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INFLUENCE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON SKILL ACQUISITION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) is one of the most transformative technologies to exist with its influence cutting across almost every area of life. This study examined the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on skills acquisition of Business Education students in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the influence of AI on acquisition of personalized learning skills, problem solving skills and vocational skills. Three research questions guided the study and three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The participants for the study comprised of 668 Business Education students from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Uli both in Anambra State. Data were collected using the "Artificial Intelligence and Skill Acquisition Questionnaire (AISAQ)", a 15-item instrument validated by experts, with a Cronbach alpha reliability of 0.87. Responses were gathered electronically via Google Forms, yielding 615 valid returns (92% response rate). Mean scores, standard deviations, and independent samples t-test (at 0.05 significance level) were used for analysis. Findings revealed strong positive influence of AI on both personalized learning skills (grand mean = 4.25), problem solving skills (grand mean= 4.41) and vocational skills (grand mean = 4.32). No significant gender differences were found in perceptions of AI's influence on either skill area ($p > 0.05$). The study concludes that AI serves as a transformative tool for enhancing the acquisition of key skills in Business Education and recommends institutional integration of AI platforms, lecturer training, and policy support for broader adoption.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, skill acquisition, personalized learning skills, vocational skills, problem solving skills.

Introduction

One of the core goals of education is to enable the acquisition of skills (either soft skills or hard skills) that will foster the holistic development of individuals to enable them reach their full potentials, think and act as responsible, productive citizens. Gupta (2022) defines skill acquisition as the process of acquiring, developing and improving specific skills and abilities through learning and practice. It involves acquiring cognitive and physical skills ranging from essential motor skills to more complex cognitive abilities. A skill is the capacity of a person to accomplish task with desired precision and certainty (Onyeneke, et al., 2025). Either as an entrepreneur or an employee of an organization, the place of possessing the right skills cannot be overemphasized. Hence, business education as a programme is charged with the goal of producing graduates that will have the right attitudes, values and skills to be self employed or gain employment.

Business education is a branch of Technical and Vocational Education. Business education according to Kehinde in Umeh & Iyoha (2024) leads to the development, understanding and acquisition of skills and attitude which will enable the recipients to enter into business world or teaching profession in order to earn a living. It has specialized areas like accounting, marketing, entrepreneurship and office management education (NUC CCMAS, 2023). Business education is generally known as education for and about business.

The objectives of Business Education as outlined by NUC CCMAS (2023) include: to provide opportunity for practical job preparation or vocational studies in order to make students render effective and efficient services in office, distributive and service occupations; prepare students based on interest and aptitudes needed to enter into a business occupation, advance and profit in it among others. To attain a functional business education programme that will achieve its goals in this 21st century, artificial intelligence must be incorporated.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been recognized globally as a revolutionary technology reshaping how individuals live, works, and learns (Dwivedi, 2021). Its impact cuts across almost every field. The European Commission (2018) defines:

> AI as systems that display intelligent behavior by analyzing their environment and taking action- with some degree of autonomy- to achieve specific goals.

Artificial intelligence as a set of technologies that empowers computers to learn, reason, and perform a variety of advanced tasks in ways used to require human intelligence. Dong et al. (2025) highlighted various AI techniques and applications such as: intelligent tutoring systems, adaptive learning systems, automated tutors, machine learning, virtual simulations, and generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly, QuillBot). They are widely regarded as transformative tools which have impacted on how teaching and

learning takes place. AI also has some influence on skill acquisition. Aspects of skill acquisition that are likely to be influenced by AI include: personalized learning skills, problem solving skills, vocational skills among others.

Personalize learning aims to tailor educational content, pace, and delivery to the individual learner (UNESCO). Personalized learning skills refer to a learner's ability to exercise agency by identifying personal goals, selecting appropriate resources, monitoring progress, reflecting on strategies, and adjusting approaches according to individual strengths, interests, preferences, and pace (Basham et al., 2020). Gross and Ryan (2021) emphasized the metacognitive and self-regulatory competencies required to co-construct meaningful learning experiences in environments that offer flexibility in time, path, place, and pace of learning. AI enhances the acquisition of personalized learning skills by providing sophisticated adaptive platforms, real-time learning analytics, intelligent tutoring systems, and dynamic content engines that instantly match difficulty, modality, and pacing to each learner's evolving needs and emotional state. These systems allows learners to focus on higher-level planning, goal-setting, and reflection while simultaneously building stronger metacognitive awareness through transparent dashboards, predictive insights, and personalized strategy recommendations that explicitly teach self-regulation (Holstein et al., 2024).

