

## Digital Marketing and Pedagogical Competencies: Business Educators' Perspectives on Graduate Employability in Southeast Nigeria

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### Info Article

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### ABSTRACT

The increasing shift to digital channels in business has led to a growing need among businesses for employees to be proficient in digital marketing, and educators, to have digital pedagogical skills to train such employees. This study investigated business educators' perceptions of the digital marketing and digital pedagogical skills equipments needed for the employment of business education graduates in Anambra state of Nigeria. The design of the study employed was a descriptive survey which was based on 45 business educators who answered a validated questionnaire. The mean, SD and ANOVA were used to analyze the data. The results showed that employability of graduates was very much in need of digital marketing and digital pedagogical skills. In addition, there were no gender or experienced teachers differences in the respondents' ratings. From this study, it is recommended that structured professional development programmes for teachers should be developed to be provided to teachers to gain knowledge on digital teaching technologies and, digital marketing experiences should be integrated to the business education programme.

**Keywords:** *Digital marketing skills, digital pedagogy, business educators, employability, curriculum development, Nigeria.*

### Introduction

Technological advancements are becoming a central part of today's society and the future of work is rapidly transforming how we approach jobs in all sectors, resulting in an unprecedented demand for workers with strong digital skills (World Economic Forum, 2020). Therefore, imparting appropriate digital skills to graduates has become one of the major priorities in business education. The CCMAS (2023) provides a list of key digital skills needed for this, such as using digital marketing tools, understanding concepts such as search engine optimisation (SEO), social media marketing, email marketing and analytics. In general, digital marketing skill is an understanding and competence to sell goods, services, or brands through digital platforms (Piabari et al., 2022). This includes making use of digital media applications such as the internet, SMS and short messaging services to promote, assist, and sell business products and services (Alubakah and Obuba (2022). In the end, these digital skills enable people to access, create, and present information efficiently with digital devices, software applications, and the Internet (Berson and Berson, 2020).

Along with student skills, the pedagogical skills of teachers also need to be digital skills, defined as “digital pedagogical skills are the skills needed to effectively use digital technologies in teaching” (Nanjunda et al., 2021). The skills help teachers to improve learning experiences, to engage learners and to promote meaningful interactions in digital environments. Dhakal (2023) argued that digital pedagogy is the integration of digital media and technology in teaching and learning to highlight the active role of digital technology in helping students learn.

The importance of digital marketing skills on graduates' employability and the importance of digital pedagogical skills in maximizing the effectiveness of higher education instruction have been demonstrated in previous studies. Yet, there is a critical gap as there is little empirical evidence on the perceptions of business educators on these competencies in Anambra State. A lack of information at local level results in serious problems of curriculum development and relating educational outcomes to the requirements of today's industries. This regional mismatch is because of basic pedagogical practices in the state. In addition, it is found that targeted interventions, including the technological gamification in the study of Enem et al (2025) in the Awka education zone, have significantly improved learner achievement in learning outcomes, while traditional intervention methods have resulted in poor student preparation. Likewise, Muogbo et al (2025) in the Nnewi education zone reported on the effect of an experiential learning approach on academic performance which further supports the role of hands-on, active learning in learning technical concepts. The psychological dimension also plays a significant role in this practical knowledge as motivation and self-esteem are known to have a considerable impact on academic achievement (Ezeanyagu et al, 2023).

The systemic readiness of faculty needs to be addressed in an effective way for cultivation of these traits and in teaching modern skills. However, the introduction of technology in secondary and tertiary institutions has been challenging in the past, with one of the initial findings being the low levels of computer literacy and use among science teachers (Nneka and Okafor, 2013). Although current studies suggest that teachers are increasingly proficient in using AI (Okafor et al, 2026), there are still some areas where their proficiency is limited. Recent assessments have shown improvement in teachers' skills and capacity to leverage advanced educational technologies that incorporate AI into the classroom; however, there remain areas of teachers' struggle. Enhancing these gaps in the faculty is crucial to identifying certain instructional contents that can actively support students' entrepreneurial abilities (Okafor, 2018). This article directly addresses this landscape by focusing on the very specific digital marketing and pedagogical skills required to help close the gap between the industry and academia and to help ensure that business school graduates are employable.

Research Questions

1. What are the digital marketing skills required for employability of business education graduates in universities in Anambra State?

2. What are the digital pedagogical skills required for employability of business education graduates in universities in Anambra State?

#### Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on digital marketing skills based on gender.

H02: Business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital marketing skills based on teaching experience.

H03: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on digital pedagogical skills based on gender.

H04: Business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on digital pedagogical skills based on teaching experience.

