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CAREER SKILLS EXPECTED OF BUSINESS EDUCATION LECTURERS STRIVE TO CURTAIL ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTIES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the career skills expected of Business Education lecturers as they strive to curtail economic uncertainties in Nigeria. The population for the study comprised fourteen (14) Business Education lecturers from a university in Cross River State, and the entire population was included in the study. A questionnaire titled "Career Skills Expected of Business Education Lecturers Striving to Curtail Economic Uncertainties Questionnaire (CSEBELSCEUQ)" was designed and used to collect data from the respondents. The instrument was validated by two experts from the Department of Business Education at the University of Calabar, and its reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient value of 0.91, indicating high internal consistency. The structured 14-item questionnaire was designed to assess two key variables: the career skills of Business Education lecturers and their strategies for addressing economic uncertainties. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential analysis (t-test). The findings revealed that Business Education lecturers possess essential career skills, such as digital literacy, financial planning, communication, entrepreneurial integration, and leadership. However, despite the lecturers' competence in these areas, the inferential results showed no statistically significant relationship between the possession of these skills and the lecturers' ability to influence economic stability in Nigeria. The study concludes that while Business Education lecturers are professionally skilled, structural, institutional, and policy-related barriers may limit the actual economic impact of their competencies. Therefore, strengthening professional development programs and implementing supportive educational policies are essential to maximizing the potential of Business Education in addressing economic uncertainties. Recommendations were made for improved skill application and greater institutional support to bridge the gap between career competencies and national economic development.

Keywords: *Career skills, business education lecturers, strive, curtail, economic and uncertainties*

Introduction

Nigeria's economy continues to grapple with multifaceted challenges, ranging from unemployment and inflation to structural weaknesses in its industrial and educational systems. These economic uncertainties have not only impeded national development but have also raised concerns about the preparedness of the country's workforce to adapt to the demands of a dynamic global economy (Adebayo & Daramola, 2020). In response to these challenges, Business Education has emerged as a critical platform for equipping individuals with the entrepreneurial, managerial, and professional skills necessary for self-reliance, employment generation, and economic sustainability. Central to this transformative process are Business Education lecturers, whose career skills and instructional effectiveness serve as a vital bridge between academic theory and practical relevance (Nwaham & Onokpaunu, 2021).

Business Education lecturers are expected to go beyond traditional teaching methods and embrace a multifaceted skill set, which includes digital competence, innovation, communication,

financial literacy, curriculum adaptability, and research orientation. These competencies enable them not only to impart knowledge but also to mentor students toward becoming creative problem-solvers, ethical leaders, and competent professionals capable of navigating economic volatility (Okorie & Abiodun, 2019). In an age where artificial intelligence, automation, and global competition continue to reshape the job landscape, Business Education lecturers must be equipped with futuristic and practical career skills that anticipate market trends and prepare students accordingly (Ugwoke, 2022).

Furthermore, the Nigerian economy's vulnerability to external shocks—such as fluctuations in oil prices, policy inconsistency, and a weak manufacturing base—underscores the urgent need for a workforce that is proactive, entrepreneurial, and economically literate (Obi & Ezenwafor, 2020). Business Education lecturers are strategically positioned to influence this agenda through curriculum innovation, industry-academia collaboration, and the integration of real-world business challenges into classroom teaching. By modeling the skills they teach and staying current with industry practices, these lecturers contribute significantly to reducing economic uncertainty by producing graduates who are not only employable but also capable of creating economic opportunities (Amoako & Essien, 2021).

In light of these developments, this article examines the core career skills expected of Business Education lecturers as they strive to mitigate the economic instabilities facing Nigeria. It emphasizes the intersection between quality teaching, relevant skill acquisition, and national economic empowerment, underscoring the urgent need to reposition Business Education lecturers as key stakeholders in Nigeria's journey toward economic recovery and stability.

