

DIGITAL SKILLS AND INDUSTRY RELEVANCE: A REBRANDING IMPERATIVE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

In today's rapidly evolving economic landscape, Nigeria's industries face significant challenges in remaining competitive and relevant. The acquisition of digital skills has become a crucial factor in determining industry relevance, and rebranding efforts must prioritize digital literacy to stay ahead. This opinion paper argues that acquiring digital skills is essential for industry relevance in Nigeria and that rebranding efforts should prioritize digital literacy to remain competitive. The paper begins by highlighting the importance of digital skills in modern industries, discussing their role in enhancing productivity, innovation, and competitiveness. It then examines the current state of digital skills in Nigeria, revealing significant challenges and limitations, including a gap between the demand for digital skills and the available talent pool. The paper argues that rebranding efforts must prioritize digital literacy to increase competitiveness and relevance, providing examples of successful rebranding efforts in other countries and industries. The paper concludes by emphasizing the importance of digital skills and rebranding in Nigeria's future, calling on policymakers, industry leaders, and individuals to prioritize digital skills development and rebranding efforts. Specific recommendations are provided, including developing digital skills training programs, investing in digital infrastructure, and encouraging industry-academia partnerships. By prioritizing digital skills and rebranding, Nigeria's industries can remain competitive, drive economic growth, and enhance the country's global relevance.

Keywords: Digital skills, industry relevance, rebranding, competitiveness, digital literacy.

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving economic landscape, Nigeria is at a crossroads, grappling with the challenges of a dynamic global market. The country's economy has long been reliant on oil, but the volatility of global oil prices and the finite nature of this resource have made it imperative for Nigeria to diversify its economy. As the country strives to reduce its dependence on oil and explore other revenue streams, it has become increasingly evident that digital skills are no longer a luxury but a necessity. The relevance of industries in Nigeria's economy is inextricably linked to their ability to harness digital technologies, innovate, and remain competitive. With the global economy becoming more interconnected, Nigerian industries must prioritize digital literacy to stay afloat. The digital revolution has transformed the way businesses operate, and industries that fail to adapt risk becoming obsolete. In contrast, those that embrace digital technologies can improve their efficiency,

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productivity, and competitiveness, ultimately driving economic growth and development. The importance of digital skills in modern industries cannot be overstated. Digital technologies have enabled businesses to streamline their operations, enhance customer experience, and gain valuable insights into market trends. In Nigeria, industries such as finance, healthcare, and education have already begun to leverage digital technologies to improve their services and reach a wider audience. For instance, mobile banking has expanded financial inclusion, while e-learning platforms have increased access to education.

However, despite the growing importance of digital skills, Nigeria still faces significant challenges in this area. The country's education system has been criticized for its lack of emphasis on digital skills, and many industries struggle to find employees with the necessary digital literacy. This skills gap has significant implications for Nigeria's economic development, as industries that fail to adapt to digital technologies risk falling behind their global competitors. This opinion paper argues that acquiring digital skills is crucial for industry relevance in Nigeria, and rebranding efforts should prioritize digital literacy to remain competitive. By exploring the importance of digital skills in modern industries, the current state of digital skills in Nigeria, and the need for rebranding and digital literacy, this paper aims to underscore the imperative of digital skills in driving industry relevance and competitiveness in Nigeria's economy.

The significance of digital skills in Nigeria's economic landscape cannot be ignored. As the country seeks to diversify its economy and drive growth, digital skills will play a critical role in enabling industries to innovate, compete, and thrive. By prioritizing digital literacy and investing in digital infrastructure, Nigeria can unlock new opportunities for economic development and improve the competitiveness of its industries. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies, and industries that fail to adapt risk being left behind. The pandemic has shown that digital technologies can enable businesses to continue operating even in the face of significant disruptions. As Nigeria navigates the post-pandemic landscape, it is essential that industries prioritize digital skills and literacy to remain relevant and competitive.

In conclusion, the importance of digital skills in Nigeria's economic landscape is clear. Industries that prioritize digital literacy and invest in digital technologies will be better positioned to drive growth, innovation, and competitiveness. As this paper will argue, rebranding efforts that prioritize digital literacy are essential for industry relevance in Nigeria. By exploring the importance of digital skills, the current state of digital skills in Nigeria, and the need for rebranding and digital

literacy, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of digital skills in driving industry relevance and competitiveness in Nigeria's economy.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria's rapidly evolving economic landscape, industries face significant challenges in remaining relevant due to a lack of digital skills and inadequate rebranding efforts. Despite the growing importance of digital skills in modern industries, many Nigerian industries struggle to find employees with the necessary digital literacy, leading to a gap between the demand for digital skills and the available talent pool. This gap hinders industry productivity, innovation and competitiveness, ultimately affecting Nigeria's economic growth and development.