#### Method

The descriptive survey research design was used in this study. According to Nworgu (2015), a descriptive survey research design aims at collecting data and describing it systematically regarding a given population. This was also found to be highly suitable because it included a structured questionnaire to gather quantitative data from a specific population in business education. This enabled the educators to provide a rating on a Likert scale, thus enabling data to be analysed robustly using descriptive and inferential statistics.

The study was conducted in Anambra State, South-Eastern of Nigeria. Nationally, Anambra State is popularly known as the “Light of the Nation” because it was established on 27th August, 1991 with Awka as its capital city. Geographically, it is bounded by Delta State to the west, Kogi State to the north, Enugu State to the east and Imo State to the south. The policy to choose this area was influenced by the high number of commercial hubs, manufacturing companies and digital companies in the state where it is expected that the business education graduates will be able to make their career. The economic context calls for a local-based assessment of digital competencies needed to ensure graduate employability by business educators. The Study was conducted in a population of 1,500 people, with a sample size of 400. The population was 1,500, and the sample was 400. The target population was all the 48 business educators lecturing in the three universities in Anambra State offering specialized programmes in Business education up to June 2025. Of these, 11 educators were from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, 25 educators from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and 12 educators from Madonna University, Okija. The total population of 48 business educators was small and easily managed, therefore a census sampling technique was used; there was no sampling fraction. 45 educators

completed and returned the research instrument of the targeted population. Demographically, the respondents consisted of 19 male and 26 female teachers, or 42.22 and 57.78 per cent, respectively. As for their teaching experience, 12 participants were early career teachers (1-5 years), 21 were mid-career (6-15 years), and 12 were senior teachers (16+ years).

The data collection tool employed was researcher-made structured questionnaire entitled, "Business Educators' Rating of Digital Skills Required for Employability of Business Education Graduates Questionnaire. In order to retain the thematic focus on the core study variables, the sections analyzed for this article measured two different domains. The first was the digital creativity skills cluster, consisting of 5 items designed to measure competencies in digital content creation, multimedia assembly and innovative problem-solving with technology. The second was the digital literacy skills cluster consisting of four separate items that tapped into basic skills in data management, digital communication, and information processing. The instrument was designed on a 5 point likert scale in which the very highly required is assigned a score of 5, highly required a score of 4, moderately required a score of 3, lowly required a score of 2 and very lowly required a score of 1.

The questionnaire was carefully face and content validated by three independent experts of Faculty of Technology and Vocational Education of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. The draft items were subjected to a structured validation matrix by the experts to achieve structural congruence and psychometric quality. Specifically, they examined the content relevance of the items to ensure that all 9 were relevant to the modern curriculum, suitability for the coverage of the words to ensure that the vocabulary was suitable for tertiary educators, clarity of items to ensure that items were clear, and the extent of coverage to ensure that both clusters were enough to cover the constructs. Content Validity Index was calculated to quantify content validity from the ratings of the experts on relevance of the content is 0.89 for the instrument as a whole. This was greater than the 0.80 academic standard, so the instrument was confirmed to have high content validity and all minor corrections proposed by the validators were included in the final version. The instrument was trial tested with 25 business educators from Enugu State for internal consistency. These pilot participants had identical institutional characteristics with the target population, but were not included in the final population. The results of the collected data were analyzed by Cronbach's Alpha formula with reliability coefficient of 0.800 for digital creativity skills cluster and 0.906 for digital literacy skills cluster. The high coefficients showed that the instrument was structurally sound and its field administration was very reliable.

Copies of the instrument were administered electronically by the researcher, with two trained research assistants who followed up with the respondents through

institutional email addresses and through professional mobile networks. This field data collection period was a mere three weeks. Of the 48 digital links distributed 45 completed questionnaires were retrieved and verified giving an effective response rate of 93.75 per cent. To answer the core research questions, descriptive statistics were applied, namely mean and standard deviation. The mean scores were used to make decisions about individual questionnaire items, and the following scores were used as guidelines: very highly required indicated a mean ranging from 4.50 to 5.00; highly required indicated a mean ranging from 3.50 to 4.49; moderately required indicated a mean ranging from 2.50 to 3.49; lowly required indicated a mean ranging from 1.50 to 2.49; and very lowly required indicated a mean ranging from 1.00 to 1.49. In the tests for inferential testing, an independent samples t-test was used for null hypotheses relating to gender and a one way Analysis of Variance was used for null hypotheses between categories of teaching experience. All null hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

The t-test and ANOVA are parametric statistical methods which require certain assumptions about the distribution. Assumptions were made that the data would comply and were checked first using preliminary inferential tests. The first is the fact that the dependent variables were rated with an interval scale (a composite of Likert data). Secondly, the logs showed that the observations were independent of each other in that no one participated in more than one observation and each individual respondent completed the form independently. Third, a Shapiro-Wilk test was performed to test the assumption of a normal distribution, which showed that the distribution of scores was not significantly different from a normal distribution because the probability value was  $> 0.05$ . Lastly, the assumption of equal variance among comparison groups was tested using a Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. The non-significant test value ( $P > 0.05$ ) was obtained for both the gender groups and teaching experience brackets. This indicated that the homoscedasticity assumption was completely satisfied and thus it was appropriate to make use of parametric statistical methods.

