

Vocational Training Skills and Economic Sustainability among Business Education Students in Public Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to determine the influence between vocational training skills and economic sustainability among business education final year students in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve this purpose, the research was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses. The study adopted correlational survey design to establish the influence between Vocational Training Skills and Economic Sustainability among Business Education Students in Public Universities in Cross River State Nigeria. The population of the study is 604 business education students from the two public university in Cross River State, Nigeria. A sample size of 208 final year Business Education Students in Public Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria were selected using the accidental sampling technique. A structured questionnaire titled “Vocational Training Skills and Economic Sustainability among Business Education Students in Public Universities in Cross River State Nigeria. (VTSESBESQ) was used for data collection. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach Alpha which ranges from .84 to .88. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment correlation Coefficient at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that Technical Training Skills, and Soft Training Skill each have a significant individual influence with Economic Sustainability among Business Education Students in Public Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. It was concluded that Economic Sustainability among Business Education Students in Public Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria effectiveness depend on acquisition of Technical Training Skills and Soft Training Skills. Based on the finding, it was recommended amongst others that Public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria should design curricula that integrate Technical and Soft skills, ensuring that students receive a well-rounded education.

This can be achieved through interdisciplinary courses and experiential learning opportunities.

Keywords: *Vocational Training Skills, Economic Sustainability, Technical Skill and Soft skills Training.*

Introduction

Economic sustainability is a critical concern in today's rapidly evolving global landscape, particularly for business education students in public universities. As economies become increasingly interconnected and competitive, the need for graduates who can contribute to sustainable economic practices have never been more pressing. Economic sustainability refers to practices that support long-term economic growth without negatively impacting social, environmental, and cultural aspects of society (Adebayo & Adebayo, 2021). Nwafor & Nwosu (2021) defined economic sustainability as the ability of an economy to support a defined level of economic production indefinitely. Economic sustainability involves creating job opportunities, enhancing productivity, and ensuring that resources are used efficiently and effectively. In business education, economic sustainability can be referred to as activities or the integration of economic principles and practices that continually promote long-time financial viability, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship for economic growth. (Okute, 2020), stated that sustainable education also requires collaborative teaching and learning methods that increase learners motivation and empower them to change their behaviour, taking action for sustainable development.

For business education students, this concept is vital as they prepare to enter a workforce that increasingly values sustainability alongside profitability and growth. However, many business education curricula still emphasize traditional business models that prioritize short-term gains over long-term sustainability. This gap in education can lead to graduates who are ill-prepared to address the pressing challenges of economic sustainability, such as resource depletion, climate change, and social inequality. Moreover, the integration of sustainability principles into business education is essential for fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among students (Eze & Okeke, 2020). By encouraging innovative thinking and problem-solving skills, universities can empower students to develop sustainable business models that contribute positively to the economy and society. These institutions are tasked with equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate complex economic environments while promoting sustainable practices. This approach not only enhances students' employability but also prepares them to become responsible leaders in their respective fields. The intersection of economic sustainability and business education in public universities is crucial for developing a skilled workforce that can address contemporary economic challenges (Ibrahim & Sadiq, 2022). As educational institutions adapt their

curricula to include sustainability principles, they can better prepare students to contribute to a more sustainable and equitable economy. The alignment of economic sustainability with vocational training is particularly relevant in the context of Nigeria, where high unemployment rates and a growing youth population pose significant challenges. Public universities must adapt their educational strategies to address these issues, ensuring that students are equipped with the skills needed to meet the demands of the labor market and contribute to sustainable economic development through educational strategies called vocational training skills. By integrating vocational training into business education, universities can contribute to economic sustainability by producing graduates who are not only employable but also capable of driving innovation and growth in their communities.

