DIGITALIZATION AS A TOOL FOR STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CROSS RIVER STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated Digitalization as a tool for student employability in secondary schools in Cross River State. To facilitate the study, one research question were raised as well as one hypothesis formulated to guide the study. Correlation research design was adopted to guide the study. The population of the study comprised 89 principals in Calabar Education Zone in the study area. The instrumentation was a structured questionnaire titled: "Digitalization as a tool for student employability questionnaire (DTSEQ). Data were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation analysis at the coefficient ranges between 0.72 to 0.82 level of significant and conclusion was made according to the findings that online learning significantly relate with management of students' employability in Cross River State.
Keywords: Digitalization, tool, students' employability and online learning

Introduction

Globally, in this present dispensation, technological advancement and innovative capabilities has aided the employability of students in schools, this has not only brought better things to the student but adopting information technology tool for teaching in online environments through virtual classroom platforms, Prashat, Amita and Renn (2022).

Employability to some large extend has evolved over a period of time, it is defined as an individuals skills and attributes that benefit onself, Laveena, Shaitashin (2023). The perception of employability is the belief of possibility for better employment. Berntson (2008), the perceived employability of the students and the actual need to be tested where been in the employability situations which plays a key role in the lives of the students. Employability is the need of the hour irrespective of the course chosen by a student in the school. The uncertainty of the outcome of education can be given a silver living through the employability technology which improved the learning aspect of the students employability is influenced by many factors such as skills, knowledge and personal attributes that are gained through the right education and appropriate training. Timane et al. (2020), students of the institutions need to improve personal skills, thinking and continuous learning skills, enhancing their employability all this are generally referred to as employability skills. Finding the right skills that employees seek and developing them through proper training initiatives will help in building individuals read for the rapidly changing workplace. Overtoom (2020). Today, the reputation of an institution is judged by its academic success, its ability to retain students and to provide employment for its students rely basically on the modality used for their training, Tripti, Dharmider and Sangeeta (2017). Digital technologies are an integral part of teaching and learning Beckler et al (2017). Institutions and peoples life have seen internet influencing by technological development, such as computers, portable devices and the internet,

influencing their relation with information knowledge and ways of working Selwyn (2016). It is imperative to note that institutions of learning as an organization and management level, offer technology based computer infrastructures that support virtual organization and management of teaching and learning. Also at a pedagogical and organizational level digital technologies have had an exponential use, generating expectations of an education transformation involving the physical space of schools and the ways to instruct and deliver educational content, Pedro, Barbosa and Santos (2018), the expectation of digital technology has been met halfway, effective transformation have occurred in learning process and occurs to classes using learning materials Han and Shin (2016). The transformations prompted by the integration of digital technologies in the education sectors of teaching and learning has a wide and fast changing set of goals. Salinus and Sosetti (2017). The time dedicated to the interaction between students and teachers is now flexible, continuing beyond classroom walls in a process of engagement, content sharing, connection and communication, devices such as mobile phones, tablets, e-book readers and mobile appliants have been considered prominent tools in the education of a child. Stevenson and Hedberg (2017), the pervasiveness of digital technologies has drastically blured the traditional borders between learning space and time, between formal and informal learning environments, between the use of specific tools for learning and personal use. Marta and Carlinda (2020). Ategwu, Amos and Uyimse (2022), supported the opinion of Hedberg that benefit of digital technologies (ICT) has not integrated the learning of students to a better life but supported them in technological achievement were they can be self-employed to eradicate criminality and becomes responsible in the society using technology such as online learning tools address a lot of difficulties found in the educational sectors. Online learning tools and courses provide a wide range of skills and knowledge for the learners attending live classes. Mobile devices are famous learning tools for the advancement of technology ages, they have been tremendously increased in the use of e-learning materials, specifically among students. Prasbhet et al (2020), the use of online facility in learning is rapidly increasing, but it has also led to a change in classes, student attendance, and interaction among students, there is a need to effectively handle the rapid changes in teaching-learning pedagogy and have overall development. Nwankpa, Okon, Ategwu and Udo (2024), opined that utilization of online learning resources is capable of transmitting the traditional method of learning to a digital area, because the availability of resources predicts students level of engagement in technological advancement and propel them towards employability.

