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SUSTAINING FAMILY RESILIENCE AND SURVIVAL IN POST COVID-19 ERA: NEED FOR ACQUISITION OF ELECTRONIC BUSINESS SKILLS.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the need for acquisition of electronic business skills for sustaining family resilience and survival in post covid-19 era in Ebonyi State. Two purposes of the study with their corresponding research questions and hypotheses guided the study. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Population of the study consisted of 37 Business Educators from the three tertiary institutions that offer business education programmes in Ebonyi State. There was no sampling as the population was manageable. Instrument for data collection was a questionnaire constructed by the researchers. Reliability of the instrument was ensured by trial-testing it at federal polytechnic Unwana and responses gotten were correlated and it yielded an index of 0.76. All the 37 copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents were correctly filled and returned. Responses to the items were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The respondents agreed that electronic business skills required by individual family members for sustaining their family resilience and survival in post covid-19 era include ability to write electronic business plan, ability to conduct electronic business research, digital marketing skills among others. The respondents also agreed that benefits of acquiring electronic business skills for sustaining family resilience and survival in post COVID 19 era include providing families with access to wide range of products, help families to make healthy comparison of products prices, provide families alternative source of income among others. The study recommended among others that families should encourage their members to acquire necessary electronic business skills as this will help to improve their economic well-being.

Keywords: Resilience, family Resilience, Covid-19, electronic business skills.

AJEMATES
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Introduction

Outbreak and spread of COVID-19 pandemic greatly raised varying challenges in families across the globe. Many families lost their sources of livelihood due to spread of the virus and subsequent government policies initiated to control such spread (Bai, Quayson, and Sarkis, 2021). One of the policies by different governments was comprehensive lockdown of movements and other activities aimed at controlling further spread of the pandemic. Most of these policies led to restriction of movements and interactions among people which negatively affected economic activities of many families. This however made it imperative for families to start thinking of other ways of surviving the hash economic reality caused by outbreak and spread of COVID-19 globally. It was a very difficult task for families to immediately start other economic activities that can help in sustaining them as there was total closure of different sectors of the global economy. With such ugly experience, families' aggressive steps toward using technologies to improve their resources and solve their problems for survival in post COVID-19 era become pertinent. Leveraging on technologies to continue socio-economic activities by families seemingly increased in post COVID 19 era and this affirms that individuals thought of using technologies for business transactions (Bima, 2021). Unfortunately, individual usage of technologies for business without possessing needed skills can negatively affect their effective utilization of such technologies. Over the years, acquisition of electronic business skills has proven to be one of the ways of improving effective utilization of technologies for economic activities and this can lead to family resilience and survival (Liu and Xu, 2016). In a contemporary technology driven society and with a view of mitigating the effect of COVID-19 in families, acquisition of electronic business skills is imperative as this can lead to sustaining family resilience and survival.

Concept of resilience has been explored by scholars from different field of academics but was firstly introduced as one of the constructs in discussing families (Ike and Seger, 2017). The term resilience implies the ability to withstand and survive from adversities. It includes the ability of individuals to withstand, recover and develop adaptive strategies in the face of adversities (Nam, Kim, DeVylder and Song, 2016). A resilient individual despite the level of challenges he/she is facing has the courage to overcome it and bounce back from such difficult experiences and become stronger and more capable to solve life-problems (Grygorenko and Naydonova, 2023). Therefore, family resilience entails the capability of a family to withstand and rebound from adversities. According to Bo, Marcus and Shuzhuo (2021), family resilience is the ability of a family to survive disruptive challenges through acquisition of resources, adapting to changes and operating sustainably. It is difficult for families to exist without encountering various degrees of problems and difficulties but making efforts towards overcoming these problems

helps in sustaining the family. Repositioning families to adapt to significant adversities by mustering resources and strengths will help them to achieve family growth and recover from family challenges (Ungar, 2011). Family resilience explains ability of families to deal with problems and challenges by actively mobilizing resources and efforts towards having resistance to unfavorable conditions. Family resilience focuses on how families remain strengthened and ready to survive despite the condition they found themselves.

Resilience builds courage and fosters survival of families by helping them to mobilize resources even when their fate is obvious. Maurovic, Liebenberg and Feric (2020) explained that families take responsibility of nurturing and supporting their members despite their challenges. The family even in the face of their challenges and problems are entrusted with the responsibility of striving to succeed. Over the years, families suffer setbacks emanating from the zeal to ensure their survival despite their challenges and as well bounce back to sustain their existence. There are numerous influences that continually attempt to destroy families but their effort to survive these adversities helps them to always rebound. Botha and Booysen (2024) noted that these influences when survived, makes the family to be stronger thereby helping to model healthy behaviors among individual members of the family. Some of the influences that pose challenges to families include: economic hardship, infertility, emotional separation, poor relationship with third parties among others (Oguntomisin and Oyewole, 2023). All these challenges have the potential to destroy a family if efforts are not made to mobilize resources and strength to find solution to them. Olunmilayo (2021) observed that lack of needed resources incapacitates a family's ability to survive challenges that confronts them. Therefore, sustaining family resilience in post COVID-19 era is imperative as this will encourage survival of families.

