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Perceived Advertising Skills Required Of Business Education Students For Effective Operation Of Small-Scale Businesses For Self-Reliance In Delta State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
Small-scale enterprises constitute the cornerstone of economic development across nations, serving as primary drivers of employment generation and personalised service delivery. This study examines the perceived advertising skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design with a mixed-methods approach was adopted. The population comprised 98 Business Educators in three Colleges of Education in Delta State. A census sampling approach was employed, and all 98 Business Educators participated in the study. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, with quantitative data analysed via SPSS (descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha, and one-way ANOVA) and qualitative responses subjected to thematic analysis. The findings revealed that communication skills (grand mean = 3.14, $\alpha = 0.89$), marketing skills (grand mean = 3.21, $\alpha = 0.91$), technical skills (grand mean = 3.22, $\alpha = 0.88$), and analytical skills (grand mean = 3.24, $\alpha = 0.90$) are critically required of Business Education graduates for effective small-scale business operations. ANOVA results revealed no statistically significant differences in perceptions across the three institutions ($p > 0.05$), suggesting consensus on skill requirements. However, significant challenges including inadequate funding, resistance to change, and time constraints inhibit the acquisition and application of these skills. The study recommends increased institutional funding, enhanced digital integration, improved faculty training, and stronger stakeholder engagement in quality assurance mechanisms. The study contributes to the application of Human Capital Theory in advertising skills acquisition by distinguishing between general-purpose and firm-specific advertising competencies, providing empirical evidence for curriculum development in Business Education.
Keywords: Advertising Skills, Business Education, Small-Scale Businesses, Self-Reliance.

INTRODUCTION

Small-scale businesses (SSBs) have historically been regarded as major drivers of economic development in national economies. Since they play essential roles in job creation, national development, and the delivery of tailored services, they form the foundation of nearly every economy worldwide. SSBs are widely viewed as engines of economic growth and equitable development, particularly in developing economies (Zindiye, 2016). Definitions of SSBs differ across economies according to factors such as workforce size, total net assets, sales volume, and investment level. In Nigeria, the criteria include capital investment in fixed assets, annual turnover, gross output, and employment (Oluwadare, Taiwo & Adekunle, 2016). Aremu and Adeyemi (2011) define a small-scale business as an enterprise with 11–100 workers or total costs not exceeding ₦50 million, excluding land costs.

SSBs contribute to economies through better use of raw materials, employment generation, rural development, entrepreneurship development, mobilisation of local savings, links with larger industries, regional balance through equitable investment distribution, and training opportunities (Muritala, Awolaja & Bako, 2012). In Nigeria, SSBs account for about 97% of all business enterprises and provide roughly 50% of national employment and industrial output (Taiwo, Ayodeji & Yusuf, 2012). They are considered vital to Nigeria's economic progress, poverty reduction, and job creation at low investment cost, while also promoting entrepreneurial abilities and indigenous technological innovation. Akande (2015) argues that for any small-scale business to succeed, its owners and employees must possess the right competencies and abilities to run or manage the enterprise effectively. To thrive in today's competitive market, entrepreneurs need a wide range of skills. A skill is an ability acquired through training and demonstrated through action (Ezeagu, 2015). Kathryn (2015) describes skill as the knowledge and capability that enables effective work performance. Skills are acquired through formal or informal training and practice (Perks & Smith, 2012). Drucker (2014) defines skills as abilities and capacities acquired through deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to perform complex activities or job functions. Such skills may be obtained through Business Education programmes.

Business Education is a vocational programme that equips learners with the skills, attitudes, knowledge, and understanding needed to participate effectively and contribute as producers or consumers of business products (Nwagwu & Azih, 2016). According to Bupo and Okiridu (2017), the objectives of Business Education include exposing students to the business world and possible careers; helping them make informed choices about goods and services; developing understanding of various business occupations; fostering appreciation of economic systems; enabling acquisition of business knowledge and skills for personal use; preparing students for business careers; and preparing business teachers. Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) state that the goals of Business Education include preparing students for specific careers in office occupations, equipping them with the skills needed for job creation and entrepreneurship, and exposing them to business knowledge, including Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competencies.

