

# Crafting Sustainable Future: The Nexus of Vocational Training, Employability and Sustainability within Development Initiatives

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## **Abstract**

*Vocational Institutions over the years have emphasized more on the Education and Training that enhance the technicality and practicality of the vocation, also spearheads the agenda of facilitating both graduates and non-graduates; educated and non-educated and persons with minimum educational qualifications, since certain workforce do not require tertiary education. This research procures cross-sectional study of employability of Nigerian graduates who have undergone vocational education and training in previous years. Cross-sectional study was carried out on One hundred and twenty-five (125) Home Economics graduates across six tertiary institutions (Universities / Colleges of Education) in Oyo state. Data collected through self-designed On-line survey questionnaire accessed relationship between vocational education, training, and employability in professional career. Data was analysed using R-studio version 4.4.0., with 28% male and 72% female, of which 72% were above the age of 25years. The survey showcased marital status and educational qualification as not driving factors for employability among the graduates as most participants were bachelor's degree / higher diploma and certificate certified. About 56% of the participants had gained employment above the duration of 5years, 44.8% were*

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*self-employed while the rest were administered to government establishment and private enterprises. While 51.2% were employed in Educational sector only 34.4% were in Business sector and the rest in hospitality and ICT. From satisfaction survey overview and recommendation, skills attained during vocational training played a huge role in career of employees and benefitting their current employment.*

*Keywords: Vocational Institution, Vocational Policy, Empowerment Programmes, Sustainability, Vocational Education, Vocational Skill*

### **Introduction**

The sustainable future of vocation is dependent on the quantity of resources, ideas and research invested in the vocation field. With the high rate of economy and low availability of job opportunities in Nigeria, vocation education is required to empower unskilled individuals for self-employment. For the skilled personnel, it is essential to preserve the longevity of skilfulness which relates to the possibility of futility of certain skills and profession in future years due to improvement of technology, industrialization and economic factors which has created vast underemployment in the nation. Currently, vocational institutions in recent years have collaborated with professional bodies like Home Economics Professional Association of Nigeria (HEPAN), Home Economics Research Association of Nigeria (HERAN), Home Economics Teachers Association of Nigeria (HETAN) as Home Economics registered bodies which promised to regulate law and order among trainees and stakeholders and empower research and career development of members (HEPAN, 2024). Although, attempts made by these bodies to curb underemployment might not be efficient enough, strategies are deployed by the government to assist practitioners and individuals to embark on skill development journey which will also help them to thrive in the labour market and keep a last longing impression of stability in the vocational field.

Home Economics as a vocation entails interior design, textile design, fashion design, food and beverage manufacturing, hospitality, teaching, dietetics, human nutrition, and childcare ensue career opportunities in vast field of production and services (Oladokun,

2020). This vocational field creates an avenue for poverty alleviation schemes through introduction of its variety of skills; Government could dissolve poverty by creating poverty eradication policy through programmes like National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) (Gamawa, 2015). Development funds and grants from organizations can also be used to build and support research and career development. The International Federation of Home Economics (IFHE) development funds which assist home economists around the world and many more serves as encouragement to prospective home economist (IFHE, 2023). Vocational training programmes open practical skills for individuals in areas of production or services demands, thereby creating an avenue for potential employability. Graduate training programmes encourage graduates to learn more visible skills outside the academic facet, considering the number of unskilled individuals and the rate of youth unemployment in the nation. Vocational training fulfils the role of accustoming youths and young adults to learning skills or trade for generating incomes. Vocational training is an essential tool to increase employment with the potential of developing individuals (Shankar Lal Gupta et al., 2023).

Nigeria's National Employment Council (NEC) was approved and reviewed by the Financial and Technical support of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2017. The reviewed National Employment policy clearly shows the strategies involved in the creation of decent jobs through various prominent methods of provisions and maintenance of physical infrastructure, improved marketing for private firms and availability of credit facilities. The involvement of employment policy by the government steers employability of labour-force in the nation (International Labour Organization, 2017).

Professional bodies are instrumental to skill sustainability due to their autonomous tenacity in perspective vocation ramifications. For trainees in the vocational field, professional bodies like Annals of Technology Education Practitioners Association of Nigeria (ATEPAN), Home Economics Teachers Association of Nigeria (HETAN) and many more create awareness for young trainees and stakeholders by regulating practices in the various fields.

