

TRAVEL PACK SKILLS POSSESSED BY BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS FOR EFFICIENT ITINERARY PLANNING IN THE MODERN FREELANCING NICHE IN THE ONLINE SPACE

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Abstract

This study determined the travel-pack skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in the modern freelancing niche in the online space. Three purposes, three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study. A descriptive survey research design was used to conduct the study among Federal Universities in the South East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The population of the study was 178 final-year students. No sample was drawn as the entire population was manageable. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-designed Google Form with 31 items. The validity of the instrument was established by three lecturers from the departments of Business Education and one from the department of Computer and Robotics Education in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was used to test the internal consistency of the instrument, and Federal universities in South-South that offer business education programme were used, giving an overall coefficient of 0.89. The data collected was analyzed using the mean to answer the research questions and the standard deviation to determine the level of dispersal of responses. The hypotheses were tested using a t-test. The study found that business education students do not possess the needed skills in preparing a travel pack for efficient itinerary planning. It was concluded that there is a need for targeted curriculum improvement to equip business education students with a more comprehensive and competitive skill set for the global digital workforce. It was recommended that workshops and seminars should be organized regularly to build students' practical competence in areas where they lack, especially in itinerary design and online accommodation booking using tools like Google Travel, Airbnb, or Booking.com. Secondly, institutions offering business education should revise and enhance their curriculum to integrate more practical training in itinerary planning and lodging reservation systems, possibly through simulations, travel management apps, or virtual projects.

Keywords: Travel Pack, Itinerary, freelancing, Business Education, Online Space

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving digital economy, freelancing has emerged as a dominant force in the global labour market, offering flexible work opportunities across various professional domains. One critical yet often overlooked aspect of success in the freelancing

niche, particularly among mobile and remote professionals, is the ability to effectively plan and manage travel itineraries. This has changed workflow and work environment from the traditional face-to-face workplace to an online work-from-home basis (Sunayana & Pooja, 2022). The job of business education students upon graduation and many other jobs are at the verge of collapse if such student do not upgrade their skills to suit the virtual work space that is taking over most jobs. The rapid expansion of the gig economy and remote work culture has significantly transformed the global employment landscape, most especially in freelancing.

Freelancing refers to a work arrangement in which individuals offer services to clients or companies on a project or contract basis, rather than as permanent employees (Chukwuma & Obi, 2022). Freelancers are often self-employed, and they usually work remotely or online, particularly in the modern digital economy. Similarly, Lee et al (2022) define freelancing as a form of digital gig work where individuals are hired for short-term tasks or projects without entering into long-term employment contracts. They argue that freelancing is reshaping traditional labour markets by offering workers autonomy and global access to opportunities, albeit with reduced job security. One of their major role is to prepare an itinerary for their clients.

Freelancing, particularly within the digital space, has emerged as a viable and increasingly popular career path for young professionals, including graduates of business education. As this trend continues, business education students who hope to become freelancers are expected not only to demonstrate proficiency in business operations and digital communication but also to effectively manage their work-related travel responsibilities. This has brought about the importance of competencies required to organize and execute efficient travel plans which are altogether referred to as travel pack.

A travel pack refers to a coordinated set of essential items, documents, and skills that an individual prepares or organizes in anticipation of travel, especially for professional or business-related purposes. According to Ahmed and Nur (2021), a travel pack encompasses the tools, documents, and arrangements required to ensure a seamless and productive travel experience. Similarly, Adeyemo and Olatunji (2022), posited that a travel pack includes both physical items, such as travel documents and tech gadgets, and cognitive skills such as adaptability, digital literacy, scheduling, and remote work readiness, which are vital for professionals operating in virtual economies and cross-border gigs. They emphasize that in the context of virtual freelancing and global mobility, travel packs also include knowledge of

online booking platforms and cost-effective travel planning strategies. This type of job role mostly characterized with the planning of administrator's itinerary.

