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DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND JOB CREATION IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study aimed at examining how digital entrepreneurship promotes job creation in Anambra state, Nigeria. Survey research design study was adopted. The population comprised of all the 83 Business Educators in the two colleges of Education in Anambra state. No sampling technique was used as the population was of manageable size. Three research questions guided the study. A 22-item structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The instrument was validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbachs' Alpha was used to test the reliability of the instrument and the overall reliability coefficient of 0.73 was gotten. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings indicated that digital entrepreneurship promotes job creation in Anambra State through three key areas: digital knowledge base, digital business environments, and digital skills. It was recommended among other things that government agencies, educational institutions, and private stakeholders should invest in digital education and training programs to equip individuals with the knowledge and resources required for digital entrepreneurship and remote employment opportunities.

Keywords: Digital, Entrepreneurship, Digital Entrepreneurship, Job, Job Creation.

Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has significantly transformed the entrepreneurial landscape, creating new opportunities for economic growth, innovation, and job creation. Entrepreneurship is the identification of business opportunities and the mobilization of the requisite economic resources to initiate a new business or revitalize an existing business, under conditions of risks and uncertainties, for the purpose of making profit (Adenutsi, 2023). Digital means something related to or characterized by the use of digital technologies like

computers, smart phones and the internet. Digital entrepreneurship, as defined by Davidson and Vaast (2010), refers to the act of identifying and utilizing business opportunities enabled by digital media and internet technologies. Unlike traditional entrepreneurship, digital ventures rely heavily on digital platforms for business operations, marketing, and customer engagement, thereby breaking geographical and operational barriers. Hair *et al*. (2012) emphasized that the primary distinction between digital and traditional entrepreneurship lies in the innovative business models and strategies employed in digital spaces.

The European Commission in Kraus *et al* (2019) identifies critical elements that drive digital entrepreneurship, including the digital knowledge base, ICT markets, digital business environments, digital skills, and entrepreneurial culture. Among these, the digital knowledge base and ICT market play a central role in enabling entrepreneurs to leverage technology for innovation and efficiency. ICT serves as the backbone of digital entrepreneurship by facilitating seamless communication, data management, and operational processes across digital platforms. Similarly, the digital business environment offers virtual spaces where entrepreneurial activities, including marketing, sales, and customer interactions, are conducted efficiently through online platforms and social networks (Nguyen *et al*, 2021). Furthermore, digital skills have become essential for navigating and maximizing the opportunities provided by digital technologies (Triyono *et al*, 2023). Entrepreneurs equipped with digital competencies can better adapt to market changes, optimize digital tools, and drive business growth in an ever-evolving technological landscape. Komninos *et al* (2024) explained that by developing novel digital products or increasing competition, entrepreneurs boost demand which can create new job opportunities. When unemployment is high and the economy is contracting or stagnating, entrepreneurship could help turn the economy around. Similarly, Agide and Dada (2023) affirmed that digital entrepreneurship increases

access to jobs by providing useful information on manpower training and skills development, access to business development.

Digital entrepreneurship has emerged as a critical driver of job creation, particularly in regions facing high unemployment rates, such as Anambra State, Nigeria (Hair *et al*, 2012). A job is a paid position or activity that an individual performs to earn a living, support him or herself and contribute to the society and job creation is the process of generating new employment opportunities, enabling individuals to secure paid work and earn a living. Digital entrepreneurship promotes the creation of jobs. Whittington (2018) submitted that the adoption of digital tools has enabled entrepreneurs to reduce operational costs, expand their market reach, and offer innovative solutions to societal challenges. Despite its potential, digital entrepreneurship in Anambra State faces challenges, including limited digital infrastructure, inadequate digital skills among the workforce, and a lack of awareness about digital opportunities. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the contribution of digital knowledge base and ICT markets, digital business environments, and digital skills to job creation in Anambra State. Understanding these relationships will provide insights into how digital entrepreneurship can be leveraged to address unemployment challenges and drive sustainable economic development in the region.