Also, by outlining the codes and conduct of the Home Economics vocational society and bringing members of the society to orderliness. These bodies also organize workshops and conferences whereby knowledge of vocational profession is attained, which is a portal to sustain the lifespan of skill and labour in the nation. Moreover the professional bodies give career advice to aspiring entrepreneurs in the field and offer possible employment options although in rare cases.

The concept of empowerment plays down to the collective process of an agency recruiting a good number of individuals for skill training within a particular period. These programmes are always put in place to refurbish participants with the insight of backing them up resource-wise after the skill acquisition programme. In March 2024 the Federal Government introduced an initiative aimed at empowering the youths through job creation (Outsource to Nigeria Initiative, 2024). The main aim of empowerment programme is to tackle poverty and unemployment in the society for sustainable development. Methods used to empower participants include: disbursement of loan to participants, setting up weeks of fully activated training programmes and enabling individuals with vocation practising devices, resources, and infrastructure.

Vocational education entails formal preparation of individuals for entrepreneurship which oversees upgrading their professional skills to make them employable in their field of work. Vocational education is practised both in schools and on the field (Supervised Industrial Work Experience Scheme) to generate productivity among students, unfortunately this might not circumnavigate all field of job sectors in vocational education. The development of vocational education is of great benefit to satisfy the basic needs of economic and social growth in the labour market (Weina, 2024), also the involvement of young innovators and environmentalist outside the formal education system creates a transformed vocational education (Monk et al., 2023).

Vocational skills are practical skills required for defined roles in career or jobs, these skills are acquired through vocational and technical training. Such skills possess uniqueness whereby some career requires soft skills like communication, negotiation and

critical thinking which are dependent on the nature of the profession. The reliability of vocational skill to an employee is expedient to generate maximum satisfaction of their services during employment; hence skills are seen as articulation of knowledge and criteria for employment (Omar et al., 2023). Workers need technical skills and knowledge to survive in a developed economy (Dania et al., 2014)

Sustainability is the ability to maintain a process consistently over a long period of time without losing its quality, value and goal. It requires holistic approach to create equilibrium in the economy and bring balance in-between the employed and unemployed (Anyanwu & Duru, 2020). The proportion of workers in wage employment in the third quartile of 2023 was 12.7% which increased to 16% in the first quartile of 2024, while unemployment rate which was 5.0% at third quartile of 2023 increased to 5.3% as at first quartile of 2024 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). Sustainability monitors seasonality in some specific career considered time-conditioned, sectors like interior decoration where job is contracted to an experienced employee for a calculated period ranging from days to weeks, career of such do lack sustainability especially when there is lack of efficient job networking and time management. Sectors like food and beverage production of which certain raw materials are perishable, products take a certain amount of time before preparation, packaging and manufacturing. Assessment on products management is considered to stimulate improvement in storage and processing of products with its nutritional values being maintained over the period of storage and production. Achieving sustainability is essential in a rapid growing world, where resource management, climate change and social responsibility are among the critical challenges faced by food production (Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations, 2019).

Development initiatives can be generated by curriculum development, curriculum implementation, vocational education and accessibility to harness a long-term effect on vocational sustainability. Further development projects can be backed-up by feedbacks and evaluations to observe the improvements made through the curriculum introduction. Initiatives to create demonstration by cooperation of young individuals and exchange of

vocational knowledge generate success in vocation (Monk et al., 2023).

### **Aim and Objectives of Study**

The study was aimed and conducted to examine the influence of Technical, Vocational and Education Training (TVET) on the employability of graduates with Home Economics related vocation, after which the relationship between employability and other variables were evaluated and then estimated the sustainability of employment future. Moreover, the following research Objectives were devised:

1. Investigate the employability rate of graduates who practised TVET
2. Assess the level of employability skills of the graduates?
3. Evaluate the quality of vocational training involved in the TVET curriculum
4. Assess the effect of Socio-demographics such as age, academic qualification, and gender on employability of graduates
5. Examine the relationship between Employability, vocational training and skills of the graduates
6. Estimate the role of employability factors in the future of employment sustainability.

### **Research Questions**

1. RQ 1: What is the employability rate of the graduates who practised TVET?
2. RQ 2: What is the level of employable skills of the graduate?
3. RQ 3: What is the quality of training vocational involved in the TVET curriculum scheme?
4. RQ 4: Will Socio-demographics such as age, academic qualification, and gender affect the employability of the graduates?
5. RQ 5: What is the relationship between the employability, vocational skills and vocational training of the graduates?
6. RQ 6: What role will the employability factors play in the future of employment sustainability?