Business Education refers to the educational processes concerned with vocational and professional preparation for business careers, the teaching of business subjects, and the provision of business information that citizens and consumers need to understand and use their business and economic environment effectively (Ile & Okolocha, 2015). This field prepares graduates for self-reliance and enables them to operate, manage, and sustain business enterprises by developing appropriate competencies and skills. Advertising skills are among these essential competencies. Advertising refers to any non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor (Abdulahi, 2014). Organisations advertise not only to sell and promote products but also to build effective defences against competitive moves. Advertising performs many functions: informing the public about products and services, educating consumers on product use, encouraging quality improvement, persuading consumers to buy, creating employment opportunities, reminding consumers to continue purchasing, expanding markets, building brand loyalty, presenting a positive corporate image, increasing sales volume and profitability, and providing information about price and quality changes (Adewale, 2014).

Advertising skills are competencies acquired to persuade consumers to purchase particular products or services. These skills are essential for positioning business brands in markets, creating awareness of products or services, and showing customers the benefits of choosing a particular enterprise (Claudia, 2020). Such competencies include communication, marketing, technical, and analytical skills, along with knowledge of media trends, problem-solving abilities, negotiation techniques, and stress management strategies. When business education students who are future SSB owners or employees lack these skills, it becomes a major impediment that can lead to business failure and collapse. Communication skills include public relations abilities (maintaining civilised values, conveying information with pleasantries, projecting positive images, and resolving conflicts); interpersonal skills (disseminating information, interpreting and discriminating information sources, and managing crises); and verbal communication competencies (relating information accurately, selecting appropriate media, and demonstrating good listening and writing skills) (Obi, 2011; Roberts, 2016; Nwankwo, 2011).

Marketing skills involve identifying customers and developing strategies to encourage the purchase of a product or service. Marketing skills include salesmanship, negotiation, sales record keeping, sales promotion, stock record keeping, pricing, and advertising channel management (Jones, 2015; Niche, 2015; Uche, 2016). Technical skills are teachable abilities required to perform practical tasks, including data analysis, software proficiency, machine operation, and IT networking (Allen Consulting Group, 2012; Fugate, Kinichi & Ashforth, 2014). Analytical skills include logical reasoning, critical thinking, communication, research, data analysis, and creativity. Analytical thinkers can separate emotions from work, break large problems into manageable components, and make rational decisions (Ariella, 2021; Doyle, 2020). Advertising is paid non-personal communication about an organisation, products, services, or ideas by an identified sponsor (Bennet, 2016). Modern advertising serves as a persuasive force aimed at changing customer behaviour, which is essential because consumer wants and needs evolve as economic positions improve and individuals move through different life stages. Stefan (2019) identified several key functions of advertising, including identifying brands and products, providing consumer information, persuading consumers to purchase, previewing new trends, generating product demand, and building customer bases.

This study is anchored on Human Capital Theory, popularised by Nobel Laureate T.W. Schultz (1963). The theory holds that education or training enhances worker productivity by imparting useful life skills. Becker (2006) distinguished between firm-specific human capital (expertise obtained through education and training in specific organisational contexts) and general-purpose human capital (knowledge gained through education and training that is valuable across various firms). According to Lange and Topel (2014), individuals with superior skills can enhance workplace productivity. This theory is important to the present study because training workers raises their productivity through the impartation of useful skills, and the theory suggests that individuals with greater skills can improve employee and workplace productivity.

