

## DIGITAL MARKETING SKILL ACQUISITION AS A TOOL FOR ACHIEVING YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW

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### Abstract

*The paper reviews digital marketing skill acquisition as a tool for achieving youth empowerment in Nigeria. Empowering youth in this context means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their behalf, and their terms, rather than at the direction of others. These enabling conditions include an economic and social base, political will, adequate resource allocation and supportive legal and administrative frameworks, a stable environment of equality, peace and democracy, and access to knowledge, information and skills including digital marketing skills and a positive value system. The paper critically examines the concepts of youth empowerment, skill acquisition and digital marketing. The paper also looked at digital marketing skills acquisition and digital marketing skills needed to be acquired by youths. The paper concluded that when individuals are equipped with relevant skills such as digital marketing skills, needed for self-sustenance in the economy, it will encourage their charisma, undependability, social and economic acceptability in the polity, and it has the potency of bringing unemployment, economic doom and other social vices to a minimal degree. The paper recommends that the creation of more youth empowerment programs in different fields of trade including digital marketing should be one of the priorities of government and other well-meaning individuals, if the issue of youth unemployment and its associated negative outcomes in the society will be hugely stamped out.*

**Keywords:** Digital Marketing, Skill Acquisition, Youth Empowerment, Nigeria.

### Introduction

There is a saying that, the future belongs to those who learn more skills and creatively combine them. So, to belong to the future, through self-employment, which can also determine ones financial status, one needs to pursue the skills and training that will enable his / her desire to come to fruition on time. Ikegwu, Ajiboye, Aromolaran and Okorafor (2014) opined that, Skill acquisition is the first step in the fight for the reduction of hunger and poverty, unemployment in the society and elimination of crime and other social vices through effective engagement of youths. Skill acquisition is a form of training obtained by individuals which can lead to the accession of knowledge for self-development. It encourages the training of people in different fields of trade or services under formal agreement which involves the trainers and the trainees for a fixed period of time (Idoko, 2014). It also has to do with the process of cultivating the habit of active thinking or behaviour in a specific area of learning (Osita, Oraegbunam and Onuzulike, 2022).

Similarly, skill acquisition, which is the manifestation of an uncommon idea, that is made manifest through training and injecting in individuals the

spirit of entrepreneurship, which triggers self-development and reliance, is what the economy of most developing economies are in dire need of. When individuals are equipped with relevant skills needed for self-sustenance in the economy, it will encourage their charisma, undependability, social and economic acceptability in the polity, and it has the potency of bringing unemployment, economic doom and other social vices to a minimal degree. However, youth employment in Nigeria has gotten to a point where if it is not addressed quickly to a certain degree, it might usher in anarchy which has the capability of snowballing into other kinds of criminalities and dreadful social vices (Makinde and Adegbami, 2019). So, it is on this premise that the researchers deemed it fit to look at digital marketing skill acquisition as a tool for achieving youth empowerment in Nigeria.

### The Concept of Youth Empowerment

Youth according to Jega (2012) is a special group of people with strong stamina and passion for realizing certain set goals and objectives ". How a nation defines its youth is related to the objective conditions and realities that exist on the ground especially

historical and contemporary socio-economic and political issues that need to be addressed. That is why nations use different parameters and variables in defining their youth. According to Ezeani (2012) sprang from the need to enable young people to have a say in decisions which affect them and to have lower and heard voices. This would give young people the economic, social and cultural advancement of their countries, and to gain self-fulfillment. Young people are empowered when they acknowledge that they have or can create choices in life, are aware of the implications of these choices, make an informed decision freely, take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of that action.

Youth empowerment is an altitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people, including youths and adults (Babagana and Dazz, 2019). Empowering youth in this context means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their behalf, and their terms, rather than at the direction of others. These enabling conditions includes; an economic and social base, political will, adequate resource allocation supportive legal and administrative frameworks, a stable environment of equality, peace and democracy, access to knowledge, information and skills and a positive value system.

### **Skill Acquisition**

Ikegwu (2014) defines Skill acquisition as the ability to learn a skill that can be intellectual such as learning to listen, speak, read and write or manually, such as learning to build or make something. This definition specifically relates skills acquisition to possessing only cognitive and intellectual skills without referring to physical, technical, entrepreneurial, or vocational skills. Furthermore, the possession of cognitive skills alone can impact a nation's development, especially in developing countries, if the cognitive skill acquired is linked to innovation, creativity, and source of gainful employment, especially among the teaming youths or the productive age. Meanwhile, Babagana and Dazz (2019) states that most donors who continue to be interested in the concept of skills acquisition are talking about something more than literacy and numeracy skills and certainly more than the term life skills. That is a strong sense that the capacities acquired through skills training or development are linked to livelihood. In this definition, one can notice that the acquisition of the skill alone does not impact the development of an individual or a nation but to transform the skill acquired to go beyond literacy and numeracy is

what is required to have development. It can be achieved through the use of vocational or entrepreneurial skills such as digital marketing skills to be imparted to the citizens to contribute meaningfully to solving the problem of poverty and unemployment.

It can be seen from the definition of Adedapo and Demokun (2021) that Skill acquisition is the solution to improving the opportunities of youths who lack the resources, skills, or motivation to continue with higher education. It provides useful skills for youths' entry into the labor force and improves their chances of a successful professional career. In this case, the acquisition of skills, especially among the youths, can be said to be a driver of educational development and as well reducing poverty and unemployment because they can have what it takes to read, write, and also the source for their means of livelihood through the skills acquisition.