Vocational training skills refer to the specific competencies and practical abilities of an individual acquired through education and training programs designed to prepare them for particular trades or careers. According to Kis, (2020). Vocational training skills are practical and sustaining skills and ability acquired by individuals to perform or handle specific tasks or occupations. These skills are typically acquired through formal or informal training, apprenticeships, or on-the-job experience. Vocational training emphasizes hands-on experience and practical application of skills in various fields, such as healthcare, construction, or information technology. Vocational training aims to equip learners with the necessary tools to enter the workforce and meet industry demands. Vocational training skills play a crucial role in shaping the future of business education students in public universities and outside the world, particularly in the context of economic sustainability. As economies worldwide face rapid changes due to technological advancements and globalization, the demand for skilled workers equipped with practical vocational skills has never been more critical (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2020).

In Nigeria, particularly in the South-South region, public universities are increasingly recognizing the importance of integrating vocational training into their curricula to enhance the employability of graduates and contribute to sustainable economic development and growth. Vocational training encompasses a range of skills and competencies that prepare students for specific careers; it emphasizes hands-on experience and practical knowledge; this type of training is essential for business education students, as it equips them with the necessary skills to thrive in various sectors, including entrepreneurship, management, and finance (Bennett & Lemoine, 2021). By fostering a strong foundation in vocational skills, public universities can help students navigate the complexities of the job market and contribute positively to the economy. The vocational training skills that are considered the influence of economic sustainability among business education students in public Universities include, technical skills, soft skills and business skills. Technical skills are

specific knowledge and abilities required by an individual to perform specialized tasks or job, often related to technology, engineering, or other fields that involve the application of scientific and mathematical principles.

According to Bennett & Lemoine (2020), technical skills are essential for operating equipment, performing maintenance, and executing tasks in various industries. These skills are often acquired through formal education, training programs, or hands-on experience and are critical for job performance in technical occupations. Technical skills refers to the specific knowledge, abilities, and expertise required to perform a particular job or task in an organization. These skills are acquired through formal education, training and experiences e.g programming, data analysis, engineering, design skills and business skills. Business skills that has to do with

Soft skills simply refers to the innate ability of a person's attributes, traits, and communication skills that is valuable in personal and professional settings. These skills are distinguished from hard skills, which are technical skills specific to a particular job or industry, these soft skills can be seen as, communication skill both verbal and written, teamwork, time management, adaptability, problem-solving, leadership, emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills in dealing with day-to-day activities of the organization. An individual with these skills can improve their personal and professional relationships, increase their productivity and effectiveness, and enhance their career prospect and opportunities. Soft skills refer to interpersonal attributes and personality traits that enable individuals to interact effectively and harmoniously with others. These include communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence. According to Kis, (2020), soft skills complement technical skills and are increasingly recognized as essential for career success. They facilitate collaboration, adaptability, and conflict resolution in the workplace, contributing to a positive work environment.

While business skills are the ability and the technical-know-how of an individual necessary or needed to perform effectively in a business environment as an entrepreneur. These skills can be seen as, financial management skill, marketing skill, sales skill, operations, human resources, strategic planning, risk management and global business as an entrepreneur. By developing business skills, the individuals and organisations can improve their performance, better decision making, achieve their set objectives and goals and stay competitively in the business environment. Business skills encompass a range of competencies necessary for effectively managing and operating a business. These skills include financial management, marketing, strategic planning, and leadership. According to Baker and Nelson, (2021), business skills are critical for entrepreneurs and managers, enabling them to make informed

decisions, drive growth, and navigate challenges in a competitive environment. They are often developed through formal education, training, and practical experience. Johnson and Lee (2021) emphasizes the critical role of business skills such as financial literacy, marketing, and strategic planning in preparing students for the workforce. The authors argue that equipping business education students with these skills enhances their employability and contributes to economic sustainability by ensuring that graduates can effectively navigate the complexities of modern business environments.

In a study, Adebayo and Adebayo (2021) examine the role of technical training in enhancing the employability of business education graduates in Nigeria. Their study found that students who engaged in technical training programs demonstrated a higher level of job readiness and practical skills, which are crucial for meeting industry demands. The authors argue that integrating technical training into business education curricula can significantly contribute to economic sustainability by producing graduates who can effectively contribute to the workforce. Eze and Okeke (2020) conducted a study that emphasize the necessity of aligning vocational and technical training with industry needs. Their research highlighted that many business education programs in public universities lack sufficient collaboration with industry stakeholders, leading to a disconnect between the skills taught and those required in the labor market.