## Results

### 3.1 Research Question 1: Digital Marketing Skills Required for Employability

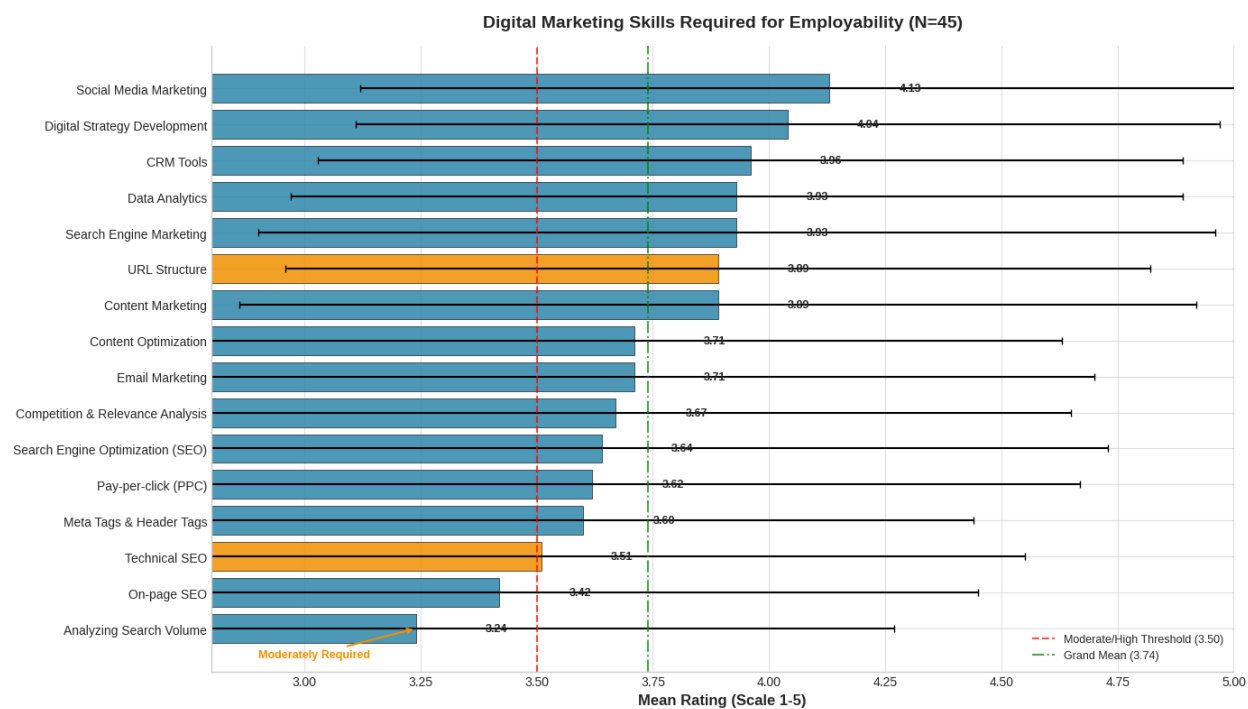
**Table 1: Digital Marketing Skills Required for Employability (N=45)**

| S/N | Digital Marketing Skills               | Mean | SD   | Decision        | Rank |
|-----|----------------------------------------|------|------|-----------------|------|
| 1   | Social Media Marketing (SMM)           | 4.13 | 1.01 | Highly Required | 1    |
| 2   | Digital Marketing Strategy Development | 4.04 | 0.93 | Highly Required | 2    |

