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**STAFF-PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT TOWARDS TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS FOR UNIVERSITY GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA.**

**Ekpenyong E. Ekanem Ph.D**

Department of Educational Administration and Planning  
Faculty of Education, University of Calabar  
P.M.B 1115, Calabar, Nigeria.

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**ABSTRACT:** *University graduate employability rests on university personnel to enhance their employability skills and attitude in Technical and Vocational Education (TVE). University management in Nigeria seems to undermine the right university academic staff in skills and qualities that could contribute to graduate employability in global marketplace. Therefore, this study aimed at investigating staff-personnel management towards technical and vocational education and its implications for graduate employability in Cross River State, Nigeria. It was designed to provide a baseline information for policy-management on education in university knowledge production towards increased productive output. This descriptive survey design study has two hypotheses formulated to guide the study while the related literatures were reviewed. Sample size of 400 university academic staff was drawn from a population of 2,239 members of academic staff from the two universities studied using stratified random sampling technique. A researcher designed questionnaire was used to collect information from the respondents. Data was statistically analyzed using population t-test and independent t-test statistics. Results revealed that staff-personnel management towards TVE was not significantly low and also, not significantly dependent on ownership of the university. It was recommended among others that university management should establish a better work relations between TVE institutions and the labour market for positive inputs and better students' orientation to the world of work.*

**KEYWORDS:** Employability, staff-personnel, technical, vocational, university.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Emphasis on university graduate employability has become a major issue worldwide since it contributes to students being independent, reflective and responsible learners. The expectations of the output of education at this level are not only to be employed (to be at risk) but also to be employable (to be secured) with competitive advantage in the job market. Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) can empower students to be employable on graduation because it utilizes scientific knowledge in the acquisition of practical and applied skills in giving solutions to technical and vocational problems (Ekanem, 2014; Ocho, 2005 and Agbebi, 1984). In Ogunu (2010), effective staff-personnel management leads to the success of organizations. It provides functions to efficiently utilize university academic staff for the achievement of employability skills as foundation of students' career building blocks. Therefore, this study sets out to investigate staff-personnel management toward Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) and its implications for university graduate employability.

University education aimed at providing graduates with socially and economically valuable attributes and expertise. It becomes critical that an achievement-oriented university students engage themselves in educational processes and students experiences for a well-rounded education with ability to contribute to employability. Graduates employability is a secured state in which a graduate apply creativity and wide range of opportunities in workplace in order to acquire competitive advantage and justify his pay in the job market. According to Ezeh (2012), it is the capability of a graduate to develop job specific skills throughout his time in the university in order to bring marketability and expertise in global marketplace. This means that a graduate is capable of enhancing his career prospect with returns on investment vis-à-vis cost effectiveness in education (Ekanem & Uchendu 2012). The university personnel are made to provide maximum services with appropriate skills to stimulate growth for the development of the university outcome.

The fact remains that staff or workers make up the university and they work towards the achievement of goals and objectives of the university. Staff-personnel management becomes important in that it is made to effectively utilize human resources for the achievement of university objectives and development of the employees. In Ejiogu 2011, staff-personnel management are activities involved in acquiring, developing and maintaining a creative and productive effort in an organization. Meaningful educational value change can take place in individual human beings who are involved in the management of the educational system for sustainable growth (Ekanem, 2014). This means bringing together academic staff involved in TVE and ensuring that each of them makes contribution towards graduate employability vis-à-vis the world of work and income generating in livelihood. The staff-personnel management provides effective utilization of academic staff to achieve the goals of TVE satisfy and develop them for better productive output in the universities. The functions of staff-personnel management include staff recruitment, staff training, staff deployment, staff compensation, staff performance and organization structure. These variables may contribute to creative and productive effort in the university personnel TVE (Orisi, 2001 and Ogunu, 2010).

TVE is an education that prepares people for world of work, self reliance and creates dynamic economy through technical advancement. According to Olaitan (1993), TVE is a tool for training the youth and unemployed persons for jobs, help workers update or extend their job skills. It is a comprehensive term including those aspects of education process involving in additions to general education, the study of technology related sciences and acquisition of practical skills, attitude, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of the economic and social life. In Akinseinde (2006), very small proportion of TVE teachers are engaged in professional growth activities. This implies that quality TVE in Nigeria need current skills, knowledge and existing new information in the occupational fields that have immediate application in the classroom. Our universities have been bedeviled with staff-personnel management problems while the policies are not matched with TVE contemporary problems.