## **Methodology**

### **Research method**

The study adopted mixed-method approach which entailed quantitative and qualitative methods that were used to describe the research objectives and tools. The Quantitative approach involved the collection of numerical data on demographics, employability factors, vocational training quality and vocational skills. While the Qualitative approach involved thematic insights gathered from respondents during course of the survey.

### **Population of the study**

The study targeted 125 Home Economics graduates from six tertiary institutions (universities and college of education) in Oyo state with technical and vocational experience.

### **Sampling Technique and Data Analysis**

Purposive survey was used to collect the data from the respondents who met the requirement of the study most especially Home Economics graduates who witnessed the TVET program. while convenience sampling was used to select respondent who were available for the survey.

The data was analysed using descriptive statistics which include frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Statistical model analyses used Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to determine relationship employability, vocational skills, vocational training quality and other variables like the Socio-demographics, while Linear regression model was used to estimate the sustainability of employment in future years.

### **Instrument for data collection**

The instrument used was a self-designed online google form questionnaire, which was categorized into:

Section A: included Demographic factor which was: Age, gender, Qualification, and years of working experience.

Section B: included with vocational training quality and satisfaction were scaled using a 4-point modified Likert scale (Very good, Good, Fair, Unfair)

Section C: included: Relevance of current employment to obtained vocational training and academic field, which was designed in an open and closed form.

The data analysis was conducted using the software R and R-studio. Survey questionnaires were stationed on Google form survey and other social media platforms while responses were based on participant’s familiar experiences, participants were also informed about the purpose of the study. The sustainability of the graduates’ employment was based on the employability factor as demonstrated by the results.

**Validity and reliability**

The instrument was subjected to inspection by home economist and Vocational professionals to enhance the validity of the instrument to ensure reliability and validity. The questionnaire was pretested with by 30 respondents with a reliability of 0.79 Cronbach alpha confirming its internal consistency.

**Results**

**Table 1: Demographic attribute of respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	35	28
	Female	90	72
<b>Age</b>	Above 25	90	72
	Below 25	35	28
<b>Marital status</b>	Single	56	44.8
	Married	69	55.2
<b>Highest Qualification</b>	NCE	15	12

	Bachelor's Degree	80	64
	Masters	28	22.4
	Ph.D	2	1.6
<b>Currently employed</b>	Yes	67	53.6
	No	2	1.6
	Self-employed	56	44.8
<b>Work nature</b>	Self-employment	57	45.6
	Government Establishment	37	29.6
	Private enterprise	31	24.8
<b>Nature of Employment</b>	Educational	64	51.2
	Business enterprise	43	34.4
	Hospitality service	17	13.6
	ICT	1	0.8
<b>Employment duration</b>	Below 5 years	55	44
	Above 5 years	70	56
<b>Total</b>		125	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 indicates the demographic details of respondents. The result reveals that the respondents comprised of 28% male and 72% female all with a mean age of 32 years and based on highest qualifications attained; 12% had NCE, 64% Bachelor-Degree, 22.4% Master's degree and 1.6% PhD, the frequency of the employed were 123

(98.4%) while only 2 (1.6%) of the participants were unemployed. About 56% experienced an employment longevity above 5 years.

**RQ 1:** What is the employability rate of the graduates who practised TVET?

**Table 2: Employability of graduates with TVET**

<b>Currently employed percentage</b>		<b>frequency</b>
Yes	123	98.4
No	2	1.6
Total	125	100

The employability of graduates with TVET is presented in Table 2. The result shows that the employability of graduates who participated in the TVET, 98.4% of the graduates were employed while 1.6% were currently unemployed; Average Mean = 3.93, Sd = ±1.90

**RQ 2:** What is the level of employable skills of the graduate student?

<b>Table 3: Employable/Vocational skills</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Problem solving	49	39.2
Project management	31	24.8
Technical skills	56	44.8
Communication Skills	54	43.2
n=125		
*multiple responses		

Table 3 depicts the employable/vocational skill of the participants. The result shows that the assessment of employability skills in graduates with frequency of problem solving are 49, project management 13, technical skills 24 and communication skills 24. This is because most graduates possessed two or more employable skills (average mean= 3.79, Sd= ±1.75).