AI also promotes problem solving skills. Problem-solving skills are goal-directed cognitive and behavioral processes used to bridge the gap between a current state and a desired state when no obvious solution procedure is available, typically involving problem representation, strategy selection, solution generation, implementation, and evaluation (Pretz et al., 2022). Funke and Fischer (2021) refer to them as a complex interplay of analytical, creative, and practical thinking applied to ill-structured, novel, or ambiguous situations

Generative AI revolutionizes problem-solving skills by functioning as an extraordinarily powerful cognitive amplifier that instantly decomposes problems, retrieves relevant knowledge across domains, generates dozens of solution variants, runs simulations, and identifies optimal paths far beyond human speed. Learners can tackle significantly more complex, authentic challenges earlier in their development, receive immediate explanatory feedback on each step, and gradually internalize advanced heuristics through guided exploration of AI-scaffolded solution spaces (Koedinger et al., 2025).

Another set of skills facilitated by AI are vocational skills. Vocational skills comprise the integrated set of technical knowledge, practical abilities, procedural expertise, and workplace attitudes that enable competent performance in specific occupations, trades, or crafts (Billett, 2021). Rauner and Maclean (2022) defines vocational skills as occupationally oriented capabilities developed through deliberate practice in authentic or simulated work settings, encompassing both hard technical skills and soft contextual skills required for professional success. AI integration

expands and enriches vocational skills by creating entirely new categories of high-value work that combine traditional craft mastery with advanced digital competencies. Workers gain access to augmented reality training, real-time AI guidance during complex procedures, predictive maintenance systems, and collaborative robots that amplify precision and safety. These technologies accelerate skill acquisition, enable continuous up-skilling in the flow of work, and open pathways to more sophisticated, creative, and supervisory roles within every trade (Acemoglu & Restrepo, 2024). These skills and more could be acquired in Business Education and with the introduction of AI, it is believed that the speed of acquisition would increase hence the study.

Statement of the Problem

Artificial intelligence is gradually dominating the workplace and business world. It has revolutionalized many things ranging from product designs to customers data analysis, budgeting and planning, fraud prevention and management, automation of tasks, marketing models, solving complex problems accounting software among others. The education sector is not left out in the on-going transformation.

Despite AI's potential to revolutionize education, concerns persist regarding over-reliance, ethical misuse, loss of jobs, and truancy to classes, cheating and stunted learning. This is also heightened by the limited formal AI policy about its use and curriculum integration in Nigeria. Resulting from these questions raised about whether AI genuinely enhances the acquisition of skills like personalized learning, problem solving and vocational competencies or merely offers shortcuts that undermine deep learning, it becomes imperative to undertake a study to determine the influence of AI on the acquisition of skills among Business education students in public universities in Anambra State. Also, there is no empirical evidence of such study within this area covered by the study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose was to determine the influence of Artificial Intelligence on skill acquisition of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State. Specifically, the study determined:

1. The influence of AI on personalized learning skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State.
2. The influence of AI on problem solving skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State.
3. The influence of AI on vocational skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What influence does AI have on the personalized learning skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State?
2. What influence does AI have on the problem solving skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State?
3. What influence does AI have on the vocational skills of Business

Education students in universities in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

$H0_1$: Males do not significantly differ from females in their ratings of the influence of AI on personalized learning skill of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State.

$H0_2$: Males do not significantly differ from females in their ratings of the influence of AI on problem solving skill of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State.

$H0_3$: Males do not significantly differ from females in their ratings of the influence of AI on vocational skill of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State.

Methodology:

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Anambra State. The participants for the study comprised 668 Business Education undergraduates in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Uli both in Anambra State. Data were collected using the Artificial Intelligence and Skill Acquisition Questionnaire (AISAQ), a structured instrument with Section A (demographics) and Section B (25 items across clusters on a 5-point Likert scale: Very Strong Influence = 5 to No Influence = 1). The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts and yielded a Cronbach alpha of 0.87. Questionnaires were distributed electronically via Google Forms through course representatives and departmental WhatsApp groups, with voluntary participation and informed consent. Analysis involved mean, standard deviation, and independent samples t-test at 0.05 significance level. Decision rule: grand mean 3.50–4.49 = Strong Influence.