|    |                                                           |      |      |                     |         |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------|------|------|---------------------|---------|
| 3  | Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools              | 3.96 | 0.93 | Highly Required     | 3       |
| 4  | Search Engine Marketing (SEM)                             | 3.93 | 1.03 | Highly Required     | 4 (tie) |
| 5  | Data Analytics (Google Analytics)                         | 3.93 | 0.96 | Highly Required     | 4 (tie) |
| 6  | Content Marketing (blogging, video creation)              | 3.89 | 1.03 | Highly Required     | 6 (tie) |
| 7  | URL structure                                             | 3.89 | 0.93 | Highly Required     | 6 (tie) |
| 8  | Email Marketing                                           | 3.71 | 0.99 | Highly Required     | 8 (tie) |
| 9  | Content optimization                                      | 3.71 | 0.92 | Highly Required     | 8 (tie) |
| 10 | Competition and relevance analysis                        | 3.67 | 0.98 | Highly Required     | 10      |
| 11 | Search Engine Optimization (SEO)                          | 3.64 | 1.09 | Highly Required     | 11      |
| 12 | Pay-per-click advertising (PPC)                           | 3.62 | 1.05 | Highly Required     | 12      |
| 13 | Meta tags and header tags                                 | 3.60 | 0.84 | Highly Required     | 13      |
| 14 | Technical SEO (site speed, mobile friendliness, sitemaps) | 3.51 | 1.04 | Highly Required     | 14      |
| 15 | On-page SEO                                               | 3.42 | 1.03 | Moderately Required | 15      |
| 16 | Analyzing search volume                                   | 3.24 | 1.03 | Moderately Required | 16      |
|    | Grand Mean                                                | 3.74 | 0.06 | Highly Required     |         |

As shown in the descriptive data in Table 1, business educators strongly believe that the digital marketing skills are important as a minimum baseline

needed for students graduating from business schools. Of the 16 skills assessed, 14 of them were clearly deemed to be Highly Required (3.50 to 4.49 average scaled score). A review of the rankings shows that higher level, strategy-based skills are valued more highly than very specific task-related skills. Social Media Marketing was the most widely required skill with a mean of 4.13 and a standard deviation of 1.01, with Digital Marketing Strategy Development following with a mean of 4.04 and a standard deviation of 0.93, and Customer Relationship Management tools being the third most popular with a mean of 3.96 and a standard deviation of 0.93. On the other hand, On page SEO with a mean of 3.42 and a standard deviation of 1.03, and Analyzing search volume with a mean of 3.24 and a standard deviation of 1.03 were considered important but ranked 15th and 16th, respectively, in the Moderately Required category. The overall cluster had a grand mean of 3.74, corroborating the fact that digital marketing literacy in today's business education graduates is of high importance in the job market.



The horizontal bar chart displays all 16 digital marketing skills ranked by mean rating. Social Media Marketing (SMM) leads decisively at 4.13, followed by Digital Marketing Strategy Development (4.04) and CRM Tools (3.96). The grand mean of 3.74 (green dash-dot line) sits comfortably above the moderate/high threshold of 3.50 (red dashed line), confirming that digital marketing skills are collectively viewed as highly required for employability. Notably, 14 out of 16 skills (87.5%) fall into the "Highly Required" category. The only two exceptions are Analyzing Search Volume (3.24) and On-page SEO (3.42), both colored in orange to flag them as "Moderately Required." The relatively high standard deviations

(ranging from 0.84 to 1.09) suggest moderate variability in respondent perceptions, with SEO (1.09) and PPC Advertising (1.05) showing the most disagreement among participants.

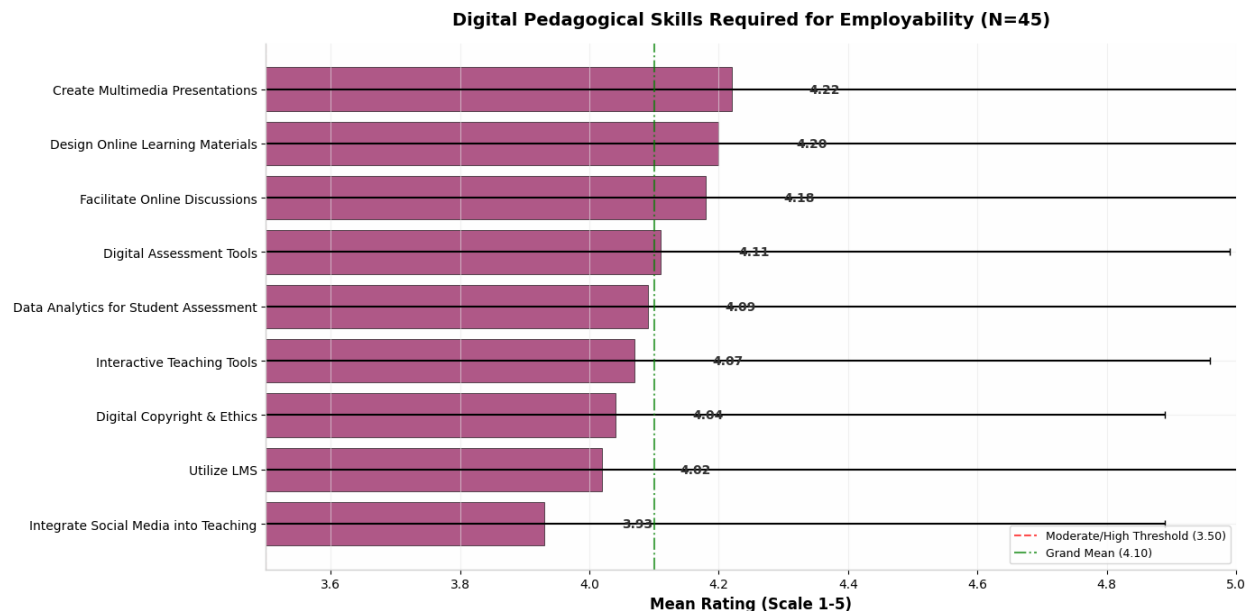
### 3.2 Research Question 2: Digital Pedagogical Skills Required for Employability

