

JOB READINESS SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY OF LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION STUDENTS

BY

¹Oladejo Muhideen Adewale ²Egboh Fasilat Bolaji ³Olugbogi Yusuf Folorunsho & ⁴Aina Olatunji Frederick
Department of Educational Management, College of Specialized and Professional Education, Lagos State
University of Education, Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos State.
Email: deenoladejo@gmail.com

Abstract

The industrial revolution 4.0 encourages creativity and innovation which calls for the urgent need for the government to review the relevance of graduates of education to respond to changes, challenges and job opportunities in the era of industrial revolution 4.0. This study therefore, examined the relationship between job readiness skills and employability of education graduates in society 4.0. The study was guided by four research hypotheses. The study used the descriptive survey research design and the population of the study was all the final year students at the Lagos State University of Education while the sample was 400 participants selected using multi-stage sampling technique. The data for the study was collected through a self-designed questionnaire titled: Job Readiness Skills and Employability of Students (JRSESQ). The instrument was designed on a 4-point Likert-type scale with a reliability coefficient of .86 attained through Cronbach alpha reliability technique. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics at .05 level of significance. The findings showed that all the explanatory variables significantly relate to employability of Lagos State University of Education students. Based on these findings, it was therefore recommended that; government should review the curriculum to reflect the needs of the employers of labour and the society, build a synergy between industry and the academia among others. Obviously, the building the right skills and competencies in the students will prepare them for the world of work which will help them contribute gainfully to economic growth and development.

Keywords: Job readiness, Information technology, employability, Decision making, Critical thinking

Introduction

The point to which university education is capable of producing potential graduates in the competitive digital world is attracting the attention of employers, scholars and policy makers globally. This interest rises from major concerns which include; signs that patterns of work are rapidly changing with the emergence of new firms, sectors, and conglomerates with technological advancement, globalization and environmental changes significantly reforming the work force (Harish 2024; Pitan 2015). The result of these changes means that it is not sufficient for graduates to possess a good degree alone but must possess ability to acquire the skills and characteristics required in order to compete and work together with others in a dynamic knowledge economy and the world of work (Network, 2015). This seems to be responsible for the argument by Lee (2002) where it was stated that some of the existing university curriculum is not producing graduates with the required professional and lifelong learning skills needed to be successful in the competitive and congested changing world of work. Tertiary institutions have been criticized that the mode of training has little or no relevance to the social and economic needs of their countries (Rufai et al. 2015) which result to large number of unemployable graduates.

Results from past studies shows that the higher rate of unemployment experienced by university graduates in Nigeria is not only as a result of the unavailability of jobs but also lack of candidates with employability skills that employers are looking for (Emeh et al. 2012; Pitan, 2015). Facts in support of these assertions shows that out of over 40 million unemployed youths in the country, 23 million are unemployable possibly due to their lack of needed

skills for employment and about Seventy Percent of the 80 million youths in Nigeria are either unemployed or under employed (Emeh et al. 2012). According to Akanmu (2011), many graduates who are ready to work are not gainfully employed and for those who found fulfilling employment in spite of everything, their employers raised serious concerns about their skills and fits for the job. In the same view, Pitan and Ayodeji (2012), revealed an overall skills mismatch of 60.6 percent among employed university graduates, with critical deficiencies in communication, information technology, decision making, critical thinking, interpersonal relationship, entrepreneurial, technical and numeracy skills.

The notion of employability is a great challenge to the traditional concepts of university education, and raises questions about the importance of schooling at this level of education. Normally, it is the dream of university graduates to get good and high-income jobs after graduation. According to Boeteng and Ofori-Sarpong (2002), this expectation is rational from the perspective of human capital theory, which explains that the main determinant of the demand for higher education is the expectation of higher earnings over an individual's lifetime, and higher income is necessary to compensate for the high costs of tertiary education. However, the recent problem where lack of employable skills contributes to unemployment (with all its prevailing consequences which include; increased poverty level, increase in dependency ratio, social ills and delinquent behaviour such as terrorism, armed robbery, cybercrime, kidnapping, banditry and increase in recruitment cost), this expectation is a mere illusion for many graduates and society at large. Similarly, it has been observed that disagreement exist among researchers on the factors that actually influence employability of students.

