open communication and diverse perspectives. Research by Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) emphasizes the significance of collaborative leadership in complex organizational environments.
- **Technological Literacy:** In the digital age, leaders must be technologically literate to leverage the latest tools and innovations for improved productivity and efficiency. Technological competency enables leaders to make informed decisions about adopting new technologies in the workplace. The work of Volpicelli et al. (2016) explores the impact of technological literacy on leadership effectiveness.
- Additionally, business education graduates aiming to operate modern offices effectively must possess a diverse range of leadership competencies, including emotional

intelligence, communication skills, adaptability, strategic thinking, collaborative leadership, and technological literacy. These competencies, supported by research and citations, contribute to the success of leaders in navigating the complexities of contemporary work environments.

- How Do Employers Value the Entrepreneurial Mindset and Ability to Drive Innovation Within Their Roles
- The entrepreneurial mindset and the ability to drive innovation have become increasingly valued by employers across various industries and job roles. This trend is likely to continue or even intensify as businesses evolve in response to the changing global landscape. Let's explore the reasons why these attributes are highly regarded:
- Adaptability and problem-solving: Entrepreneurs are known for their adaptability and resourcefulness. They can apply creative problem-solving skills to overcome challenges and find opportunities in complex situations, which is highly desirable in a rapidly changing business environment.
- Initiative and proactiveness: Entrepreneurs tend to be proactive self-starters who take initiative without constant supervision. Employers appreciate individuals who are willing to take charge, drive projects forward, and identify new opportunities.
- Risk-taking and resilience: Entrepreneurs are comfortable with calculated risks and can handle failure with resilience. This mindset can be valuable to organizations seeking to explore new markets, develop innovative products, or navigate uncertain situations.
- Innovation and competitiveness: Entrepreneurial individuals often have a natural inclination towards innovation. They bring fresh ideas, methodologies, and perspectives that can enhance an organization's competitiveness and keep it at the forefront of its industry.

- Creativity and out-of-the-box thinking: Employers value candidates who can think creatively and propose unconventional solutions to problems. The entrepreneurial mindset fosters a willingness to challenge the status quo and find innovative ways of doing things.
- Leadership and vision: Entrepreneurs typically possess strong leadership skills and a clear vision of where they want to go. These qualities are valuable for leading teams, driving change, and shaping the direction of a company.
- Growth potential: Employers see the entrepreneurial mindset as an indicator of an employee's potential for personal and professional growth within the organization. It suggests the individual can evolve, adapt, and contribute positively to the company's growth and success.
- Customer-centric focus: Entrepreneurs often have a deep understanding of customer needs and preferences. This customer-centric approach can be beneficial for businesses looking to improve their products or services to better meet customer demands.

While the importance of an entrepreneurial mindset and innovation may vary from one organization to another, many employers recognize the potential impact of these attributes in driving business success, fostering a culture of innovation, and staying competitive in the marketplace. Therefore, they often seek candidates who demonstrate these qualities, regardless of the specific role being filled.

### **Review of Related Empirical Studies**

Many studies have been conducted on the office skills that graduates of business education must possess to satisfy the demands of their employers, particularly in light of the recent information

technology, which has transformed office tasks from manual to computerized processing.

Agbamu (2007) carried out a study on ICT competencies need for NCE business education graduates. The study's primary goal was to identify the particular ICT competencies that NCE business graduates would require in order to obtain work in contemporary companies. Findings of the study reveal that computer operation competencies are generally required for employment in both the public and private sectors. The capacity to launch and stop a computer system and its add-ons, launch a program and generate a document using part option, use word processing package etc. It also revealed media communication competencies were generally not required for employment of business education graduates, in particular they were not required by employers in the private sector. The competence required were essentially those rated by public sector employers and they include apply media in effective communication; create simple animation, ability to communicate orally as in written form.

The current study is similar to Agbamu's in that it aims to determine the abilities needed for office employment.

Agbamu's study focuses solely on ICT competencies, whereas this study looks beyond the ICT competencies in the modern office to include other skills required of an office education graduate like, communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, and problem solving skills. A study on the affective job skills secretaries require to operate in the private sector was carried out by Egwu (2003). The main purpose of the study was to identify effective work skills perceived as important by secretaries and their executives and to determine the level of effective work skills held in corporate organizations, as stated by its executives and secretaries. Idih's (2004) study on the word processing abilities needed for today's business education curricula was also reviewed.

