
**ASSESSMENT OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS'
EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This paper assesses Technical Education undergraduate students' employability skills in Colleges of Education in South-East geopolitical zone in Nigeria. Two research questions and Two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 Technical Education final year undergraduate students from a population of 176 in three Colleges of Education. A 48-item questionnaire of 4-point rating scale was used for data collection. The instrument was faced and content validated by three research experts, while the reliability of the instrument was obtained using Cronbach Alpha statistics which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.84. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while the hypotheses were tested using independence t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that students of Building Technology, Electrical/Electronic Technology and Mechanical Technology lack adequate instructional resources on problem solving and adaptability skills, team work and Leadership skills, communication skills, equipment and machine handling skills, experience Lecturers, funding, classrooms, workshops and practical equipment. The findings of the study further revealed that Building Technology students lack skills in block and brick laying, tiling, plumbing and pipe-fitting, concrete construction work, carpentry and joinery. The study also revealed that Electrical/Electronic Technology students lack skills in electronic circuit troubleshooting, circuit design, signal analysis, coil winding, radio and television maintenance and repair. The study also revealed that Metalwork Technology students lack skills in Air conditioning and refrigerator servicing, general plant operation, automobile repair and computer-controlled vehicle. The researchers recommend among other, that Federal and State government should employ qualified Lecturers, provide adequate machines, equipment, facilities, instructional resources and fund in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Employability skills, Technical Education, Colleges of Education, Undergraduate students, Nigeria



Introduction

In today's world, industries are undergoing a revolutionary change in manpower demands due to the effects of technological advancement. Vijay (2017), Oviawe, Uwameiye and Uddin (2017) stated that to meet the manpower needs of today's workplace, all employable individuals must acquire the employability skills, up-to-date knowledge, awareness, beliefs and attitudes to improve their capacities to work in line with the demands of the industries.

Employability skills have become an international concept and come with various names such as generic skills, employability skills, key skills, and core skills. Simatele (2015) and Mello (2017) defined employability skills as the convertible skills desirable by an individual to increase efficiency at work. In the views of Ghazali and Bennett (2017); Dinning (2017); Smith, Maguire and Han (2018); Watkins and Smith (2018); Drange, Bernstrøm and Mamelund (2018); Suleman (2018); Adeyinka-Ojo (2018); Knox and Stone (2018), employability skills are verified skills which include creative and innovative, problem solving and critical thinking; information systems; ICT skills; communication skills, adaptive skills, interpersonal skills and the ability to work as a team; management skills; English language skills, leadership

skills, initiative and enterprises skills, personal organization and time management skills, goal setting skills, self-awareness and self-learning skills, ethics, moral and Professionalism.

The necessity to provide a skilled workforce calls for the provision of qualitative education that is technically impactful. According to Ayonmike and Okeke (2015), technical education is that branch of education that imparts employability skills to prospective industrial workers. In the same vein, Edokpolor and Owenvbiugie (2017), Obidile (2018), and Oladejo (2019), defined technical education as a programme for the acquisition of skills needed for personal empowerment in the world of work and socio-economic development. The Nigerian National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) defined Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a compressive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of the economy and social life. From the foregoing, technical education is seen to have great potential for reforming individuals in the areas of knowledge and skills for skillful employment. Today, Nigeria is one of the developing nations in the world saddled with the



fundamental issue of graduate unemployment (Oviawe, Uwameiye and Uddin, 2017).

In Nigeria, colleges of education are the third category of tertiary institutions that offer technical education aimed at equipping students with scientific, technological, and pedagogical knowledge and skills for effective participation in the work place (Attaochu, 2013). According to Attaochu (2013), Pitan (2017), Okunuga and Ajeyalemi (2018), Okolie, and TVET curriculum in Nigerian Colleges of Education, inadequate emphasis on employability skills leads to a high rate of graduate unemployment. In the view of Okwelle and Owo (2017), technical education courses in Nigerian colleges of education are taught almost theoretically due to the poor state of practical training facilities. Similarly, the Nigerian labour market reported that Nigerian graduates lack the necessary employable skills due to poor curriculum implementation (Igberadja, 2014; Okolie, Igwe, and Elom, 2019; Wagbara and Ordu, 2020). Several studies have revealed that graduate unemployment in Nigeria is high, which can be attributed to a lack of employability skills (Oladokun and Gbadegesin, 2017; Pitan, 2017; Oladokun and Olaleye, 2018; Okunuga and Ajeyalemi, 2018).