**RQ 3:** What is the quality of training involved in the TVET curriculum scheme?

**Table 4: Vocational training quality and satisfaction survey overview**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>percentage</b>
<b>How well did vocational training received align with current job skill requirement?</b>		
Very good	74	59.2
Good	50	40
Fair	0	0
Unfair	1	1.8
M=3.93		
<b>How satisfied were you with the quality of resources provided during training?</b>		
Very good	58	46.4
Good	58	46.4
Fair	7	5.6
Unfair	2	1.6
M =3.37		
<b>How did the vocational training influence your employability?</b>		
Very good	65	52
Good	25	46.3
Fair	1	1.8
Unfair	0	0
M = 3.69		
Total	125	100

The Vocational training quality and satisfaction survey overview is as shown in Table 4. The results indicated that the overall vocational training quality (TVET), ( $m = 3.64$ ,  $Sd = \pm 1.62$ ) which is dependent on vocational training alignment to current job, quality of resources during vocational training and vocational training influence on

employability. The report shows a good quality vocational training given by institution showcasing vocational education and training.

**RQ 4:** Will gender, age, academic qualification and marital status influence the employability of the graduates?

**Table 5: Correlation of employability and other variables**

	employability	gender	qualification	age	marital status
employability	1				
gender	-0.1801	1			
qualification	-0.2096	0.4106	1		
age	-0.4048	0.1154	-0.2567	1	
marital status	-0.4622	0.0783	0.1421	-0.0177	1

Table 5 depicted the correlation of employability and other variables. The result shows that the factors of gender, academic qualification, age and marital status are not influential to the employability of the graduates

**RQ 5:** What is the relationship between the employability and vocational skills, vocational training of the graduates?

**Table 6: Correlation between vocational training quality, employability**

Variable	Vocational Training quality	Employability
Vocational Training n=125	0.91	1
Employability n=125	1	0.91

Two tailed Pearson correlation test (t= 112.2 , df =123, p< 0.05)

**Table 7: Correction between employability and vocational skills**

	Employability	vocational skill
Employability	1	0.93
Vocational skills	0.93	1

Two tailed correlation test ( $t = 117.49$ ,  $df = 123$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )

Significant correlations were seen in employability, vocational skill ( $r=0.93$ ) and vocational training quality ( $r=0.91$ ). The correlation in between the two variables and employability is strongly positive as depicted by Tables 6 and 7.

**RQ 6:** What role will the employability factors play in the future of sustainability?

**Table 8: Multi-linear regression towards employability (n=125)**

Variables	B	std error	Beta	t	p
Intercept	1.68	1.44	-	11.03	0.000
(Vocational skill)	0.87	0.33	0.23	9.08	0.000
(vocational training quality)	0.11	0.02	0.20	3.14	0.002
Employment nature	0.04	0.15	0.10	0.12	0.007

$R^2 = 0.9989$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0.9988$  F (3,121),  $p < 0.05$

To determine sustainability of the prospective employee jobs in future years, a multiple regression analysis was conducted using three variables (Vocational training quality, vocational/employability skills, Employment nature) of which the employability stood as the dependent variable in the analysis through the multiple regression expression ( $y \sim 0.23 \cdot x_a + 0.20 \cdot x_b + 0.10 \cdot x_c + 1.6$ ), the importance of the variables was considered by the beta co-efficient of which the Vocational skills had the highest beta co-efficient value (0.23), tailed by the vocational training (0.20) and employment nature (0.10).

### **Discussion of Findings**

Tables 1 and 2 showcase demographic profiles of participants such as age of which 72% were above 25 years old, marital status (52.5% married), and employment duration of which 56% enjoyed employment stability for more than five (5) years. Majority of the respondents possessed bachelor's degree (64%) as their highest academic qualification, based on the field of vocation, higher percentage were females (72%) although gender is not a determinant of employability in the study. Higher percentage had permanent employment while others (44.8%) were working based on contract jobs which was identified as self-employed.

Table 3 demonstrates the participants' employable/vocational skill such as problem solving (39.2%), project management, technical skills (44.8%) and communication skills. The results showcase the ability of graduates to own multiple vocational skills through the dynamic application of TVET in academic institution, which also serves as a holistic approach to creating employable skilled graduates in Home Economics related fields. Skills development sits at the nexus of multiple sustainable goal developments which highlights the access to TVET skills and knowledge for decent job and employment (McGrath & Yamada, 2023).