An itinerary is a detailed plan or schedule that outlines the sequence of events, destinations, activities, accommodations, and transportation arrangements for a trip (Lück & Mitas 2019). In professional and freelancing contexts, an itinerary help in organizing tasks, managing time, and ensuring efficient travel for business engagements. According to Page and Connell (2020), an itinerary is a structured travel plan that includes information about routes, locations, accommodations, and timelines. It serves as a guide for travelers - particularly business professionals - allowing them to maximize time and resources during trips. In freelancing, especially where mobility is involved, a well-prepared itinerary ensures the freelancer meets deadlines and appointments efficiently hence, in preparing a travel pack, skills such as itinerary planning, travel budget and lodging reservation booking are highly needed.

Itinerary planning is the systematic arrangement of travel activities, including scheduling destinations, transportation, meetings, accommodations, and leisure time, aimed at ensuring effective time and resource management during a journey (Ezenwafor & Okeke, 2020). Furthermore, Olaniyan and Yusuf (2019) define itinerary planning as the process of organizing a sequence of travel events and logistics in advance, ensuring that each component aligns with the traveler's goals, timelines, and operational needs. They note that effective planning reduces stress and increases productivity during business travel. Every travel involves spending of money hence, freelancers are expected to prepare a travel budget in each itinerary.

In the definition put forward by Okoro and Nwachukwu (2021), a travel budget is an estimated financial plan covering the total costs associated with a trip, including transportation, accommodation, meals, contingencies, and other logistics. They stress that budgeting is crucial for maintaining financial discipline during work-related travel. Ajayi and Bello (2020), also posited that a travel budget refers to a predetermined allocation of funds meant to cover the various expenses incurred during travel, especially for professional or freelance assignments. Business Education students are expected to have at their fingertips the skills to prepare travel budget which also covers lodging reservation booking.

Lodging reservation booking is the act of pre-arranging accommodation through digital or physical means, ensuring that the traveler has a secured place to stay during a trip (Ibrahim & Osho, 2022). In other words, it is the process of selecting and confirming accommodation in advance through online platforms, phone calls, or travel agents, often facilitated by travel apps or hotel websites (Chukwuma & Eze, 2019). Business Education students will find it difficult

to excel in the line of freelancing if they lack the ability to prepare a travel pack hence, there is need to assess these track pack skills possessed by Business Education students.

Business Education is a specialized area of vocational education that equips individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes for gainful employment and sustainable economic participation in business and office occupations (Nwosu & Onuka, 2021). Similarly, Ogunyemi and Adediran (2020) define business education as a form of education that prepares students for careers in business and equips them with transferable skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, communication, and computer literacy, which are vital in the 21st-century job market. They argue that the scope of business education has expanded beyond clerical skills to include entrepreneurship, digital tools, and freelancing opportunities. For business education students aspiring to participate in the online freelancing niche, the ability to plan and execute efficient itineraries is no longer optional but essential (Rasheed & Olawoyin, 2020). Tasks such as attending digital nomad conferences, on-site client visits, and international co-working events require sound travel planning to enhance productivity, reduce stress, and foster professional credibility (Nwosu & Onuka, 2021). While traditional business education programmes emphasize core areas such as office administration, communication, and entrepreneurship, less attention appears to be given to the practical travel skills that support these competencies in a mobile and digital work context.

Given the growing integration of travel with freelance job functions, it is pertinent to assess whether students of business education are being equipped with the necessary travel pack skills to meet the evolving demands of the labour market. Furthermore, as freelancing continues to shape geographical boundaries, the need for structured learning experiences that embed itinerary planning, digital travel tools, and adaptive logistics strategies for business education students becomes increasingly crucial (Egbri & Ogunleye, 2024). There is also need to identify if gender is a criterion to be considered in skill possession of business education students. This study, therefore, investigates the travel pack skills possessed by business education students, with a view to determining their readiness for efficient itinerary planning in the context of the modern online freelancing niche. Specifically, this study determined the:

1. itinerary planning skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space.
2. travel budget planning skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space.

3. lodging reservation booking skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. what are the itinerary planning skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space?
2. what are the travel budget planning skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space?
3. what are the lodging reservation booking skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space?