On another note, Ibrahim & Sadiq (2022) investigated the impact of technical training on employment outcomes among business education students in Nigeria. Their findings revealed that students who participated in technical training programs were more likely to secure employment after graduation compared to their peers who did not. The study suggests that technical skills not only improve individual employability but also contribute to broader economic sustainability by reducing unemployment rates among graduates. In a comparative study, Nwafor and Nwosu (2021) explored technical training programs in public universities across different countries, including the United States and Germany and found that countries with robust technical training frameworks saw higher rates of economic growth and sustainability. Olaniyan & Okemakinde (2020) highlighted the challenges faced by public universities in implementing effective technical training programs and found that inadequate funding, lack of trained instructors, and insufficient infrastructure hinder the development of comprehensive technical training initiatives..

A recent study by Morrison & Lutz (2023) examined the role of technology in facilitating technical training for business education students and found that incorporating technology into training programs significantly improved students' engagement and skill acquisition. They argue that leveraging technology not only enhances the learning experience but also

prepares students for the digital economy, thus supporting economic sustainability. The empirical evidence underscores the critical role of technical training skills in promoting economic sustainability among business education students in public universities. By aligning training programs with industry needs, fostering partnerships, and addressing implementation challenges, educational institutions can better prepare graduates for the workforce. Moreover, embracing technology in training initiatives can further enhance skill acquisition and adaptability in a rapidly changing economic landscape.

A study conducted by Cottam & Muir (2021) highlights the critical role of soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving in preparing business education students for the workforce. The authors found that employers increasingly prioritize these skills alongside technical competencies, as they are essential for effective collaboration and innovation in the workplace. The research emphasizes that integrating soft skills training into business curricula can significantly enhance graduates' employability and contribute to economic sustainability.

Research work conducted by Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock (2020) examines the impact of soft skills on employability among business graduates in Germany and found that graduates with strong soft skills have higher chances of securing employment and achieving career advancement. The study suggests that soft skills training should be a fundamental component of business education programs to align graduates with industry expectations and enhance overall economic sustainability. In a comparative study, Zhang et al. (2022) explored the emphasis on soft skills development in business education across several countries, including the United States, Australia, and China and found that countries with robust soft skills training frameworks reported higher levels of student satisfaction and better employment outcomes. A study by O'Connor & McCarthy (2023) investigated the relationship between soft skills and entrepreneurial intentions among business education students in Ireland and found that students who possess strong soft skills are more likely to pursue entrepreneurial ventures post-graduation. This finding highlights the role of soft skills in fostering entrepreneurship, which is crucial for economic sustainability and innovation in any economy. Research by Smith and Jones (2021) emphasizes the effectiveness of experiential learning in developing soft skills among business education students found that students who engaged in internships, group projects, and community service reported significant improvements in their communication, leadership, and teamwork abilities.

In a study conducted by Alharbi & Alshammari (2022), the authors identified several challenges in implementing soft skills training within business education programs in Saudi Arabia. These challenges include a lack of trained faculty, insufficient resources, and the

perception that soft skills are less important than technical skills. The study calls for a reevaluation of educational priorities to ensure that soft skills are given due emphasis, thereby enhancing graduates' employability and contributing to economic sustainability. By integrating soft skills training into business curricula and providing experiential learning opportunities, public universities can better prepare graduates to meet the demands of the labor market. Addressing challenges in soft skills education is vital for fostering a workforce that can contribute effectively to economic growth and sustainability.

Research conducted by Patel & Kumar (2022) explored the correlation between business skills training and employment outcomes among business graduates in India and found that students who received comprehensive training in business skills were more likely to secure jobs shortly after graduation. The study highlights the need for educational institutions to incorporate practical business skills training into their curricula to improve students' employability and contribute to national economic growth. In a comparative analysis, Smith et al. (2023) examined business skills development in public universities across several countries, including Canada, Australia, and South Africa and found that universities with a strong emphasis on business skills training reported higher student satisfaction and better employment rates.