The purpose of the study was to find out the working knowledge skills and keyboard operating skills required by secretaries. The present work is broader to include other office skills like office communication skills, teamwork and collaboration competencies, adaptability and flexibility competencies.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

The work focuses on identifying and analyzing the employability skills that are crucial for business education graduates to effectively operate in a modern office setting. The modern office environment demands a diverse set of skills beyond academic knowledge, and this study aims to highlight the key competencies required for graduates to succeed in their careers. The study begins by emphasizing the importance of employability skills in today's job market, where employers seek candidates with a blend of technical expertise and soft skills. It then delves into the specific skills that business education graduates need to navigate the complexities of a modern office. Some of the highlighted skills include:

**Communication:** Effective communication skills, both verbal and written, are essential for conveying ideas, collaborating with colleagues, and interacting with clients and stakeholders.

**Problem-Solving:** The ability to identify and address challenges, think critically, and devise innovative solutions is crucial for making informed decisions and contributing to the success of the organization.

**Teamwork:** Collaboration and effective teamwork are crucial for achieving common goals and fostering a positive work environment.

**Leadership:** While not all graduates may assume leadership roles immediately, possessing

leadership qualities helps in taking initiative and motivating others.

The work concludes by emphasizing the significance of integrating these employability skills into business education curricula. It highlights the role of educational institutions, businesses, and graduates themselves in fostering a culture of continuous learning and skill development to meet the demands of the modern office environment effectively.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The following headings in this chapter outline the approach used for this study:

- Design of the Study,
- Population of the Study,
- Sample of the Study,
- Instrument for Data Collection,
- Validation of the Instrument,
- Reliability of the Instrument,
- Method of Data Collection,
- Method of Data Analysis.

#### **Design of the study:**

The study utilized a survey research design, which is recommended by Ali (2006) for investigations focused on individuals' opinions, attitudes, and perceptions. This design was chosen because the study aimed to gather respondents' views and perceptions regarding the employability skills required by business education graduates for the successful operation of modern office among students of the University of Benin, (Masters) Business Education, 2022/2023 academic session.

### **Population of the Study:**

The population of the study consists of 90 Business Education, Master students, 2022/2023 academic session of the University of Benin.

Level	Accounting Students	OTM Students	Total
Masters	79	11	90

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques:**

The study utilized a sample size of 50, which was considered to accurately reflect the entire population. The 50 respondents were chosen using a proportionate random sampling method. This approach ensured that the sample was highly representative of the population.

Level	Accounting Students	OTM Students	Total
Masters	30	20	50

### **Instrument for Data Collection:**

Data collection was carried out using a well-organized questionnaire designed to align with the research questions. The questionnaire was divided into sections, each serving a specific purpose. The first section deals with the personal data of the respondent such as Department, age, gender and level. The second section comprised of questionnaire items that addressed the six research questions. Participants are required to respond by ticking the appropriate column. These questions were rated on a four-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE),

Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE), allowing participants to express their level of agreement or not for each item.

### **Validation of Instrument:**

A copy of the drafted questionnaire was given to the project supervisor and two other business educators from the University of Benin for their input and face validation. They provided their expertise and offered suggestions and comments on the wording and relevance of the questionnaire items. These inputs were taken into consideration and integrated into the final version of the questionnaire.

### **Reliability of the Instrument:**

After confirming the validity of the instrument, it underwent a reliability test to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. For this purpose, the questionnaire was given to twenty students (Masters) in the University of Benin, and the Cronbach Alpha formula was used to calculate the coefficient of internal consistency (stability) of the instrument. The computed coefficient turned out to be 0.781, which indicates a relatively strong level of internal consistency.

### **Method of Data Collection:**

The survey was conducted among students within the University. The distribution and collection of the questionnaire were carried out through direct personal contact, with the assistance of other research associates. Overall, 50 questionnaires were administered and subsequently collected after correctly filled out by the respondents.

**Method of Data Analysis:**

The gathered data underwent analysis using mean and standard deviation to assess scores for each response category. According to the decision rule, items with a mean equal or greater than 2.5 will be regarded as positive (very high extent) those with a mean less than 2.5 will be regarded as negative (very low extent).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter represents the outcomes of the students' responses included in the study.