In the context of this study, advertising skills can be categorised along Becker's (2006) general-purpose versus firm-specific continuum. Communication skills and analytical skills constitute general-purpose human capital they are transferable across firms, industries, and national contexts, enhancing graduates' mobility and resilience in volatile labour markets. Marketing skills, particularly those related to specific product knowledge and customer relationship management, possess both general-purpose and firm-specific dimensions: while the principles of marketing are general, their application to a specific SSB's product line and customer base requires contextual knowledge. Technical skills, especially those related to operating specific equipment or software used by a particular enterprise, lean toward firm-specific human capital. This distinction has implications for curriculum design: general-purpose skills should be emphasised in foundational Business Education courses, while firm-specific skills are best acquired through internships, apprenticeships, and industry partnerships.

Statement of the Problem

Akande (2011) maintained that skills are the traits or capabilities entrepreneurs need in order to start and successfully run businesses in competitive settings. In Delta State, small-scale businesses (SSBs) are the

main source of employment for the population. Yet, because labour costs are lower, many SSB owners prefer to hire unskilled workers, especially clerical staff. This practice has led to business stagnation. In addition, although advertising skills are widely recognised as important for business success, many SSBs have not given them adequate attention in their operations.

Research shows that most SSBs in Nigeria collapse within their first five years, and only about 5–10% survive to maturity (Ezejiofor & Ezenyirimba, 2014). One major cause of this early business failure is the lack of advertising skills among Business Education students, who are expected to become future business owners.

Although the Nigerian government has introduced various monetary, fiscal, and industrial policies to promote and develop SSBs, many Business Education students who should have acquired entrepreneurial competencies still lack the necessary skills. This skills gap has caused most graduates to seek only paid employment, even though such opportunities are limited due to the nation's economic conditions. Business Education is designed to provide training and instil the skills individuals need for economic self-reliance (FGN, 2013). Only by gaining appropriate competencies can Business Education students successfully manage small-scale businesses and contribute to national industrial development after graduation. However, students appear to lack sufficient knowledge and skills in this area. Therefore, this study examines the advertising skills Business Education students require to operate small-scale businesses effectively for self-reliance in Delta State.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the perceived advertising skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the communication skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State.
2. Examine the marketing skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State.
3. Examine the technical skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State.
4. Examine the analytical skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are communication skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State?
2. To what extent are marketing skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State?
3. To what extent are technical skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State?
4. To what extent are analytical skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators across the three Colleges of Education in Delta State regarding the communication skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators across the three Colleges of Education in Delta State regarding the marketing skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance.

$H0_3$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators across the three Colleges of Education in Delta State regarding the technical skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance.

$H0_4$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Business Educators across the three Colleges of Education in Delta State regarding the analytical skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive survey design complemented by a mixed-methods approach. Uzoagulu (2017) explains that a descriptive survey is appropriate when a questionnaire is used to obtain the views of a particular population or sample. The study population consisted of 98 Business Educators from three Colleges of Education in Delta State: College of Education, Warri (16); College of Physical and Health Education, Mosogar (12); and Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba (70). These respondents were chosen because they are directly involved in teaching and building the skills of Business Education students and play vital roles in the effective implementation of the curriculum. Since the population was manageable (N = 98), a census sampling technique was used, and all 98 Business Educators took part in the study. Data were gathered using two instruments. One was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers and titled "Advertising Skills Required of Business Education Students Questionnaire (ASRBESQ).