More so, the unemployability of education students in the context of Society 4.0, a period of rapid technological advancement, stems from a mismatch between the skills and knowledge they gain in traditional educational settings and the demands of the modern, digital-driven workforce. This gap can be attributed to a lack of digital literacy, insufficient focus on emerging technologies, and a disconnect between academic curriculum and industry needs. The prevailing unemployability of university graduates in Nigeria is a major factor causing unemployment in the country. Indications are that unemployment seems to occur as a result of graduate lack of job readiness skills necessary to filling the existing vacant positions and they are, therefore unemployable. This issue has become a great challenge for the importance of tertiary education, educational wastage, destruction of government properties, increase in crime rate among others. These identified issues in the society calls for urgent attention. This study therefore sought to unravel the mystery behind employability of Lagos State University of Education students in society 4.0.

Literature Review

Job readiness skills are the core set of competencies that prepare individuals to effectively enter, adapt to, and succeed in the workplace. These skills go beyond technical knowledge and encompass transferable abilities such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, adaptability, and professionalism. According to Robinson (2000), employers consistently emphasize these soft skills as essential because they determine how well employees can work with others and handle dynamic workplace challenges. Job readiness also involves self-management, time management, and the ability to learn new tasks quickly, which are critical for sustaining productivity in modern, competitive job markets. In addition, job readiness skills include digital literacy and career management competencies, such as writing résumés, preparing for interviews, and understanding workplace ethics. The National Network of Business and Industry Associations (2014) highlights that these foundational skills are not only vital for securing employment but also for long-term career growth, as they support adaptability in changing

industries. Ultimately, job readiness is about equipping individuals with both the technical and interpersonal capabilities to transition smoothly from school or training into meaningful work. The job readiness skills considered in this study include; information technology, decision making, critical thinking, and Interpersonal relationship skills.

Information technology (IT) skills as one of the indices of job readiness skills in today's knowledge-driven economy are central to students' employability. These skills include computer literacy, internet navigation, the use of productivity software, and familiarity with digital communication platforms. Employers consistently rank IT competence as one of the most in-demand attributes, as it enables graduates to adapt quickly to digital work environments and handle technology-mediated tasks efficiently (Akindahunsi, Haruna, & Malan, 2021). It appears that graduates with strong IT skills enjoy higher employability prospects because digital fluency is now considered a prerequisite rather than an added advantage (Pitan & Adededeji, 2012; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023). A survey of 521 students in Ekiti State by Akindahunsi, Haruna and Malan (2021), found that possession of IT skills (computer literacy, internet skills, application software) significantly influenced students' *perceived employability* and readiness for work. Similarly, Pitan and Adededeji (2012) carried out a national employer survey which showed that IT skills were in *critical demand* while graduates' who displayed IT proficiency were low, evidencing a large skills gap that negatively affects employability while Stone (2020) found that no significant relationship exist between information technology skills and employability. Decision-making as another important variable of this study is the ability to identify problems, evaluate possible solutions, and choose the most effective course of action. It is a critical employability skill because workplaces are dynamic, requiring employees to make informed judgments under pressure. Empirical studies show that decision-making significantly predicts employability among higher education students, indicating that those confident in their decision-making abilities transition more effectively into the labor market (Zhou, Peng & Zhou, 2023). Employers in Nigeria also emphasize decision-making as a vital skill, yet many graduates display weaknesses in this area, which reduces their job readiness for possible employment opportunities. The finding of this study shows that a significant positive relationship exists between decision making and employability (Pitan & Adededeji, 2012). According to (Zhou, Peng & Zhou, 2023), decision-making had a significant positive effect on employability.

Another important index of job readiness skill is critical thinking which refers to the ability to analyze information objectively, evaluate evidence, and make reasoned judgments. In the workplace, critical thinking underpins problem-solving, creativity, and innovation. Research evidence indicates that employers consider critical thinking one of the core skills necessary for employability, but many graduates fall short in this area, leading to a skills gap in the labor market. Thus, a significant relationship exists between critical thinking skills and employability (Pitan & Adededeji, 2012; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023). Intervention studies also demonstrate that students who receive critical thinking training show significant improvements in argumentation and reasoning, making them more employable in knowledge-intensive sectors (Dwyer, Hogan, & Stewart, 2023). Interpersonal relationship skills refer to the ability to communicate effectively, collaborate with others, manage conflicts, and build positive professional and social interactions. These skills encompass teamwork, empathy, active listening, respect, and emotional intelligence, all of which are vital for creating harmonious workplace relationships. In the context of employability, interpersonal skills are often grouped under "soft skills," distinguishing them from technical competencies, yet they are equally essential for workplace success. Interpersonal relationship skills encompass communication, teamwork, empathy, and the ability to build positive workplace relationships. These "soft skills" are essential for collaboration, conflict resolution, and leadership in professional environments. Empirical evidence from Nigerian polytechnic students