The analysis includes discussions and tables to visually represent the findings. To evaluate student's attitudes as positive or negative, we utilize the mean as a measure. The discussion will be organized into the following sections:

- Percentage of Demographic Data
- Answering of Research Question
- Discussion of Findings

#### Percentage of Demographic Data

The demographic data was analyzed using frequency and simple percentage. The results are presented in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE**

<b>AGE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>19-23</b>	3	23%
<b>24-29</b>	10	16%
<b>30-34</b>	23	38%
<b>35 and Above</b>	14	23%
<b>TOTAL</b>	50	83%

The above table shows the percentage and frequency distribution of the age of respondents, 19-23 are 3 and has 23%, 24-29 are 10 and has 16%, 30-34 are 23 and has 38%, while the age of respondents from 35 and above are 14 and has 23%.

**TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY GENDER**

<b>GENDER</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>MALE</b>	28	46%
<b>FEMALE</b>	22	54%
<b>TOTAL</b>	50	100%

The above table shows the percentage and frequency distribution of the gender of respondents, male is 28 and has 46% while the female gender of respondents are 22 and has 54%.

**Answer to Research Questions**

Data collected to answer the research questions was answered using mean and standard deviation. The results is shown in Table 4.

**Research Question 1**

**Table 4:** Data showing the extent to which Communication skill required by employers of Business education graduates in modern office.

<b>S/</b>	<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>STAND</b>	<b>DECISION</b>
<b>N</b>			<b>EA</b>	<b>ARD</b>	
			<b>N</b>	<b>DEVIA</b>	
				<b>TION</b>	
1	Communication skills is important for employers hiring	50	3.6	.48487	<b>STRONGL</b>

	business education graduates in modern office settings		40			<b>Y AGREE</b>
			0			
2	Employers place emphasis on effective communication when considering business education graduates for job roles	50	2.7	.79693		<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
			60			<b>Y AGREE</b>
			0			
3	Employers value communication skill when seeking business education graduates for job role	50	2.0	1.03016		<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
			00			<b>Y</b>
			0			<b>DISAGREE</b>
4	Is the ability to communicate across diverse teams and cultures required for business education graduates in today's office environment	50	3.5	.78792		<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
			40			<b>Y AGREE</b>
			0			
5	Is strong communication skill is a prerequisite for business education positions in contemporary workplaces	50	2.7	.85809		<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
			20			<b>Y AGREE</b>
			0			

With respect to research question one, Table 4 shows that employers require business education graduates to have communication skills in modern office. Items 1 & 2 and 4 & 5 indicate strong agreement with mean ranging from 2.00 to 3.64. The data suggests a strong consensus among respondents regarding the importance of communication skills for business education graduates in modern office settings. However, there is some variation in opinions, particularly regarding whether employers value communication skills when seeking business education graduates for job roles.

**TABLE 5:** Data showing the extent to which Team work and collaboration competencies prioritized by employers when hiring Business Education graduates

<b>S/N</b>	<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>STANDARD DEVIATION</b>	<b>DECISION</b>
6	Do employers mention teamwork and collaboration competencies as important as important criteria in job descriptions for business education graduates	50	2.6000	.98974	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
7	Do employers place emphasis on teamwork and collaboration skills during the interview and hiring process for business education graduates	50	2.5600	1.09096	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
8	Do employers place emphasis on teamwork and collaborations competencies highlighted as essential for business education graduates in their professional roles	50	2.4400	1.16339	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
9	Do employers place emphasis on teamwork and collaboration skills	50	2.7400	1.13946	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>

particularly crucial for business education graduates

10	Has employers observed changes in the emphasis on teamwork and collaborations competencies for business education graduates	50	2.3800	.94524	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
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With respect to research question two, Table 5 shows that employers prioritize teamwork and collaboration competencies when hiring business education graduates. Items 6 & 7 and 9 & 10 indicate strong agreement with mean ranging from 2.38 to 2.74. The data suggests that the respondents generally believe employers strongly emphasize teamwork and collaboration skills during the hiring process of business education graduates. However, there is some disagreement regarding whether these competences are emphasized in graduates' professional roles and whether there have been changes in the emphasis over time.