In a study conducted by Thompson & Garcia (2020) investigated the impact of internships on the acquisition of business skills among business education students in the United States. Their research revealed that students who participated in internships developed stronger business acumen, including problem-solving and decision-making skills. The authors argue that internships are vital for bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, thereby enhancing graduates' readiness for the workforce. Research conducted by Choi and Kim (2022) explored the relationship between business skills and entrepreneurial intentions among business education students in South Korea. The study found that students with well-developed business skills were more inclined to pursue entrepreneurial ventures after graduation. This finding highlights the role of business skills in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, which is essential for driving economic sustainability and innovation.

In a study by Al-Mahmood & Al-Sabah (2021), the authors identified several challenges in teaching business skills in public universities in Kuwait. These challenges included outdated curricula, lack of experienced instructors, and insufficient resources for practical training. The study calls for a comprehensive review of business education programs to ensure that they meet the evolving demands of the labor market and enhance economic sustainability. By integrating practical business skills training into curricula, offering internships, and

addressing educational challenges, public universities can better prepare students to contribute to economic growth and sustainability.

Statement of the Problem

The integration of vocational training skills among business education students in public universities presents a significant challenge in addressing the skills gap in today's labour market. Despite the increasing demand for practical, job-ready skills, many business education programs continue to prioritize theoretical knowledge over hands-on training. This misalignment can leave graduates inadequately prepared to meet the expectations of employers, who increasingly seek candidates with specific vocational skills that enhance employability and productivity. Many public universities focus heavily on traditional academic approaches, neglecting the practical skills that are essential in the business world. As a result, students may graduate with a strong theoretical foundation but lack the practical experience and skills necessary to navigate real-world business challenges effectively. This gap in education contributes to high unemployment rates among graduates and perpetuates a cycle of underemployment, especially in economies where the demand for skilled labor is rising.

Moreover, there is a prevailing stigma associated with vocational training, often viewed as a lesser alternative to traditional academic pathways. This perception can discourage students from pursuing vocational skills development, even when such skills are crucial for their career advancement. Additionally, the lack of collaboration between educational institutions and industry stakeholders further exacerbates this problem. Without input from employers regarding the skills and competencies needed in the workforce, vocational training programs may fail to align with actual market demands. The lack of integration of vocational training skills within business education programs in public universities poses a significant barrier to student employability and economic sustainability. Addressing this issue is essential for preparing graduates to thrive in an increasingly competitive and dynamic job market.

Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to determine the influence that exist between vocational training skills and economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in South South Nigeria. Specifically, the study seek to established

1. The influence between technical skills training and economic sustainability among business education students
2. The influence between soft skills training and economic sustainability among business education students

3. The influence between business skills training and economic sustainability among business education students

Research questions

To direct the investigation, the following research questions are posed:

1. To what extent does the technical skills training influence economic sustainability among business education students?
2. . To what extent does the soft skills training influence with economic sustainability among business education students?
3. To what extent does the business skills training influence with economic sustainability among business education students?

Research hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence between technical skills training and economic sustainability among business education students in Public Universities in Cross River State Nigeria
2. There is no significant influence between soft skills training and economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria
3. There is no significant influence between business skills training and economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria

Research Method

The study area was Public Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The research design used for this study was the correctional survey design. The correctional survey research design was used to established the relationship between the variables of study. The sampling techniques adopted for this study accidental sampling technique. Accidental random sampling, also known as convenience sampling, is a non-probability sampling technique where individuals are selected based on their availability and willingness to participate rather than through a random selection process. This method was used since most of the business education students were not available at the time of conducted a research and even some that were available were not willing to participated in the exercises. The researcher only used those that are available and were willing to participated in the research study. A total sample of 208 final year business education students were used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire titled “Vocational training skills and economic sustainability (VTSESQ)”. The instrument was developed by the researcher with the help of the two expert in business Education

