

Assessment of Employability Preparedness among ... Oguntunji, I. O., Et al. (2026)

Assessment of Employability Preparedness among Penultimate Health Education Undergraduate Students in Oyo Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study assessed employability preparedness among penultimate health education undergraduates (PHEUs) in Oyo Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. A descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised all 300 level health education students at Emmanuel Alayande University of Education (EAUED), Oyo totaling 93. A purposive sampling technique was used to select all 93 PHEUs and formed the sample size. A validated structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was done using test re-test method and Cronbach alpha yielded 0.84. The research questions were answered using mean score. The null hypotheses were tested using Chi-square at 0.05 alpha level. The finding of the study indicate that there was a significant difference in the distribution of responses on the level of competence in employability-related skills ($\chi^2 (36) = 286.67, p < 0.001$); on the level of knowledge of health-related job opportunities ($\chi^2 (1) = 226.86, p < 0.001$); and in the distribution of challenges affecting employability preparedness ($\chi^2 (3) = 302.01, p < 0.001$) among PHEUs in Oyo, Mretropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study concludes that the level of competency in employability-related skills among PHEUs is fair; they had a high level of knowledge of health-related job opportunities and some challenges affect their employability preparedness. It was recommended that training institution should focus on skill-based training among health education undergraduates. There is need to strengthen career guidance initiatives. Also, practical training should be strengthened with goal oriented supervised practicum exercise.

Keywords: Employability preparedness; Health Education; Preparedness; Undergraduates

Introduction

Students in higher institutions constitute a significant segment of the emerging workforce, and their preparation plays a crucial role in shaping national development outcomes. Higher institution is a viable place for the training and acquisition of necessary skills useful in the workplaces. Based on this study, employability preparedness implies essential skills, competences and knowledge acquired by graduates in readiness for the job opportunities in the global world. Skills refers to as special abilities acquired in higher institutions in readiness for the employment globally. Penultimate class in this study is referred to 300 level because health education as a course of study is a four-year programme in Nigerian universities. Therefore, penultimate health education undergraduates (PHEUs) become the centre of focus in this study as they are fast approaching their final year in the university. Despite educational qualification being a pre-requisite for job opportunity, in Nigeria today, it is not enough to qualify young graduates for desired jobs because most labour employers required would-be applicants to possess essential skills for efficient output in the workplace. According to Geel (2014), employability skills refers to a set of competences that enables graduates to effectively adapt to workforce demands and perform efficiently in professional environment. As submitted by the Institute of Progressive Policy and Development Studies (IPPDS) (2024), most organizations prioritize graduates who demonstrate adaptability, effective communication, problem-solving ability, ability, ICT ability, creative thinking, and a commitment to continuous professional development.



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It is believed that all graduates have been deemed to have met threshold standards specific to their disciplines, yet some graduates are more employable than others and succeed in their careers in complex and unpredictable environment (Bell et. al., 2018). Report of Cobb (2019) showed that final year students who have no work experience are considerably less likely to get employment after graduation. Whereas, students who had practical experience, such as practicum placement as parts of their undergraduate studies have increased probability of finding graduate level employment (Cobb, 2019). In Malaysia, among graduates who are unable to get jobs six months post graduation, the major reasons reported include lack of skills, knowledge and attitudes that employers are looking for (Rodney & Symeon, 2020). However, findings of Mohd et. al. (2019) showed that the level of employability skills of students is at high level in terms of teamwork and communication. Among the disposition and capabilities needed for health professionals to be successful sustainable in employment include positive personal qualities, self belief, metacognition, experience (Bell et. al., 2018), self-reflection (Hank et. al, 2018; Brewer et. al., 2014), conflict resolution skills (Brewer et. al., 2014). School of Public Health (2021) documented communication skill, teaching skill, analytical skill, analytical skill, programme planning skill, interpersonal skill and community engagement.