In Nigeria, the factors responsible for skills mismatch in technical

education institutions are inadequate training facilities, insufficient exposure to practical work, weak, dissipated, and obsolete infrastructure, equipment, and facilities, and inadequate information between the institutions and industries (NBTE, 2011; Usman and Tasmin, 2015; Oviawe, Uwameiye, and Uddin, 2017). Therefore, considering the potential of technical education in enhancing the acquisition of employability skills, this paper assessed Technical Education undergraduate employability skills in Colleges of Education in South-East geopolitical zone in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Employability skills have been discovered to be essential indices for technological advancement in Nigeria. This has led to industries seeking employees who possess employability skills. Research revealed that Technical Education graduates produced by colleges of education are lacking in the area of employability skills due to inadequate training facilities, insufficient exposure to practical work, weak, dissipated, and obsolete infrastructure, equipment, and facilities, and inadequate information between the institutions and industries, making it uneasy for them to secure paid employment in the world of work or become self-reliant after graduation. This development increases the rate of criminal activities such as vandalism,



kidnapping, armed robbery, terrorism, and other social vices in society among the youths. Hence, this study aims to proffer strategies to remedy the challenges facing Technical Education undergraduate students' acquisition of employability skills in Nigerian Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

1. To identify the employability skills acquired by Technical Education undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.
2. To identify the challenges facing acquisition of employability skills by Technical Education undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What are the employability skills acquired by Technical Education undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria?
2. What are the challenges facing acquisition of employability skills by Technical Education undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria?

Null Hypothesis

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

- H₀₁ - There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Male and Female Technical Education undergraduate students on the employability skills acquired by Technical Education students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.
- H₀₂ - There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Male and Female Technical Education undergraduate students on the challenges facing acquisition of employability skills by Technical Education students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Colleges of Education in South-East Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey research design to elicit information from the respondents. Nworgu (2006), noted that descriptive survey is a design approach which aims at collecting data and describing them in a systematic manner, the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. The population of this study comprised of 176 final year undergraduate students of Technical Education Department in



three Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.

Simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 students in Technical Education Departments. The researchers developed a structured questionnaire titled: Technical Education Undergraduate Students Employability Skills Questionnaire (TEUSEQ) for data collection. The questionnaire has two parts; Part A contains forty (40) items on Technical Education undergraduate students' employability skill and Part B contains eight (8) items on challenges facing acquisition of Technical Education undergraduate student's employability skills in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.

Face and content validation of the instrument in terms of clarity, relevance and structure was carried out by two experts in the Department of Industrial Technology Education and one in Department of Tests and Measurement, Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Corrections and possible suggestions were offered by the experts after adequate scrutiny of each item. This was to ensure that the instrument measured the intended attributes. In order to ensure the reliability of the instrument, the researchers administered the questionnaire to 20 respondents in Akwa Ibom State College of Education, Afaha Nsit who were not part of the study

but possess the same qualities of those used for the study. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to analyze the data collected which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.84. This shows the instrument was reliable for the study.

The researchers administered the instrument directly to the respondents in the Colleges of Education with the help of three assistants who were instructed on what is required. A four-point rating scale with cut-off points for the interpretation of the mean of the respondents' opinion were: Strongly Agree (3.50-4.00), Agree (2.50 - 3.49), Disagree (1.50 - 2.49) and Strongly Disagree (1.00-1.49). The instrument was collected immediately after completion which recorded 98% return rate. The research data collected were, answered using Mean and Standard Deviation while independent t-test was used to test all the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Where the calculated t-value was greater than the tabulated value, null hypothesis was rejected, where the calculated t-value was less than the tabulated value null hypotheses was upheld.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Research Question 1: What are the employability skills acquired by Technical Education undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria? (see table 1)



Table 1: Mean ratings of employability skills acquired by Technical Education undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.