In an ideal situation, digital entrepreneurship would thrive in Anambra State, Nigeria, driven by a robust digital knowledge base, vibrant ICT markets, and favorable digital business environments. This would enable entrepreneurs to acquire essential digital skills, leverage technology for innovation and efficiency, and create sustainable job opportunities. As a result, the region would experience significant economic growth, reduced unemployment rates, and improved living standards.
However, the current situation in Anambra State falls short of this ideal due to challenges such as limited digital infrastructure, inadequate digital skills among the

workforce, and so on. These challenges hinder the growth of digital entrepreneurship, constraining its potential to create jobs and stimulate economic development. The consequences of this situation are far-reaching. The lack of digital entrepreneurship opportunities exacerbates unemployment rates, perpetuates poverty, and undermines sustainable economic development in Anambra State. This gap in digital entrepreneurship development necessitates an investigation into the contribution of digital knowledge base and ICT markets, digital business environments, and digital skills to job creation in the region. By exploring these relationships, this study aims to provide insights into how digital entrepreneurship can be leveraged to address unemployment challenges and drive job creation in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine examine how digital entrepreneurship promotes job creation in Anambra state. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. How digital knowledge base promote job creation in Anambra state.
2. Ways digital business environments promote job creation in Anambra state.
3. How digital skills promote job creation in Anambra state

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does digital knowledge base promote job creation in Anambra state?
2. In what ways do digital business environments promote job creation in Anambra state?
3. How do digital skills promote job creation in Anambra state?

Research Method

A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. In line with the research design, opinions of Business educators on the problem of the study were sought. Business Educators were chosen because they prepare students for the world

of work and business. The study was carried out in the two Colleges of Education in Anambra state- Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe (NOCEN) and Federal College of Education (Tech), Umunze (FCETU). The population is made up of 83 Business Educators, consisting of 66 Business Educators in FCETU and 17 Business Educators in NOCEN as gotten from the office of the Head of the Department of the respective schools. The whole population was used because the size was manageable, hence, no sampling and sampling technique was used.

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire constructed by the researchers based on the research questions. The questionnaire was made up of 22 items and was divided into three: Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3. Part 1 with 7 items to elicit information on how digital knowledge base promote job creation; Part 2 has 8 items which covered ways digital business environments promote job creation and Part 3 has 7 items which covered how digital skills promote job creation. The instrument was validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The instrument was pilot tested using 20 business educators in Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba, Delta state who were not part of the study population. This was done to ensure the reliability of the instrument and the data collected was analyzed using Cronbachs' Alpha. Overall reliability coefficient of 0.73 was obtained and was considered to be acceptable for the study. The questionnaire was administered by the researchers using direct administration method. Out of the 83 copies of the questionnaire administered only 69 copies were used for analysis representing about 83.13% return rate. The other 14 copies were not used for analysis because they were not duly filled.

The data obtained were analyzed using mean and standard deviation based on the 4-point scale ranging from very high extent of 4 points to very low extent of 1 point. Any item with a mean response of 2.50 and above was considered 'agreed' while items with a mean response below 2.50 was considered 'disagreed'.

Results

The results from the analysis are presented in the tables below

Research Question 1 How does digital knowledge base promote job creation in Anambra state?

Table 1*:* Mean Ratings of Respondents on how digital knowledge base promote job creation in Anambra state

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	X	SD	REMARKS
1	Offers online education and training that boosts employability	3.62	0.49	Agreed
2	Enables individuals to access remote work opportunities	3.48	0.85	Agreed
3	Provides resources, tools and information that help to develop digital startups	3.24	0.61	Agreed
4	Improves digital literacy among people to effectively use digital tools	3.57	0.58	Agreed
5	Facilitates innovation and research and development	3.33	0.89	Agreed
6	Enables online coaching and mentorship that provides valuable industry insights	3.24	0.75	Agreed
7	Enables individuals to connect with industry experts and others fostering job opportunities	2.95	1.39	Agreed
	Cluster mean	**3.42**	**0.79**	**Agreed**

In table 1, all the 7 items have mean ratings more than or equal to 2.50, showing that the respondents rated them as how digital knowledge base promote job creation in Anambra state. The standard deviation of 0.79 shows that the data points are closely clustered around the mean, suggesting low variation in the opinion of respondents.

Research Question 2: In what ways do digital business environments promote job creation in Anambra state?

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Respondents on Ways Digital Business Environments Promote Job Creation in Anambra State

S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	REMARKS
1	Enables e-commerce and online marketplace	3.24	0.61	Agreed
2	Facilitates the building of virtual teams, creating job opportunities	3.67	0.47	Agreed
3	Supports digital innovation and entrepreneurship	3.24	0.61	Agreed
4	Enhances digital infrastructures that aids job creation	3.48	0.59	Agreed
5	Enhances cyber security that foster job creation	3.38	0.58	Agreed
6	Supports digital payments and financial services creating job opportunities in that area	3.52	0.79	Agreed
7	Enables data-driven decision making creating job opportunities for data scientists, business and data analysts	3.33	0.78	Agreed
8	Facilities online collaboration and networking platforms creating job opportunities for in that area	3.33	0.77	Agreed
	Cluster mean	**3.28**	**0.76**	**Agreed**

In table 2, all the 8 items have mean ratings more than or equal to 2.50, showing that the respondents rated them as ways digital business environments promote job creation in Anambra state. The standard deviation of .76 shows that the data points are closely clustered around the mean, suggesting low variation in the opinion of respondents.