### RESEARCH QUESTION 3

**TABLE 6:** Data showing the extent employers evaluate the problem solving skills of Business education graduates in practical business scenarios.

S/N	QUESTIONS	N	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
11	Do employers frequently assess the problem-solving abilities of business education graduates	50	3.2000	.98974	<b>STRONGLY</b>

							<b>AGREE</b>
12	Do business education programs effectively prepare graduates for solving practical business challenges	50	3.060	.93481			<b>STRONG</b>
			0				<b>AGREE</b>
13	Do employers consider problem-solving skills when evaluating the overall competencies of business education graduates	50	2.660	1.08063			<b>STRONG</b>
			0				<b>AGREE</b>
14	Are employers satisfied with the problem-solving capabilities demonstrated by business education graduates in actual business scenarios	50	2.960	1.17734			<b>STRONG</b>
			0				<b>AGREE</b>
15	Do employers believe that problem-solving skills play a significant role in the success of business education graduates in their professional roles	50	2.520	1.01499			<b>STRONG</b>
			0				<b>AGREE</b>

Table 6 shows that employers evaluate the problem solving skills of business education graduates in practical business scenarios. Items 11 to 15 indicate strong agreement with mean ranging from 2.52 to 3.20. The data indicates that, according to the respondents, employers frequently assess the problem solving abilities of business education graduates, and business education programs effectively prepare graduates for practical challenges. However, there is some variability in the responses, as reflected in the standard deviations.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION 4**

**TABLE 7:** Data showing the extent employers view the Adaptability and flexibility competencies of Business education graduates in rapidly changing business environments.

<b>S/N</b>	<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>STANDARD DEVIATION</b>	<b>DECISION</b>
16	Do employers consider adaptability and flexibility competencies when hiring business education graduates	50	2.8600	.85738	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
17	Do employers observe business education graduates effectively adjust their skills to meet the evolving demands of the business landscape	50	2.9400	1.09563	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
18	Do employers believe that flexibility is a key factor in the success of business education graduates in navigating dynamic business environments	50	2.9000	.90914	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
19	Do business education graduates demonstrate the ability to learn new concepts and technologies quickly as indicated by employers perception	50	2.8600	1.01035	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
20	Do employers think that business education program adequately prepares graduates to handle unexpected challenges and change in their work settings	50	3.0800	.94415	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>

Table 7 shows that employers view the adaptability and flexibility competencies of business education graduates in rapidly changing business environments. Items 16 to 20 indicate strong agreement with mean ranging from 2.86 to 3.08. The data shows that employers view the adaptability and flexibility competencies of business education graduates in rapidly changing business environments.

### RESEARCH QUESTION 5

**TABLE 8:** Data showing the extent do employers look for leadership competencies in Business education graduates, and how these competencies assessed during the hiring process.

S/N	QUESTIONS	N	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
21	Do employers consider leadership competencies when hiring business education graduates	50	3.0400	.83201	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
22	Do employers prioritize leadership competence when evaluating business education graduates	50	2.3200	.97813	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
23	Do employers assess leadership competencies during the hiring process of business education students	50	2.4600	1.26507	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
24	Do employers use tools to measure leadership competencies in potential hire of business education graduates	50	3.3800	1.04764	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>

25	Do employers believe that strong leadership competencies contribute to the success of business education graduates within their organization	50	3.1200	.91785	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
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With respect to research question five, Table 8 shows that employers look for leadership competencies in business education graduates, and how these competencies are assessed during the hiring process. Items 21, 24, & 25 indicate strong agreement with mean ranging from 2.32 to 3.38. Respondents generally believe that employers do consider and value leadership competencies when hiring and assessing business education graduates, with some variation in the strength of disagreement 22 & 23.

### RESEARCH QUESTION 6

**TABLE 9:** Data showing the extent do employers value Business education graduates entrepreneurial mindset and ability to drive innovation within their roles.