University as a place of preparation of undergraduates for labour market has roles to play especially in some practical-oriented courses such as health education and other allied health and medical professions. In health and medical training, specialty and residency training programmes along with clinical and outreach placements in university curricula were valued for enriching employability (Harolds et. al., 2014; Lawton, et. al., 2021). It is important for the paradigm shift in the training of health education undergraduates in the reality of current labour market especially in Nigeria. Classroom-based experience aimed towards preparing health education undergraduates for the teaching profession is limited in comparison with the job opportunities for graduate health educators in different health-related places. Apart from being a classroom teacher, graduate health educators work in different places such as health sectors, industries, sick-bays, and health-related non-governmental organizations to mention a few. According to Bruening et al. (2018), health educators are employed across a wide range of settings such as public health institutions, healthcare facilities, educational organizations, and community-based agencies. Many health educators work in hospital and clinics (School of Public Health (2021). A career in health education offers numerous opportunities to work, teach and guide individuals in various setting including non-profit healthcare, social work, governmental and private organizations (Muhammed & Bakidi, 2014). Given the wide range of career pathways available to health educators, it is important that training programmes prepare students for roles beyond classroom teaching. Uchendu (2015) asserted that the level of university students' skills acquisition for employability is significantly low and there was no significant difference between conventional university and specialized university in their skills acquisition for employability.

With the new trend of available job opportunities for graduate health educators, acquisition of necessary employability skills are germane. Graduate health educators can work as Health Education Officers in the Ministry of Health and primary health care facilities, employed as Medical Social Workers, Health Counselors, Health Data Officers/Monitoring and Evaluation Officers, Field Officers in some public health field projects, Disease Surveillance Officers and as Safety Officers in some agencies among others. Therefore, effective health education practicum is among the indices for employability skills acquisition among health education undergraduates in preparation towards employability readiness after graduation. In the acquisition of employability skills, lecturers have greater influence so likewise the available facilities in the institution of learning. The study of Chukwurah and Akpo (2019) revealed a significant influence of student-teacher relationship and provision of instructional facilities on employability skills acquisition among business education students. Also, the findings of Atah and Abeng (2019) showed a significant influence of classroom climate and instructional method on employability skills acquisition among business education students. Therefore, the knowledge, areas of specialization, exposure and orientation of lecturers are contributing factors to students' employability preparedness and acquisition of employability skills. As observed by the researchers, in many universities in Nigeria, high proportion of health education department/unit have no functional laboratories. Some universities have designated buildings for laboratory, but without staff and necessary or outdated equipment/materials except ill-equipped first aid box.

Statement of the Problem

Graduate employment in Nigeria has become a bottleneck. Vast number of graduates is jobless and many were under-employed, and changing careers at will due to blink future in their chosen career due to inadequate knowledge or information about their career prospects despite years spent at various universities. Many PHEUs express concern regarding



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job security and career prospects after graduation. Among graduate youths in Nigeria, transitioning from university to workplace remains a challenge to so many of them despite practicum experience exposure meant to equip them for employment. Practicum experiences provide opportunities for students to apply theoretical knowledge with real-world professional settings, thereby enhancing practical competence (Hejazi, 2018). Mohabati et. al. (2025) identified familiarizing graduates with work experience in their studies as an effective strategy for skill development and employment. However, it was observed by the researchers that exposure of PHEUs to practical experience is shallow, inconsistent and inadequate in many universities. Many health education courses were mainly classroom-based which may not afford undergraduates enough opportunity to real life exposure to practical aspects needed to compete in the labour market with contemporary graduates. In the locale of study, there is no existing work on similar study carried out among the PHEUs. Also, there is dearth of literature focusing on employability preparedness specifically among health education students. Therefore, the researchers assessed employability preparedness among PHEUs in Oyo metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess the employability preparedness among PHEUs in Oyo Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised and answered in this study:

1. What is the level of competence in employability-related skills among PHEUs in Oyo Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of knowledge of health-related job opportunities among PHEUs in Oyo Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges affecting employability preparedness among PHEUs in Oyo Metropolis Oyo State, Nigeria?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the distribution of responses on the level of competence in employability-related skills among PHEUs in Oyo Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the distribution of responses on the level of knowledge of health-related job opportunities among PHEUs in Oyo Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.
3. There is no significant difference in the distribution of challenges affecting employability preparedness among PHEUs in Oyo Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Research Methodology