S/N	A. Problem solving and adaptability skills	Male		Female		DEC.
		X	SD	X	SD	
1.	Display desire to help others.	3.17	0.87	3.33	1.09	Agreed
2.	Maintain a moral course in turbulent times	2.51	0.82	3.09	0.88	Agreed
3.	Identify new ideas to get the job done	3.11	1.09	3.16	0.96	Agreed
4.	Recognize peoples diversity and individual difference.	3.12	0.97	3.09	1.02	Agreed
5.	Adapt easily to new situations	2.33	0.88	2.47	0.93	Disagreed
	B. Team work and Leadership skills					
6.	Work as part of a team and cope with uncertainty	2.18	0.91	2.32	1.07	Disagreed
7.	Display initiative, energy and persistence to get the job done.	2.53	0.70	2.56	0.90	Agreed
8.	Set goals that are measurable and achievable	2.41	0.76	2.19	0.84	Disagreed
9.	Display self-esteem and confidence	2.29	0.98	2.48	0.82	Disagreed
10.	Dialogue on critical development issues.	3.07	1.14	2.59	0.96	Agreed
	C. Communication skills					
11	Communicate in line with subjects discussion	2.58	0.79	2.76	0.80	Agreed
12	Ask questions to understand others points of view.	2.53	1.02	2.51	0.91	Agreed
13	An active listener in conversations	3.06	0.93	3.12	0.88	Agreed
14	Obtain information and make used them accurately.	2.49	0.95	2.44	1.05	Disagreed
15	Read, comprehend and use graphs and images.	2.42	0.71	2.28	0.79	Disagreed
	D. ICT skills					
16	Have basic ICT skills.	2.35	0.98	2.46	1.13	Disagreed
17	Use computer software such as Ms Word, Excel, SPSS and Power-Point.	2.18	1.03	2.24	0.96	Disagreed
18	Use search engine appropriately to fetch information.	2.64	0.62	2.68	1.17	Agreed
19	Take online courses on different sites	2.38	0.75	2.23	0.84	Disagreed
20	Read industry websites and magazines to stay updated.	2.52	0.97	2.56	1.01	Agreed
	E. Entrepreneurship Development Skills					
21	Establish and operate business enterprises.	2.12	0.76	2.01	0.89	Disagreed
22	Identify investment opportunities	1.52	0.82	2.09	0.81	Disagreed
23	Show eagerness to learn new business skills.	3.30	1.09	3.39	0.94	Agreed
24	Accountability to responsibilities.	3.34	0.94	3.36	1.04	Agreed
25	Carry out quality controls and assessment of tasks.	2.48	0.86	2.42	0.90	Disagreed
	F. Building Technology Skills					
26	Block and brick laying.	1.58	1.05	2.07	1.14	Disagreed
27	Wall and floor tiling.	2.12	0.92	2.18	0.87	Disagreed
28	Plumbing and pipe-fitting.	2.46	0.95	2.32	0.99	Disagreed
29	Carpentry and joinery.	2.11	0.91	2.39	1.06	Disagreed
30	Concrete construction work.	2.40	1.17	2.37	0.79	Disagreed
	G. Electrical/Electronic Technology Skills					
31	Electronic circuit troubleshooting.	1.72	0.96	1.67	0.93	Disagreed
32	Electronic circuit design.	2.02	1.02	2.18	1.12	Disagreed
33	Electronic signal analysis.	1.46	0.99	2.32	0.95	Disagreed
34	Coil winding.	2.11	0.93	1.39	1.07	Disagreed
35	Radio and television maintenance and repair.	2.48	1.08	2.15	0.77	Disagreed
	H. Metal Technology Skills					
36	Air conditioning and refrigerator servicing	2.13	1.10	2.07	0.74	Disagreed
37	General plant operation and maintenance	1.52	0.80	1.58	0.86	Disagreed
38	Automobile repair and maintenance	2.45	0.79	2.49	0.91	Disagreed
39	Bolt and nuts design and production	1.88	0.84	2.09	1.09	Disagreed
40	Computer controlled vehicle.	2.23	1.14	2.16	0.97	Disagreed
	Grand mean and standard deviation	2.47	0.86	2.43	0.79	Disagreed