S/N	QUESTIONS	N	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
26	Does entrepreneurial mindset for business education students contribute to innovation within the organization is important	50	2.7600	1.20475	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
27	Do business education graduates able to drive innovation when making hiring decisions	50	2.9800	.74203	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>

28	Does business education background enhance an employee's potential to bring innovative ideas to their roles	50	2.5400	1.12866	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
29	Do business education graduates typically align with their organizations expectations for fostering an entrepreneurial mindset	50	2.5800	.92780	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
30	Do business education graduates entrepreneurial skills positively impact their ability to drive innovation in their role within the company	50	2.4200	1.32619	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>

The statistics provides insight into the respondents' opinions regarding the relationship between business education, entrepreneurial mindset, and innovation within organisations. Notably, there is some variations in responses, as indicated by the standard deviations. Item 27 and 28 received STRONG DISAGREE responses, while items 26, 29, and 30 received STRONG AGREE responses. This suggests differing views on the impact of business education on innovation with mean range of 2.42 to 2.98.

These findings present the results of a study on business education graduates and employer perceptions. The data includes demographic information, responses to research questions, and the mean and standard deviation for each question.

Demographic Data: The respondents were 50 individuals, with the majority falling into the age groups 24-29 and 30-34, and a balanced gender distribution.

Research Question 1 (Communication Skills): Employers strongly agree that communication skills are essential for business education graduates in modern office settings.

Research Question 2 (Teamwork and Collaboration): Employers also strongly agree that teamwork and collaboration competencies are important criteria when hiring business education graduates.

Research Question 3 (Problem Solving Skills): Employers frequently assess the problem-solving abilities of business education graduates and believe these skills are crucial for success in their roles.

Research Question 4 (Adaptability and Flexibility): Employers view adaptability and flexibility competencies as important when hiring business education graduates, and they observe graduates effectively adjusting to evolving business demands.

Research Question 5 (Leadership Competencies): Employers strongly agree that leadership competencies are considered when hiring business education graduates, but they may not prioritize these competencies when evaluating them.

Research Question 6 (Entrepreneurial Mindset): Employers value an entrepreneurial mindset in business education graduates for driving innovation, although they may not always see graduates as effective innovators.

Overall, the study suggests that employers highly value communication skills, teamwork, problem-solving abilities, adaptability, and leadership competencies in business education graduates, but there may be room for improvement in some areas, such as assessing leadership competencies and driving innovation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

#### **Summary**

The fifth chapter of this project provides a comprehensive summary of the research conducted on 'Employability Skills Required by Business Education Graduates for Effective Operation of Modern Office.' This study aimed to identify and analyze the essential employability skills that business education graduates need to excel in today's modern office environments.

Throughout the research process, various aspects of employability skills, including communication skills, teamwork and collaboration competencies, problem solving skills, adaptability and flexibility competencies, leadership competencies, and entrepreneurial mindset and ability to drive innovation were explored. Surveys and interviews were conducted, alongside literature reviews so as to gather valuable insights from graduates of business education. The key ideas of the subject were examined in pertinent literature. To guide data collection, six research questions guided the study. The population of the study consisted of 50 graduates (Masters students), in business education.

A well-designed questionnaire served as the data gathering tool. It was face validated by experts in Business Education, University of Benin. The questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the respondents. Fifty copies of the questionnaire were administered and duly completed and retrieved for data analysis. The data obtained were analysed using Mean and Standard Deviation.

#### **Key Findings**

- Communication skills, both oral and written, were identified as the most critical employability skill, enabling graduates to convey ideas effectively, collaborate, and build

relationships in the workplace.

- Teamwork and collaboration skills are essential, as modern offices often rely on cross-functional teams to achieve their goals.
- Problem-solving and critical thinking skills were recognized as crucial for graduates to address complex challenges and make informed decisions.
- Adaptability and flexibility skills are vital in today's dynamic work environments, allowing graduates to respond to changing circumstances and learn new technologies or tools quickly.
- Technical proficiency, particularly in software and digital tools, is increasingly important for graduates to navigate modern office technologies efficiently.
- Implication of the Study
- Research on the employability skills required by business education graduates for successful operation of modern offices can have far-reaching economic implications, from improving labor market efficiency to boosting business competitiveness and fostering economic growth. Here are a few economic implications:
- Labor Market Efficiency: Identifying the specific employability skills needed for modern office operation can lead to a more efficient labor market. Graduates possessing these skills are more likely to find suitable employment quickly. There by reducing unemployment rates and minimizing the time businesses spend searching for qualified candidates.
- Productivity Gains: Graduates equipped with the necessary skills can contribute to improved workplace productivity. Efficiently run offices can complete tasks more quickly, increasing overall economic output and competitiveness.