A descriptive cross-sectional research design of the survey type was adopted. It was a purely institutional-based study. The population of the study comprised all PHEUs that is, 300 level health education students at Emmanuel Alayande University of Education (EAUED), Oyo totaling 93. In Oyo metropolis, there exist three universities namely EAUED (public), Ajayi Crowther University (private) and Atiba University (private). Among the three universities, only EAUED, Oyo is running health education as a course of study. The study was carried out during the first semester in 2025/2026 academic session. A purposive sampling technique was used to select all 93 PHEUs due to limited number and they formed the sample size for the study. The structured questionnaire for the collection of quantitative data was validated by three experts: one in Health Education, one in Educational Measurement and Evaluation, and one in Industrial Organizational Psychology. The reliability of the instrument was done using test re-test method. Its reliability was determined using Cronbach alpha and 0.84 was obtained. Permission to carry out the study was obtained from the class representatives. Consent of each respondent was sought and confidentiality of the information pledged. The instrument was administered online and only 90 PHEUs responded. The research questions were answered and presented using mean ranking and score. All the null hypotheses were tested using Chi-square at 0.05 alpha level.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of competence in employability-related skills among PHEUs in Oyo metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Score of Items on Level of Competence in Employability-related Skills among PHEUs

N= 90

| S/n | Items | \bar{x} | Decision | Remarks |
|-----|-------|-----------|----------|---------|
|-----|-------|-----------|----------|---------|



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| | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|------|-----------|------------------|
| 1 | ICT Application | 2.63 | Competent | Fairly Competent |
| 2 | Team work Approach | 3.21 | Competent | Fairly Competent |
| 3 | Oral Communication | 3.12 | Competent | Fairly Competent |
| 4 | Problem-solving | 3.16 | Competent | Fairly Competent |
| 5 | Analytical skill | 3.18 | Competent | Fairly Competent |
| 6 | Multi-tasking Ability | 2.92 | Competent | Fairly Competent |
| 7 | Creativity | 2.97 | Competent | Fairly Competent |
| 8 | Leadership Ability | 3.10 | Competent | Fairly Competent |
| 9 | Relational Skill | 3.37 | Competent | Very Competent |
| 10 | Self Confidence | 3.38 | Competent | Very Competent |
| 11 | Listening Skill | 3.41 | Competent | Very Competent |
| 12 | Interpersonal Skill | 3.28 | Competent | Very Competent |
| 13 | Self Motivation | 3.26 | Competent | Very Competent |

Criterion $\bar{x} = 2.50$

Mean score interpretation: 3.25-4.00 (Very competent); 2.50-3.24: (Fairly competent); 1.75-2.49: Slightly competent; and 1.00-1.74 (Not competent).

The results in the table 1 revealed that the mean scores of all items were above the criterion mean of 2.20. This indicates that PHEUs were competent in the assessed employability-related skills. Specifically, items 9-13 that is, relational skill, self confidence, listening skill, interpersonal skill and self motivation were rated very competent; while items 1-8 were rated fairly competent.

Research Question 2: What is the level of knowledge of health-related job opportunities among PHEUs in Oyo metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Score on Level of Knowledge among PHEUs on Health-Related Job Opportunities

N= 90

| S/n | Items | \bar{x} | Decision | Remarks |
|-----|---|-----------|-------------------------|--|
| 1 | Work as Health Education Officers | 0.87 | High level of knowledge | Good knowledge of health-related job opportunities |
| 2 | Work as Medical Social Worker | 0.84 | High level of knowledge | Good knowledge of health-related job opportunities |
| 3 | Work in Health-related NGOs | 0.83 | High level of knowledge | Good knowledge of health-related job opportunities |
| 4 | Work in Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) | 0.86 | High level of knowledge | Good knowledge of health-related job opportunities |
| 5 | Work in Federal Road Safety Corp (FRSC) | 0.72 | High level of knowledge | Relatively lower knowledge of health-related job opportunities |
| 6 | Work in National Agency for Food & Drug Administration & Control (NAFDAC) | 0.82 | High level of knowledge | Good knowledge of health-related job opportunities |