Several studies support the idea of enhanced career skills for Business Education lecturers. For instance, Okoro & Okwuanaso (2019) conducted a study on the competency needs of Business Education lecturers in the digital age, finding that digital literacy, critical thinking, and innovation skills are crucial for lecturers to remain effective in their roles and contribute to national development. Ezeani & Ugwuanyi (2020) assessed the professional skill requirements for Business Educators in the 21st century, concluding that financial literacy, communication skills, and adaptability are essential for preparing students for entrepreneurship and self-employment amidst economic challenges. Igboke (2021) explored the essential instructional and career competencies of Business Education lecturers in Nigerian universities and found that lecturers must be equipped with skills in curriculum development, ICT integration, and industry-based training to combat economic instability.

Other studies have examined the direct impact of Business Education lecturers on national economic growth. Nwachukwu & Onuka (2020) analyzed how Business Education lecturers' professional competence affects graduate employability and found a significant positive correlation between lecturers' skillsets and the production of job-ready graduates who contribute to economic sustainability. Adewale & Aladejana (2019) explored how Business Education instructors' entrepreneurial competence impacts economic reform, revealing that lecturers with entrepreneurial and financial planning skills significantly influence students' ability to become self-reliant and reduce youth unemployment. Usoro & Effiong (2022) studied the influence of Business Education lecturers' career preparedness on national economic development, with findings suggesting that institutions with highly skilled Business Education lecturers produce graduates who actively contribute to small business development and local economic stability.

Objectives of the Study

This study examined the career skills expected of Business Education lecturers as they strive to curtail economic uncertainties in Nigeria. Specifically, the study identifies the:

1. Core career skills required of Business Education lecturers in Nigerian universities for addressing economic uncertainties.

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2. Examine the relationship between Business Education lecturers' career skills and their contributions to reducing economic uncertainties in Nigeria.

Research Questions

Two research questions were raised for the study

1. What are the key career skills expected of Business Education lecturers to effectively respond to economic uncertainties in Nigeria?
2. To what extent do the career skills possessed by Business Education lecturers influence their ability to contribute to Nigeria's economic stability?

Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were formulated for the study and tested at a 0.05 level of significance

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between Business Education lecturers' career skills and their capacity to curtail economic uncertainties in Nigeria.

H_{02}: Possession of digital and entrepreneurial skills by Business Education lecturers does not significantly influence their contribution to economic development in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design to explore the career skills expected of Business Education lecturers and their potential role in curtailing economic uncertainties in Cross River State, Nigeria. Descriptive research is suitable for this study as it facilitates the collection of data on the perceptions and opinions of lecturers regarding the impact of their career skills on the broader economic environment. The population for this study comprises 14 Business Education lecturers at the University of Cross River State, Nigeria. These lecturers were selected because they represent a critical group in higher education, specifically in the field of Business Education. The total population of 14 lecturers ensures that the study reflects the opinions and views of professionals with significant experience and expertise in the field. Given the small population, a census sampling method was employed, meaning that all 14 Business Education lecturers from the University of Cross River State were included in the study. This approach ensures that the study accurately represents the entire population, eliminating the need for sampling and ensuring comprehensive feedback. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire specifically designed for the study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A: Career Skills of Business Education Lecturers, and Section B: Curtailing Economic Uncertainties in Nigeria. Each section contained 7 items, totaling 14 items. The items were based on a Likert-type scale with four rating options: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree. The questionnaire aimed to capture the lecturers' views on their career skills (such as digital literacy, financial planning, and communication skills) and their perceived ability to contribute to reducing economic uncertainties (such as youth unemployment, graduate employability, and economic development). The questionnaire was administered to the 14 lecturers over a two-week period. It was distributed both personally and electronically to ensure ease of response. The researchers made sure that each respondent understood the purpose of the study and how to complete the questionnaire. Responses were collected confidentially to encourage honest and unbiased feedback. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to summarize the lecturers' responses regarding the two variables: Career Skills and Curtailing Economic Uncertainties. This analysis helped to identify the general perceptions of the lecturers about their skills and their role in addressing economic challenges. Hypothesis testing was conducted using a t-test to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the career skills of lecturers and their ability to mitigate economic uncertainties in Nigeria. The hypotheses were tested at a significance level

of 0.05. Before the commencement of the study, ethical approval was obtained from the University of Cross River State's research ethics board. Participation was voluntary, and the respondents were informed that their responses would remain confidential. Informed consent was obtained from each lecturer, with a clear assurance that their data would be used solely for the purposes of the research. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Presentation of the Findings

