

The determinants of employability among final-year students at the federal university of agriculture, Abeokuta

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the determinants of employability among final year students of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB). The study population comprised of all the final year students of FUNAAB. A multistage sampling procedure was used to collect information from 150 respondents in agricultural colleges of the University. Study data were analysed using percentages, mean, Chi square and regression analyses. The study reveals that the mean age of the respondents was 24.51(±2.26) years. Female students were more (59.4%) in the sample of respondents drawn for this study. Respondents perceived communication skills as the most important ($\bar{x}=4.5$) for a good job placement after graduation. Majority (90.40%) of the respondents perceived that the employability indices of the job market were favourable to them. Self-motivation and commitment ($\bar{x}=4.57$), self-confidence ($\bar{x}=4.45$) and mature attitude ($\bar{x}=4.36$) were some of the indices of employability possessed by the respondents. There was a significant relationship between employability and career path ($\chi^2=70.089$, $df=36$, $p<0.01$) as well as students' CGPA ($r=0.196$, $p<0.05$). Also, technical skills ($\beta=0.249$, $p<0.01$), communication skills ($\beta=0.285$, $p<0.01$), and other skills ($\beta=0.244$, $p<0.05$) were factors associated with the employability indices possessed by the respondents. The study concluded that employability of final year students in the university is largely dependent on their possession of employability skills. This study recommended among others that; institutions should endeavour to integrate employability skills training into their curriculum.

Keywords: Employability, Determinants, Final year students, Agriculture.

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment has grown to be a national issue in Nigeria. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the unemployment rate in urban areas was 5.9% in Q2 2023, which was an increase from 5.4% in Q1 2023. Time-related underemployment in Q2 2023 was 11.8%. Out of this, 8% (constituting 67.80%) of the working-age population were in subsistence agriculture, while the percentage of youth unemployment was 13.8% of the population (NBS, 2024). This implies 31.65 youth who are currently unemployed going by the current population of Nigeria which 229,332,533 million people (Worldometer, 2024). Ongbali *et al.* (2019) stressed that one of the reasons for youth unemployment in Nigeria is non-possession of employable skills. Employability, therefore, has to do with dedication of potential candidates to excellence in professional and technical skills especially in incipient technologies. In addition to this, such potential workers must be self-motivated, confident, and competent to accomplish future employment tasks in an efficient and effective way. Employability is, therefore, a personal quality that makes it easier for people to find work and supports an individual's professional life more easily (Tushar and Sooraksa, 2023). These skills are needed to perform higher-order thinking, personal and social skills needed to excel in the current civilisation (Lim,

2023). Lack of adequate employability skills can lead to unemployment and hinder people's career development. Since skills are becoming more important in a globalised world, even though professional and technical skills are essential, employers are looking for candidates who can continue to learn and adapt, competent in reading, writing and arithmetic and who can listen and communicate effectively with team members. According to Mariano and Tantoco (2023), the world of work today is rapidly transforming from the industrial age to the knowledge-based economy which requires various skills that were not used in the past, for which students who have foresight must personally develop themselves in. It has become so important for candidates to develop employability skills so that they can be equipped to secure and retain a job and move with the ever-changing world of employment (Ismail & Hilal, 2023). According to the World Bank (2017; 2020) "only about 2 - 4% of secondary and tertiary level graduates are employable (i.e. have the knowledge, skill and ability to get a job and succeed on the job), while 18 - 20% of tertiary graduates will require training interventions for about 1 - 4 years to be employable". This indicates that students do not possess the necessary skills or do not know the appropriate skills required to compete in the labour market as employers look out for candidates who have skills and not certificates alone. Aluko (2014)

researched on employability skills from the perception of employers, while Agboola (2022) examined employability issues from the perspective of how these skills improves organisational growth and sustainable development. Furthermore, of all unemployability categories in Nigeria, agricultural graduates are worst hit by unemployment and employability issues (Olubusoye *et al.*, (2022). This is why this study focussed on potential agricultural graduates of agricultural science at the Federal University of Agriculture.

The broad objective of the study was to examine the determinants of the employability of final-year students at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB). The specific objectives are to:

1. describe employability indices used in the labour market,
2. determine the indices of employability possessed by the respondents,
3. examine the perception of respondents on constraints to employability.

Arising from the above, the hypotheses examined by this study are:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics and employability of the respondents.

H₀₂: There is no relationship between the employability indices and the employability of final year students of FUNAAB.