The data presented in Table 1 shows Grand Mean and Standard Deviation of 2.47, 2.43 and 0.86, 0.79 for male and female Technical Education students respectively on employability skills acquired by Technical Education undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria. The result revealed that Building Technology students lack skills in block and brick laying, tiling, plumbing and pipe-fitting, carpentry and joinery and concrete construction work. The study also revealed that Electrical/Electronic Technology students lack skills in electronic circuit troubleshooting, circuit design, signal analysis, coil winding, radio and television maintenance and

repair. Furthermore, the study shows that Metal Technology students lack skills in Air conditioning and refrigerator servicing, general plant operation and maintenance, automobile repair and maintenance, bolt and nuts design and production and computer controlled vehicle. The overall result indicates that Technical Education undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria do not acquire adequate employability skills.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges facing acquisition of employability skills by Technical Education undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria? (see table 2)

Table 2: Mean ratings of challenges facing acquisition of employability skills by Technical Education undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.

S/N	Challenges Facing Acquisition of Employability Skills	MALE		FEMALE		DEC.
		X	SD	X	SD	
1.	Inadequate of instructional resources on problem solving and adaptability skills	3.72	3.51	3.51	0.96	SA
2.	Inadequate of instructional resources on team work and Leadership skills	3.56	1.08	3.58	0.90	SA
3.	Inadequate of instructional resources on communication skills	3.44	1.14	3.07	0.88	SA
4.	Inadequate of instructional resources on ICT skills	3.50	1.05	3.66	1.09	SA
5.	Inadequate of instructional resources on equipment and machine handling skills	2.64	0.82	2.52	0.85	SA
6.	Inexperience TVET educators	3.83	0.97	3.56	1.02	SA
7.	Inadequate of funding TVET institutions	3.57	0.77	3.50	0.85	SA
8.	Inadequate classrooms, workshops and practical equipment	3.31	0.74	3.48	0.79	SA
Grand mean and standard Deviation		3.45	0.95	3.36	0.88	SA

The data presented in Table 2 shows Grand Mean and Standard Deviation of

3.45, 3.36 and 0.95, 0.88 for male and female Technical Education students



respectively on the challenges facing the acquisition of employability skills by Technical Education undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria. It was revealed that students of Building Technology, Electrical/Electronic Technology and Mechanical Technology are facing the challenges of instructional resources on problem solving and adaptability skills, team work and Leadership skills, communication skills, equipment and machine handling skills, experience

TVET educators, funding, classrooms, workshops and practical equipment in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Male and Female Technical Education undergraduate students on the employability skills acquired by Technical Education students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria. (see table 3)

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis on the employability skills acquired by Technical Education undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Male	58	2.47	0.86	98	0.24	1.67	NS
Female	42	2.43	0.79				

Note NS = Not Significant.

Table 3 shows that the t-cal. was 0.24 while the t-crit. was 1.67 hence, since the t-cal at 98 degree of freedom is less than t-crit. thus the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean responses of Technical Education undergraduate students on the employability skills acquired by Technical Education students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria was upheld. This implies that Technical Education undergraduate

students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria do not acquire adequate employability skills.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Technical Education undergraduate students on the challenges facing acquisition of employability skills by Technical Education students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria. (see table 4)

Table 4: Independent t-test analysis on the challenges facing acquisition of employability skills by Technical Education students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Male	58	3.45	0.95	98	0.5	1.67	NS
Female	42	3.36	0.88				

Note: NS = Not Significant.