**Table 2: Digital Pedagogical Skills Required for Employability (N=45)**

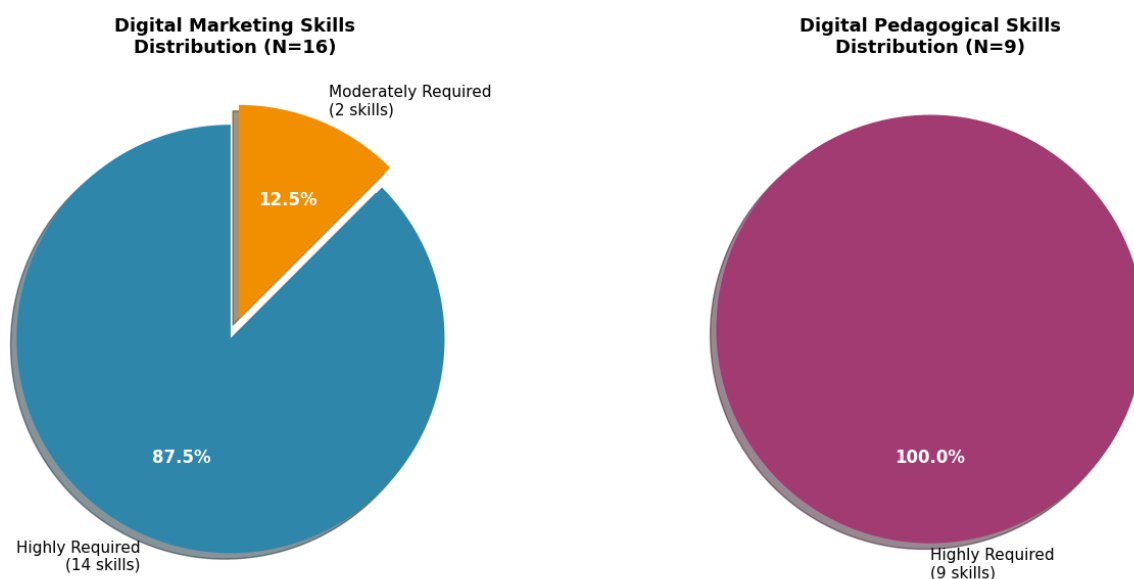
| S/N | Digital Pedagogical Skills                            | Mean | SD   | Decision        | Rank |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------|------|------|-----------------|------|
| 1   | Create multimedia presentations                       | 4.22 | 0.79 | Highly Required | 1    |
| 2   | Design online learning materials                      | 4.20 | 0.81 | Highly Required | 2    |
| 3   | Facilitate online discussions                         | 4.18 | 0.98 | Highly Required | 3    |
| 4   | Use digital assessment tools (Google Forms, Kahoot)   | 4.11 | 0.88 | Highly Required | 4    |
| 5   | Apply data analytics for student assessment           | 4.09 | 0.92 | Highly Required | 5    |
| 6   | Implement interactive teaching tools (quizzes, polls) | 4.07 | 0.89 | Highly Required | 6    |
| 7   | Understand digital copyright and ethics               | 4.04 | 0.85 | Highly Required | 7    |
| 8   | Utilize learning management systems (LMS)             | 4.02 | 1.01 | Highly Required | 8    |
| 9   | Integrate social media into teaching                  | 3.93 | 0.96 | Highly Required | 9    |
|     | Grand Mean                                            | 4.10 | 0.07 | Highly Required |      |

As shown in Table 2, the description data indicates that digital pedagogical competencies are viewed as very important parts of graduate readiness by business educators. The mean scores for all nine of the items assessed in this cluster were in the Highly Required range and were unanimously scored this way. A detailed examination of the specific ranking of items shows that content generation and interactive engagement are perceived to be the most important capabilities. Designing multimedia presentations and online learning materials had the highest