METHODOLOGY

The study area is the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), and it is in Ogun State, Nigeria. The Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta was established on 1 January 1988 by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The University has 179 academic programmes made up of 44 undergraduate programmes, 135 graduate programmes which include 22 postgraduate diploma programmes, 57 master's degree programmes and 56 doctorate degree programmes. The population of the study were the final year students of the three agricultural colleges of the university.

Primary data were used for this study. They were sourced from structured questionnaire administered to the sampled respondents. The questionnaire was in five sections which included the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, employability indices used in the labour market, indices of employability possessed by the respondents, and factors mitigating against employability of respondents. The questionnaire measured perceived employability indices used in the labour market by

adapting Nikunen (2021) and Tran *et al.*, (2022) containing 7 predictors of perceived employability which are academic performance, technical skills, communication skills, personality, leadership and motivation skills, teamwork and problem-solving skills and other factors which were rated on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). The indices of employability possessed by the respondents were adapted from Desai and Ramisetty-Mikler, 2017, with five domains (Communication, Personal and professional advancement, Personal qualities, Personal qualities, Understanding organization vision and objectives), which were rated on a five-point Likert scale (To a Very Great Extent to Not at All). Finally, factors militating against employability of respondents was measured using a scale developed by the author, with six factors considered (Lack of Motivation, Disorganisation, Communication Error, Individualism, Inflexibility, others) and these were rated on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree).

Sampling procedure and sample size: Multistage sampling technique was used to collect information from 150 respondents. The first stage featured purposive selection of three agricultural colleges in the university, because agricultural graduates are worst hit by unemployment and employability issues (Olubusoye *et al.*, (2022). At the second stage, stratified sampling technique was used to select two departments from each college making 6 departments. The third stage adopted a simple random sampling technique to select 25 final year students each from the six departments giving a sample size of 150 respondents.

Data obtained from 106 respondents (representing a return rate of 70.67%) was used for meaningful analysis and to achieve objectives of the study. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviation, frequency counts, and percentages and inferential statistics (Chi square, Pearson Product Moment Correlations, and Regression) were used in the analysis of the data obtained from the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic characteristics

Majority (53.8%) of FUNAAB final year students are within the ages of 23 and 25 years with the mean age of 24.51±SD years (Table 1). This which implies that they are youths who were employable, if they can develop their employability skills needed for a successful career. There were more (59.4%) females interviewed among the respondents. Also, (37.7% of the respondents were from COLAMRUD (College of Agricultural Management and Rural Development),

while 33.0% were from COLANIM (College of Animal Science and Livestock Production), and 29.2% from COLPLANT (College of Plant Science and Crop Production). The mean CGPA of the respondents were approximately 3.67. This shows that the respondents were in the second-class upper division which indicates that they are academically sound, and have the capability to compete favourably for employment in the country. Majority (62.3%) of

the respondents' parents had tertiary education with 37.7% having BSc qualification, while 3.8% of the respondents' parents had Ph.D. qualification. This denotes that majority of the respondents' parent were educated and are therefore expected to be abreast of emerging employability skills that their children can learn to enhance their quick job placement post-university education (Kaul, 2020).

Table 1: Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean (S.D)
Age			
<=22	19	17.9	24.51± 2.260
23-25	57	53.8	
26-28	25	23.6	
>= 29	5	4.7	
Sex			
Male	43	40.6	
Female	63	59.4	
College			
COLPLANT	31	29.2	
COLANIM	35	33.0	
COLAMRUD	40	37.7	
Marital status			
Single	100	94.3	
Married	5	4.7	
Separated	1	0.9	
Religion			
Christianity	84	79.2	
Islam	22	20.8	
CGPA			
2.50-3.49	39	36.8	3.669 (0.545)
3.50-4.49	58	54.7	
>= 4.50	9	8.5	
Level of education of students' parents			
O level	40	37.7	
HND	15	14.2	
BSc	40	37.7	
MSc	7	6.6	
PhD	4	3.8	

Source: Field survey, 2023

Perception of respondents on employability indices used in the labour market

Employability indices obtained from Nikunen (2021) and Tran *et al.*, (2022) were adapted for this study. The findings shown in Table 2 describe how the respondents perceived the indices of employability in the labour market. The grand means (average scores) for seven perceived indices of employability in the labour market are displayed in the table. According to the table, of all (Communication Skills, Teamwork and Problem-Solving Skills, Leadership and Motivation Skills, Personality, Technical Skills and others) the indices, communication skills (\bar{x} =4.51) was perceived most while academic performance