Hypotheses

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

- H₀₁ There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education students on the itinerary planning skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space.
- H₀₂ There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education students on the travel budget planning skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space.
- H₀₃ There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education students on the lodging reservation booking skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Descriptive survey design was suitable for this study because it ascertained the opinions of business education students travel pack skills possessed by business education students of federal universities in south-east for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study was conducted among Federal Universities in South East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The population for the study was 178 final year Business Education students of 2023/2024 academic session comprised of 67 students in University of Nigeria, Nsukka; 55 students from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, 15 students from

Federal University of Technology Owerri and 41 students from Alex Ekweme University, Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi state. Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra state, University of Nigeria, Nsukka Enugu state and Alex Ekweme University, Ndufu-Aleke, Ebonyi state was used for this study. No sample was drawn as the population is manageable. The instrument for data collection was researcher's designed Google Form questionnaire titled: "Travel Pack Skills Questionnaire" (TPSQ) with 31 items. 4 point liket scale was used and the response category are Very Highly Possessed (4), Moderately Possessed (3), Slightly Possessed (2) and Not Possessed (1).

Drafted copies of the questionnaire were subjected to face-validation by three lecturers who are knowledgeable in the subject matter and are two experts in the departments of Business Education and one from department of Computer and Robotics Education in faculty of Vocational Technical Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. Apart from editorial corrections, the experts advised some items to be removed. The comments and suggestions of the experts were used to modify the questionnaire and produce the final copy for data collection. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was used to test the internal consistency of the instrument and Federal universities in south-south that offer business education programme were used giving an overall coefficient of 0.89. A Google Form link containing the questionnaire were administered to the respondents using their class WhatsApp social media handles group with the help of their class representative and 171 forms were submitted to the researcher's Google Drive and was used for data analyses. The data collected was analyzed using mean to answer the research questions and standard deviation to determine the level of dispersal of responses. In taking decision for skill possessed, any item with the mean of 3.50 – 4.00 was considered as Very Highly Possessed, 2.50 – 3.49 was Highly Possessed, 1.50 – 2.49 was considered as Slightly Possessed, 0.50 – 1.49 was Not Possessed. The hypotheses were tested using t-test. When the p-value was greater than or equal to the critical value 0.05, the null hypotheses was not rejected, while when the calculated p-value was less than the critical value 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. The data analyses were facilitated using Statistics Product and Service Solution (SPSS) to ensure the accuracy of the analysis.

Results

Research Question One

What are the itinerary planning skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in the modern freelancing niche in the online space?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Responses of the Respondents on the Itinerary Planning Skills Possessed by Business Education Students for Efficient Itinerary Planning in Modern Freelancing Niche in the Online Space.

S/N	To what extent do you possess the ability to	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	source accurate and up-to-date travel information virtually	2.02	0.69	SP
2	allocating appropriate time to activities, minimizing travel fatigue, and maximizing productivity or leisure.	2.11	0.73	SP
3	evaluate destinations based on client or personal goals, preferences, safety, and suitability.	3.51	0.62	VHP
4	plan logical and efficient routes, considering distance, transport schedules, and priority activities.	2.36	0.71	SP
5	use tools like Google Maps, TripIt, Skyscanner, Airbnb, and itinerary planning software.	2.16	0.67	SP
6	organise visas, tickets, insurance, ID, and other required documents.	2.65	0.84	HP
7	plan for unforeseen changes such as delays, cancellations, or emergencies.	2.09	0.73	SP
8	coordinate virtually with travel agents, clients, or service providers, especially when arranging bookings or resolving issues.	2.29	0.71	SP
9	interpret and translate time zones.	2.56	0.85	HP
Grand Mean		2.42	0.73	SP

Key: \bar{X} = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; SP = Slightly Possessed; VHP = Very Highly Possessed and HP = Highly Possessed

The result in Table 1 above shows that items 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8 has their mean range from 2.02 – 2.36 indicating slightly possessed while items 6 and 9 has mean ranged from 2.51 – 2.56 indicating highly possessed. Only item 3 with mean of 3.51 indicated very highly possessed. With the grand mean of 2.42, it shows that the respondents agreed that business education students slightly possess the itinerary planning skills for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education students on the itinerary planning skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of the Grand Mean Responses of Male and Female Business Education Students on the Itinerary Planning Skills Possessed by Business Education Students for Efficient Itinerary Planning in Modern Freelancing Niche in the Online Space.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	Mean diff.	t-value	p-value	Sig. Level	Rmk.
Male	38	2.42	0.27	87	0.01	0.14	0.89	0.05	NS
Female	51	2.41	0.26						

Note: Rmk. – Remark, NS – Not Significant.