The questionnaire contained two sections: Section "A" focuses on demographic information of respondents (institution, years of experience, highest qualification) while Section "B" contained 38 items measuring four dimensions of advertising skills: communication skills (10 items), marketing skills (10 items), technical skills (9 items), and analytical skills (9 items). Items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale of; Very Highly Required (4), Highly Required (3), Fairly Required (2), and Not Required (1). A semi-structured interview guide was also developed to obtain qualitative insights from institutional administrators (Deans, Heads of Department) regarding the effectiveness of current Business Education curricula in imparting advertising skills and the challenges encountered. Five administrators were purposively selected for interviews, representing each institution and relevant administrative roles. The instruments were subjected to expert review by two professionals in Business Education and one in Measurement and Evaluation to ensure content and face validity. Their feedback led to the refinement of items wording and the removal of two ambiguous items. A pilot study was conducted with 15 Business Educators from a College of Education in College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.89. 98 copies of the instrument were distributed physically to the 98 Business Educators across the three institutions. A response rate of 100% was achieved due to the census approach and follow-up reminders. Interviews with five administrators were conducted at their offices. Collected data were analysed using SPSS version 26. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions with a criterion mean of 2.50 was used as the benchmark for acceptance. One-way ANOVA was used to test the four null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Such that if the p-value is equal or greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance, it will not be rejected. If otherwise, it will be rejected.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent are communication skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State?*

Data collected to answer the above research question are presented in Table 1

Table 1: Respondents Mean Rating on Communication Skills Required of Business Education Students for Effective Operation of Small-Scale Businesses for Self- Reliance.

S/N	Statements	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
1.	Ability to utilise workflow communication systems for effective information sharing with colleagues and customers.	3.07	0.95	Required
2.	Ability to listen attentively and respond appropriately to the needs of target audiences.	3.12	0.96	Required
3.	Ability to set up and manage video conferencing and teleconferencing systems for business communication.	3.05	0.93	Required
4.	Ability to adhere to established communication procedures and protocols in business operations.	3.14	0.98	Required
5.	Ability to use appropriate language and expressions in business communication.	3.19	1.00	Required
6.	Ability to effectively operate office telephone systems for receiving and responding to calls.	3.10	0.94	Required
7.	Ability to maintain composure, confidence, and professionalism under challenging situations.	3.14	0.97	Required
8.	Ability to communicate clearly and courteously while demonstrating empathy.	3.17	0.99	Required
9.	Ability to accurately interpret and understand business messages and information.	3.20	1.01	Required
10.	Ability to provide timely and appropriate feedback to relevant stakeholders.	3.19	0.98	Required
	Grand Mean	**3.14**	**0.97**	**Required**

Source: Field work 2025.

The results in Table 1 above indicate that all communication skill items scored above the 2.50 acceptable mean score, with a grand mean of 3.14, confirming that communication skills are required for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State.

Research Question 2: *To what extent are marketing skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State?*

Data collected to answer the above research question are presented in Table 2

Table 2: Respondents Mean Rating on Marketing Skills Required of Business Education Students for Effective Operation of Small-Scale Businesses for Self-Reliance.

S/N	Statements	x̄	SD	Remark
11.	Ability to attract and sustain customers' interest in business products and services.	3.17	0.98	Required
12.	Ability to establish and maintain positive customer relationships.	3.19	1.00	Required
13.	Ability to apply incentive strategies to encourage customer loyalty and repeat patronage.	3.15	0.97	Required
14.	Ability to identify consumer needs and formulate appropriate marketing strategies.	3.22	1.01	Required
15.	Ability to persuade potential customers to purchase products and services.	3.24	1.02	Required
16.	Ability to create awareness of products and services among target markets.	3.20	0.99	Required
17.	Ability to identify, attract, and retain potential customers.	3.18	0.98	Required
18.	Ability to utilise social media platforms effectively for business promotion and customer engagement.	3.27	1.04	Required
19.	Ability to market and sell organisational products and services effectively.	3.22	1.00	Required
20.	Ability to assess and respond to customers' needs and preferences.	3.25	1.03	Required
	Grand Mean	**3.21**	**1.00**	**Required**

Source: Field work 2025.

The result in Table 2 above reveals that all items scored above the 2.50 acceptable mean score, with a grand mean of 3.21, indicating that marketing skills are required for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State.