It becomes imperative to implement qualitative TVE in Nigerian universities since it entrenches desirable gains such as preparing individuals for skilled performance, change in attitude, improve human productivity in administrative positions, reverse unemployment and provide for qualified manpower. Despite these benefits, Ocho, (2005) posits that qualified personnel are not adequately managed to integrate teaching and learning that can bring creativity in TVE. This makes university education in Nigeria not to provide opportunities for the training of youths that can function effectively with skills in the society (Ezeh, 2012). The university system seems to lack the deliberate

attempt to acquire and develop suitable human capital needed in TVE which can provide graduate employability.

The significance of the study will be seen in its acting as an inspiration for universities to be committed to skilled-oriented education among other potential benefits of the research. The government, educational administrators, students and parents will equally find the study useful as universities are prime targets of efforts to provide skills and competencies for the labour market demands. The study is particularly important to scholars since the teaching staff-personnel management of universities is the heart to quality TVE towards graduate employability. The scope of the study is delimited to academic staff assessment of TVE in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria and the extent it can guarantee graduate employability. This investigation wishes to contribute to filling of the gap and hence, brings added knowledge to the literature.

### **Statement of the Problem**

University academic staff lacks knowledge and technical skills to solve the perennial problem of Technical and Vocational Education (TVE). This makes it difficult for universities in Nigeria to respond to the perceived needs of the society to produce employable graduates that can function in the world of work. Ideally, the right kind of human capital are needed in TVE in order to produce employable university graduates and channel the nation to on envisaged transformation. The observed basic issues are faulty decisions taken in the process of academic staff recruitment, training/development, compensation, performance appraisal and organizational structure. These result in a wide gap between the students' skills and that required by the labour market. The employed graduates find it difficult to respond to the perceived needs of the society such as creativity in workplaces, dedication to work globally and justification of their pay. This study is necessary to fill the gap by assessing the university staff-personnel management variables towards achieving the knowledge and skill in TVE in order to ensure university graduate employability. A perceived way out of this problem is for academic staff to deploy a non-traditional innovative role driven by well-defined policies which can relate university curriculum with the societal needs. The question remains; can university staff-personnel management guarantee skilled-oriented education and ensure university graduate employability? The study was designed to find the answer to this poser.

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. Staff-personnel management towards TVE is not significantly low.
2. Staff-personnel management towards TVE is not significantly dependent on ownership of universities

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a descriptive survey design because it involved the use of representative sample from a population, and the drawing of inference based on available data analysed. The study area was Cross River State of Nigeria. It covered two universities located therein, one owned by the federal government while the other owned by the state government. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 400 academic staff from two universities studied. The stratification was done on the basis of ownership of the universities. In each of the universities, 200 academic staff formed the respondents, giving a total sample size of 400 members of staff. The staff were used to assess staff-personnel management towards the university TVE and its implications for graduates employability.

The instruments used for the study was a 18-item questionnaire titled “Staff-personnel Management Towards Technical and Vocational Education Questionnaire (SMTTVEQ)”. The instrument was designed to find out relevant information in university staff-personnel management towards TVE for solving the problem of graduate employability. The scoring of the instrument was based on 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Strongly Disagree (2 points) and Disagree (1 point). The instrument was faced-validated by subjecting the items to the critical judgment of the experts, one in Educational Management and the other in Management and Evaluation. The reliability test was ascertained with test retest method using Spearman Rank correlation to give 0.74. This value indicated that the instrument was reliable for use in achieving the research objectives.

The administration of the instrument was done by the researcher and his trained research assistance. The percentage response was 100 percent. The data collected were analysed using statistical techniques of population t-test and independent t-test to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The information gathered from the sampled academic staff were used to assess the TVE for graduate employability using statistical techniques of population t-test (test of single mean) and independent t-test. The analysis was shown in table 1 and 2.

**TABLE 1:**

**Population t-test (test of single mean) analysis of staff-personnel management towards TVE.**

Variables	Expected Mean ( $\mu$ )	Observed Mean (X)	SD	t-value
Staff recruitment towards knowledge and skills in TVE.	10	9.21	2.26	15.551
Staff training /development towards knowledge and skills in TVE.	10	11.11		2.91
				6.561*
Staff deployment towards knowledge and skills in TVE	10	8.19	2.29	1.392
Staff compensation towards knowledge and skills in TVE	10	10.76	3.01	4.579*
Staff performance appraisal towards knowledge and skills in TVE.	10	9.18	2.38	1.387
Organizational structure towards knowledge and skills in TVE	10	9.22	2.28	1.561

$P > 0.05$ ;  $df = 399$ ; critical t-value = 1.968.

### Hypotheses One

Staff-personnel management towards TVE is not significantly low. The independent variable was the staff-personnel management while the dependable variable was knowledge and skills in TVE. Population t-test (test of single mean) statistical analysis was used to compare the expected mean with the observed mean. The results were presented in table 1.