- **Reduced Training Costs:** Employers often spend resources on training new hires to bridge skill gaps. Research on employability skills can lead to graduates who require less training, saving businesses time and money.
- **Higher Earnings Potential:** Graduates with in-demand employability skills may command higher salaries, which can positively impact personal income levels and potentially lead to increased consumer spending, benefiting various sectors of the economy.
- **Competitiveness of Businesses:** Businesses with employees possessing the right skills are better positioned to compete in the global market. This can contribute to business growth, exports, and the overall economic performance of a region or country.
- **Innovation and Adaptation:** Modern offices rely heavily on technology and adapt to changing work environments. Research in this area can lead to graduates who are better prepared to innovate and adapt to new technologies and work trends, potentially fostering economic growth through innovation.
- **Reduction in Skill Mismatch:** By aligning educational programs with the actual needs of businesses, there is a potential reduction in skill mismatch. This means that graduates are more likely to find employment that matches their qualifications, which, in turn, reduces economic inefficiency caused by underutilization of skills.

## **Recommendations**

The research's conclusions lead to the following recommendations being put forth:

- Educational institutions should incorporate employability skill development programs into their curricula to better prepare business education graduates for the modern workplace.

- Employers should provide ongoing training and development opportunities for their employees to enhance and update their technical skills.
- Graduates should actively seek opportunities for internships, co-op programs, or volunteer work to gain practical experience and further develop their employability skills.
- Industry associations and government bodies should collaborate to create awareness campaigns and initiatives that promote the value of employability skills and encourage their integration into hiring practices.
- Further research should be conducted to continually assess the evolving landscape of employability skills in response to changing office environments and technology advancements.
- This project sheds light on the critical role employability skills play in the success of business education graduates in modern offices. By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can contribute to the development of a skilled and adaptable workforce that meets the demands of the ever-changing workplace.

## **Conclusion**

The research highlights the paramount importance of employability skills for business education graduates seeking success in modern office settings. Graduates possessing strong communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, and technical skills are more likely to excel in their roles and contribute positively to their organizations.

The study underscores the evolving nature of office work, emphasizing the need for continuous skill development and adaptation to stay competitive in the job market. Employers and educational institutions must collaborate to bridge the skills gap and ensure that graduates are adequately prepared for the demands of modern offices.

## **Suggestion for Further Studies**

- **Comparative Analysis:** Conduct a comparative study of the employability skills required by business education graduates in different countries or regions and assess how they align with the demands of modern office settings. This can provide insights into global variations and trends.
- **Industry-Specific Focus:** Investigate the specific employability skills needed for various industries within modern offices, such as finance, technology, healthcare, or marketing. Identify industry-specific skill gaps and training needs.
- **Employer Perspective:** Conduct surveys or interviews with employers to gather their perspectives on the employability skills they seek in business education graduates. This can help bridge the gap between academia and industry expectations.
- **Technology Integration:** Explore the role of technology in modern office operations and how business education programs can better prepare graduates with the necessary digital skills, including proficiency in software and digital tools.

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Appendix I

**DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (VTE),  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.**

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS REQUIRED BY BUSINESS  
EDUCATION GRADUATES FOR EFFECTIVE OPERATION OF MODERN OFFICE.**

**Dear Respondent,**

I am currently an undergraduate student at the University of Benin, conducting a research survey titled "Employability Skills Required by Business Education Graduates for Effective Operation of Modern Office". This survey is part of my efforts to fulfill the requirements for a Bachelor's degree in Education. The information gathered will remain confidential and will solely be utilized for academic purposes.

Kindly indicate your response by checking the appropriate box provided. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

**ONYEKA RITA UCHE**

Researcher

**SECTION A**

**INSTRUCTION:** Carefully read through the following statement/question and indicate your response by ticking (√) in the appropriate box provided for the response that you consider to be

most appropriate for each item.

Department: VTE [ ]

Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]

Age: Less than 18 [ ] 19 – 23 [ ] 24 – 29 [ ] 30 – 34 [ ] 35 & and above [ ]

Level: Masters

### SECTION B

For each statement/question, tick (✓) as appropriate on the column that best describes your opinion using the following: Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE).