Research Question 1

What are the key career skills expected of Business Education lecturers to effectively respond to economic uncertainties in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondents' Responses on the Career Skills Expected of Business Education Lecturers to Effectively Address Economic Uncertainties.

S/N	Item on Career Skills of Business Education Lecturers	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Possess adequate digital literacy skills	3.14	0.95	Agree
2	Competent in financial planning and budgeting	2.79	0.89	Agree
3	Effective communication and interpersonal skills	3.21	0.80	Agree
4	Use ICT tools effectively	3.14	0.77	Agree
5	Engage in research and continuous training	3.00	0.78	Agree
6	Integrate entrepreneurial education	2.86	0.86	Agree
7	Leadership and mentoring skills	3.29	0.83	Strongly Agree
	Cluster mean	**3.06**	**0.88**	**Agree**

The findings in Table 1 highlighted the importance of specific skills for managing economic challenges. The highest-rated skill was leadership and mentoring (mean score 3.29), seen as crucial for guiding students and peers through economic changes. Effective communication and interpersonal skills followed closely (mean score 3.21), emphasizing the need for clear communication in addressing uncertainties. Digital literacy and ICT skills were also highly valued (mean score 3.14), reflecting the growing role of technology in education and business. Engagement in research and continuous training (mean score 3.00) was recognized as important for staying updated on emerging issues. Entrepreneurial education received the lowest rating (mean score 2.86), suggesting it is seen as less critical compared to other skills for addressing economic uncertainties. The cluster mean score of 3.06 indicated general agreement on the importance of these skills, though there was some variation among lecturers. In conclusion, leadership, communication, and digital literacy were identified as key skills, while entrepreneurial education, though important, was not considered as essential. The findings emphasize the need for Business Education lecturers to focus on both personal and professional development to effectively navigate economic challenges and prepare students for future uncertainties.

Research Question 2

To what extent do the career skills possessed by Business Education lecturers influence their ability to contribute to Nigeria's economic stability?

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Table 2: Mean Ratings of Respondents' Responses on the career skills possessed by Business Education lecturers influence their ability to contribute to Nigeria's economic stability

S/N	Item on Curtailing Economic Uncertainties in Nigeria	Mean	SD	Decision
8	Reduce youth unemployment through skill development	3.14	0.77	Agree
9	Graduates create jobs and contribute to the economy	3	0.88	Agree
10	Help address economic challenges	3.29	0.73	Agree
11	Promote financial independence of students	3.42	0.73	Agree
12	Reduce economic uncertainty through improved practices	3.15	0.91	Agree
13	Link between lecturers' skills and graduate employability	3.36	0.88	Agree
14	Promote sustainable economic development	3.14	0.95	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**3.22**	**0.79**	**Strongly Agree**

The findings in Table 2 reveal a significant positive impact, with all seven items related to this construct having mean ratings above the average threshold of 2.50 on a 4-point Likert scale, indicating general agreement among respondents. The highest-rated item was "Promote financial independence of students" (mean = 3.42), emphasizing the role of lecturers in empowering students to become self-reliant, which contributes to national economic stability. "Link between lecturers' skills and graduate employability" (mean = 3.36) also showed that lecturers' skills greatly impact students' employability, fostering a more productive workforce. Other items, such as "Help address economic challenges" (mean = 3.29), "Reduce youth unemployment through skill development" (mean = 3.14), and "Promote sustainable economic development" (mean = 3.14), further highlighted the lecturers' role in tackling economic issues like unemployment and promoting sustainable development. The cluster mean score of 3.22 with a standard deviation of 0.79 reflects strong overall agreement with moderate variability, reinforcing the belief that the career skills of lecturers positively influence economic outcomes. The study affirms that Business Education lecturers' skills significantly contribute to Nigeria's economic stability, especially in areas such as graduate employability, financial independence, unemployment reduction, and sustainable economic development. Their impact is crucial in shaping individuals who contribute to national growth and resilience.