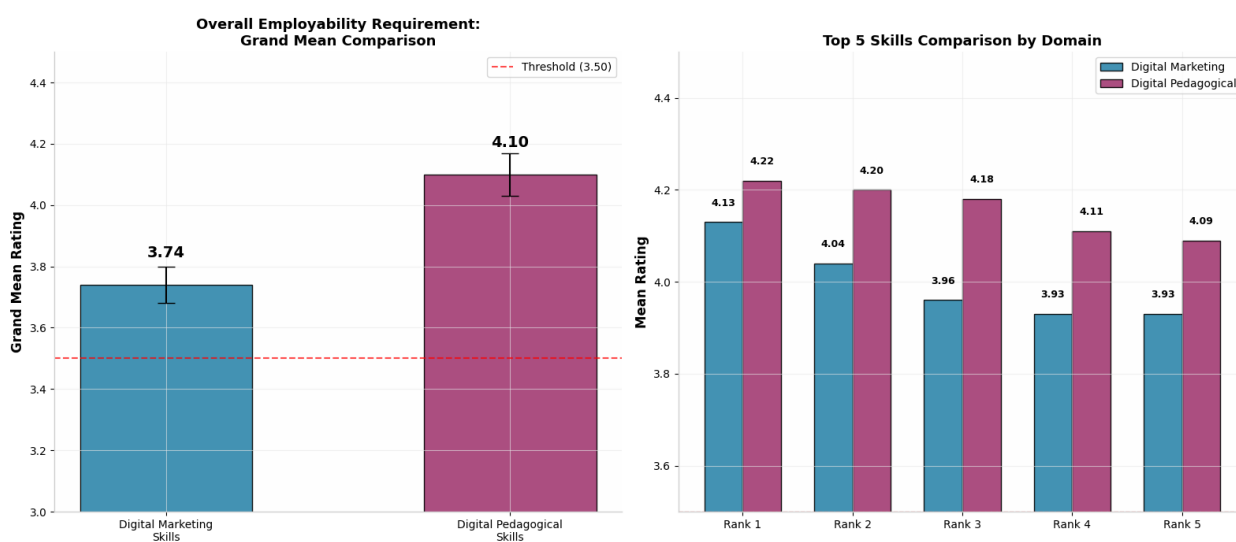
means of 4.22 (SD 0.79) and 4.20 (SD 0.81), respectively, with facilitating online discussions following closely at 4.18 (SD 0.98). On the other hand, the use of social media in teaching was recognized as a valuable asset, but ranked last with a mean score of 3.93 and a SD of 0.96. Overall, the grand mean of all items was 4.10, which shows that business educators consider digital instructional competences essential prerequisites for their future workplace.



Digital pedagogical skills demonstrate exceptionally strong and consistent ratings. All 9 skills are classified as "Highly Required," with the grand mean reaching 4.10; notably higher than the digital marketing grand mean of 3.74. Creating Multimedia Presentations (4.22) ranks highest, closely followed by Designing Online Learning Materials (4.20) and Facilitating Online Discussions (4.18). The standard deviations here are generally lower (0.79–1.01) compared to digital marketing skills, indicating stronger consensus among the 45 respondents. The narrow range of means (3.93 to 4.22) suggests that employers or educators view these pedagogical competencies as an integrated, equally essential skill set rather than a hierarchy of importance. The lowest-rated skill, Integrating Social Media into Teaching (3.93), still exceeds the high-requirement threshold by a substantial margin.



The pie charts starkly contrast the two domains. Digital marketing shows a 87.5% / 12.5% split between highly and moderately required skills, reflecting some nuance in how specific technical SEO tasks are valued. In contrast, digital pedagogical skills present a unanimous 100% "Highly Required" classification, a perfect consensus that underscores the critical importance of digital teaching competencies in the current employability landscape.



The left panel reveals a statistically meaningful gap of 0.36 points between the two grand means (4.10 vs. 3.74), with both domains well above the 3.50 threshold. This suggests that while both skill sets are essential, digital pedagogical skills are perceived as even more critical for employability than digital marketing skills.

The right panel compares the top 5 skills from each domain rank-by-rank. At every rank, digital pedagogical skills outperform their digital marketing counterparts:

Rank 1: Multimedia Presentations (4.22) vs. Social Media Marketing (4.13) – +0.09 advantage

Rank 2: Online Learning Materials (4.20) vs. Digital Strategy (4.04) – +0.16 advantage

Rank 3: Online Discussions (4.18) vs. CRM Tools (3.96) – +0.22 advantage

Rank 4: Digital Assessment Tools (4.11) vs. Data Analytics (3.93) – +0.18 advantage

Rank 5: Data Analytics for Assessment (4.09) vs. SEM (3.93) – +0.16 advantage

This consistent pattern across all top-tier skills reinforces that pedagogical digital competencies carry greater weight in employability assessments.