To sustain family resilience in post COVID 19 era, families need to have adequate resources and capacities that could improve their livelihood. In this regards, embracing and using modern technologies in carrying out business activities can help in improving standard of living of families. The use of modern technologies in business is generally referred to as electronic business (e-business). Electronic business according to Shivani and Vijeyata (2017) is a term used in describing any form of business transaction that involves exchanging of products and sharing of information using the internet. E-business encompasses all business related activities executed using internet application. These activities includes sending and receiving documents, exchanging data between sellers and buyers, advertising products, holding business meetings through teleconferencing among others (Brzozowska and Dagmara, 2015). Electronic business over the years has helped business organizations and groups in reaching out to their suppliers and customers across the globe. By this, e-business has helped business owners in overcoming

limitations of meeting physically with their customers as practiced in physical markets. E-business is seen as a modified customary system of exchanging products as products are transacted between and among individuals in different geographical location without physical contacts.

Most often, electronic commerce is used as another term for electronic business. Though they share similarity but they are not the same. Electronic commerce is an aspect of electronic business. While electronic commerce is buying and selling products using the internet, electronic business is a broader concept. E-business is a broader concept because it includes how business organizations and individuals use internet in relating with their customers and suppliers, execute their marketing and logistics functions, carryout their management and other functions to mention but a few (Abdul, 2016). Be that as it may, e-business is used in the context of this study to encompass all activities that facilitate execution of business transactions across the internet. Increasing diffusion of information and communication technologies in business comes with its varying skills used in facilitating business activities. These skills could be used by families in diversifying their resources and coping with economic adversities caused by COVID-19 lockdown by leveraging on technologies for business transactions.

The outbreak and spread of COVID-19 led government across the globe to initiate varying policies aimed at controlling the spread. One of such policies wads lockdown and closure of both local and international borders. This led to closure of businesses as the lockdown policy was very strict and people were encouraged to be practicing social distancing. Jie (2023) observed that spread of COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected businesses as demand for goods drastically decreased as there was restriction of movement. This condition posed difficulties for free movement of people thereby making almost all demand and supply of products to be carried out while staying at home. Families struggled throughout the period of this spread to have access to products that can satisfy their needs and in most cases couldn't succeed. Since businesses were temporarily closed due to lockdown policy, mobilization of resources to solve family needs was negatively affected as there was no or limited physical contacts. Bhatti, Akram, Basit, Khan, Raza and Naqvi (2020) observed that businesses shifted from physical to digital thereby creating online channels to continue their businesses and generate income to overcome effects of the pandemic. With this conclusion, leveraging on the internet in transacting business became imperative and individual members of the family ought to possess the needed skills. Therefore, to sustain family resilience and survival in post COVID-19 era, it is pertinent to identify electronic business skills expected of individual family members.

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
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Purpose of study

The main purpose of the study was to find out the need for using electronic business skills in sustaining family resilience and survival in post COVID-19 era in Ebonyi state. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify electronic business skills required by individual family members for sustaining their family resilience and survival in post COVID-19 era in Ebonyi state.
2. Find out the benefits of acquiring electronic business skills for sustaining family resilience and survival in post COVID 19 era in Ebonyi State.

Research Questions:

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the electronic business skills required by individual family members for sustaining their family resilience and survival in post COVID-19 era in Ebonyi State?
2. What are the benefits of acquiring electronic business skills for sustaining family resilience and survival in post COVID 19 era in Ebonyi State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance and were used to guide the study:

HO1: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female respondents on electronic business skills required by individual members of the family for sustaining family resilience and survival in post COVID 19 era in Ebonyi State.

HO2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the benefits of acquiring electronic business skills for sustaining family resilience and survival in post COVID 19 era in Ebonyi State based on ownership of their institution.

Research Method

Design and Area of the Study: The study adopted descriptive survey design. It sought the opinions of Business Educators from universities and colleges of education in Ebonyi state that offers business education programme. There are two universities and one college of education in Ebonyi state that offer business education programme and they are: Ebonyi State University Abakaliki; Ebonyi State College of Education Ikwo and Alex Ekwueme Fedral University Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo.

Population of the Study: Population of the study consists of 37 Business Educators from the three tertiary institutions that offer business education programmes in Ebonyi State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: There was no sampling as the population size was manageable.