Observation of the results presented in table 1 disclosed that staff-personnel management of universities towards TVE was not significantly low. It was with respect to staff recruitment towards knowledge and skills in TVE ( $t = 1.56$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ; staff deployment towards knowledge and skills in TVE ( $t = 1.39$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) staff performance appraisal towards knowledge and skills in TVE ( $t = 1.39$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ) and staff organizational structure towards knowledge and skills in TVE ( $t = 1.56$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). However, only two variables revealed that the staff-personnel management towards knowledge and skills in TVE was significantly low. They were in respect to staff training/development towards knowledge and skills in TVE ( $t = 6.56$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ); and staff compensation towards knowledge and skills in TVE ( $t = 4.58$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). On the overall staff-personnel management towards TVE was not significantly low. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted because the obtained t-values were found to be lower than the critical t-value of 1.968 at 0.05 alpha level of significance with 399 degrees of freedom. Moreover, statistical comparison of these observed mean values with the expected mean values of 10.00; using population t-test analysis for simple mean, negative t-values were obtained. With the findings, therefore, staff-personnel management towards TVE was not significantly low. By implication, staff-personnel management in Cross River State, Nigeria was high with TVE in knowledge and skills variables.

**TABLE 2:**

**Independent t-test analysis dependent of staff-personnel management towards TVE on ownership of universities.**

Variables	Federal-owned university		SD	State-owned university		t-value
Staff recruitment towards knowledge and skills in TVE	11.19		2.22	10.81	2.13	1.571
Staff training /development towards knowledge and skills in TVE	11.36		2.30	10.62	3.62	6.719*
Staff deployment towards knowledge and skills in TVE	12.01	5.59	10.67	3.43	1.562	
Staff compensation towards knowledge and skills in TVE	11.5		2.32	11.44	2.39	2.512*
Staff performance appraisal towards knowledge and skills in TVE	12.03		5.63	10.66	3.43	1.564
Organizational structure towards knowledge and skills in TVE	11.71		4.880	11.42	3.24	1.398

\* $P > 0.05$ ;  $df = 398$ ; critical t-value = 1.968.

### Hypotheses Two



Staff-personnel management towards TVE is not significantly dependable on ownership of universities.

The results of the independent t-test analysis shown in table 2 indicated that the staff-personnel management towards knowledge and skills in TVE was not significantly dependent on the ownership of universities. This was in respect of staff-personnel management towards knowledge and skills in TVE ( $t = 1.57, p > 0.05$ ); staff deployment towards knowledge and skills in TVE ( $t = 1.56, P > 0.05$ ); and staff organizational structure towards knowledge and skills in TVE ( $t = 1.40, p > 0.05$ ). The null hypothesis was therefore accepted given that obtained t-values were found to be less than the critical t-value of 1.968 at 0.05 alpha level of significance and 398 degrees of freedom.

However, the result also revealed that the staff-personnel management towards TVE was significantly dependent on the ownership of university with only two variables. These were in terms of staff training towards/development knowledge and skills in TVE ( $t = 6.72, p < 0.05$ ) and staff comparison towards knowledge and skills in TVE ( $t = 2.51, p < 0.05$ ) given the same critical t-value alpha level of significance and degree of freedom.

Furthermore, the result in table 2 also showed that federal-owned university has higher mean than the state-owned university counterpart in for the staff-personnel management towards TVE in most of the variables under consideration. The implication was that the federal university had a better staff-personnel management towards TVE than the state owned university.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of the study revealed that the staff-personnel management towards Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) was not significantly low. These findings mean that the staff-personnel management in the universities under consideration was high with TVE in knowledge and skills. As such, academics staff have high level of perception in teaching skills, task performance efficiency and provision of quality skill-oriented education in their universities. The recipients of the appropriate skills in TVE can in effect stimulate growth for development of the society in terms of improved standard of living for citizens. The universities produced full educational spectrum of values from imparting knowledge, understanding for the development of skills and economically valuable attributes.

The analysis of hypothesis one showed that the academic staff personnel management of the universities towards TVE was not significantly low on the whole. The findings were in respect to the staff recruitment towards knowledge and skills, staff deployment towards knowledge and skills, staff performance appraisal towards knowledge and skills and organizational structure towards knowledge and skills in TVE. The recruitment process employed qualities applicants for teaching job positions. The positional staff requirement was on the basis of personality held capabilities to perform the skilled-oriented assignment (functional competence) backed up with previous experience in productivity (Ogunu, 2010). The performance appraisal of the TVE staff were carried out to provide systematic judgments to support critical aspects of personal activities such as salary increase, promotions, transfers, demotions and termination of staff appointments (Arikewuyo, 2012). Also, the university policy development, executions, communications, and public relations were effectively carried out in terms of TVE in the universities studied.