shows that interpersonal skills such as communication and teamwork strongly correlate with employability outcomes, making them critical for career success (Ismail, Ahmad, & Awang, 2017). Employers equally identify interpersonal competence as a core requirement for employability, but note that many graduates demonstrate significant deficiencies in this area, which limits their workplace adaptability. Thus a significant relationship exists between interpersonal relationship skills and employability of students (Pitan & Adedeji, 2012). A survey on soft skills and review of employability prediction approaches by researchers (Rahman et al., 2021; Adebakin, Ajadi, & Subair, 2017), found that interpersonal skills significantly predicts employability. However, Jones (2023) found that no significant relationship exist between interpersonal skills and employability.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between students' job readiness skills and employability of Lagos State University of Education students in society 4.0. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the relationship between information technology and employability of students.
2. Investigate the relationship between decision making and employability of students
3. evaluate whether critical thinking relates to employability of students.
4. examine the relationship between interpersonal relationship skills and employability of students.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested in this study.

1. There is no significant relationship between information technology and employability of students.
2. There is no significant relationship between decision making and employability of students.
3. Critical thinking is not significantly related to employability of students.
4. Interpersonal relationship skills and employability of students are not significantly related.

Methodology

The study used the descriptive survey research design and the population of the study was all the 300 level students at the Lagos State University of Education. The sample was determined using the Taro Yemane formular for determining minimum sample size sufficient to uphold the external validity of the study and it was found that 400 students were sufficient to participate in the study, Therefore, the study used the multi-stage sampling technique to select the participants of the study. At the first stage, the students were stratified based on the existing colleges in the University while the second stage involved the random selection of three colleges to participate in the study. The third stage involve the selection of participants in the colleges that participated in the study using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique while the last stage involved the selection of the participants using the simple random technique. The data for the study was collected through a self-designed questionnaire titled: Job Readiness Skills and Employability of Students (JRSESQ). The instrument had 30 items that sought information on the stated research hypotheses. The instrument was deigned on a 4-point Likert-type scale of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed, the reliability of the instrument was assured by administering the questionnaire on 30 students who dd not participate in the main study. The Cronbach alpha reliability technique was used on the data collected and a reliability coefficient of .86 showed the instrument was reliable. The stated hypotheses were

tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics at .05 level of significance with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results

Research Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between information technology and employability of students.

Table 1: Information Technology and Employability of Students

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	r	p	Rmk	Decision
Information Technology		2.99	.42					
Employability of Students	400	1.33	.11	398	.76	.001	Sig	Ho ₁ Rejected

Sig @ P<.05

Information on Table 1 shows that Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics was run to determine the relationship between information technology and employability of Lagos State University of Education students. The results of the analysis shows that there is a positive, strong and significant relationship between information technology and employability of Lagos State University of Education students ($r(400) = .76$; $df = 398$; $p < .05$). In view of this, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between information technology and employability of Lagos State University of Education students was rejected. Thus, there is significant relationship between information technology and employability of Lagos State University of Education students.

Research Hypotheses 2: There is no significant relationship between decision making and employability of students.

Table 2: Decision Making and Employability of Students

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	r	P	Rmk	Decision
Decision Making		2.85	.51					
Employability of Students	400	1.33	.11	398	.64	.001	Sig	Ho ₂ Rejected

Sig @ P<.05

Information on Table 2 shows that Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics was run to determine the relationship between decision making and employability of Lagos State University of Education students. The results of the analysis shows that there is a positive, weak and significant relationship between decision making and employability of Lagos State University of Education students ($r(400) = .64$; $df = 398$; $p < .05$). In view of this, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between decision making and employability of Lagos

State University of Education students was rejected. Thus, there is significant relationship between decision making and employability of Lagos State University of Education students.