(\bar{x} =4.09) was the least perceived indices that can determine the employability of candidates in the labour market. In relation to the communication skills, respondents thought that better communication skills make the candidate confident (\bar{x} =4.53), as they must have sound communication skills along with other requirements (\bar{x} =4.52), because candidates with better networking capabilities are highly valued (\bar{x} =4.48). In terms of teamwork and problem-solving skills, respondents feel that organisations strongly seek candidates with better teamwork and problem-solving capabilities (\bar{x} =4.42). Also, both teamwork and problem-solving skills are two very essential skills when hiring (\bar{x} =4.39), and they are tested through brainstorming and real problem-solving tests

(\bar{x} =4.36). Furthermore, regarding leadership and motivation skills, respondents believe that organisations firmly seek the candidate with leadership and motivational skills (\bar{x} =4.37), because only a good leader can motivate his/her followers (\bar{x} =4.35), and organisations prefer employees who have developed their leadership and motivational skills (\bar{x} =4.30). Additionally, respondents perceived other (\bar{x} =4.11) indices that could predict the employability of candidates in the labour market. Respondents pointed out that having a professional certificate increases employability (\bar{x} =4.41), while critical thinking is an important skill employers hunt for (\bar{x} =4.41), with the resilience of the candidate (\bar{x} =4.39), having 21st century skills as a prospective employee (\bar{x} =4.38) and acquiring a growth mind set which is needed to succeed in the workplace (\bar{x} =4.37). Moreso, concerning personality, respondents thought personality can be developed (\bar{x} =4.45), but a candidate with strong personality usually has leadership capability (\bar{x} =4.25), and has better commitment to his/her job (\bar{x} =4.23). About technical skills, respondents indicated that candidates with sound technical skills are better sought after (\bar{x} =4.35), as it is one of the mandatory competencies for employability (\bar{x} =4.25), because they are well sought after (\bar{x} =3.97). Finally, on academic performance, respondents perceived that organisations consider academic performance as an important indicator of employability although it is not the only thing (\bar{x} =4.35), because good academic performance can be

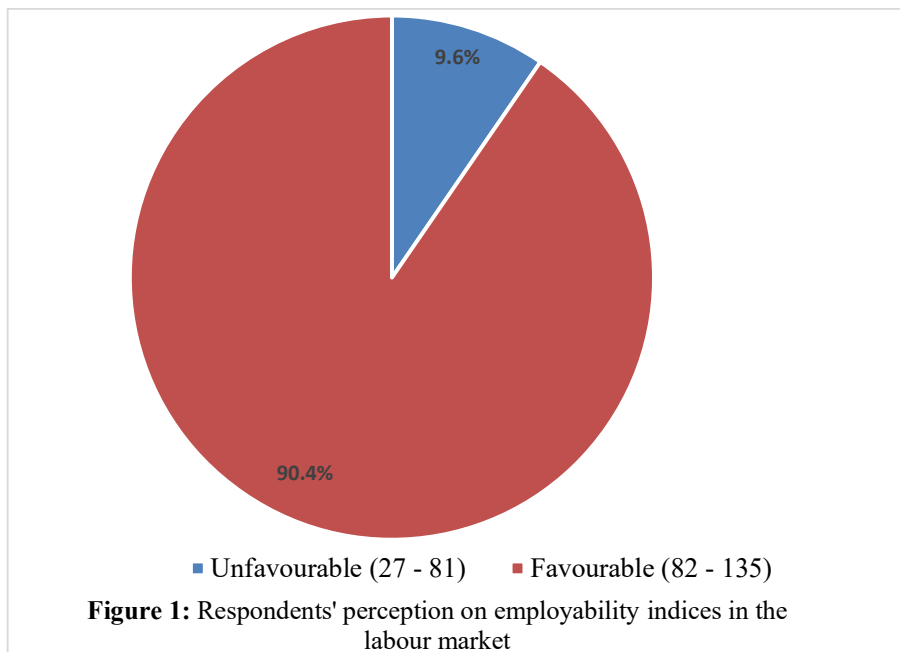
jettisoned for exceptionally skillful candidates (\bar{x} =4.35) even though academic performance is an indicator of candidate's employability (\bar{x} =4.35). These results suggest that communication proficiency is directly linked to self-assurance in professional settings because employers may prioritize communication abilities as a fundamental criterion, potentially influencing hiring decisions and professional development programs within organizations. This confidence can enhance candidates' ability to perform effectively during interviews and in their roles, contributing to overall job performance and satisfaction. This result also reflects the growing recognition of the importance of networking in career advancement, collaboration, and organizational success. Employers may therefore invest in training programs that enhance networking skills to cultivate a more interconnected and resourceful workforce. These findings are corroborated by Mariano and Tantoco (2023) that possession of additional employability skills outside normal academic performance, helps young graduates to secure jobs quite easily. Furthermore, result presented in Fig. 1 revealed the further categorisation of the perceived employability indices used in the labour market. The result showed that 90.4% of the respondents perceived that employability indices in the job market were favourable to them, while 9.6% perceived an unfavourable employability indices in the labour market.