The anomaly of these findings was explained in this study to the effect that staff training/development and staff compensation towards TVE were significantly low. The reasons for these findings bordered on poor reward, inadequate growth and development programmes for the university TVE personnel. The relevance of these results for graduate employability rested on the fact that there was no regular Mandatory Professional Development Programme (MPDP) for continuous growth and development of the TVE staff. The university personnel for TVE therefore, lack the latest or modern methods of teaching through conferences, workshops and in-service training. In most cases, the up-to-date knowledge and employability skills to perform skilled-oriented tasks in Nigeria became inadequate (Fagbanmiye and Durosar, 2009). In Ezech (2012), this made the outcome of university education not to be linked up to what was learnt in Nigerian universities with practical situation at workplace.

Moreso, the low significant results in staff compensation towards TVE could be attributed to poor wage and salary administration in the university for the TVE personnel. The university management has also failed to effectively evaluate the supplementary benefits (fringe benefits) to the TVE staff. It should be noted that university TVE is a specialized area of education, requiring special ability to train others in order to attain graduate employability. This was critical since adequate staff compensation would promote vital roles in technical and vocational society for achieving employability skills (Nwadiani, 1998).

The analysis of hypotheses two showed that the university TVE staff was not significantly dependent on the ownership of universities. In other words, federal-owned universities and state-owned universities in Cross River State, Nigeria; did not differ significantly in staff-personnel management with respect to knowledge and skills in TVE. This means that the owners of the universities were able to finance and control operations of the universities to justify knowledge production in TVE. The possible reason was the control of these universities one national body (National Universities Commission-NUC) for the purpose of quality assurance. However, the university management of the two types of universities were observed to lack quality institutional facilities, need for effective staff orientation (immediately after recruitment), and efficient conduct of wage and salary rates for employability skills in every modern functional university globally. Employability skills was viewed beyond qualification and experience of university graduates. It exhibited a mix of hard skills (to manage a job role) and soft skill (to include desirable personal characteristics and aptitude) of the employees for different employment sectors (Ekanem, 2014).

The comparison of the mean scores between the two universities in the staff-personnel management towards TVE revealed a significant difference. University of Calabar (federal-owned university) was found to be higher than that of its state-owned counterpart, Cross River University of technology. The university ownership was an intervening variable introduced to establish that federal-owned university embraced knowledge production towards productive output, more readily than its state-owned counterpart. This finding could be explained as in NUC (2006) with possible reason that federal university enjoyed better funding than the state universities. Federal university was viewed to develop and learn more in TVE personnel towards work practices and attitude to work, with assertiveness and effective negotiation skills.

In the other hand, the state university was better than the federal university with regard to applying staff-personnel appraisal as a basis for coaching and counseling individual staff by the superiors. A plausible explanation for this result was an improvement in the university personnel evaluation

process in TVE for performance ability and enhanced competitive advantage. Nevertheless, the nature of students experiences in the two universities influenced the chances of success though, might not guarantee graduate level job globally.

### **Educational policy implications for university graduate employability in Cross River State, Nigeria.**

1. University management should maintain the right calibre of TVE personnel for the effective production and delivery of TVE. This is because universities lack the quality and quantity of skilled-oriented personnel available to sustain the economic and social well-being of the institutions vis-à-vis training and development of staff.
2. The University TVE educators should be adequately monitored to improve desirable educational and training needs for university graduate employability. This can be achieved through effective performance appraisal in terms of systematic judgment for staff support and value change in attitude, knowledge and skills in TVE.
3. Government should formulate policy decisions that will adequately bring out jobs openings in specified and designated terms to effectively capture the university staff potentials. By so doing, TVE status, prestige and vital role performance can be achieved in technical and vocational society towards graduate employability.
4. University management should effectively co-ordinate the university TVE personnel and job location assignment for self-motivation and confidence of employees. This is necessary in view of the imbalance existing in the teacher supply in different parts of Nigeria which culminates to poor knowledge production and weak graduate employability.
5. University TVE educators should be engaged in Mandatory Professional Development Programmes (MPDP) in their various skill-oriented fields. This will enhance employability skills and knowledge of TVE staff towards the achievement of graduate employability.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study has been able to establish that the university teaching staff-personnel management towards TVE in Cross River State, Nigeria; was not significantly low. The staff-personnel management was not equally significantly dependent on the ownership of universities. However, the Federal university had a relatively better staff-personnel management towards TVE than its state-owned counterpart. The universities were the prime human capital development institutions for developing employability skills in students to be independent, reflective and responsible learners. University graduate employability considerations enhanced career prospects and total students' experiences in order to increase the benefits of creativity in workplace, widen the range of employment opportunities, marketability and expertise for better working environment. Therefore, university graduate employability in Cross River State, Nigeria was guaranteed by improved knowledge production in terms of TVE which might not influence graduate level job globally.

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