Table 4 showed that the t-cal. was 0.5 while the t-crit. was 1.67 since the t-cal. was less than the t-crit. at 98 degree of freedom, thus the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean responses of Technical Education undergraduate students on the challenges facing acquisition of employability skills by Technical Education students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria was upheld. This implies that the items are challenges facing acquisition of employability skills by Technical Education undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of research question 1 showed that Building Technology students lack skills in block and brick laying, wall and floor tiling, plumbing and pipe-fitting, carpentry and joinery and concrete construction work. The study also revealed that Electrical/Electronic Technology students lack skills in electronic circuit troubleshooting, circuit design, signal

analysis, coil winding, radio and television maintenance and repair. Furthermore, the study shows that Metal Technology students lack skills in Air conditioning and refrigerator servicing, general plant operation and maintenance, automobile repair and maintenance, bolt and nuts design and production and computer-controlled vehicle. The overall result indicates that Technical Education undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria do not acquire adequate employability skills. The findings of the study is in line with the study carried out by Attaochu (2013), Pitan (2017), Okunuga and Ajeyalemi (2018), who posited that TVET curriculum in Nigerian Colleges of Education, inadequately emphasis on employability skills thereby leading to a high rate of graduate unemployment. Oladokun and Gbadegesin (2017); Pitan, 2017, Oladokun and Olaleye (2018); Okunuga, and Ajeyalemi (2018) also stated that the high rate of graduate's unemployment in Nigeria, is traceable to lack the employability skills.



Table 3 shows that the t-cal. was 0.24 which the t-crit. was 1.67 hence, since the t-cal at 98 degree of freedom is less than t-crit. thus the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean responses of Technical Education undergraduate students on the employability skills acquired by Technical Education students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria was upheld.

The data presented in Table 2 revealed that students of Building Technology, Electrical/Electronic Technology and Mechanical Technology are facing the challenges of instructional resources on problem solving and adaptability skills, team work and Leadership skills, communication skills, equipment and machine handling skills, experience TVET educators, funding, classrooms, workshops and practical equipment in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria do not possess adequate employability skills. The finding of the study is in support of the study carried out by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE, 2011), Usman and Tasmin (2015), Oviawe, Uwameiye, and Uddin (2017) who stated that the factors responsible for skills mismatch in TVET institutions are inadequate training facilities, insufficient exposure to practical work, weak, dissipated and obsolete infrastructure, equipment and

facilities, inadequate information between the institutions and industries.

Table 4 showed that the t-cal. was 0.5 while the t-crit. was 1.67 since the t-cal. was less than the t-crit. at 98 degree of freedom, thus the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean responses of Technical Education undergraduate students on the challenges facing acquisition of employability skills by Technical Education students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria was upheld.

Conclusion

The need for continuous learning to acquire the necessary skills in this present day knowledge driven economy characterized by technological advancement cannot be over emphasized. Learning of skills through Technical Education is very important as the main objectives of Technical Education is to equip students with skills that can make them employable and self-reliance. Unfortunately, Technical Education undergraduate students lacked the essential employability skills after graduation due to lack adequate instructional resources on problem solving and adaptability skills, team work and Leadership skills, communication skills, equipment and machine handling skills, experience Technical Education educators, funding,



classrooms, workshops and practical equipment. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop employability skills of the undergraduate students in Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the Federal, State and Colleges of Education management should endeavor to:

1. Employ qualified TVET educators and provide modern practical equipment materials.
2. Lecturers should adopt activity-based instructional strategies such as service learning, modelling, cooperative learning to give students opportunity to connect classroom with real life situation.
3. Plan, negotiate and fund exchange programmes on employability skills with industries that are carrying out skills acquisition practices.
4. Organize in-service training of staff should be a continuous exercise to ensure consistent improvement in the quality of TVET educators.
5. Provide instructional resources required for innovation skills and employability skills.



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