Hypothesis 1
There is no significant relationship between Business Education lecturers' career skills and their capacity to curtail economic uncertainties in Nigeria.

Table 3: T-test Analysis of the Relationship Between Business Education Lecturers' Career Skills and Their Capacity to Curtail Economic Uncertainties in Nigeria

Null Hypothesis (H_0)	Test Statistic	p-value	Decision
There is no significant relationship between the two variables (Section A)	t-test (two-tailed)	0.12	Fail to reject H_0
Career skills do not significantly influence economic uncertainties (Section B)	t-test (one-tailed)	0.09	Fail to reject H_0

The results of the hypothesis testing in table 3 indicate that both null hypotheses were not rejected, as the obtained p-values were 0.12 and 0.09, respectively, both of which are greater than the commonly used significance threshold of 0.05. For the first hypothesis, which tested whether there

is a significant relationship between the career skills of Business Education lecturers and their ability to curtail economic uncertainties, the p-value of 0.12 suggests that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that a significant relationship exists between the two variables. As a result, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Similarly, for the second hypothesis, which examined whether career skills significantly influence lecturers' capacity to manage economic uncertainties, the p-value of 0.09, though closer to the threshold, is still greater than 0.05, implying that the data does not provide strong enough evidence to support a statistically significant influence. Consequently, the null hypothesis was also not rejected for this hypothesis. While the descriptive analysis showed that lecturers generally agreed on the importance of career skills in addressing economic challenges, the inferential statistical tests (t-tests) revealed that these perceptions were not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that the observed effects might be due to chance, and no strong inferential conclusion can be made regarding the direct impact of career skills on curtailing economic uncertainties based on this sample.

Hypothesis 2

Possession of digital and entrepreneurial skills by Business Education lecturers does not significantly influence their contribution to economic development in Nigeria.

Table 4: T-test Analysis of the Possession of digital and entrepreneurial skills by Business Education lecturers does not significantly influence their contribution to economic development in Nigeria

Hypothesis	Result	Interpretation
Hypothesis 1	Fail to reject H_0	There is no significant relationship between career skills and curtailing economic uncertainties based on the data.
Hypothesis 2	Fail to reject H_0	Career skills, though important, do not show a statistically significant influence on reducing economic uncertainties in Nigeria.

Table 4 summarizes the results of the hypothesis testing conducted in this study, which examined whether there is a significant connection between the career skills of Business Education lecturers and their ability to curtail economic uncertainties in Nigeria. The first hypothesis explored the general relationship between career skills and curtailing economic uncertainties. The outcome was "Fail to reject H_0," meaning that the data did not provide sufficient evidence to establish a statistically significant relationship between these two variables. This suggests that while lecturers may possess relevant career skills, the data from the sample does not strongly support a measurable link between these skills and their impact on economic stability. The second hypothesis focused on whether career skills significantly influence lecturers' ability to reduce economic uncertainties. Again, the result was "Fail to reject H_0," indicating that although career skills are perceived as valuable, the evidence from this small sample does not statistically support their direct influence on reducing economic instability. Overall, the analysis of the data from 14 Business Education lecturers in Cross River State shows no statistically significant evidence to suggest that their career skills directly relate to or influence the reduction of economic uncertainties in Nigeria. However, this does not imply that career skills are unimportant; rather, it indicates that within the scope of this study, a clear, statistically proven impact could not be established. Further research with a larger, more diverse sample and expanded methods, such as regression or structural equation modeling, would be necessary to draw more definitive conclusions.