Department. The questionnaire contained two sections A and B. Section A was designed to elicit information from respondents' demographic variables such as gender while section B is an 41 items four points scale designed to measure the sub-variables of the study. Each item required the respondent to indicate the frequency of his or her various opinions under strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The face and content validity were established by using two experts in Test, Measurement and Evaluation; in the faculty of Vocational and Entrepreneurial Education, and two expert in business education department both from University of Calabar. The expert certified that the instrument (questionnaire), was face and content validity and could be used for the study. To established the reliability of the instrument (questionnaire) through Cronbach Alpha Reliability, a trial testing was done using 20 final year business education students in Cross River State University who was not part of the sample for the study. The internal consistency give the reliability indices ranges from .84 to .88 which showed that the research instrument was reliable. The hypotheses formulated to guide the study were appropriately tested using a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Presentation of results

The result of the analysis is presented in tables 1, 2 and 3 shows answer to research questions while table 4, 5 and 6 shows the result for research hypotheses which were tested at .05 significant level.

Research question one:

To what extent does the technical training skills influence with economic sustainability among business education students? The research question was answered using co-efficient of determinant. This was based on the data generated from responses to the questionnaire items on technical training skills as its influence with economic sustainability among business education students. The result is presented in 1.

Table 1: Co-efficient of determinant using r- value on the extent to which technical skills training influence with the economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in South South Nigeria

Variables	No. of item	X	SD	R-value	Decision
Technical skills training	8	29.987	4.332	.811	Positively related
Economic sustainability	15	47.922	5.809		

The result in Table 1 shows the extent to which the technical skills training influence with the economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in South South Nigeria with r- value of .811 which measures the direction and effect size or the strength of a influence between the two variables. This means that technical training skills positively contributed 81.1 % which is high determinants of economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in South South Nigeria .

Research question two:

To what extent does the soft skills training influence with economic sustainability among business education students? The research question was answered using co-efficient of determinant. This was based on the data generated from responses to the questionnaire items on soft skills training as its influence with economic sustainability among business education students. The result is presented in 2.

Table 2: Co-efficient of determinant using r- value on the extent to which soft skills training influence with the economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in South South Nigeria

Variables	No. of item	Mean	SD	R- value	Decision
Soft skills training	8	27.104	4.133	.788	Positively related
Economic sustainability	15	47.922	5.809		

The result in Table 2 shows the extent to which the soft skills training influence with the economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in South South Nigeria with r- value of .788 which measures the direction and effect size or the strength of a influence between the two variables. This means that soft skills training positively contributed 78.8 % which is high determinants of economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in South South Nigeria.

Research question three:

To what extent does the business skills training influence with economic sustainability among business education students? The research question was answered using co-efficient of determinant. This was based on the data generated from responses to the questionnaire items on business training skills as its influence with economic sustainability among business education students. The result is presented in 3.

Table 3: Co-efficient of determinant using r- value on the extent to which business skills training influence with the economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in South South Nigeria

Variables	No. of item	Mean	SD	R-value	Decision
Business skills training	8	28.234	4.764	.832	Positively related
Economic sustainability	15	47.922	5.809		

The result in Table 3 shows the extent to which the business skills training influence with the economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in South South Nigeria with r- value of .832 which measures the direction and effect size or the strength of a influence between the two variables. This means that business skills training positively contributed 83.2 % which is high determinants of economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in South South Nigeria. The result of the analysis is presented in tables 4, 5 and 6. The hypotheses were tested at .05 significant level.

H₀₁

There is no significant influence between technical skills training and economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The independent variable in this hypothesis is technical skills training while the dependent variable is economic sustainability among business education students. In testing this hypothesis, mean, standard deviation of technical skills training and economic sustainability among business education students were computed, compared and correlate using Pearson Product Moment Correction. The results are presented on Table 4.