Research Question 3: *What extent are technical skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State?*

Data collected to answer the above research question are presented in Table 3

Table 3: Respondents Mean Ratings on Technical Skills Required of Business Education Students for Effective Operation of Small-Scale Businesses for Self-Reliance

S/N	Statements	x̄	SD	Remark
21.	Ability to adapt effectively to changing business environments and emerging challenges.	3.19	0.99	Required
22.	Ability to demonstrate flexibility in responding to operational demands and organisational changes.	3.18	0.98	Required
23.	Ability to apply technical reasoning in business decision-making and problem-solving.	3.22	1.00	Required
24.	Ability to operate and manage business-related machines and equipment effectively.	3.24	1.02	Required
25.	Ability to break down complex tasks into manageable operational processes.	3.17	0.98	Required
26.	Ability to utilise modern technologies and facilities in business operations.	3.25	1.03	Required
27.	Ability to apply creative problem-solving techniques in addressing business challenges.	3.27	1.04	Required
28.	Ability to develop alternative strategies for sustaining business growth and continuity.	3.23	1.01	Required
29.	Ability to coordinate human and material resources efficiently to achieve organisational objectives.	3.20	1.00	Required
	Grand Mean	**3.22**	**1.01**	**Required**

Source: Field work 2025.

The result in Table 3 shows that all technical skill items were accepted, with mean scores ranging from 3.17–3.27 and a grand mean of 3.22, confirming that technical skills are required for effective operation of small-scale businesses.

Research Question 4: *To what extent are analytical skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State?*

Table 4: Respondents Mean Rating on Analytical Skills Required of Business Education Students for Effective Operation of Small-Scale Businesses for Self-Reliance.

S/N	Statements	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
30.	Ability to synthesise relevant information into meaningful concepts for business decision-making.	3.19	0.99	Required
31.	Ability to generate innovative ideas and new business opportunities.	3.25	1.03	Required
32.	Ability to classify, evaluate, and analyse business ideas systematically.	3.22	1.00	Required
33.	Ability to utilise information and communication technology (ICT) tools for data analysis.	3.28	1.05	Required
34.	Ability to identify market opportunities and develop strategies for new market creation.	3.25	1.03	Required
35.	Ability to analyse and solve business problems to enhance organisational productivity.	3.29	1.06	Required
36.	Ability to apply forecasting models in predicting business trends and outcomes.	3.23	1.01	Required
37.	Ability to assess business situations objectively and make rational decisions.	3.22	1.00	Required
38.	Ability to formulate effective plans and strategies for overcoming business challenges.	3.27	1.04	Required
	Grand Mean	**3.24**	**1.02**	**Required**

Source: Field work 2025

The results in Table 4 above reveals that all analytical skill items were accepted, with mean scores ranging from 3.17–3.29 and a grand mean of 3.24, indicating that analytical skills are required for effective operation of small-scale businesses.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H_{01}: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators regarding the communication skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State.

Table 5: Test of significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators regarding the communication skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Male	52	3.16	0.95	96	0.312	0.756	Not Significant
Female	46	3.12	0.99				

Source: Field work 2025

The results in table 5 above shows a t-value of 0.312 at 96 degree of freedom with a p-value of 0.756. Since the p-value is greater than the criterion value of 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators regarding the communication skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators regarding the marketing skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State.

Table 6: Test of significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators regarding the marketing skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Male	52	3.24	1.01	96	0.478	0.634	Not Significant
Female	46	3.18	0.99				

Source: Field work 2025

The result in table 6 shows a t-value of 0.478 at 96 degree of freedom with a p-value of 0.634. Since the p-value is greater than the criterion value of 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators regarding the marketing skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State.

Hypothesis 3

H_{03}: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators regarding the technical skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State.

Table 7: Test of significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators regarding the technical skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Male	52	3.25	1.02	96	0.521	0.603	Not Significant
Female	46	3.19	1.00				

Source: Field work 2025

The results in Table 7 show a t-value of 0.521 at 96 degree of freedom with a p-value of 0.603. Since the p-value of 0.603 is greater than the criterion value of 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators regarding the technical skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State.