Research Question 3: How do digital skills promote job creation in Anambra state?

Table 3: Mean Ratings of Respondents on how Digital Skills Promote Job Creation in Anambra State

S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	REMARKS
1	Makes individuals more attractive to potentials employers	3.45	0.64	Agreed
2	Enables one access job opportunities that may not be available locally	3.62	0.49	Agreed
3	Allows individuals to offer services on freelancing platforms	3.24	0.61	Agreed
4	Enables individuals to start their own digital businesses	3.48	0.73	Agreed
5	Enables individuals to automate tasks and processes improving their values to employers	3.19	0.73	Agreed
6	Helps individuals to take on new challenges and advance in their careers	3.52	0.66	Agreed
7	Enables individuals to design, and develop products and services creating job opportunities	3.28	0.76	Agreed
	Cluster mean	**3.09**	**0.65**	**Agreed**

In table 3, all the 7 items have mean ratings more than or equal to 2.50, showing that the respondents rated them as how digital skills promote job creation in Anambra state. The standard deviation of .65 shows that the data points are closely clustered around the mean, suggesting low variation in the opinion of respondents.

Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that the digital knowledge base significantly contributes to job creation in Anambra State. Respondents agreed that digital knowledge enhances employability through online education and training, remote work opportunities, and access to resources that support digital startups. Improved digital

literacy among individuals was also identified as a key factor in equipping people with the skills needed to manipulate digital tools effectively. Additionally, respondents acknowledged the role of online coaching, mentorship programs, and industry connections in fostering job opportunities. These findings align with the views of Komninos *et al*. (2024) and Agide and Dada (2023), who emphasized that access to a robust digital knowledge base empowers individuals with the skills and insights needed to thrive in the digital economy. In essence, a well-established digital knowledge infrastructure not only improves employment prospects but also drives innovation and entrepreneurial ventures.

Findings from research question two found that digital business environments play a crucial role in promoting job creation in Anambra State. Respondents highlighted that e-commerce platforms and online marketplaces have created avenues for entrepreneurship and employment. Virtual teams and collaborative tools have broken geographical barriers, enabling businesses to source talent globally. Enhanced digital infrastructure and cybersecurity measures were also noted as contributors to a stable business environment that fosters employment. Furthermore, digital payments and financial services have opened up new job opportunities, particularly in fintech, while data-driven decision-making has increased the demand for analysts and scientists. These findings corroborate the European Commission's in Kraus *et al* (2019) assertion that digital business environments create a conducive ecosystem for entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainable employment. The ability of digital environments to facilitate collaboration, secure transactions, and foster innovation cannot be overemphasized.

Furthermore, findings from research question three revealed that digital skills are integral to job creation in Anambra State. Respondents agreed that individuals equipped with digital skills become more attractive to employers, can access remote job opportunities, and participate in freelancing platforms. The ability to automate

tasks, start digital businesses, and design innovative products and services were also highlighted as outcomes of digital skill acquisition. Moreover, digital skills empower individuals to take on new challenges, grow in their careers, and adapt to evolving job market demands. These findings support the assertion by Davidson and Vaast (2010) that digital skills are indispensable in leveraging the opportunities provided by digital entrepreneurship. As technology continues to advance, individuals with digital competencies will remain better positioned to secure employment and contribute to economic growth.

Conclusion

The study concludes that digital entrepreneurship significantly promotes job creation in Anambra State through three key areas: digital knowledge base, digital business environments, and digital skills. The digital knowledge base equips individuals with essential knowledge and resources, digital business environments create platforms for innovation and entrepreneurship, and digital skills enable individuals to effectively utilize technology for employment and business creation thereby promoting job creation in Anambra state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following were recommended:

1. Government agencies, educational institutions, and private stakeholders should invest in digital education and training programs to equip individuals with the knowledge and resources required for digital entrepreneurship and remote employment opportunities.
2. Policymakers should improve digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, and fintech ecosystems to create a conducive environment to enhance the digital business environment for digital businesses to thrive.

3. Continuous skill development programs should be introduced by relevant stakeholders to ensure individuals acquire and update their digital skills, enabling them to meet the dynamic demands of the digital job market.

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