The Table 2 above shows t-value of 0.14, at 87 degrees of freedom and p-value of 0.89 which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education students on the itinerary planning skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space.

Research Question Two

What are the travel budget planning skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Responses of the Respondents on the Travel Budget Planning Skills Possessed by Business Education Students for Efficient Itinerary Planning in Modern Freelancing Niche in the Online Space.

S/N	To what extent do you possess the ability to	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	investigate the cost of living and pricing at the travel location such as accommodation, food, transportation.	2.34	0.87	SP
2	estimate costs for flights, local transport such as taxis, buses, rental cars, and transfers.	2.61	0.87	HP
3	compare hotels, hostels, Airbnb, or lodges, and planning based on length of stay and budget.	2.60	0.91	HP
4	set a daily budget for food, drinks, shopping, and entertainment.	3.12	0.84	HP
5	factor in insurance for health, trip cancellations, lost luggage, etc.	2.39	0.82	SP
6	allocate extra money for unexpected events such as medical expenses, missed connections.	2.36	0.71	SP
7	plan for exchange rates, ATM withdrawal fees, and international card transaction fees.	1.99	0.68	SP

8	include costs of travel documents such as visas, passports, and vaccination certificates.	2.64	1.21	HP
9	budget for SIM cards, data plans, or international roaming.	3.52	0.62	VHP
10	account for platform service fees such as Airbnb, ticketing platforms.	2.66	0.89	HP
11	estimate costs for tourist attractions, excursions, guided tours, and cultural events.	2.06	1.02	SP
	Grand Mean	2.57	0.86	HP

Key: \bar{X} = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; SP = Slightly Possessed; VHP = Very Highly Possessed and HP = Highly Possessed

The result in Table 3 above shows that items 1, 5, 6, 7 and 11 has their mean ranging from 1.99 – 2.39 indicating slightly possessed and items 2, 3, 4, 8 and 10 has their mean ranging from 2.60 – 3.12 indicating highly possessed. Only item 9 with mean 3.52 shows very highly possessed. With the grand mean of 2.57 which indicates that business education highly possess travel budget planning skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space. The standard deviation ranges of 0.68 – 1.21 shows that the respondents are not far from each other in their responses.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education students on the travel budget planning skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of the Grand Mean Responses of Male and Female Business Education Students on the Travel Budget Planning Skills Possessed by Business Education Students for Efficient Itinerary Planning in Modern Freelancing Niche in the Online Space.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	Mean diff.	t-value	p-value	Sig. Level	Rmk.
Male	38	2.59	0.32	87	0.04	0.64	0.52	0.05	NS
Female	51	2.55	0.26						

Note: Rmk. – Remark, S – Significant, NS – Not Significant.

Table 4 above shows a t-value of 0.64, at 87 degrees of freedom and p-value of 0.52 which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education

students on the travel budget planning skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space.

Research Question Three

What are the lodging reservation booking skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Responses of the Respondents on the Lodging Reservation Booking Skills Possessed by Business Education Students for Efficient Itinerary Planning in Modern Freelancing Niche in the Online Space.

S/N	To what extent do you possess the ability to	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	choose between hotels, hostels, guesthouses, apartments, vacation rentals.	3.52	0.68	VHP
2	assess the proximity of the lodging to major attractions, business venues, transport stations, or city centers.	1.88	0.86	SP
3	compare lodging options based on cost per night, taxes, and available discounts or deals.	2.49	1.00	SP
4	use platforms such as Booking.com, Airbnb, Agoda, Expedia, and TripAdvisor to make reservations.	1.70	0.82	SP
5	review room features (e.g., Wi-Fi, kitchen, workspace, bathroom type) and facilities (e.g., gym, laundry, breakfast, parking).	1.71	0.73	SP
6	read user reviews and analyzing ratings to determine the quality and reliability of the lodging.	2.16	0.67	SP
7	check cancellation policies, check-in/check-out times, refund policies, and hidden charges.	1.99	1.05	SP
8	communicate directly with property managers for special requests or clarifications.	2.35	1.10	SP
9	ensure travel dates align with check-in and check-out dates before confirming reservations.	3.54	0.64	VHP
10	secure and save confirmation emails, booking IDs, receipts, and customer support contact info.	3.51	0.69	VHP
Grand Mean		2.48	0.82	SP