Research Hypotheses 3: Critical thinking is not significantly related to employability of students.

Table 3: Critical Thinking and Employability of Students

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	r	P	Rmk	Decision
Critical Thinking	400	2.94	.48	398	.57	.002	Sig	Ho ₃ Rejected
Employability of Students		1.33	.11					

Sig @ P<.05

Information on Table 3 shows that Pearson Product-Moment Correlation statistics was run to determine the relationship between critical thinking and employability of Lagos State University of Education students. The results of the analysis shows that there is a positive, moderate and significant relationship between critical thinking and employability of Lagos State University of Education students ($r(400) = .57$; $df = 398$; $p < .05$). In view of this, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between critical thinking and employability of Lagos State University of Education students was rejected. Thus, there is significant relationship between critical thinking and employability of Lagos State University of Education students.

Research Hypotheses 4: Interpersonal relationship skills and employability of students are not significantly related.

Table 4: Interpersonal Relationship Skills and Employability of Students

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	r	P	Rmk	Decision
Critical Thinking	400	2.94	.48	398	.74	.001	Sig	Ho ₃ Rejected
Employability of Students		1.33	.11					

Sig @ P<.05

Information on Table 13 shows that Pearson Product-Moment Correlation statistics was run to determine the relationship between Interpersonal relationship skills and employability of Lagos State University of Education students. The results of the analysis shows that there is a positive, strong and significant relationship between Interpersonal relationship skills and employability of Lagos State University of Education students ($r(400) = .74$; $df = 398$; $p < .05$). In view of this, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Interpersonal relationship skills and employability of Lagos State University of Education students was rejected. Thus, there is significant relationship between Interpersonal relationship skills and employability of Lagos State University of Education students.

Discussion

The findings of hypothesis one showed that there is a positive, strong and significant relationship between information technology and employability of Lagos State University of Education students. This may be due to the recent reliance on information technology to drive innovation in the work place to achieve organizational goals and objectives. The finding agrees with the work of Akindahunsi, Haruna and Malan (2021) where it was found that possession of IT skills (computer literacy, internet skills, application software) significantly influenced students' *perceived employability* and readiness for work. Similarly, it supports the work of Pitan and Adedeji (2012) which showed that a significant relationship exists between information technology and employability. However, it negates the work of Stone (2020) who found that no significant relationship exists between information technology skills and employability. The result of analysis of hypothesis two found that There is a positive, weak and significant relationship between decision making and employability of Lagos State University of Education students. The finding agrees with empirical studies that showed that decision-making significantly predicts employability among higher education students, indicating that those confident in their decision-making abilities transition more effectively into the labor market (Liu et al., 2023). Similarly, it supports the finding of a study by Pitan and Adedeji (2012) where it was found that a significant and positive relationship exists between decision making and employability.

The findings of hypothesis three showed that a positive, weak and significant relationship exists between critical thinking and employability of Lagos State University of Education students. This agrees with the work of Dwyer, Hogan, and Stewart (2023) which proved that students who receive critical thinking training show significant improvements in argumentation and reasoning, making them more employable in knowledge-intensive sectors. Similarly, it also supports the findings of studies by researchers (Pitan & Adedeji, 2012; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023) where it was found that a significant relationship exists between critical thinking skills and employability. The findings of hypothesis four showed that there is a positive, strong and significant relationship between and employability of Lagos State University of Education students. The finding of this hypothesis agrees with the finding of Pitan and Adedeji (2012) which confirmed that a significant relationship exists between interpersonal relationship skills and employability of students. It also supports the finding of a survey on soft skills and review of employability prediction approaches by researchers (Rahman et al., 2021; Adebakin, Ajadi, & Subair, 2017), where it was established that interpersonal skills significantly predicts employability. However, it negates the findings of Jones (2023) where it was found that no significant relationship exists between interpersonal skills and employability.

