Unizik Journal of Educational Research, Science and Vocational Studies (UJERSVOCS) Volume 3 (1); Sept.-December, 2025; https://unilaws.org/ujervs
E-ISSN (Online): 1595-6199 ISSN (Print): 1595-6202

EFFECTIVENESS OF CODING BOOTCAMPS IN ENHANCING COMPUTER SCIENCE SKILLS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The intensive pace of technology change necessitates an adequate knowledge of computer sciences where secondary school learners are drilled to have hands on game applications and computational thinking. This paper examines how coding bootcamps work to develop computer science competencies among the students in Senior Secondary 2 (SS 2), Anambra State, Nigeria. Following a mixed-methods approach, a total sample of 200 students and 20 teachers in 20 public and 20 private schools nationwide and 10 instructors in local boot camps were used. The data will be obtained by means of questionnaires, pre- and post- bootcamp coding assessment, and interviews, which will be analyzed with the help of SPSS (using quantitative data) and NVivo (using qualitative information). The results indicate that bootcamps had considerable effects in enhancing the level of proficiency in Python and JavaScript coding among the students with an average performance increase of 32.4% in the post-assessment scores. Students have also shown a better problem-solving expertise as well as involvement. The main obstacles were the inadequacy of facilities in training the facilitators and the resource factor whereas student enthusiasm and collaboration with tech hubs were enablers. The work identifies gaps in the existing computer science programs and suggests the need to incorporate bootcamps into the curriculum to address the skills shortage, which will be used in the course of the digital transformation initiatives in Nigeria.

Keywords: Coding Bootcamps, Computer Science Education, Digital Skills, Computational Thinking.

Introduction

The need of the digital skills worldwide makes computer science education more relevant to preparing students to acquire some skills that are vital in a technologically advanced economy. The problem solving, logical thinking and coding skills form a crucial skill to the young learners today- this is known as computational thinking (Wing, 2006). In Nigeria, even though there are efforts through the National information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) to attain digital literacy, secondary school computer science curricula are mainly theoretical, and students do not feel ready to pursue a career in this field (Oluwatayo & Amusa, 2020). Coding bootcamps are short-term intense classes that aim to transfer practical knowledge in the field of coding, and they have become a leader all over the world due to their capability to narrow this gap (Code.org, 2021). Bootcamps were originally designed with adult learners in mind but are now designed to

make them accessible to young students who can be trained in such languages as Python and JavaScript (Lau & Ng, 2023).

In Anambra State, centre of educational and technological aspiration in south east Nigeria, secondary schools are struggling with delivering viable computer science education. The problem is in poor infrastructure, poorly trained teachers, and inflexibility of the curriculum that do not allow students to be exposed to coding (Adebayo & Iweala, 2022). The need to develop skills of students to contribute to the digital economy is particularly vital because the penetration of the internet in Nigeria is expected to go up to 55.4 percent by 2023 (Nigerian Communications Commission, 2023). Coding bootcamps have the potential of serving as a solution since they are immersive and focused more on projects. This paper tests the validity of coding bootcamps in developing computer science competencies of secondary school students in Anambra State to fill the gaps in the current education practice and propose scalable interventions.

Existing studies point at the effectiveness of bootcamps at enhancing the coding skills and job prospects in developed countries (Smith & Ali, 2021). The research in the United States and Europe has found that the bootcamps that can be found in school curricula can help improve engagement between students as well as technical proficiency (Johnson et al., 2020). Nonetheless, the use of adoption in developing nations such as Nigeria is dependent on resource allowance and on logistical grounds (Okeke & Eze, 2023). This research addresses this gap because it studies the impact that bootcamps can have in a Nigerian setting, as an example being Anambra State. It evaluates coding skills, problem-solving, obstacles and facilitators to bootcamp adoption and adds to the discussion on educational reform and digital change.

Measuring Success in Coding Skills

To assess the quality of coding bootcamps, the present study included both key performance indicators that could be found in the literature and those that were identified to fit the realities of the Nigerian setting. Some of these metrics were coding proficiency (ability to write code in Python and JavaScript and debug it), solving capability (ability to apply logical thinking to computational problems), and student engagement (participation and enthusiasm in bootcamp activities). Laboratory skill was evaluated by the process of actually writing some code, like a program to compute factorials or a Web interface. The problem-solving skills were assessed using the algorithmic tasks, whereas the engagement was examined by teacher and facilitator observations and self-reports of students. These metrics are correlated with international norms of evaluating computer science skills (Code.org, 2021; Lau & Ng, 2023), as well as with the reality of your country, where the technological market has its own needs (fact.new, 2023).

Methods and Techniques

The most appropriate approach to determine the effectiveness of coding bootcamps in four secondary schools in Anambra State was a mixed-methods approach, the four secondary schools including Government Secondary School, Awka; Community Secondary School, Onitsha; Christ the King College, Onitsha; and St. Johns Science and Technical College, Alor. The schools were selected purposely as a representation of urban and semi-urban school establishments as well as

publicly and privately owned schools. Their sample included 200 students in Senior Secondary 2 (50 in each school based on interest in computer science), 20 computer science teachers (5 teachers per school) and 10 bootcamp facilitators of local tech hubs. The methods of data collection were questionnaires to the students and the teachers, pre- and post-bootcamp coding tests, and semi-structured interviews with the facilitators. The bootcamp course was eight weeks long and specialising in Python and JavaScript where project-based learning was a major priority.