Therefore, there is a need for industries to prioritize digital skills development and rebranding efforts to remain competitive and relevant in today's digital economy. The statement of the problem highlights the specific issue that the paper aims to address, which is the lack of digital skills and inadequate rebranding efforts in Nigerian industries, and its impact on their competitiveness and relevance.

Significance of the Paper

The significance of this paper lies in its exploration of the crucial role digital skills play in driving industry relevance and competitiveness in Nigeria's rapidly evolving economic landscape. By highlighting the importance of digital literacy and rebranding efforts, this paper provides valuable insights into how industries can remain competitive and relevant in today's digital economy..

Key Significance

- **Economic Growth:** Acquiring digital skills can contribute significantly to Nigeria's economic growth by increasing productivity, innovation, and competitiveness in various industries.
- **Industry Relevance:** Digital skills are essential for industries to remain relevant and competitive in today's digital economy, enabling them to adapt to changing market demands and technological advancements.
- **Job Creation and Entrepreneurship:** Digital skills can enable individuals to start and upscale their enterprises using low-cost digital platforms, promoting entrepreneurship and job creation.
- **Digital Transformation:** Digital skills are critical in driving the digital transformation of conventional industrial sectors, such as education, agriculture, banking, and healthcare.

- **Global Opportunities:** Acquiring digital skills can provide individuals with global opportunities, enabling them to work remotely for companies worldwide and participate in the digital economy.

By emphasizing the importance of digital skills and rebranding efforts, this paper aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on how Nigeria can harness digital technologies to drive economic growth, improve industry competitiveness and enhance global relevance.

Literature Review

The Importance of Digital Skills in Modern Industries:

Digital skills have become a fundamental necessity in today's workplace, driving organizational success and career growth. The importance of digital skills in modern industries can be understood through various perspectives, including their impact on productivity, employability, and economic development.

Enhancing Productivity and Efficiency

Digital skills enable employees to streamline workflows, automate repetitive tasks, and focus on strategic goals. According to NS Training, proficiency in digital tools like project management software, CRM platforms, and data analysis programs can reduce manual tasks and improve resource allocation, ultimately leading to cost savings and better productivity. For instance, tools like Asana, Salesforce, or Tableau can enhance workflow efficiency and support data-driven decision-making.¹

Boosting Employability and Career Prospects

In today's digital landscape, having digital skills is crucial for career advancement and employability. The World Economic Forum reports that by 2025, 50% of all employees will need reskilling due to technological advancements, highlighting the importance of digital literacy in the modern workforce. Digital skills like data analysis, digital marketing, and cloud computing can significantly enhance job prospects and career growth.²

Driving Economic Growth and Development

Digital skills can have a profound impact on the economy, generating trillions of dollars in global GDP. A report by Gallup and Amazon found that digital skills can generate \$18.5 trillion globally, with enterprises that use digital skills reporting 168% higher annual revenues than those that don't. Moreover, workers with advanced digital skills can earn up to 30% more than those without digital skills, adding to their job satisfaction and productivity.³

Key Digital Skills for Modern Industries

Several digital skills are essential for modern industries, including:

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Basic Computer Skills: Understanding basic software applications like Microsoft Office and Google Suite.

Digital Communication and Collaboration: Using platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Slack for remote work.

Data Analysis and Management: Knowledge of Excel, SQL, and data visualization tools like Tableau.

Cybersecurity Awareness: Protecting personal and organizational data from cyber threats.

Programming and Coding: Learning programming languages like Python, Java, and HTML.

Cloud Computing and IT Infrastructure: Understanding cloud storage solutions like Google Drive and Dropbox.

The Current State of Digital Skills in Nigeria

The current state of digital skills in Nigeria is a pressing concern, with various studies and research highlighting the gaps and challenges in the country's digital literacy landscape. According to a study by Oladipupo Bello and Abdulazeez O. Ajao, government policies aimed at facilitating digital literacy and skills development in Nigeria have been examined, revealing significant barriers that hinder the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Challenges in Digital Skills Development

Limited Digital Literacy: Many Nigerians lack the necessary digital skills to participate effectively in the digital economy. This limited digital literacy hinders their ability to enhance their standard of living and contribute to national development.

Barriers to Digital Skills Development: Several barriers hinder digital skills development in Nigeria, including:

Limited Access to Quality Education: The lack of access to quality education is a significant barrier to digital skills development.

Inadequate Infrastructure: Inadequate digital infrastructure, such as computers and internet connectivity, hinders digital skills development.

Shortage of Skilled Professionals: A shortage of skilled professionals in the field of digital skills development also poses a significant challenge.