Conclusion

Students in higher education institutes (HEIs) must be well-equipped and ready for industrial revolution 4.0 (IR4.0). They will compete for employment in a global market and must be aware of new industrial technologies. As a result of the fact that higher education institutions serve as economic development anchors, student involvement and the formation of industry collaborations will be critical to success in higher education. Higher education institutions should focus on the IR4.0 development since the industrial workforce changes. Collaboration between companies and higher education institutions (HEIs) will become increasingly important because these students will be working in an industry 4.0 environment. Therefore, it is critical to get them ready. Industry 4.0 is characterised by the advancement of digitization and robotics to create new intelligent production. The intelligent factories connected by

a Cyber-Physical system are the primary goal of this approach. Industrial revolution 4.0 not only will impact the industry, but it also can be seen in the labor market and education. There is a chance of the disappearance of certain professions and jobs. It is therefore important that we prepare the students to survive in the modern digital world.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are therefore suggested from the findings of this study:

1. The government should strengthen industry-academia collaboration for digital transformation and economic growth.
2. There should be continuous review of the curriculum to instill digital and work-related skills in learners.
3. The institutional managers should ensure that specific employability skills are emphasized in schools using adequate pedagogical skills to prepare students for the world of work.
4. The students should redirect their energy towards the acquisition of digital and employability skills in order to be able to compete favourably with counterparts globally.
5. The parents should be encouraged to commit more fund in the training of the learners in modern digital skills.
6. The political class at the grassroot should provide digital training centers for students assess in order to prepare them for the world of work which will help them contribute meaningfully to economic growth and development.

References

- Adebakin, A. B., Ajadi, O. T., & Subair, S. T. (2017). Assessing Nigerian graduate employability through entrepreneurial competencies in the ODL system. *Global Journal of Business Disciplines*, 1(1), 1–13.
- Akanmu (2011). An evaluation of graduate employability in Oyo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Research in Education*, 2(1), 121-134.
- Akindahunsi, Y. O., Haruna, A. J., & Malan, P. U. (2021). Assessment of information technology employability skills among business education students in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *EPRA International Journal of Research and Development*, 6(5), 222–229.
- Boateng, K., & Ofori-Sarpong, E. (2002). *An analytical study of the labour market for tertiary graduates in Ghana*. Accra: National Council for Tertiary Education & National Accreditation Board Project, World Bank. Retrieved from <https://catalog.ihsn.org/citations/312>
- Emeh, I. E., Nwanguma, E. O., & Abaroh, J. J. (2012). *Engaging youth unemployment in Nigeria with youth development and empowerment programmes: The Lagos State in focus*. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 4(5), 1125–1141.

- Harish, S. T. (2024). Development of employability skills through work-based learning. *Journal of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)*2024, 18(1), 102-111.
- Ismail, I., Ahmad, A. & Awang, M. (2017). A Study of Soft Skills among Polytechnic Students. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 5, 295-311. doi: 10.4236/jss.2017.58025.
- Jones, E. A. (2023). Determining the influence of relevant skills on graduate employability. *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(2), 142-154.
- Lee, E. (2002). The Chinese Exclusion Example: Race, Immigration, and American Gatekeeping, 1882-1924. *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 21, 36-62. SCIRP
- National Network of Business and Industry Associations. (2014). Common employability skills: A foundation for success in the workplace. Washington, DC: Business Roundtable.
- Pitan, O. S. (2015). An Assessment of Generic Skills Demand in Five Sectors of the Nigerian Labour Market, *Public and Municipal Finance*, 4(1), 28-36.
- Pitan, O. S., & Adedeji, S. O. (2012). Skills mismatch among university graduates in the Nigeria labour market. *US-China Education Review A*, 1, 90–98.
- Rahman, M. M., et al. (2021). Employability prediction: A survey of current approaches, research challenges and future directions. *Journal of Big Data*, 8, 64.
- Robinson, J. P. (2000). What are employability skills?. *The Workplace*, 1(3), 1–3. The National Network of Business and Industry Associations (2014). Common employability skills. Retrieved 2nd September, 2025 from <https://www.cewd.org/documents/Common%20Employability%20CGI.pdf>
- Tushar, H., & Sooraksa, N. (2023). Global employability skills in the 21st-century workplace: A semi-systematic literature review. *Heliyon*, 9(11), 21-23.
- Zhou D, Peng Z and Zhou H (2023) The influence of career decision-making self-efficacy on employability of higher vocational students: mediated by emotional intelligence. *Front. Educ.* 8, 127-143. doi: 10.3389/educ.2023.1274430.