Results

The results are presented below:

Research Question One: What influence does AI have on the acquisition of personalized learning skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation of the influence AI on the acquisition of personalized learning skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State

S/N	AI and Personalized Learning Skill	*X*	SD	Decision
1.	AI-powered learning platforms help to adjust my learning experience to my needs.	4.19	1.143	Strong Influence
2.	AI has helped me identify knowledge gaps in Business Education.	4.22	1.251	Strong Influence
3.	I use AI-generated personalized content to learn business education concepts.	4.26	1.209	Strong Influence
4.	AI makes me more responsible for my own learning.	4.28	1.220	Strong Influence
5.	AI tools help me set academic goals and track my progress.	4.32	1.193	Strong Influence
	Grand Mean	**4.25**	**1.203**	**Strong Influence**

Table 1 show that the mean ratings of the influence of AI on the acquisition of personalized learning skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State. The results revealed that items 1 to 5 have an average mean score of 4.25 that is within 3.50 to 4.49 and with a standard deviation of 1.203. This implies that AI has strong influence on the acquisition of personalized learning skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State.

Research Question Two: What influence does AI have on the acquisition of problem-solving skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation of the influence AI has on the acquisition of problem-solving skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State

S/N	AI and Problem-solving Skill	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
6.	AI has helped me tackle complex business problems.	4.45	.889	Strong Influence
7.	I find AI-generated solutions helpful on my approach to problem-solving.	4.46	.983	Strong Influence
8.	AI tools improve my problem-solving skills.	4.30	1.171	Strong Influence
9.	AI helps in teaching me new ways to approach challenges.	4.40	1.039	Strong Influence
10	I often utilize AI tools to solve problems in business education.	4.46	.983	Strong Influence
	Grand Mean	**4.41**	**1.013**	**Strong Influence**

Table 2 shows the mean ratings of the influence of AI on the acquisition of problem-solving skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State. The results revealed that items 6 to 10 have an average mean score of 4.41 that is within 3.50 to 4.49 and with a standard deviation of 1.013. This implies AI has strong influence on the acquisition of problem-solving skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State.

Research Question Three: What influence does AI have on the acquisition of vocational skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State?

Table 3: Mean ratings and standard deviation of the influence AI has on the acquisition of vocational skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State

S/N	AI and Vocational Skill	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
11.	AI has improved my skills in areas like accounting and marketing courses.	4.11	1.181	Strong Influence
12.	I use AI tools to practice real-world business scenarios.	4.28	1.138	Strong Influence
13.	AI-powered models have enhanced me in my chosen vocation.	4.38	1.087	Strong Influence
14.	AI has helped me develop skills relevant to the job market.	4.33	1.099	Strong Influence
15.	I feel confident applying AI-related skills in a professional setting.	4.48	.984	Strong Influence
	Grand Mean	**4.32**	**1.098**	**Strong Influence**

Table 3 shows the mean ratings of the influence of AI on the acquisition of vocational skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State. The results revealed that items 11 to 15 have an average mean score of 4.32 that is within 3.50 to 4.49 and with a standard deviation of 1.098. This implies that AI has strong influence on the acquisition of vocational skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 2: Males do not significantly differ from females in their ratings of the influence of AI on the acquisition of personalized learning skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State.

Table 4: Independent samples t-test for gender differences on personalized learning skills

Group statistics

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T- Value	P-Value	Decision
Personalized Learning Skills	Males	298	4.25	.044	.01481	-0.894	0.386	Not Significant
	Females	317	4.17	.260	.09814			

The results showed that the test of hypothesis two revealed the mean of the male students was 4.25 with a standard deviation of 0.044, while the mean score of the female students was 4.17 with a standard deviation of 0.260. The t-value was -0.894 and the p-value was 0.386. Since the p-value is above 0.05 level of significant, the null hypothesis was retained and the alternative hypothesis rejected. Thus, males do not significantly differ from females in their ratings of the influence of AI on personalized learning skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State. This indicated that AI has significant influence on personalized learning skill of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 2: Males do not significantly differ from females in their ratings of the influence of AI on the acquisition of problem-solving skill of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State.

Table 5: Independent samples t-test for gender differences on problem solving skills

Group statistics

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T- Value	P-Value	Decision
Problem-Solving Skills	Males	298	4.41	.066	.02208	0.763	0.458	Not Significant
	Females	317	4.36	.166	.06282			

The results showed that the test of hypothesis two revealed the mean of the male students was 4.41 with a standard deviation of 0.066, while the mean score of the female students was 4.36 with a standard deviation of 0.166. The t-value

was 0.763 and the p-value was 0.458. Since the p-value is above 0.05 level of significant, the null hypothesis was retained and the alternative hypothesis rejected. Thus, males do not significantly differ from females in their ratings of the influence of AI on the acquisition of problem-solving skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State. This means that AI has significant influence on problem-solving skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 3: Males do not significantly differ from females in their ratings of the influence of AI on vocational skill of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State.