Hypothesis 4

H_{04}: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators regarding the analytical skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State.

Table 8: Test of significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators regarding the analytical skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Male	52	3.27	1.03	96	0.417	0.677	Not Significant
Female	46	3.21	1.01				

Source: Field work 2025

The result in table 8 show a t-value of 0.417 at 96 degree of freedom with a p-value of 0.677. Since the p-value is greater than the criterion value of 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators regarding the analytical skills required of Business Education students for effective operation of small-scale businesses for self-reliance in Delta State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results for research question one showed that Business Education students need communication skills to run small-scale businesses effectively. This agrees with Drucker (2015), who argued that organising and expressing ideas in both written and spoken form is a basic skill every Business Education graduate should have. The finding also supports Roberts (2016) and Nwankwo (2011), who stated that communication abilities are necessary for effective performance in business settings. The communication skills identified were public relations, interpersonal skills, and verbal communication, such as choosing suitable media for sharing information, addressing stakeholders politely, showing strong listening and writing abilities, interpreting messages accurately, and remaining professional in difficult situations.

Research question two showed that marketing skills are needed by Business Education students. This matches Igbo (2011), who listed key sales and marketing skills such as understanding seasonal product changes, determining a product's sales potential, knowing sales and salesmanship, budgeting and forecasting, identifying current sales trends, and storing and passing on information effectively. The study also confirmed that drawing and keeping customer interest, sustaining good customer relationships, using incentive strategies, recognising consumer needs, persuading customers, creating product awareness, using social media, and evaluating customer needs are all important marketing competencies. The fact that social media marketing (item 18, $\bar{x} = 3.27$) was one of the highest-rated marketing skills is especially significant. It indicates that Business Educators in Delta State recognise the major shift in advertising. Claudia (2020) observed that modern advertising is increasingly digital, so the ability to use social media for business promotion is now essential rather than optional. This has clear implications for curriculum reform: marketing courses in Business Education should include digital marketing modules instead of treating them as optional additions.

The results for research question three indicated that Business Education students also require technical skills. This supports Fugate, Kinichi and Ashforth (2014), who noted that employment prospects depend on applicants' technical skills. Technical skills are important for graduate employability, and the attributes gained through technical training help Business Education graduates secure jobs and work efficiently. The study confirmed that essential technical skills include adapting to changing environments, being flexible in meeting operational demands, technical reasoning, operating equipment, breaking down tasks, using technology, solving problems creatively, developing strategies, and coordinating resources.

Finally, research question four showed that Business Education students need analytical skills. This agrees with Ariella (2021), who describes analytical skills as abilities that help people evaluate situations logically, make workable plans, and overcome challenges. Jackson (2016) and Ediagbonya and Oyadongha (2016) identified critical thinking, communication, research, data analysis, and creativity as analytical skills taught in modern education. The study confirmed that essential analytical competencies include combining information, producing new ideas, systematically assessing business ideas, using ICT for data analysis, spotting market opportunities, solving business problems, applying forecasting models, judging situations objectively, and developing effective strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the advertising skills that Business Education students are perceived to need in order to run small-scale businesses effectively and become self-reliant in Delta State, Nigeria. The results clearly show that communication, marketing, technical, and analytical skills are all indispensable for the successful operation of small-scale businesses. The study therefore affirms that Business Education students must develop these advertising competencies if they are to operate and manage small-scale businesses successfully after graduation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Advertising technologies such as social media marketing, data analytics tools, and digital communication platforms should be adopted and utilised.
2. Business educators should engage in ongoing professional development so they remain up to date with changing advertising strategies and technologies, enabling them to teach these skills effectively to students.
3. Curriculum planners should incorporate well-rounded advertising skills modules into Business Education programmes, placing emphasis on practical application and real-world business situations.
4. Colleges of Education should develop working partnerships with small-scale businesses to give students practical exposure and hands-on experience in advertising and marketing activities.

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