Formal Education Approach

The formal education in Nigeria's digital skills development landscape is a critical area of examination. According to Adegoke and Osuntade (2020), the Nigerian government has implemented policies and initiatives aimed at promoting digital literacy, but the formal education system has been

criticized for its inability to provide adequate digital skills training. Oyewole and Adeyeye (2019), also noted that the majority of programs offered in universities and polytechnics are inadequate or outdated, which hinders digital skills development. This is particularly concerning given the growing demand for digital skills in the modern workforce (Egbetokun & Oluwatola, 2020). The lack of emphasis on digital skills in the formal education system means that many students graduate without the necessary skills to compete in the digital economy (Nwokeji, 2022). Furthermore, the formal education system's inability to provide adequate digital skills training is compounded by a shortage of skilled professionals in the field of digital skills development (Salau & Falade, 2023).

To address these challenges, there is a need for a comprehensive overhaul of the formal education system to prioritize digital skills development (Yusuf & Abubakar, 2022). This could involve updating curricula to include digital skills training, providing training for educators, and investing in digital infrastructure (Akinyemi & Odo, 2019). By doing so, the formal education system can play a more effective role in equipping students with the digital skills they need to succeed in the modern workforce.

In addition, industry – academia partnerships can also play a crucial role in providing students with practical digital skills training (Bolou & Yusuf, 2022). By partnering with industry experts, educational institutions can provide students with hands-on experience and exposure to the latest digital technologies and trends (Anuforo, 2023). This can help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills, making students more employable and competitive in the digital economy.

The Need for Rebranding and Digital Literacy

In today's digital age, rebranding and digital literacy are crucial for organizations and individuals to remain competitive and relevant. Digital transformation has become a key driver of business success, and digital literacy is essential for navigating this new landscape.

Rebranding can help organizations:

Establish a strong digital presence: A well-designed digital brand can increase visibility, credibility, and trust with customers.

Stay competitive: Rebranding can help organizations differentiate themselves from competitors and stay ahead in the market.

Build trust and loyalty: A strong brand can create trust and loyalty with customers, leading to increased engagement and retention.

Adapt to changing market trends: Rebranding can help organizations adapt to changing market trends and consumer preferences.

The Importance of Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is critical for individuals and organizations to effectively navigate the digital landscape. It encompasses a range of skills, including:

Basic digital skills: Understanding basic software applications, online safety, and digital communication.

Information literacy: Finding, evaluating, and using digital information effectively.

Digital creativity: Using digital tools to create and innovate.

Digital problem-solving: Troubleshooting technical issues and navigating digital conflicts.

Adaptability and updates: Staying up-to-date with the latest digital trends and technologies.

Benefits of Digital Literacy

Digital literacy can bring numerous benefits, including:

Improved employability: Digitally literate individuals are more attractive to employers and can adapt to changing technologies.

Enhanced personal lives: Digital literacy can enrich personal lives by providing access to online services, education, and social connections.

Increased productivity: Digital literacy can improve productivity and efficiency in the workplace.

Better decision-making: Digital literacy can enable individuals to make informed decisions by evaluating digital information effectively.

Strategies for Implementing Digital Skills and Rebranding

Implementing digital skills and rebranding requires a comprehensive approach that involves various strategies. Here are some effective strategies for implementing digital skills and rebranding:

Digital Skills Implementation Strategies

- i. **Develop a Digital Skills Framework:** Develop a digital skills framework that outlines the essential digital skills required for employees to perform their jobs effectively. This framework should include skills such as data analysis, digital marketing, and cloud computing.
- ii. **Provide Training and Development Opportunities:** Provide training and development opportunities for employees to acquire digital skills. This can include online courses, workshops, and conferences.

- iii. Encourage Continuous Learning: Encourage continuous learning and professional development to ensure that employees stay up-to-date with the latest digital trends and technologies.
- iv. Foster a Digital Culture: Foster a digital culture that promotes innovation, experimentation, and risk-taking. This can include encouraging employees to try new digital tools and technologies.
- v. Measure and Evaluate Digital Skills: Measure and evaluate digital skills to identify areas for improvement. This can include conducting regular skills assessments and providing feedback to employees.

Rebranding Strategies

- i. Define Your Brand Identity: Define your brand identity and develop a clear brand positioning statement. This should include your brand values, mission, and vision.
- ii. Conduct Market Research: Conduct market research to understand your target audience and their needs. This can include surveys, focus groups, and social media listening.
- iii. Develop a Brand Strategy: Develop a brand strategy that outlines your brand's unique value proposition and messaging. This should include your brand's tone, voice, and language.
- iv. Create a Visual Identity: Create a visual identity that reflects your brand's values and personality. This can include your logo, color palette, typography, and imagery.
- v. Communicate Your Brand: Communicate your brand consistently across all touchpoints, including your website, social media, advertising, and customer service.