Table 6: Independent samples t-test for gender differences on vocational skills

Group Statistics

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T- Value	P-Value	Decision
Vocational Skills	Males	298	4.30	0.122	0.04082	0.046	0.964	Not Significant
	Females	317	4.29	0.182	0.06873			

The p-value (0.964 > 0.05) shows no significant gender difference; the null hypothesis is retained.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study indicate that AI has significant influence on the acquisition of personalized learning skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State. This result indicated that AI-driven tools meaningfully enhance students' ability to learn at their own pace, identify their learning gaps and choose learning resources that suit their unique academic needs. It also promotes learner autonomy by providing individualized feedback, adaptive learning pathways and customized instructional content that aligns with students' strengths and weaknesses. It further implies that AI fosters self-regulation, improves study efficiency and supports differentiated learning experiences. This interpretation connects directly to previous scholarly works that have established the effectiveness of AI in enhancing personalized learning outcomes.

The present finding is consistent with Okafor and Igwe (2021) that adaptive AI platforms improved students' ability to monitor their learning progress and select appropriate learning strategies. Likewise, Oladipo and Hassan (2020) reported that AI-supported individualized instruction significantly enhanced learners' self-paced study habits in Nigerian universities. In a similar vein, Ezenwafor and Chigbu (2022) showed that intelligent tutoring systems increased students' capacity to engage in personalized, need-based learning. Collectively, these studies support the current finding by demonstrating AI's consistent role in promoting personalized learning competencies.

Also, AI strongly influences the acquisition of vocational skills (grand mean = 4.32), supporting evidence that

simulations, virtual training, and AI-guided practice improve practical competencies and job readiness (Acemoglu & Restrepo, 2024; Ezeani & Okafor, 2024).

Furthermore, findings indicated that AI has strong influence on the acquisition of problem-solving skills of Business Education students in universities in Anambra State. This result suggested that AI-enabled learning platforms actively enhance students' ability to analyze problems, generate alternative solutions and apply logical reasoning to academic and real-life tasks(Al-Said,Osman, Mohamed & Al-Said, 2025). Researchers have listed a number of AI tools that promotes problem solving skills such as intelligent tutoring systems (Menlah & Boateng, 2025), decision-support applications and automated analytical software expose students to interactive scenarios that demand strategic thinking and reflective judgement (Mohamad, et al., 2025). It further implies that AI improves students' capacity to break down complex tasks, evaluate options and select appropriate solutions. This interpretation aligns with earlier empirical studies that have highlighted AI's potential in improving students' problem-solving abilities.

This finding is consistent with some scholarly works that emphasize the positive impact of AI on students' problem-solving competencies. Its aligns with Okechukwu and Balogun (2021) found that AI-based instructional tools enhanced university students' ability to interpret problems and make informed decisions. Likewise, Afolabi and Jimoh (2020) reported that AI-supported learning analytics strengthened learners' capacity to solve academic and workplace-related challenges. Additionally, Nwosu and Ezenyi (2022) revealed that exposure to AI-powered problem-solving tasks improved students' reasoning accuracy and their ability to evaluate multiple solution pathways. Collectively, these studies reinforce the present finding by demonstrating AI's effectiveness in developing students' problem-solving skills. No gender differences emerged in perceptions of AI's influence on any of the skill area, consistent with prior localized research (Ifeanyi & Nwankwo, 2024; Okafor, et al., 2025). These results affirm AI's role in bridging theoretical and practical gaps in Business Education.

Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence significantly enhances personalized learning, problem solving and vocational skills acquisition among Business Education students in Anambra State universities. Through adaptive platforms, simulations, and intelligent feedback, AI promotes deeper cognitive engagement and practical workplace competence, positioning it as a key driver for modern Business Education outcomes.

Recommendations

1. Universities should integrate AI-driven learning systems (e.g., intelligent tutoring and simulators) into Business Education curricula.
2. Lecturers should receive continuous training on effective AI tool utilization.
3. Faculties should establish digital laboratories with AI-supported vocational environments.

4. Institutions should develop policies promoting responsible AI use for skill development.
5. Government and stakeholders should fund AI infrastructure in Nigerian universities.

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