1. Table 2: Perception of respondents on employability indices used in the labour market)

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD
Communication skills						4.51	
Better communication skills make the candidate confident	64(60.4)	35(33.0)	6(5.7)	1(0.9)	0(0)	4.53	0.65
Candidates must have sound communication skills along with other requirements	60(56.6)	42(39.6)	3(2.8)	1(0.9)	0(0)	4.52	0.61
Candidates with better networking capabilities are highly valued	60(56.6)	38(35.8)	7(6.6)	1(0.9)	0(0)	4.48	0.67
Teamwork and problem -solving skills						4.39	
Organisations strongly seek the candidate with better teamwork and problem-solving capabilities	54(50.9)	45(42.5)	5(4.7)	1(0.9)	1(0.9)	4.42	0.72
Teamwork and problem-solving are two very essential skills when hiring	62(58.5)	33(31.1)	5(4.7)	2(1.9)	4(3.8)	4.39	0.95
Candidates' problem-solving skills are tested through brainstorming and real problem-solving tests	52(49.1)	44(41.5)	7(6.6)	2(1.9)	1(0.9)	4.36	0.77
Leadership and motivation skills						4.34	
Organisations strongly seek the candidate with leadership and motivational skills	51(48.1)	47(44.3)	5(4.7)	1(1.9)	1(0.9)	4.37	0.75
Only a good leader can motivate his followers	58(54.7)	35(33.0)	7(6.6)	4(3.8)	2(1.9)	4.35	0.91
Organisations prefer employees who have developed their leadership and motivational skills	56(52.8)	33(31.1)	12(11.3)	3(2.8)	2(1.9)	4.30	0.92

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD
Others						4.33	
Having a professional certificate increases employability	49(46.2)	45(42.5)	8(7.5)	4(3.8)	0(0)	4.41	0.69
Critical thinking is an important skilled employer hunt for	54(50.9)	42(39.6)	5(4.7)	5(4.7)	0(0)	4.41	0.71
Resilience is a vital trait that employers look out for among candidates	48(45.3)	45(42.5)	4(3.8)	3(2.8)	6(5.7)	4.39	0.95
Having 21st century skills is highly essential for prospective employee	47(44.3)	49(46.2)	7(6.6)	2(1.9)	1(0.9)	4.38	0.76
Growth mindset is needed to succeed in the workplace	51(48.1)	50(47.2)	3(2.8)	1(0.9)	1(0.9)	4.37	0.79
A robust curriculum vitae can increase chances of getting a job	47(44.3)	41(38.7)	13(12.3)	4(3.8)	1(0.9)	4.31	0.77
Having work experience is an important requirement	54(50.9)	44(41.5)	5(4.7)	3(2.8)	0(0)	4.31	0.76
Volunteer roles are a prerequisite for getting jobs	38(35.8)	44(41.5)	17(16.0)	7(6.6)	0(0)	4.22	0.87
The ability to adapt to changing technologies is very important for job seekers	52(49.1)	47(44.3)	3(2.8)	3(2.8)	1(0.9)	4.19	1.04
Personality						4.31	
Personality can be developed	57(53.8)	41(38.7)	7(6.6)	1(0.9)	0(0)	4.45	0.66
A candidate with a strong personality usually has leadership capability	51(48.1)	39(36.8)	9(8.5)	6(5.7)	1(0.9)	4.25	0.91
A candidate with strong personality has better commitment to his/her job	48(45.3)	44(41.5)	5(4.7)	8(7.5)	1(0.9)	4.23	0.92
Technical skills						4.19	
Candidates with sound technical skills are better sought after	46(43.4)	48(45.3)	6(5.7)	5(4.7)	1(0.9)	4.35	0.78
Technical skills are one of the mandatory competencies for employability	43(40.6)	49(46.2)	5(4.7)	7(6.6)	2(1.9)	4.25	0.84
Candidates with technical skills are well sought after	53(50.0)	41(38.7)	8(7.5)	4(3.8)	0(0)	3.97	1.01
Academic performance						4.09	
Organisations consider academic performance as an important indicator of employability although it is not the only thing	43(40.6)	52(49.1)	8(7.5)	2(1.9)	1(0.9)	4.26	0.76
Good academic performance can be jettisoned for exceptionally skilful candidates	34(32.1)	52(49.1)	10(9.4)	10(9.4)	0(0)	4.04	0.89
Academic performance is an indicator of candidate's employability	35(33.0)	47(44.3)	13(12.3)	8(7.5)	3(2.8)	3.97	1.01