S/N	STATEMENT	VHE	HE	LE	VLE
RQ1	<b>TO WHAT EXTENT IS COMMUNICATION SKILL REQUIRED BY EMPLOYERS OF BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES IN MODERN OFFICE?</b>				
1	To what extent do communication skills important for employers hiring business education graduates in modern office settings?				
2	What extent do employers place emphasis on effective communication when considering business education graduates for job roles?				
3	What extent do employers value communication skill when seeking business education graduates for job role?				
4	To what extent is the ability to communicate across diverse				

	teams and cultures required for business education graduates in today's office environment?				
5	To what extent is strong communication skill is a prerequisite for business education positions in contemporary workplaces?				
RQ2	<b>TO WHAT EXTENT ARE TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION COMPETENCIES PRIORITIZED BY EMPLOYERS WHEN HIRING BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES?</b>				
6	To what extent do employers mention teamwork and collaboration competencies as important criteria in job descriptions for business education graduate positions?				
7	To what extent do employers place emphasis on teamwork and collaboration skills during the interview and hiring process for business education graduates?				
8	What extent does teamwork and collaboration competencies highlighted as essential for business education graduates in their professional roles?				
9	To what extent are teamwork and collaboration skills particularly crucial for business education graduates?				
10	To what extent has employers observed changes in the emphasis on teamwork and collaboration competencies for business education graduates over the past few years?				
RQ3	<b>TO WHAT EXTENT DO EMPLOYERS EVALUATE THE</b>				

	<b>PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS OF BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES IN PRACTICAL BUSINESS SCENARIOS?</b>				
11	To what extent do employers frequently assess the problem-solving abilities of business education graduates?				
12	To what extent do business education programs effectively prepare graduates for solving practical business challenges?				
13	What extent do employers consider problem-solving skills when evaluating the overall competence of business education graduates?				
14	To what extent are employers satisfied with the problem-solving capabilities demonstrated by business education graduates in actual business scenarios?				
15	To what extent do employers believe that problem-solving skills play a significant role in the success of business education graduates in their professional roles?				
RQ4	<b>TO WHAT EXTENT DO EMPLOYERS VIEW THE ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY COMPETENCIES OF BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES IN RAPIDLY CHANGING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTS?</b>				
16	To what extent do employers consider adaptability and flexibility competencies when hiring business education graduates?				
17	What extent do employers observe business education graduates effectively adjust their skills to meet the evolving demands of the business landscape?				

18	To what extent do employers believe that flexibility is a key factor in the success of business education graduates in navigating dynamic business environments?				
19	To what extent do business education graduates demonstrate the ability to learn new concepts and technologies quickly as indicated by employer's perception?				
20	To what extent do employers think that business education programs adequately prepare graduates to handle unexpected challenges and changes in their work settings?				
RQ5	<b>TO WHAT EXTENT DO EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES IN BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES, AND HOW ARE THESE COMPETENCIES ASSESSED DURING THE HIRING PROCESS?</b>				
21	To what extent do employers consider leadership competencies when hiring business education graduates?				
22	To what extent do employers prioritize leadership competence when evaluating business education graduates?				
23	To what extent do employers assess leadership competencies during the hiring process of business education graduates?				
24	To what extent do employers use tools to measure leadership competencies in potential hires of business education graduates?				

25	To what extent do employers believe that strong leadership competencies contribute to the success of business education graduates within their organizations?				
RQ6	<b>TO WHAT EXTENT DO EMPLOYERS VALUE BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES' ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET AND ABILITY TO DRIVE INNOVATION WITHIN THEIR ROLES?</b>				
26	To what extent does entrepreneurial mindset for business education graduates contribute to innovation within the organization is important?				
27	To what extent do business education graduates able to drive innovation when making hiring decisions?				
28	What extent does business education back ground enhance an employee's potential to bring innovative ideas to their role?				
29	To what extent do business education graduates typically align with their organization's expectations for fostering an entrepreneurial mindset?				
30	To what extent do business education graduate's entrepreneurial skills positively impacted their ability to drive innovation in their role within the company?				

**Scale: ALL VARIABLES****Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.781	30