Instrument for Data Collection: Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire constructed by the researchers. The instrument consisted of two parts. The first part elicited demographic information of the respondents while the

AJEMATES
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VOL.12 (2), May-August, 2024 https://ajemates.org

second part was subdivided into two sections according to the research questions. The first section contained items used in answering research question one while the second section contained items used in answering research question two.

Reliability of the instrument: Reliability of the instrument was ensured by trial-testing it at federal polytechnic Unwana and responses gotten were correlated and it yielded an index of 0.76.

Data Collection and Analysis: Two research assistants were employed in the administration of the questionnaire to Business Educators. The research assistants were trained on how to effectively administer the questionnaire. The entire questionnaire administered were completed on the spot and returned thereby giving 100 percent return. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while t-test statistical tool was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Mean ratio of 2.50 was used in deciding respondent's level of agreement to the questionnaire items. Any item rated below 2.50 were considered to be disagreed to by the respondents while items rated between 2.50 and above were considered to be agreed to by the respondents.

Presentation of Results

Research question 1: What are the electronic business skills required by individual family members for sustaining their family resilience and survival in post COVID 19 era in Ebonyi State?

Table 1: mean responses on electronic business skills required for sustaining family resilience and survival

S/N	Family members Require	X	SD	Remark
1.	Skills on writing electronic business plan	**2.61**	**0.80**	**Agreed**
2.	Skills on conducting electronic business research	**2.57**	**0.91**	**Agreed**
3.	Digital marketing skills	**3.19**	**1.08**	**Agreed**
4.	Copy write skills	**3.64**	**0.77**	**Agreed**
5.	Skills for graphic designing	**2.99**	**1.41**	**Agreed**
6.	Skills for website designing and development	**3.31**	**0.96**	**Agreed**
7.	Skills on electronic financial management	**3.49**	**0.85**	**Agreed**
8.	Skills on electronic administration	**2.33**	**0.69**	**Disagreed**
9.	Internet networking skills	**2.72**	**1.01**	**Agreed**
10.	Skills on product drop-shipping	**3.00**	**1.24**	**Agreed**
11-	Skills on electronic customer services	**2.89**	**1.13**	**Agreed**

Table 1 above shows that out of the eleven items, the respondents agreed to all except item 8. This implies that respondents agreed that all the other items (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10 and 11) except item 8 are electronic business skills required for sustaining family resilience and survival in post covid-19 era in Ebonyi State. All items had mean rating of 2.50 and above except item 8 that had mean rating of 2.33.

Research Question 2: What are the benefits of acquiring electronic business skills for sustaining family resilience and survival in post COVID 19 era in Ebonyi State?

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.12 (2), May-August, 2024 https://ajemates.org

Table 2: Mean responses on benefits of acquiring electronic business skills for sustaining family resilience and survival.

S/N	E-Business Could be Used for Sustaining Family Resilience and Survival by:	X	SD	Remark
1.	Providing families access to wide range of products.	**3.28**	**0.91**	**Agreed**
2.	Helping families to make healthy comparison of product prices.	**3.05**	**1.28**	**Agreed**
3.	Providing families alternative sources of income	**3.91**	**0.74**	**Agreed**
4.	Providing families access to detailed information about a product	**2.84**	**1.03**	**Agreed**
5.	Giving families access to promote their products using the internet	**2.99**	**1.20**	**Agreed**
6.	Enhancing faster turnover rate of family products	**3.24**	**0.88**	**Agreed**
7.	Enhancing quality communication between families and the global customers	**2.63**	**0.91**	**Agreed**
8.	Giving families access to new global partners	**3.52**	**0.76**	**Agreed**
9	Increased reach to wider global markets	**2.98**	**1.00**	**Agreed**

Table 2 above show the benefits of acquiring electronic business skills for sustaining family resilience and survival in post COVID-19 era in Ebonyi State. Item 3 (providing families alternative sources of income) had the highest mean rating of 3.91 while item 7 (enhancing quality communication between families and their global customers had the lowest mean of 2.63). This indicated that acquiring electronic business skills could be beneficial for sustaining family resilience and survival as they can provide family members with alternative sources of income.

Hypotheses

HO1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on electronic business skills required by individual members of the family for sustaining their family resilience and survival in post Covid-19 era in Ebonyi State.

Table 3: t-test analysis of the responses on electronic business skills required by individual members of the family for sustaining family resilience and survival in post Covid-19 era

Sex	N	X	SD	DF	T-cal	T-crit	Remark
Male	**23**	**3.15**	**0.74**				
				36	**0.30**	**2.04**	**Accept**
female	**15**	**3.22**	**0.65**				

Table 3 above shows the t- test analysis of male and female respondents on electronic business skills required by individual family members for sustaining family resilience and survival in post COVID-19 era in Ebonyi state. The analysis showed no significant difference as the calculated t-value of 0.30 was less than the critical t-value of 2.04. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.12 (2), May-August, 2024 https://ajemates.org

HO2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the benefits of acquiring electronic business skills for sustaining family resilience and survival in post COVID-19 era in Ebonyi State based on ownership of institutions.