Source: Source: Computer from data collected from field survey, 2023



Indices of employability possessed by the respondents

Table 3 represents the results and discussion on the indices of employability possessed by the respondents. Respondents identified with the personal and professional advancement skill by agreeing that they are self-motivated and committed ($\bar{x}=4.57$), have self-confidence ($\bar{x}=4.45$), have a mature attitude ($\bar{x}=4.36$), and can monitor progress of goals ($\bar{x}=4.35$). Furthermore, they possess communication skills such as, attentive listening ($\bar{x}=4.44$), have good command of written, spoken and reading in English Language ($\bar{x}=4.30$), they respond effectively to others' comments during a conversation ($\bar{x}=4.28$), can convey information orally one-on-one ($\bar{x}=4.29$) and they also have excellent written communication skills including writing external and internal reports ($\bar{x}=4.08$). Personal qualities (adaptation and flexibility) are also possessed by the respondents, a good number of the respondents maintain a positive attitude, ($\bar{x}=4.47$), can

function effectively in a team ($\bar{x}=4.43$), they believe that self-motivation plays a vital role in the success of an organisation ($\bar{x}=4.41$), respond positively to constructive criticism ($\bar{x}=4.22$), and can effectively adapt to changing situations in the workplace ($\bar{x}=4.26$). The world today, including the world of employment, is in the process of changing from the industrial age to the information and communication age, often referred to as the knowledge-based economy (Pitan, 2015). An implication of this change is that it is no longer enough for new graduates to have a good degree, but it also becomes crucial for them to acquire a range of general, and employability and flexibility skills so that they can adjust to new modes of production organisation inherent to the globalisation of the economy (Fallows and Steven, 2000; Guichard, 2001).

Table 3: Indices of employability possessed by the respondents

Statements	TVGE	TGE	TSE	TME	NA	MEAN	SD
Communication skills							
I have excellent oral communication skills including making effective business presentations to a group	42(39.6)	51(48.1)	7(6.6)	5(4.7)	1(0.9)	4.21	0.836
I can convey information orally one-on-one	44(41.5)	52(49.1)	7(6.6)	3(2.8)	0(0)	4.29	0.717
I can communicate ideas verbally to groups	37(34.9)	55(51.9)	10(9.4)	4(3.8)	0(0)	4.18	0.753
I am an attentive listener	57(53.8)	41(38.7)	7(6.6)	1(0.9)	0(0)	4.44	0.705
I respond effectively to others' comments during a conversation	44(41.5)	50(47.2)	10(9.4)	2(1.9)	0(0)	4.28	0.714