Table 4: Person Product Moment Correlation of the influence between technical skills training and economic sustainability among business education students (N= 208)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-value	p-value
Technical skills training	208	29.987	4.332	.811	.000
Economic sustainability	208	47.922	5.809		

*Significant at the .05 level, df =206

The result presented on Table 4 shows the high positive significant influence between technical skills training and economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in Cross River State Nigeria ($r=.811$; $p=.000$). With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative was retained at the 0.05 level of significance. The positive r -value indicated that the more students acquired technical skills training, the effective economic sustainability among business education tend to be other wise vice versa.

H₀₂

There is no significant relationship between soft skills training and economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in South South Nigeria.. The independent variable in this hypothesis is soft skills training while the dependent variable is economic sustainability among business education students. In testing this hypothesis, mean, standard deviation of soft skills training and economic sustainability among business education students were computed, compared and correlate using Pearson Product Moment Correction . The results are presented on Table 5.

Table 5: Person Product Moment Correlation of the influence between soft skills training and economic sustainability among business education students (N= 208)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-value	p-value
Soft skills training	208	27.104	4.133	.788	.000
Economic sustainability	208	47.922	5.809		

*Significant at the .05 level, $df = 206$

The result presented on Table 5 shows the high positive significant influence between soft skills training and economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in South South Nigeria ($r=.788$; $p=.000$). With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative was retained at the 0.05 level of significance. The positive r -value indicated that the more students acquired soft skills training, the effective economic sustainability among business education tend to be other wise vice versa.

H₀₃

There is no significant relationship between business skills training and economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in South South Nigeria.. The independent variable in this hypothesis is business skills training while the dependent variable is economic sustainability among business education students. In testing

this hypothesis, mean, standard deviation of business skills training and economic sustainability among business education students were computed, compared and correlate using Pearson Product Moment Correction . The results are presented on Table 6.

Table 6: Person Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between business skills training and economic sustainability among business education students (N= 208)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-value	p-value
Business skills training	208	28.234	4.764	.832	.000
Economic sustainability	208	47.922	5.809		

*Significant at the .05 level, df =206

The result presented on Table 6, shows the high positive significant influence between business skills training and economic sustainability among business education students in public universities in South South Nigeria (r=.832; p=.000). With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative was retained at the 0.05 level of significance. The positive r-value indicated that the more students acquired business skills training, the effective economic sustainability among business education tend to be other wise vice versa.

Discussion of finding

The result of hypothesis one revealed that technical skills training significantly relate with economic sustainability among business education students in public universities. This is because technical skills training equips students with relevant skills that are directly applicable in the workplace, making them more attractive to potential employers. Graduates with practical experience are often preferred in the job market. These skills are essential for specific job roles and ensure that graduates can perform tasks effectively in their chosen fields. The finding aligned with Adebayo and Adebayo (2021), who found that students who engaged in technical skills training programs demonstrated a higher level of job readiness and practical skills, which are crucial for meeting industry demands. In line with this finding, Eze and Okeke (2020) found that many business education programs in public universities lack sufficient collaboration with industry stakeholders, leading to a disconnect between the skills taught and those required in the labor market.

The finding also agrees with Ibrahim and Sadiq (2022), who found that students who participated in technical training programs were more likely to secure employment after graduation compared to their peers who did not. The finding aligned with Nwafor and Nwosu

(2021) who found that countries with robust technical training frameworks saw higher rates of economic growth and sustainability. Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2020) found that inadequate funding, lack of trained instructors, and insufficient infrastructure hinder the development of comprehensive technical training initiatives. By aligning training programs with industry needs, fostering partnerships, and addressing implementation challenges, educational institutions can better prepare graduates for the workforce. Moreover, embracing technology in training initiatives can further enhance skill acquisition and adaptability in a rapidly changing economic landscape.