### 3.3 Hypothesis Testing Results

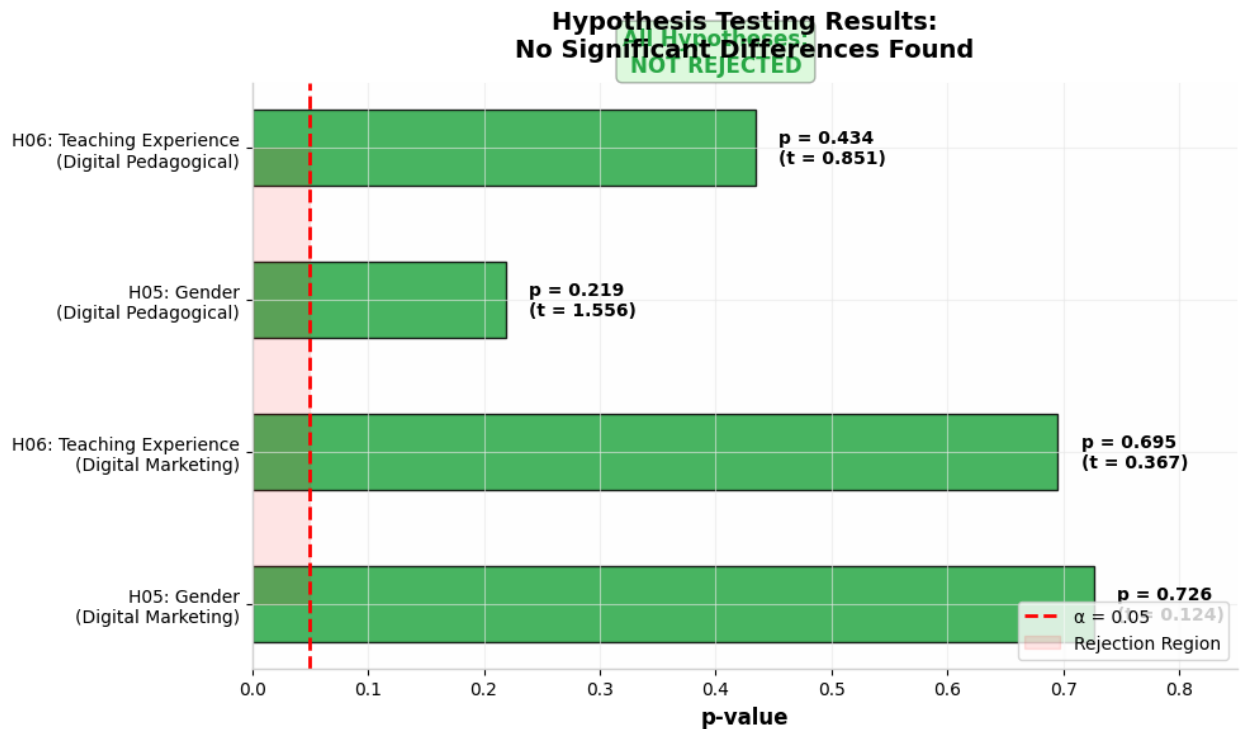
**Table 3: Summary of Hypothesis Tests for Digital Pedagogical Skills**

| Hypothesis | Variable            | Test Value | p-value | Decision     |
|------------|---------------------|------------|---------|--------------|
| H01        | Gender              | 1.556      | 0.219   | Not Rejected |
| H02        | Teaching Experience | 0.851      | 0.434   | Not Rejected |

All hypotheses were not rejected at  $\alpha = 0.05$ , indicating no significant differences in ratings based on gender or years of teaching experience for both digital marketing and digital pedagogical skills.

| Hypothesis | Variable            | Test Value | p-value | Decision     |
|------------|---------------------|------------|---------|--------------|
| H03        | Gender              | 0.124      | 0.726   | Not Rejected |
| H04        | Teaching Experience | 0.367      | 0.695   | Not Rejected |

All hypotheses were not rejected at  $\alpha = 0.05$ , indicating no significant differences in ratings based on gender or years of teaching experience for both digital marketing and digital pedagogical skills.



The visualization uses green bars to indicate non-significance (all p-values > 0.05) with the red dashed line marking the alpha boundary. The largest p-value (0.726 for gender in digital marketing) provides extremely weak evidence against the null hypothesis. These results indicate that perceptions of skill requirements are universal across demographics; neither gender nor years of teaching experience significantly influence how respondents rate the importance of these digital competencies. This homogeneity suggests that training programs can be designed for broad audiences without needing gender- or experience-specific tailoring.