Statements	TVGE	TGE	TSE	TME	NA	MEAN	SD
I have excellent written communication skills including writing external and internal reports	34(32.1)	53(50.0)	13(12.3)	6(5.7)	0(0)	4.08	0.818
I have good command of written, spoken and reading in English Language	45(42.5)	52(49.1)	5(4.7)	4(3.8)	0(0)	4.30	0.733
Personal and professional advancement skill							
I am self-motivated and committed	67(63.2)	33(31.1)	5(4.7)	1(0.9)	0(0)	4.57	0.633
I have a matured attitude	46(43.4)	54(50.9)	4(3.8)	2(1.9)	0(0)	4.36	0.650
I have self confidence	58(54.7)	41(38.7)	5(4.7)	1(0.9)	1(0.9)	4.45	0.719
I can monitor progress of goals	48(45.3)	49(46.2)	7(6.6)	2(1.9)	0(0)	4.35	0.691
I can revise plans to include new information	42(39.6)	55(51.9)	7(6.6)	2(1.9)	0(0)	4.29	0.676
I can set organisational priorities with ease	45(42.5)	43(40.6)	16(15.1)	2(1.9)	0(0)	4.24	0.775
I can work independently	48(45.3)	43(40.6)	9(8.5)	5(4.7)	1(0.9)	4.25	0.871
My presentation skill using the PowerPoint is second to none	33(31.1)	46(43.4)	19(17.9)	6(5.7)	2(1.9)	3.96	0.945
Personal qualities (adaptation and flexibility)							
I maintain a positive attitude	61(57.5)	37(34.9)	6(5.7)	1(0.9)	1(0.9)	4.47	0.733
I can effectively adapt to changing situations in the workplace	45(42.5)	50(47.2)	7(6.6)	2(1.9)	2(1.9)	4.26	0.820
I believe that self-motivation plays a vital role in the success of an organization	57(53.8)	38(35.8)	8(7.5)	3(2.8)	0(0)	4.41	0.753
I know how to develop and maintain effective relationship with colleagues and superiors	58(54.7)	40(37.7)	5(4.7)	1(0.9)	2(1.9)	4.42	0.792
I can function effectively in a team	58(54.7)	38(35.8)	8(7.5)	2(1.9)	0(0)	4.43	0.717
I have leadership skills that are expected in the workplace	52(49.1)	40(37.7)	9(8.5)	5(4.7)	0(0)	4.31	0.821
I have numeracy and computational skills	55(51.9)	39(36.8)	8(7.5)	4(3.8)	0(0)	4.37	0.785
I can recognize alternative routes in meeting objectives	49(46.2)	45(42.5)	12(11.3)	0(0)	0(0)	4.35	0.677
I meet set deadlines	47(44.3)	48(45.3)	7(6.6)	4(3.8)	0(0)	4.30	0.758
I can initiate change to enhance productivity	51(48.1)	47(44.3)	5(4.7)	2(1.9)	1(0.9)	4.37	0.747
I have empathy and understanding for the needs of others	52(49.1)	45(42.5)	8(7.5)	1(0.9)	0(0)	4.40	0.672
I respond positively to constructive criticism	39(36.8)	56(52.8)	6(5.7)	5(4.7)	0(0)	4.22	0.756
I know how to delegate work to peers	40(37.7)	55(51.9)	9(8.5)	2(1.9)	0(0)	4.25	0.691
I know how to delegate responsibilities to subordinates	39(36.8)	55(51.9)	7(6.6)	5(4.7)	0(0)	4.21	0.765
I am good in crisis management	33(31.1)	47(44.3)	21(19.8)	5(4.7)	0(0)	4.02	0.839
I understand cause-and-effect relationship	39(36.8)	51(48.1)	9(8.5)	6(5.7)	1(0.9)	4.14	0.867
Personal qualities (interpersonal and leadership skills)							
I know how to identify and provide solution to problems related to my job	43(40.6)	48(45.3)	9(8.5)	3(2.8)	3(2.8)	4.19	0.770
I know how to solve problems related to job	38(35.8)	54(50.9)	11(10.4)	2(1.9)	1(0.9)	3.75	1.067
I use a computer to carry out daily tasks	31(29.2)	36(34.0)	22(20.8)	16(15.1)	1(0.9)	4.09	0.879
I make decisions based on thorough analysis of the situation	39(36.8)	45(42.5)	15(14.2)	7(6.6)	0(0)	4.18	0.913
Understanding organization vision and objectives							
I am up to date with information related to the success of the organization	34(32.1)	53(50.0)	11(10.4)	8(7.5)	0(0)	4.07	0.854
I understand international economics policies (e.g., de-monetisation, Brexit	26(24.5)	46(43.4)	22(20.8)	12(11.3)	0(0)	3.81	0.937

Statements	TVGE	TGE	TSE	TME	NA	MEAN	SD
etc.) and their effects on the organisation and its strategies							
I understand how an organisation functions in relation to its competitors	34(32.1)	48(45.3)	14(13.2)	9(8.5)	1(0.9)	3.99	0.941
I can visualise my role in response to the changing strategies	35(33.0)	46(43.4)	15(14.2)	9(8.5)	1(0.9)	3.99	0.95

Source: Field survey, 2023

Not at All (NA), To a Minor Extent (TME), To Some Extent (TSE), To a Great Extent (TGE), To a Very Great Extent (TVGE)

Respondent's perception of factors mitigating against employability of respondents

Table 4 explains the factors that mitigate against the employability of respondents. Most (42.5%) strongly disagreed ($x=2.49 \pm 0.1.59$) that they will get a job after their education. This implies that majority of the respondent were confident of getting a job after their education and that they were inspired to develop workplace skills because they already had a strong GPA will not affect their employability (SD: $x=2.33 \pm 1.4$). Also, respondents agreed that the ability to properly allocate and distribute the time required for tasks will affect their employability (SD: $x=2.29 \pm 1.38$), while they also agreed that inability to express themselves appropriately will affect employability (SD: $x=2.05 \pm 1.25$).