Table 4 addresses The vocational training quality and satisfaction survey overview. The results indicated that the overall vocational training quality (TVET), ( $m = 3.64$ ,  $Sd = \pm 1.62$ ) is dependent on Vocational training alignment to current job, quality of resources during vocational training and vocational training influence on employability. The result shows a good quality vocational training given by academic institutions showcasing job satisfaction by the participant which is aided by the quality of vocational education and training. Job satisfaction is essential for an organization's performance and employees' comfort, as employees with TVET background show moderate satisfaction with their occupations, and they are motivated to carry out tasks willingly; factors such as workplace conditions, promotion, supervision and pay are stimulators of workers response while taking on important roles at the workplace (Rimal, 2022).

Table 5 depicts the correlation of employability and demographic variables. The result shows that the factors of gender, academic qualification, age and marital status are not influential to the employability of the graduates. Although the employment industry requires minimum of bachelors' degree as a mean of qualification for majority of white-collar jobs, this might not be applicable to workers who are self-employed, soft and professional skills are essential for person in this category. Soft skills are essential tools for sustainable working creativity in the current global market, skills as communication, problem-solving and critical thinking helps with project-based jobs by achieving a sustainable goal. In-order to succeed in the current technology driven world, it is essential to consider the implementation of vocational skills which brings resourcefulness, responsibility and dignity to one's career (Owawie, 2020).

Table 6 and 7 correlate employability, vocational skill and vocational training of the graduates who participated in the TVET. Significant correlations were seen in employability and vocational skill ( $r=0.93$ ), employability and vocational training quality ( $r=0.91$ ). The correlation between the two variables and employability was strongly positive. This finding emphasizes the importance of vocational training and skills in the employment. TVET oriented institutions help to produce labour-force with marketable skills orientation, the investment of Vocational education and training has economic benefit such as growth and development with positive impact of employment opportunities, wages and innovation (Krishnapillai, 2021)

Table 8 asserts the role of TVET in the sustainability of the employment in future years, the table shows a positive relationship among three variables (Vocational training quality, vocational/employability skills, Employment nature) which was considered by the beta co-efficient of which the Vocational skills had the highest beta co-efficient value (0.23), tailed by the vocational training (0.20) and employment nature (0.10). Among the independent variables the Employable skills had a higher mean when put in comparison to the other independent variables which explains that academic qualification without tangible skills might not make

employment favourable for graduates. Employability is highly dependent on the quality of vocational training and skill earned during the TVET programme and the employable skills acquired during the Supervised Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) programme. According to Omar et al. (2023) employable skill has outshined the certificates of academic graduates in the job market, which also improvises the inclusion of multiple vocational skills by which employers or stakeholders are attracted mainly by the quality of the graduates in need of job opportunity. Development of the vocational training is essential due to development in technology and increase in working population which may reduce chances of the employable vocational graduates-to-be, especially the ones with outdated skills.

From the study most participants invested more attention into training programmes and possessed more employable skills since many individuals practiced the skills obtained during the training period and made attempts to attain technical experiences from the vocational field in accordance with the real world of work. The multi-linear regression also showcases a sustainable future of employability for graduates with the vocational training quality, vocational skills and employment nature on occupation choices which are its driving factors. Although TVET curriculum might also include more industrial and technological approach to boost the self-esteem of the prospective employees considering lack of job experience. The TVET would prepare graduates for the job market with consideration of their adaptability to the new system, codes of conduct, operations and economic status. In the survey; participants highly recommended vocational training programmes for those pursuing a career in their individual field of studies.

### **Conclusion**

This research studied the relationship between employability, vocational training TVET and employable skills which was strongly positive. Although, demographic variables like age, gender, marital status and highest educational qualification were also requested in the questionnaire they were not considered to affect the employability of the graduates. The employment sustainability estimation was highly

influenced by the employability factors: Vocational training quality, Employable skills and Career choice (Employment nature) which brings out the essence of the TVET in professional career, according to the survey only few of the participants practised ICT-based career which has a high demand in the current job market, a lot of trainees lack the instinct of choosing an employment-worth career due to lack of insight.

### **Recommendations**

The future of vocational graduates lies on the employability factors of which TVET stands as sustainable ladder to professional success. It is thus recommended that;

- Although TVET only influences the educated or literates in the society, redesigning of vocational education curriculum must be made to influence the uneducated persons.
- The co-operation of stakeholders and professional bodies must be underscored to necessarily bring massive improvement to the employability status of fresh graduates and also establish a quality TVET curriculum and career expertise.
- Research and counselling efforts should be directed towards helping upcoming youths on career choices.
- Regular maintenance and updating of training materials to keep up with the improvement in professional careers as facilitated by the Institutions practising vocational education.

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