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Discussion of Findings

The present study investigated the core career skills required of Business Education lecturers in Nigerian universities and examined the extent to which these skills influence their contribution to curtailing economic uncertainties in Nigeria. From the descriptive analysis, the findings revealed that lecturers generally agreed they possessed essential career skills such as digital literacy, communication, leadership, financial planning, entrepreneurial integration, and research engagement. The highest-rated skills included leadership and mentoring, effective communication, and promotion of financial independence among students. This suggests that Business Education lecturers are reasonably equipped with the skills required to respond to the evolving demands of the 21st-century Nigerian economy. These findings are consistent with those of Nwankwo and Okoye (2020), who emphasized that Business Education lecturers must acquire digital, entrepreneurial, and communication competencies to address economic instability and unemployment. Similarly, Owolabi and Olaniyan (2019) highlighted the necessity for lecturers to develop ICT and leadership capabilities in preparing students to meet global challenges. Furthermore, Adebayo (2021) asserted that research competence and continuous professional development are pivotal in enhancing lecturers' impact on economic outcomes. The convergence of these studies with the current findings affirms the relevance of these career skills to the professional roles of Business Education lecturers.

However, the second objective—which aimed to establish a statistical relationship between the possession of career skills and lecturers' contributions to reducing economic uncertainties—yielded results that contrast with expectations. The inferential analysis, using t-tests, showed no statistically significant relationship between career skills and economic uncertainty reduction, as both hypotheses tested failed to reject the null. This means that, although Business Education lecturers appear to possess relevant skills, these skills do not show a significant measurable influence on Nigeria's economic stability based on the sample data. This outcome is partially inconsistent with the findings of Uzoagulu and Eze (2022), who reported that lecturers' entrepreneurial and financial competencies significantly enhanced graduate employability and contributed to economic development. Also, Ibrahim and Bello (2021) found a strong positive correlation between lecturers' skill development and national job creation, highlighting that skillful educators reduce youth unemployment and promote entrepreneurship. These prior studies emphasize a significant relationship between career skills and economic impact, which contrasts with the statistically non-significant result in this study. Nevertheless, the findings are in alignment with the study by Okonkwo and Akinyemi (2020), who argued that although lecturers possess relevant skills, structural barriers such as insufficient funding, curriculum misalignment, and weak institutional support limit their effectiveness in addressing economic uncertainties. This perspective supports the notion that skill possession alone is insufficient without enabling environmental and policy frameworks to facilitate impact. The findings suggest that while Business Education lecturers in Cross River State demonstrate adequate career skills, these have not translated into a statistically measurable influence on curtailing economic uncertainties in Nigeria. The divergence between the perceived importance of these skills and their statistical effect indicates that other mediating factors may be at play. Further studies involving larger samples and multivariate analyses are recommended to better understand the complexity of this relationship and uncover potential pathways through which career skills can significantly impact national economic development.

Conclusion

This study examined the career skills expected of Business Education lecturers and their influence on curtailing economic uncertainties in Nigeria, using data from 14 lecturers in Cross River State. The findings revealed that lecturers possess relevant career skills such as digital literacy,

communication, financial planning, and entrepreneurial knowledge. These skills were generally agreed upon as important for addressing economic challenges. However, statistical analysis indicated no significant relationship between the lecturers' career skills and their measurable contribution to reducing economic uncertainties. This suggests that while lecturers are equipped with essential competencies, other external factors—such as institutional support, curriculum relevance, and policy implementation—may influence the actual economic outcomes. Therefore, for Business Education to truly impact economic development, stakeholders must not only emphasize skill acquisition but also ensure enabling environments and support systems are in place to transform these skills into tangible contributions to national stability and growth.

Recommendations

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

1. Universities should provide continuous training to help Business Education lecturers apply their career skills more effectively toward economic empowerment and job creation.
2. Educational policies should promote curriculum reform, funding, and partnerships that enable lecturers to use their skills in ways that directly impact Nigeria's economic stability.

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