The respondents also disagreed that they do not know how to contribute to the task of others ($x=2.23 \pm 1.22$),

they also disagreed that they do not allow others to collaborate with or them to perform a task ($x=2.15 \pm 1.31$). Respondents also disagreed that they are inflexible, that is, they do not find it hard to adapt to changing environment ($x=2.18 \pm 1.27$).

Furthermore, they agreed that ability to have the 21st century workplace skills ($x=2.78 \pm 1.47$) is a factor militating employability, and that impressive performance during past internships e.g., industrial training, National youth service corp, vacation job, temporary appointment, would boost employability ($x=2.66 \pm 1.43$). These findings agree with the views of Green, (2012) Hosain, (2021) and Kamaroellah *et al.*, (2021) who asserted that graduates are usually blamed for their inability to acquire the required skills (such as entrepreneurial, social, and soft skills) upon graduation, and these may affect their employability.

Table 4: Respondent's perception of mitigating factors of employability

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	MEAN	SD
Lack of motivation							
I am not sure I will get a job after my education	19(17.9)	17(16.0)	6(5.7)	19(17.9)	45(42.5)	2.49	1.59
I do not feel motivated to develop employability skills due to the economic situation of the country	12(11.3)	21(19.8)	3(2.8)	31(29.2)	39(36.8)	2.40	1.44
I am not inspired to develop workplace skills because I already have a strong grade point average (GPA)	15(14.2)	10(9.4)	6(5.7)	39(36.8)	36(34.0)	2.33	1.40
I am not motivated to learn employability skills because of my low academic performance	12(11.3)	14(13.2)	5(4.7)	36(34.0)	39(36.8)	2.28	1.38
Disorganisation							
I am unable to properly allocate and distribute the time required for my tasks	12(11.3)	18(17.0)	6(5.7)	41(38.7)	29(27.4)	2.29	1.26
I do not know how to delegate task	10(9.4)	11(10.4)	10(9.4)	44(41.5)	31(29.2)	2.35	1.32
I have difficulty prioritizing tasks	10(9.4)	16(15.1)	9(8.5)	37(34.9)	34(32.1)	2.49	1.59
Communication error							
I have difficulty in communicating with others	12(11.3)	12(11.3)	6(5.7)	39(36.8)	37(34.9)	2.27	1.35
I do not know how to express myself appropriately	8(7.5)	10(9.4)	7(6.6)	35(33.0)	46(43.4)	2.05	1.25
I lack good writing skills	13(12.3)	11(10.4)	4(3.8)	34(32.1)	44(41.5)	2.20	1.40
Individualism							

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	MEAN	SD
I do not know how to contribute to the task of others	7(6.6)	14(13.2)	9(8.5)	42(39.6)	34(32.1)	2.23	1.22
I do not allow others to collaborate with or help me to perform a task	12(11.3)	7(6.6)	6(5.7)	41(38.7)	40(37.7)	2.15	1.31
Only my work matters, no one else matters	13(12.3)	6(5.7)	6(5.7)	34(32.1)	47(44.3)	2.09	1.36
Inflexibility							
I find it hard to adapt to changing environment	9(8.5)	12(11.3)	6(5.7)	41(38.7)	38(35.8)	2.18	1.27
I do not respond quickly to changing situations	13(12.3)	10(9.4)	5(4.7)	40(37.7)	38(35.8)	2.25	1.36
I rarely initiate change on my own	10(9.4)	15(14.2)	12(11.3)	37(34.9)	32(30.2)	2.38	1.31
Others							
Vested interest of employers	21(19.8)	11(10.4)	18(17.0)	32(30.2)	24(22.6)	2.75	1.44
Lack of impressive performance during past internships e.g., Industrial training, National Youth Service, Vacation jobs, temporary appointment, etc.	20(18.9)	9(8.5)	18(17.0)	33(31.1)	26(24.5)	2.66	1.43
Not very robust curriculum vitae	13(12.3)	21(19.8)	15(14.2)	33(31.1)	24(22.6)	2.68	1.35
Lack of volunteer roles	10(9.4)	24(22.6)	20(18.9)	27(25.5)	25(23.6)	2.69	1.31
Family background	13(12.3)	16(15.1)	18(17.0)	26(24.5)	33(31.1)	2.53	1.39
Lack of professional certificate	16(15.1)	17(16.0)	17(16.0)	32(30.2)	24(22.6)	2.71	1.38
Lack of work experience	18(17.0)	20(18.9)	12(11.3)	30(28.3)	26(24.5)	2.75	1.45
Not having 21st century workplace skills	20(18.9)	18(17.0)	13(12.3)	29(27.4)	26(24.5)	2.78	1.47
Inability to adapt to changing technologies	13(12.3)	21(19.8)	14(13.2)	32(30.2)	26(24.5)	2.65	1.37

Source: Field survey, 2023

Scholars have surmised that poor communication skills in English (McKinsey Global Institute, 2012), wrong work attitude (Hosain *et al.*, 2021), and unrealistic expectations (Tran *et al.*, 2022) are frequently cited by employers in turning down graduates for employment and mainly mismatched major of study with the students' interests.