Key: \bar{X} = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; SP = Slightly Possessed; VHP = Very Highly Possessed and HP = Highly Possessed

The result in Table 5 shows that items 1, 9 and 10 with mean ranges of 3.51 – 3.54 indicating very highly possessed while items 2 – 8 with mean ranging from 1.70 – 2.49 indicating slightly possessed. The standard deviation ranged from 0.64 – 1.10 shows that the respondents are not far from each other on the lodging reservation booking skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education students on the lodging reservation booking skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space.

Table 6: t-test Analysis of the Grand Mean Responses of Male and Female Business Education Students on the Lodging Reservation Booking Skills Possessed by Business Education Students for Efficient Itinerary Planning in Modern Freelancing Niche in the Online Space.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	Mean diff.	t-value	p-value	Sig. Level	Rmk.
Male	38	2.50	0.23	87	0.03	0.62	0.54	0.05	NS
Female	51	2.47	0.27						

Note: Rmk. – Remark, NS – Not Significant.

The Table 6 above shows t-value of 0.62, at 87 degrees of freedom and p-value of 0.54 which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business education students on the lodging reservation booking skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in research question one show that business education students slightly possess itinerary planning skills for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space. This can be deduced from the grand mean of 2.42 indicating that business education students slightly possess itinerary planning skills for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space. The slightly possessed skills is usually not enough for one to be employable. Egbri and Ogunleye (2024) and Okoro and Nwachukwu (2021) supported this finding that business education students do not possess the entrepreneurial skills to manage time and travel plans.

The findings in research question two shows that business education students highly possess travel budget planning skills for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space. This can be deduced from the grand mean of 2.57 indicating that business education students highly possess travel budget planning skills for efficient itinerary

planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space. The highly possessed skills is usually enough for one to be employable. This finding is supported by Ajayi and Bello (2020) when they stated that for accurate travel budgeting, there is need to put flight, road and contingencies costs into consideration before one can be attributed as a good freelancer. Okoro and Nwachukwu (2021) also affirmed so.

The findings in research question three shows that business education students slightly possess lodging reservation booking skills for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space. This can be deduced from the grand mean of 2.48 indicating that business education students slightly possess lodging reservation booking skills for efficient itinerary planning in modern freelancing niche in the online space. The slightly possessed skills is usually not enough for one to be employable. The findings were supported by the findings of Rasheed and Olawoyin (2020) who found that Business Education students needed skills such as time management skills and self-motivation skills for self-employment and national development.

Conclusion

The study examined the travel pack skills possessed by business education students for efficient itinerary planning in the modern freelancing niche within the online space. Findings revealed that while students slightly possess itinerary planning skills and lodging reservation booking skills, they highly possess travel budget planning skills. The slight possession of the first two skill sets suggests a gap that may hinder full employability in the freelancing market, where digital travel coordination is essential. In contrast, their strong competence in budgeting indicates a solid foundation in financial planning, a critical aspect of freelance travel management. These insights point to a need for targeted curriculum improvement to equip business education students with a more comprehensive and competitive skill set for the global digital workforce.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Institutions offering business education should revise and enhance their curriculum to integrate more practical training in itinerary planning and lodging reservation systems, possibly through simulations, travel management apps, or virtual projects.

2. Workshops and seminars should be organized regularly to build students' practical competence in areas they lack, especially in itinerary design and online accommodation booking using tools like Google Travel, Airbnb, or Booking.com.
3. Collaborations with travel agencies, freelance platforms, and digital nomad communities should be encouraged to provide students with real-world exposure and internship opportunities that foster practical skill development.

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