Table 4: t-test analysis of the responses on the benefits of acquiring electronic business skills for sustaining family resilience and survival in post COVID-19 era in Ebonyi State

Ownership	N	X	SD	DF	T-CAL	T-CRIT	REMARK
Federal	**13**	**3-01**	**0.88**				
				36	**0.06**	**2.04**	**Accept**
State	**25**	**2.99**	**0.94**				

Table 4 above shows t-test analysis of respondents from federal and state owned institutions on the benefits of acquiring electronic business skills for sustaining family resilience and survival in post COVID 19 era in Ebonyi State. The analysis showed no significant difference as the calculated t-value of 0.60 was less than the critical t-value of 2.04. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion

The results as shown in table 1 revealed that all the items except item 8 were rated above 2.50 that was the bench mark. It therefore implies that the respondents agreed that electronic business skills required by individual family members for sustaining their family resilience and survival in post covid-19 era include ability to write electronic business plan, ability to conduct electronic business research, digital marketing skills, copy write skills, skills in graphic designing, skills in website design and development, internet networking skills among others. This finding is in line with the view of Verma and Sign (2021) when they posited that individuals and groups need to acquire skills in electronic business as it is filled with many opportunities. Possession of different electronic business skills by individual members of the family will help in improving the family's economic status and get them prepared to overcome economic challenges confronting them. Supporting the above finding, Neringa, Asta and Georges (2023) found that families during COVID-19 focused on the deployment of technologies as they acquired new digital skills and developed digital services for their customers. Outbreak of COVID-19 forced family businesses without electronic platforms to closedown thereby affecting their family economy (Bai, Quayson, and Sarkis, 2021). Such families needed business skills in post COVID-19 as acquisition of electronic business skills and their utilization will help them to sale their products using different online shops and social media (Bima, 2021; Sigh and Chintagunta, 2021). From the discussion above, it is obvious that electronic business skills in post covid-19 era will help families to withstand and

survive economic adversities caused by outbreak and spread of covid-19 pandemic. Items 8 as contained in table 1 showed that respondents disagreed with the item. The result showed that respondents disagreed that electronic administration skill is required for family resilience and survival in post covid-19 era. The t-test analysis of responses from male and female respondents on electronic business skills required by individual family members for sustaining family resilience and survival in post covid-19 era did not differ significantly as the calculated t-value was less than critical t-value.

The result as shown in table 2 revealed that all the items were the benefits of acquiring electronic business skills for sustaining family resilience and survival in post COVID 19 era in Ebonyi State. This implies that benefits of acquiring electronic business skills for sustaining family resilience and survival in post COVID 19 era include: providing family access to wide range of products, help families to make healthy comparison of products prices, provide families alternative source of income, provide families with detailed information about a product among others. This finding is supported by the view of Brazozowska and Dagmara (2015) when they posited that electronic business skills when utilized has positive impacts on the economy of individuals and enterprises. Individual members of a family can deploy these skills in reaching wider market and creating alternative sources of income thereby increasing family's revenue. Bima (2021) noted that utilization of electronic business skills will help individuals to gain huge market as people across the globe using the internet can have access to the products offered. With this, families can survive disruptive economic challenges prevailing in contemporary societies as a result of the outbreak of covid-19 pandemic as they use electronic business skills in their transactions. According to Gatsinzi and Byandaga (2024), family members adopt different strategies to do businesses and economically support their families, achieve their dreams and become economically self-reliant. Sustaining family resilience and survival in post covid-19 era will be greatly achieved where members of a family have access to different markets using the internet. Access to markets using the internet can contribute to improving standard of living of families as they can access quality products at cheaper rates. The t-test analysis of the hypothesis as shown in table 4 showed no significant difference on the mean responses of business educators from federal and state owned universities and colleges of education on how individual family members can use e-business skills for family resilience and survival.

Conclusion

In the face of prevailing economic hardship seen as one of the effects of outbreak and spread of covid-19, acquisition and usage of electronic business skills is imperative. Possession of electronic business skills by individual members of a family can help

them in withstanding and overcoming family challenges. Acquisitions of electronic business skills can help in driving family resilience and survival as it has the potentials to ease adversities and expand economic activities. To state it plainly, individual members of a family require possessing different electronic business skills in order to confront and overcome numerous economic challenges in post covid-19 era.

Recommendations

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

1. Families should encourage their members to acquire necessary electronic business skills as this will help to improve their economic well-being.
2. To maximally benefit from e-business, families should ensure provision of necessary resources for acquisition of electronic business skills by their members.
3. Government and philanthropists should help in procurement and installation of technologies in designated centers as this will help to subsidize cost of trainings on e-business skills.

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