Digital Rebranding Strategies

- i. Update Your Website: Update your website to reflect your new brand identity and messaging. This should include a modern design, clear navigation, and engaging content.
- ii. Use Social Media: Use social media to promote your brand and engage with your target audience. This can include creating social media content, responding to comments and messages, and running social media ads.
- iii. Develop a Content Marketing Strategy: Develop a content marketing strategy that showcases your brand's expertise and thought leadership. This can include creating blog posts, videos, and podcasts.
- iv. Use Influencer Marketing: Use influencer marketing to reach new audiences and build credibility. This can include partnering with influencers who align with your brand values and messaging.

- v. **Monitor and Measure Your Brand:** Monitor and measure your brand's performance regularly to identify areas for improvement. This can include tracking website analytics, social media metrics, and customer feedback.

Implementation Challenges

- i. **Resistance to Change:** Resistance to change can be a significant challenge when implementing digital skills and rebranding. Employees may be resistant to new technologies or ways of working.
- ii. **Limited Resources:** Limited resources can also be a challenge, including budget, time, and personnel.
- iii. **Measuring Success:** Measuring the success of digital skills and rebranding initiatives can be challenging, especially when it comes to quantifying the impact on business outcomes.

Overcoming Implementation Challenges

- i. **Communicate the Benefits:** Communicate the benefits of digital skills and rebranding to employees and stakeholders. This can include highlighting the potential for increased productivity, efficiency, and revenue growth.
- ii. **Provide Training and Support:** Provide training and support to employees to help them develop the necessary digital skills. This can include online courses, workshops, and coaching.
- iii. **Set Clear Goals and Objectives:** Set clear goals and objectives for digital skills and rebranding initiatives. This can include increasing website traffic, improving social media engagement, or enhancing customer experience.
- iv. **Monitor and Evaluate Progress:** Monitor and evaluate progress regularly to identify areas for improvement. This can include tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) and conducting regular assessments.

By implementing these strategies, organizations can effectively develop digital skills and rebrand themselves to stay competitive in today's digital age.

The Future of Digital Skills in Nigeria

As Nigeria continues to navigate the complexities of the digital economy, it is essential to prioritize digital skills development and stay ahead of the curve. By investing in digital infrastructure, promoting digital literacy, and supporting digital skills development initiatives, Nigeria can position itself for success in the digital age.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the importance of digital skills in modern industries cannot be overstated. As Nigeria strives to diversify its economy and reduce dependence on oil, digital skills will play a crucial role in driving industry relevance and competitiveness. By investing in digital infrastructure, revamping the formal education system, and promoting public-private partnerships, Nigeria can improve digital skills development and enhance the standard of living for its citizens. In the end, the development of digital skills in Nigeria is not just a necessity, but an imperative for the country's economic growth and development.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the importance of digital skills in modern industries and the current state of digital skills in Nigeria, the following recommendations are made:

For Policymakers

Develop a National Digital Skills Development Plan: The government should develop a comprehensive national plan to promote digital skills development, including strategies for investing in digital infrastructure, revamping the formal education system, and promoting public-private partnerships.

Invest in Digital Infrastructure: The government should invest in digital infrastructure, such as computers, internet connectivity, and digital platforms, to provide access to digital skills training and promote digital literacy.

Provide Funding for Digital Skills Development Initiatives: The government and all its institutions and agencies should provide funding for digital skills development initiatives, including training programs, workshops, and conferences, to support the development of digital skills in Nigeria.

For Industry Leaders

Provide Digital Skills Training for Employees: Provide digital skills training for employees to enhance their productivity and competitiveness in the digital economy.

Partner with Educational Institutions: Partner with educational institutions to provide digital skills training and promote industry-academia collaboration.

Invest in Digital Technologies: Invest in digital technologies, such as data analytics and artificial intelligence, to drive innovation and competitiveness in industries.

For Individuals

Acquire Digital Skills: Acquire digital skills, including basic computer skills, digital communication and collaboration, data analysis and management, and cybersecurity awareness.

Stay Up-to-Date with Industry Trends: Stay up-to-date with industry trends and developments in digital technologies to remain competitive in the digital economy.

Participate in Digital Skills Development Initiatives: Participate in digital skills development initiatives, including training programs, workshops, and conferences, to enhance digital skills and knowledge.

For Educational Institutions

Update Curricula: Update curricula to include digital skills training and ensure that students are equipped with the skills needed to succeed in the digital economy.

Provide Digital Skills Training for Educators: Provide digital skills training for educators to enhance their ability to teach digital skills.

Partner with Industry: Partner with industry to provide digital skills training and promote industry-academia collaboration.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can promote digital skills development, drive industry relevance and competitiveness, and unlock new opportunities for economic development and growth.

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