Babagana and Dazz (2019) state that Skill acquisition is vital for an economy to compete and grow, particularly in an era of economic integration and technological change. Skills are widespread in Nigeria. The modern wage sector and the Agricultural and informal sectors nationally demand them. However, defining skill acquisition can always be distinct from defining learning because it is the coming together of the memory and the sense organs that will make a person understand the skill and hence transform the skill acquired into innovation and creativity. That is why most concepts of skills acquisition revolve around defining the term learning instead of skills acquisition. In the distinction, learning refers to an organism storing something about its past in memory.

In contrast, Skill Acquisition refers to prolonged learning about particular events through many pairings of the learned stimuli. Then, a person can begin to develop knowledge representation of how to respond in a certain situation, which can be in the form of skill acquisition. For instance, Ridzwan (2015) defines Skills Acquisition as a form of learning that can be experiential, which allows one to have certain practices leading to a form of belonging to and being accepted as an apprenticeship training system and sets up a system that makes up a community of practice. Oladeji and Yusuf (2018) defined skills acquisition as a well-designed procedure of acquiring new ways and methods for carrying out specialized functions. In other words, it is the form of training by individuals or a group of individuals that can lead to the acquisition of knowledge for self-sustenance.

### **Digital Marketing**

Digital marketing is an attempt by marketers and businesses to bring their products to the doorstep

of the consumers through different social media platforms. Accordingly, Okeke (2024) defined digital marketing as an aspect or branch of marketing which uses the internet and other online-based digital technology such as desktop computers, mobile phones (SMS and MMS), and other digital media and platforms to promote products and services.

Digital marketing has become so prevalent in the business world today such that many firms have resorted to employing combinations of Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Content Marketing (CM), Campaign Marketing (CAM), Data-Driven Marketing (DDM), E-commerce Marketing (EM), Social Media Marketing (SMM), Social Media Optimization (SMO), E-mail Direct Marketing (EDM), Display Advertising (DA), E-Books (EB) and many more. Digital marketing, also- extends to non-internet channels that provide digital media services such as television, callbacks and on-hold mobile ringtones (Nelson, 2016). According to Chaffy and Smith (2017), the basic objective of digital marketing is to increase market share cost and sales, add value, generate brand awareness, maintain customer relationships, and gain global coverage. These objectives and the relevance of digital marketing have compelled many firms to sought after personnel who possess digital marketing skills to boost their marketing practices in today's' business world.

### **Digital Marketing Skills Acquisition**

The discourse so far has revealed the importance and need for possession of digital marketing skills by youths who intend to be successful in the performance of 21st century marketing tasks. Olaniyi (2022) assert that for youths to succeed in the business world today, there is need for them to acquire appropriate skills to enable them fit perfectly into different digital occupation areas. This means that there is a serious need for youths to be exposed to digital marketing skills. According to Okeke (2024), youths' need to acquire different digital and social media marketing skills required of 21<sup>st</sup>-century professionals. Gregorio, Maggioni, and Mazzucheli (2019) support this assertion by reporting that for youths to succeed, there is a need for them to acquire digital marketing and technology skills such as knowledge of creative thinking and content creation skills, social media, mobile application, e-commerce and analytical skills to mention but a few.

### **Digital Marketing Skills Needed to be Acquired by Youths**

Digital Marketing Skills (DMS) are those abilities that enhance online marketing and they are numerous. In the context of this paper, they are those

talents and competencies which entrepreneurs and businesses require to successfully promote a brand, product or services online through digital communication. These skills could be a combination of hard and soft skills. According to McKinley Marketing Partners (2019), the digital marketing skills that are mostly sought out for by firms include digital content creation, digital analysis, search engine optimization, e-mail and social media and cloud computing. This informs that it is only students with such digital marketing skills could easily get employed on graduation. No wonder the digital marketing institute (2022) posit that DMS provide students with the opportunities of instant employment on graduation. According to them, such skills range from social media marketing skills, search engine marketing skills, content creator marketing skills, e-mail marketing skills, mobile marketing skills, social selling marketing skills, pay-per-click marketing skills, video creation skills, strategic planning skills and digital analytic skills. They maintain that these skills would be able to drive sales for both micro and small-scale business owners.

### **Conclusion**

The paper reviewed digital marketing skill acquisition as a tool for achieving youth empowerment in Nigeria. Based on the literature reviewed, the researchers conclude that skill acquisition including digital marketing skills, is the first step in the fight for the reduction of hunger and poverty, unemployment in society and the elimination of crime and other social vices through effective engagement of youths. When individuals are equipped with relevant skills such as digital marketing skills, needed for self-sustenance in the economy, it will encourage their charisma, undependability, social and economic acceptability in the polity, and it has the potency of bringing unemployment, economic doom and other social vices to a minimal degree.

### **Recommendation**

The following recommendation is made based on the conclusion drawn from the paper:

- The creation of more youth empowerment programs in different fields of trade including digital marketing should be one of the priorities of government and other well-meaning individuals, if the issue of youth unemployment and its associated negative outcomes in society will be hugely stamped out. This is because, with skill acquisition programs in different fields of trade including digital marketing, youths will be equipped with necessary skills and exposure needed to put in their best in the world of works.

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