Marta and Carlinda (2020), examined digital technology in support of students learning in higher education, 20346 students were used as sample of the study, the results of the investigation showed that a pattern of technologies reflecting teachers choice for methods combine face to face and at distance learning frequently relates to the adoption of flipped classroom methods. Prabhat, Aminta and Renu (2022), carried out a study on online learning for enhancing employability skills in higher education students. The mediating role of learning analytics. The result of the study confirm a positive and significant mediation of learning analytics in the relationship of e-learning usefulness and knowledge in achieving employability skills.

Laveena and Shailashim (2023), conducted a study on systematic review on the employability predicting model for the management of students. The study adopted analytical analysis. The result of the findings revealed that employability models have developed using machine learning approaches. The necessity of an accurate employability prediction model that serve as a guide significantly help students and their functions in the need of this model.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between digitalization as the tool for students employability in secondary schools in Cross River State. Specifically, the study sought to find out;
1.   Online learning and student employability

Research question
1.   How does online learning relate with student employability.

Research hypothesis
1.   There is no significant relationship between online learning and students employability.

Methodology

The research design was correlational research design. According to Isangedighi, Joshua, Asim and Ekuri (2004), correlational research design involves the collection of data to accurately and objectively

describe existing relationship between variables. Studies that make use of this approach are employed to ascertain a picture of the present conditions of particular phenomena. Correlational research is therefore very useful for opinion and attitude studies. It depends basically on questionnaires and interviews as means of data collection.

The correlational research design was used in ascertaining the relationship between two variables in a study. The population of this study comprises all the (Planning Research and Statistics Department of Secondary Education Board, Calabar, 2024). Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 10 secondary schools from each of the LGA from the total number of 89 secondary schools in the study area. From the total population of the study 120 respondents students were used. The instrument used for data collection of this study is a researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Digital as a tool for students employability Questionnaire (DTSEQ)". It is made up of two sections. Section one is on independent variable. Digitalization tool consisted of 15 items while section two consists of 5 items, grouped under three (3) clusters basically on dependent variable which is student employability. Each of the clusters contains 5 questions based on the variables in the section A of the questionnaire. The instrument was weighted on a four (4) point rating scale for the respondents to make their responses as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD)**.** The face and content validity were established by using two experts in measurement and evaluation in the faculty of education. In order to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, a reliability test was conducted. through cronbach alpha. In trial testing, the modified questionnaire was administered to 20 students who were not part of the study using Cronbach Alpha coefficient reliability ranging from 0.78 to 82. This shows a strong reliability coefficient, which is an indication that the instrument was reliable.

Hypothesis one
There is no significant relationship between online learning and student employability in public secondary schools in Cross River State.

Table 1: Summary of data and Pearson's product moment correlation showing on the relationship between online learning and management of student employability in public secondary schools in Cross River State

Variables	N	X	SD	r	p-value
Principals' writing skills	89	17.8500	3.4193		
				.242	.000
Management of students' feedback	89	18.9917	3.12619		

*P<.05, df=118

The result showed that the calculated r-value of .242 representing the observed relationship between online learning and student employability in secondary schools in Cross River State was significant at p-value of .000 at .05 level of significance with 118 degree of freedom. With the result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This therefore implies that there is a significant relationship between online learning and student employability in public secondary schools in Cross River State.

Discussion of findings
The first hypothesis revealed that there is no significant relationship between online learning and student employability in secondary schools in Cross River State. The findings of the study is in accordance with the findings of Laveena & Shailashin (2023) who conducted a study on systematic review on the employability predicting model and the management of students, analysis model were used to analyzed the study. The finding of the study concluded that employability predict students functionability in the study area.

Conclusion
From the finding of the study, it was concluded that digitalization tools through online learning relate with student employability.

Recommendations

The study recommends that government should provide ICT facilities to enhance students technological development in online participation without other perks.

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