Test of hypothesis

Socioeconomic characteristics and employability of the respondents

Table 5: Socio-economic characteristics and employability of the respondents

Variables	Chi-square (χ^2)	df	p-value	Decision
Sex	0.001	1	0.969	NS
College	5.011	2	0.082	NS
Marital status	0.663	2	0.718	NS
Religion	0.574	1	0.449	NS
Level of education of parent	1.518	4	0.823	NS
Career path	70.089	36	0.001	S

Source: Field survey, 2023

Socioeconomic characteristics and employability

Table 6 indicates the result for the test for relationship between socio-economic characteristics and employability of the respondents. There is a

Table 5 shows the relationship between socio-economic characteristics and employability of the respondents. Career path was significantly related with employability of final year students of FUNAAB. This implies that the kind of career path chosen by a final year student can influence their employability. This is possible given the fact that with the looming food crisis in the country, which predisposes many Nigerians to go back to the farm, as well as the renewed efforts of government at different levels to inspire youth into farming (Akpan, 2022), most of the agricultural graduates may be opportuned to become employable in agriculture.

significant relationship between Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and employability of respondents. This implies, according to Soon *et al.*, (2019) that the higher the CGPA of a student, the higher the chances of being employed.

Table 6: Test for relationship between socio-economic characteristics and employability of the respondents

Variables	Value	Sig. level	Decision
Age	-0.052	0.595	NS
CGPA	0.196*	0.044	S

Source: Field survey, 2023

Results on Table 7 shows the test for significant relationship between determinants of employability and employability of the respondents. The hypothesis was further tested using multiple regression analysis to determine the relative contribution of each of the indices of employability in the labour market on employability of respondents. From the analysis, the coefficient of determination (R square) equals 0.605 i.e., perceived employability indices determine majority (60.5%) of employability of a candidate leaving 39.5% unexplained. The results of the regression analysis show technical skills ($\beta=0.249$, $p \leq 0.01$), communication skills ($\beta=0.285$, $p \leq 0.01$), and other skills ($\beta=0.244$, $p \leq 0.05$) have significant relationship with the employability indices possessed by the respondents. This implies that technical skills, communication skills, and other skills strengthen

employability of respondents in the labour market. In other words, the more they develop technical skills, communication skills, and other skills which includes having professional certifications, the higher the probability of getting employment in the labour market. This implies that candidates who invest in a diverse range of skills are more competitive in the job market. Emphasizing the development of both technical and soft skills along with professional certifications amongst university student, therefore, will give students the value of multifaceted competence. Agboola (2021) and Lim (2023) asserted that employers are seeking candidates who can not only perform technical tasks but also communicate effectively and demonstrate a commitment to continuous professional development.

Table 7: Result of regression analysis of employability indices used in the labour market and employability of the respondents

Predictor	B coefficients	S. E	t-value	Sig	Remarks
Constant	36.864	5.06	7.285	0.000	
Academic Performance	0.070	0.797	0.712	0.478	NS
Technical Skills	0.249	0.813	2.55	0.012	S
Communication Skills	0.285	0.135	2.073	0.004	S
Personality	-0.094	0.141	3.466	0.302	NS
Teamwork and Problem-Solving Skills	0.054	0.929	-0.163	0.871	NS
Leadership and Motivation Skills	-0.019	0.807	0.554	0.581	NS
Other skills	0.244	0.414	2.166	0.033	S
R ²	0.605				

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Dependent variable: Employability skills of respondents

S= Significant

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study revealed that the future of work and employability of university graduates is largely dependent on the possession of employability skills such as communication, and technical and other skills including acquiring professional certificates. This study has shown that employability skills are highly essential for securing employment and succeeding in any workplace.

Universities should therefore endeavour to integrate teaching of employability skills such as communication, technical skills, and the pursuit of professional certifications into the curriculum. This can be achieved through mandatory courses, workshops, certification examinations and practical assignments that focus on these skills. They can also form partnership with industry professionals to design

programmes and courses that are aligned with the current market demands. Others like guest lectures, internships, and co-op programmes can provide students with real-world experience and enhance their employability.

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