

# Skill Development in Vocational and Technical Education for Graduates Employability in Tertiary Institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This descriptive survey study investigated the skill development in vocational and technical education for graduates' employability in tertiary institutions. The design of the study was survey design. The study was carried out in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Three purposes of study and three corresponding research questions guided the study. The sample for the study was 200 made up of students in the Departments of vocational and technical education in two (2) tertiary institutions in the study area. A structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The findings show that personal reliability and economic adaptability are skills needed by graduates for employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Based on the findings the following recommendations were made; the content of skill vocational programme in the Nigerian high institutions should be made more practical than theoretical so that graduate can be self-employed rather than seeking for white collar jobs. This finding should be made available to tertiary institutions in the state and country at large to serve as blueprint for policy makers and curriculum planners.

**Keywords:** Skill Development, Vocational and Technical Education, Graduates, Employability, Tertiary Institutions

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## 1. Introduction

Nevertheless, vocational education has sometimes become a tool for addressing the economic, political, and social crises that are threatening the political and economic stability of some nations. Rising unemployment, lack of skilled workers, high dropout rates, and the changing demographic nature of the work force have placed the issue of workforce education high on the educational reform agenda [7].

Traditionally, vocational education has prepared students for specific skills. However, in the post-Taylorist work environment, workers are expected to perform more broadly-defined jobs [8]. Therefore, a broad-based education is required. In the new economic environment, vocational education is expected to produce an educated, skilled, and motivated work force [9].

The economic argument in favor of vocational education is linked to the perceived need to orient the formal educational system to the needs of the world of work [10]. It is based on

the assumption that economic growth and development are technology-driven and human capital-dependent.

Skill acquisition vocational education prepares learners for jobs that are based on manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic and totally related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation, hence the term.

Bayode cited Uwaifo [1], stated that vocational and skill acquisition education is geared towards the production of the educated man who can effectively with his head, heart and hands towards the development of the economy, while the National Policy on Education states that the objectives of vocational and technical education are:

- (1) To acquire vocational and technical skills.
- (2) To expose students to career awareness by exposing usable options in the world of work.
- (3) To enable youths to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

Uwaifo [1], has opined that a well-structured skill acquisition and vocational programme will assist the

government in creating:

- (1) Self-employment opportunities for young school leavers and other vulnerable groups.
- (2) Technology improvement in our national life.
- (3) Higher standard of living for those who embraced it leading to self reliance.
- (4) Increase in the gross domestic product of the country through a rise in the rate of employment and reduction in employment.

Employability according to Hillage and Pollard [2] is an individual's ability to gain initial employment, maintain employment, move between roles within the same organization, obtain new employment if required and (ideally) secure suitable and sufficiently fulfilling work. Employability skill is referred to as the skill required securing and retaining a job. It also refers to the training or foundation skills upon which a person must develop job specific skills. They are those essential skills necessary for acquiring, keeping and performing well on a job [3]. These skills include; managing resources, communication and interpersonal skills, teamwork and problem solving. It also includes acquiring and maintaining a job [4].

Employability skills are skills that enable an individual to acquire and keep a job (Lankard, in Nyanabo and Ahukannah, [5]). Generally, such skills would include personal image, attitudes, habits and behavior, techniques of communication, problem-solving and decision making, management and organizational process.

Osuola, [6], grouped employability skills as follows:

- (1) Individual competence: Communication skills, comprehension, computation and culture.
- (2) Personal reliability: Personal management ethics, vocational maturity.
- (3) Economic adaptability skills: Problem solving, learning, employability and career development.
- (4) Group and organizational effectiveness skills: Interpersonal skills, organizational skills, skills in negotiation, creativity and leadership.

It is against this background that the researchers seek to determine the need for skill development in vocational and technology education for graduate employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

The crisis of youth joblessness occasioned by lack of appropriate skill empowerment has reached its peak. This have also become a challenge which successive governments in Nigeria and other governments of the world are now addressing frontally before it overwhelms the society. The situation in Nigeria is no less dire. From North to South, youths roaming the streets in search for means of livelihoods without requisite skills are a treating reality. Increasing government responsiveness to youth skill development and empowerment, self-reliance and entrepreneurial skills towards employment is becoming a yardstick for assessing government performance on national growth.

It is against this background that the researchers seek to

determine the need for skill development in vocational and technology education for graduate employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

### **1.2. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to:

- (1) Determine the role of personal reliability skill development in vocational and technical education for graduates employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
- (2) Determine the role of economic adaptability skill development in vocational and technical education for graduates employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study

- (1) what is the role of personal reliability skill development in vocational and technical education for graduates employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria?
- (2) what is the role of economic adaptability skill development in vocational and technical education for graduates employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria?

## **2. Methodology**

The study used survey research design where data were collected from a sampled population. The survey design was considered suitable for this study because questionnaire was used to collect the data used for this study. The study was carried out in Bayelsa State of Nigeria which has two tertiary institutions that has the Vocational and technical Education Department/Faculty. The population of the study comprises of 200 undergraduate students studying vocational and technical education in Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island and Isaac Jasper College of Education, Sagbama, Bayelsa State. The whole population of 200 was studied; there was no sampling because the population size was manageable. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts from the Department of Vocational and Technology education, Niger Delta University. The suggestions and observations of the experts were incorporated in the final drafting of the questionnaire. To establish the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.87 and was obtained with this, the instrument was considered to be reliable for the study. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents with the help of each head of departments in vocational and technical education in each of the tertiary institutions who acted as research assistants. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions.

### 3. Results

*Research Question 1:* what is the role of personal reliability skill development in vocational and technical education for graduates employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria?

**Table 1.** The role of personal reliability skill development in vocational and technical education for graduates employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria?

S/N	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Personal Management	3.12	0.87
2.	Ethics	2.87	0.67
3.	Vocational Maturity	3.20	0.89
4.	Comprehension	2.60	0.70

The table above shows all the items as personal reliability skills development in vocational and technical education for graduates employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

*Research Question 2:* what is the role of economic adaptability skill development in vocational and technical education for graduates employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria?

**Table 2.** The role of economic adaptability skill development in vocational and technical education for graduates employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria?

S/N	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Problem solving	2.62	0.57
2.	Learning	2.77	0.77
3.	Employability	3.22	0.86
4.	Career development	2.66	0.75

The table above shows all the items as economic adaptability skills development in vocational and technical education for graduates employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

### 4. Discussion of Findings

The funding of the study revealed that personal management, ethics, vocational maturity, comprehension are the personal reliability skill development in vocational and technical education for graduates employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. This findings is line Osuala, [6] who identified personal management, ethics, vocational maturity and comprehension as personal reliability skills needed by vocational and technical education for graduates employability.

The result of this study in table 2 revealed that problem solving, learning, employability and career development are the economic adaptability skill development in vocational and technical education for graduates employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. This findings is line Osuala, [6] who identified problem solving, learning, employability and career development as economic

adaptability skills needed by vocational and technical education for graduates employability.

### 5. Conclusion

The study concluded that personal reliability skills and economic adaptability skills are needed for graduates employability in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

### Recommendations

Base on the findings, the following recommendations were made

- (1) The content of skill vocational programme in the Nigerian high institutions should be made more practical than theoretical so that graduate can be self-employed rather than seeking for white collar jobs.
- (2) This findings should be made available to tertiary institutions in the state and country at large to serve as blueprint for policy makers and curriculum planners.

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