Criterion $\bar{x} = 0.50$

The findings in the table 2 revealed that all items recorded mean score ranging from 0.72-0.87, which are above the criterion mean of 0.50. This implies that PHEUs demonstrated a high level of knowledge of health-related job opportunities all through except in item 5 with a comparatively lower mean, indicating slightly reduced knowledge in the area of working in FRSC.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges affecting employability preparedness among PHEUs in Oyo metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean Score on Challenges Affecting Employability Preparedness among PHEUs

N= 90

| S/n | Items | \bar{x} | Decision | Remarks |
|-----|---|-----------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | There is inadequate time allocation for practicum exercise. | 2.96 | Agreed | High level challenge |



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|---|--|------|--------|----------------------|
| 2 | Most health education courses taught were classroom-based. | 2.80 | Agreed | High level challenge |
| 3 | There is limited industrial/practical exposure. | 3.14 | Agreed | High level challenge |
| 4 | There is low exposure in different areas of health education during the practicum exercise. | 3.09 | Agreed | High level challenge |
| 5 | There are no enough skills acquired during practicum exercise. | 2.98 | Agreed | High level challenge |
| 6 | Lack of workshops, seminars on career readiness/guidance organized by either university or department. | 3.24 | Agreed | High level challenge |
| 7 | There is no health laboratory for any practical work. | 3.22 | Agreed | High level challenge |

Criterion $\bar{x} = 2.50$

The analysis in the table 3 indicates that all the identified items recorded mean scores ranging from 2.80 to 3.24 are above the criterion mean of 2.5. This indicates that PHEUs agreed that those identified factors constitute significant challenges to employability preparedness. The grand mean of 3.06 further confirm that challenges affecting employability preparedness among PHEUs in Oyo metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria are highly significant.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the distribution of responses on the level of competence in employability-related skills among PHEUs in Oyo metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 4: Chi-Square Analysis Showing Difference in the Distribution of Responses on the Level of Competence in Employability-related Skills among PHEUs

| S/n | Items | VC | FC | SC | NC | Cal χ^2 | Df | Crit. cal. | Remarks |
|-----|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|--------------|----|------------|---------|
| 1 | ICT Application | 19 | 35 | 20 | 16 | | | | |
| 2 | Team work Approach | 48 | 21 | 13 | 8 | | | | |
| 3 | Oral Communication | 41 | 26 | 16 | 7 | | | | |
| 4 | Problem-solving | 40 | 30 | 15 | 5 | | | | |
| 5 | Analytical skill | 41 | 32 | 10 | 7 | | | | |
| 6 | Multi-tasking Ability | 30 | 34 | 15 | 11 | 289.67 | 36 | 50.99 | Ho Rej |
| 7 | Creativity | 29 | 35 | 20 | 6 | | | | |
| 8 | Leadership Ability | 39 | 29 | 14 | 8 | | | | |
| 9 | Relational Skill | 51 | 25 | 11 | 3 | | | | |
| 10 | Self Confidence | 49 | 25 | 9 | 7 | | | | |
| 11 | Listening Skill | 58 | 15 | 13 | 4 | | | | |
| 12 | Interpersonal Skill | 44 | 28 | 18 | 0 | | | | |
| 13 | Self-Motivation | 45 | 24 | 21 | 0 | | | | |

Key: VC- Very Competent; FC- Fairly Competent; SC- Slightly Competent; NC- Not Competent

The calculated Chi-square value (286.67) is greater than the critical value (50.99) at 0.05 alpha level with degree of freedom 36. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the distribution of responses on the level of competence in employability-related skills among PHEUs in Oyo metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the distribution of responses on the level of knowledge of health-related job opportunities among PHEUs in Oyo metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 5: Chi-Square Analysis Showing Difference in the Distribution of Responses on the Level of Knowledge of Health-Related Job Opportunities among PHEUs

| Category | O | E | (O-E) ² /E |
|----------|-----|-----|-----------------------|
| Yes | 445 | 270 | 113.43 |
| No | 95 | 270 | 113.43 |
| Total | 540 | 270 | $\chi^2 = 226.86$ |