The result of hypothesis two revealed that soft skills training significantly relate with economic sustainability among business education students in public universities. This is because Vocational training programs in terms of soft skills can be tailored to meet the specific needs of industries, ensuring that students acquire skills that are in high demand. This alignment helps bridge the gap between education and employment. Skills such as communication, teamwork, and adaptability are vital for workplace success and collaboration. According to Kis, (2020), soft skills complement technical skills and are increasingly recognized as essential for career success. They facilitate collaboration, adaptability, and conflict resolution in the workplace, contributing to a positive work environment. The finding agreed with a study conducted by Cottam and Muir (2021) who found that employers increasingly prioritize these skills alongside technical competencies, as they are essential for effective collaboration and innovation in the workplace. The finding agreed with a research work conducted by Kauffeld and Lehmann-Willenbrock (2020) who found that graduates with strong soft skills have higher chances of securing employment and achieving career advancement. In a comparative study, Zhang et al. (2022) found that countries with robust soft skills training frameworks reported higher levels of student satisfaction and better employment outcomes. The finding agreed with a study by O'Connor and McCarthy (2023) who found that students who possess strong soft skills are more likely to pursue entrepreneurial ventures post-graduation. The finding agreed with research by Smith and Jones (2021) who found that students who engaged in internships, group projects, and community service.

The result of hypothesis three revealed that business skills training significantly relate with economic sustainability among business education students in public universities. This is because students who receive vocational training are better prepared to start their own businesses, contributing to economic sustainability through innovation and job creation. This entrepreneurial mindset is crucial for economic resilience. Business training fosters adaptability, enabling students to respond effectively to changes in the job market and technological advancements. A skilled workforce can pivot to new opportunities, supporting

economic growth. Knowledge in areas like finance, marketing, and management enables graduates to understand business operations and contribute to organizational success. A strong foundation in business skills, combined with technical know-how and interpersonal skills, fosters an entrepreneurial mindset. Graduates are more likely to start their own ventures, driving innovation and contributing to economic sustainability.

According to Baker and Nelson, (2021), business skills are critical for entrepreneurs and managers, enabling them to make informed decisions, drive growth, and navigate challenges in a competitive environment. They are often developed through formal education, training, and practical experience. The finding agreed with a study by Johnson and Lee (2021) who found that equipping business education students with these skills enhances their employability and contributes to economic sustainability by ensuring that graduates can effectively navigate the complexities of modern business environments. The finding with a research conducted by Patel and Kumar (2022) who found that students who received comprehensive training in business skills were more likely to secure jobs shortly after graduation. In agreement to this finding Smith et al. (2023) found that universities with a strong emphasis on business skills training reported higher student satisfaction and better employment rates. A study conducted by Thompson and Garcia (2020) found that students who participated in internships developed stronger business acumen, including problem-solving and decision-making skills. The finding agreed with Research conducted by Choi and Kim (2022) who found that students with well-developed business skills were more inclined to pursue entrepreneurial ventures after graduation.

Conclusion

The incorporation of vocational training skills including technical skills, soft skills, and business skills into the curricula of public universities is crucial for enhancing the employability skills of business education students and fostering economic sustainability. By equipping students with a well-rounded skill set, universities can prepare graduates to meet the demands of a dynamic job market and industry needs, to contribute to economic growth to drive innovation in various sectors. As industries evolve and the job market becomes increasingly competitive, equipping students with practical skills is vital for their success. This review highlights that vocational training not only prepares students for immediate employment but also fosters long-term economic growth by creating a skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of various sectors.

Recommendations

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

1. Public universities should design curricula that integrate technical, soft, and business skills, ensuring that students receive a well-rounded education. This can be achieved through interdisciplinary courses and experiential learning opportunities. Institutions should also establish partnerships with local businesses to provide internships, co-op programs, and real-world projects. These experiences allow students to apply their skills in practical settings and gain valuable insights.
2. Public universities should implement dedicated training programs for soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Workshops, role-playing, and group projects can help students develop these essential competencies. Institutions should foster collaborations with industry professionals to ensure that training programs are aligned with current market needs. Involvement of industry experts in curriculum design and delivery can enhance the relevance of vocational training.
3. Public universities should advocate for government policies and funding that support vocational training initiatives in higher education. Financial incentives for institutions that prioritize skill development can enhance program effectiveness

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