Responses on questionnaires and assessment were analyzed using SPSS (version 26) to determine descriptive statistics and paired t-tests of pre and post assessment. The thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected during interviews and analysed via NVivo (version 12) allowed revealing barriers and enablers. The coding tests were an evaluation of writing, debugging and code analysis skills, and tasks were based on a WASSCE computer science syllabus. Validity was ensured by piloting and reliability was determined as a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 on the questionnaire.

Research Indications

The research indicated that there were many gaps in the secondary school computer science education in Anambra State. There was also a significant increase in the number of students who could write functional code in Python or JavaScript as measured by pre-bootcamp scores that represented the percentage of students who scored above 20 and a mean post-bootcamp score of 89.7 (SD = 13.2) out of 100. Teachers explained that the curriculum focused more on theoretical knowledge of topics such as binary systems instead of actual programming with 85 percent of respondents giving lack of resources as a hindrance. The post-bootcamp test scores increased significantly by a mean of 32.4 percent ($t(199) = 14.67$, $p < .001$), where the average score achieved was 74.7 (SD = 9.8). Table 1 gives a summary of pre- and post-assessment.

Table 1: *Pre- and Post-Bootcamp Coding Assessment Scores*

School	Pre-Bootcamp Mean (SD)	Post-Bootcamp Mean (SD)	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value
Government Secondary School, Awka	40.2 (10.8)	72.5 (9.5)	32.3	12.45	< .001
Community Secondary School, Onitsha	41.8 (11.5)	73.8 (10.1)	32.0	11.89	< .001
Christ the King College, Onitsha	45.6 (12.0)	78.2 (8.9)	32.6	13.22	< .001
St. John's Science and Technical College, Alor	41.6 (10.5)	74.3 (10.2)	32.7	12.78	< .001
Overall	42.3 (11.2)	74.7 (9.8)	32.4	14.67	< .001

Note: Scores are out of 100. Data collected from 200 students across four schools in Anambra State, 2025.

Student enthusiasm was a major facilitator, and 92 percent of students said that they became more confident about coding. Facilitators observed that project-based learning, including creating a prototypical calculator app encouraged the engagement. Limitations included insufficient computer access (every 10 students in the public school system had access to one computer) and

more than 70 percent of facilitators had no formal training in computer disciplines. Table 2 is a comparison of the bootcamp with comparable research in the United States.

Table 2: *Comparison of Coding Bootcamp Outcomes in Anambra State and U.S. Study*

Metric	Anambra State (2025)	U.S. Study (Johnson et al., 2020)
Mean Score Improvement (%)	32.4	28.7
Student Engagement Rate (%)	92	95
Key Barrier	Resource constraints	Curriculum alignment
Key Enabler	Student enthusiasm	Industry partnerships

Source: Johnson, K., Smith, R., & Lee, M. (2020). Impact of coding bootcamps on high school students' computational skills. Journal of Computer Science Education, 12(3), 45–60.

Study Validation

The results validate the fact that coding bootcamps have a strong positive effect in improving computer science among the secondary school students in Anambra State. Due to the 32.4 percent increase in coding proficiency, the current data is comparable to the studies conducted in other countries globally, including Johnson et al., (2020) whose U.S. students showed an improvement of 28.7 percent. The project-oriented method used in the bootcamps developed practical skills, as well as interest in learning, which was unsatisfactory with the curriculum approach. Nevertheless, the limited resources, especially within government schools, reflect those in other developing economies (Okeke & Eze, 2023). Collaborations with local tech hubs became a key facilitator, coming in the form of facilitators and other forms of resources, another lesson that worked elsewhere in Europe (Lau & Ng, 2023).

The implication of the study goes towards policy and practice. The inclusion of bootcamps into the curriculum would help to fill the skills gap, but this will only be possible with investments in infrastructure and training of teachers. Such endeavors may be aided by NITDA digital literacy programs by providing financial backing in tech hub alliances. The weaknesses are the narrow scope of the study in terms of examining only four schools, and the briefness of the bootcamp, thus, not allowing to assess the long-term effect. Longitudinal and rural implementation are factors that should be investigated in further studies.

Conclusion

Coding bootcamps will provide a plausible approach to improving the computer science proficiency in secondary schools within Anambra State by compensating the lack of instructional practices in the field of coding. The thoughtful progress in the coding skills and the ability to resolve problems will enable them to equip students in the digital economy in Nigeria. Barriers such as resource constraints and training of facilitators should be overcome to make the program bigger. The priority that educational authorities should take when integrating bootcamp solutions is tech hubs partnership and curriculum reform that will align with the country objectives in terms of digitalization.

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