## Discussion

The empirical results of this study showed that digital marketing and digital pedagogical skills are overwhelmingly regarded as important and interconnected benchmarks for graduate employability by business educators in Anambra state. The findings of the present study are consistent with the theoretical view of Kovacs (2021), who asserted that the value of digital marketing soft skills and technical agility among employers has become a growing trend and a fundamental aspect of graduates' employability in the modern corporate world. Besides, these findings corroborate the longitudinal findings of Okpighe and co-authors (2025), which indicated that digital marketing training equips university students with good, valuable and timeless skills. These skills help make the professional person adaptable in a dynamic digital world, accelerate career success, improve future employment prospects, and provide greater earning potential at graduation. The respondents gave the highest overall empirical rating for social media marketing

when looking at each competency in the marketing cluster. This clear structural prioritization is highly aligned with the Digital Marketing Institute (2021) result that currently, there are more than 4.6 billion users of social media platforms around the world, and it has become an essential valued skill for any business enterprise today to be able to use social media platforms effectively.

Likewise, the highly rated customer relationship management (CRM) tools, and digital marketing strategy development among educators, correspond directly to empirical findings from Semrush (2023). Their analysis of the industry revealed that CRM has the ability to make a substantial improvement in managing clients' interactions and also sets the foundation for providing personalised customer support. In contrast to the other skills, technical skills like search volume analysis and on page search engine optimization (SEO) architectures were rated at a relatively lower moderate level by the educators. The difference in results indicates that macro-level digital interaction and strategic planning is seen as a basic level prerequisite, whereas certain SEO techniques are seen by educators as an advanced level skill requiring more expertise and specialization that may not be part of the general business skills set. In the instructional domain, the empirical results corroborate the widespread need for digital pedagogical skills for students' employability. The outcome is in line with Smith and Lee's (2023) findings that digital pedagogy skills have become an absolute necessity given the need for constant competency to effectively work with others in a corporate setting.

This view aligns with the work of Kumar and Zhao (2022), who pointed out that advanced companies always give preference to candidates who have the ability to participate in digital pedagogical environments that encourage continuous learning, self-learning, across the company. In this pedagogical cluster, the priority was given to the creation of multimedia presentations and online learning resources. This confirms what Babat and associates (2024) said that digital pedagogy relates to the use of contemporary tools and interactive approaches that facilitate learning environments that are dynamic and immersive in nature and maximises retention of information. Moreover, the high score awarded to digital assessment tools by the local teachers is aligned with the World Economic Forum's (2020) findings on the World Economic Forum Global report which highlight that embedding digital skills directly within the educational systems is essential to equip learners for the transition to the workplace. Lastly, no statistically significant differences in skill ratings were found in terms of gender and teaching experience of the educators in the inferential analyses. This finding is consistent with Adeyemi and Olaleye (2025) who concluded that there was no significant difference between the digital competence of teachers and their attitudes towards the use of technology based on gender.

This is, however, in direct conflict with Okoli and Okolo (2024) who proposed that long serving teachers might have negative attitudes towards continuous professional development in technology because of institutional inertia. The results of this study reveal that there is a high degree of similarity, which implies that the traditional experience-based digital divide is narrowing down in Anambra State. Shared professional development, the same challenges in the region, and a common learning environment resulting from the same educational frameworks (including the updated curriculum guidance CCMAS 2023) are all possible reasons for this positive shift.

## Conclusion

This research confirms that digital marketing and digital pedagogical skills are crucial minimum skills needed for business education graduates to be employable. The empirical data shows a clear hierarchy between those two levels, as there is a strong focus on higher-level strategic skills in media use, such as social media marketing and the design of the multimedia content, versus the lower level, hyper-niche technical skills, such as search engine optimization. The fact that there is absolute consensus across all groups, also indicates that the experience-based digital divide between faculty members is narrowing.

The novelty of this study is the localized aspect of the study which has made it the first specific empirical baseline from the tertiary educational ecosystem of Anambra State in particular. It fills a gap in literature that has been missing for a long time, and, by doing so, it is extending Human Capital Theory to prove that knowledge workers of today's business landscape need to be a product of business and dual domain digital dexterity.

To implement these results, there is need to incorporate immediately credit-bearing digital modules in the baseline curriculum; at the same time, there is the need for continuous capacity building workshops for faculty, sponsored by the University boards. Furthermore, institutions should foster institutional cooperation formally to arrange practical student internships, and invest heavily in quality digital infrastructure, such as new LMS and online assessment platforms, to support the efficient and effective implementation of online learning.

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