Cal. $\chi^2 = 226.86$; Crt. val. =3.841; df = 1; P- value < 0.001

Since the calculated χ^2 value (226.86) is greater than the critical value (3.841) with degree of freedom 1, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it implies that there is a significant difference in the distribution of responses on the level of



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knowledge of health-related job opportunities among PHEUs in Oyo metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. The interpretation is that most of the PHEUs possessed higher level of knowledge on health-related job opportunities.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the distribution of challenges affecting employability preparedness among PHEUs in Oyo metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 6: Chi-Square Analysis Showing Difference in the Distribution of Challenges affecting Employability Preparedness among PHEUs metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria

| Category | O | E | (O-E) ² /E |
|----------|-----|-------|-----------------------|
| SA | 218 | 157.5 | 23.24 |
| A | 306 | 157.5 | 140.05 |
| D | 51 | 157.5 | 66.71 |
| SD | 55 | 157.5 | 72.01 |

Cal. $\chi^2 = 302.01$; Crt. val. = 7.815; df = 3; P- value < 0.001

In the table 6, the χ^2 analysis showed that there is statistically significant difference in the distribution of responses (χ^2 cal = 302.01, df = 3, P < 0.05). Since the calculated χ^2 value is (302.01) is greater than the critical value (7.815), the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there are significant challenges affecting employability preparedness among PHEUs in Oyo metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The result in the table I showed that PHEUs in Oyo metropolis were very competent in listening skill, self confidence, relational skill, and self motivation. There were fairly competent in ICT application, multi-tasking, creativity, leadership ability, oral communication, problem solving, analytical skill and teamwork approach with the mean ranking of 2.63, 2.92, 2.97, 3.10, 3.12, 3.16, 3.18 and 3.26 respectively. It was further revealed in the table 4 that was a significant difference in the distribution of responses on the level of competence in employability-related skills among PHEUs. The findings above negate the assertion of Mohd et. al. (2019) that the level of employability skills of students are at high level in the aspect of teamwork and communication. The result further corroborates the submission of Uchendu (2015) that the level of university students' skill acquisition for employability was significantly low. The analysis in the table 2 revealed that PHEUs had a higher level of knowledge that they can work as health education officers, work in NCDC, work as medical social workers, work in health-related NGOs, work in NAFDAC and RFSC with the mean values 0.87, 0.86, 0.84, 0.83, 0.82 and 0.72 respectively. This was supported by the result in the table 5 which revealed that the distribution of responses is not equal as a significantly higher proportion of PHEUs had knowledge about health-related job opportunities. This finding is in line with the submission of Bruening et. al. (2018) that health educators were aware that they can work in government public health agencies, healthcare organizations and community organizations to mention a few. Many PHEUs in the study claimed that they have been exposed to career opportunities for health educators during the health practicum orientation. The analysis in the table 3 showed that PHEUs agreed that lack of exposure to workshops/seminars on career issue ($\bar{x} = 3.24$), no health laboratory ($\bar{x} = 3.22$), limited industrial/practical exposure ($\bar{x} = 3.14$), low exposure to different areas of health education during the practicum exercise ($\bar{x} = 3.09$), no enough skill acquisition during practicum exercise ($\bar{x} = 2.98$), inadequate time allocation for practicum ($\bar{x} = 2.96$), teaching most health education courses in the classroom ($\bar{x} = 2.80$) were identified challenges affecting their employability preparedness. This finding is supported by the by the result obtained in the table 6 which revealed that there were significant challenges affecting employability preparedness among PHEUs. The findings are in line with the report of the study of Chukwurah and Akpo (2019) that there was a significant influence of student-teacher relationship and provision of instructional facilities on employability skills acquisition among business education students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that:

1. PHEUs demonstrated a moderate level of competency in employability-related skills.
2. The majority of PHEUs had a high level of knowledge of health-related job opportunities.
3. PHEUs agreed that several challenges affect their employability preparedness.



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Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, it is recommended that:

1. The training institution should focus more on skill-based training among health education undergraduates.
2. There is need to strengthen career guidance initiative among health education undergraduates.
3. The department training health education undergraduates should strengthen practical trainings and provide goal oriented supervised practicum exercise.

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