

# Skill-Oriented Education And Career Competence Among Postgraduate Students In University Of Lagos, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** University education is a fundamental tool used for empowering the citizens with high-level technical skills and abilities that can be used for national development. Skilled-oriented education is fundamental to the attainment of educational goals and objectives. For these set of skills, knowledge and capabilities acquired at the university level will enhance the employability status and career competence of individuals. The study examined skill-oriented education and career competence among postgraduate students in University of Lagos, Nigeria. The study raised two research questions and hypotheses. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study focused on postgraduate students in University of Lagos, and the total population of the study was 7,417 as at 2017/2018 academic session. Using multi-stage sampling technique, the researchers selected 810 postgraduate students for the study. The research instrument used to collect data for the study was a self-developed questionnaire. The research instrument was validated by two professors in the department of Educational Management. The researchers administered 810 copies of the questionnaire and 800 copies (representing 98.8% return rate) were in usable state. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (specifically: mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (specifically: Pearson Product Moment Correlation). Findings from the study showed that: personal management skill, information technology skill are related to career competence. The study recommends that the National Universities Commission should ensure that the universities in Nigeria should fully implement practical oriented curriculum at all programmes.

**Keywords:** skill-oriented education, career competence, personal management, information technology skill

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a veritable instrument for the development of individuals' knowledge, mind, skills, capabilities and character for sustainability of national development. It is also a potent tool that can be used to effectively and efficiently empower an individual socially, morally, economically,

technologically, physically, mentally and emotionally in order for such an individual to be useful to self, as well as the nation at large. Education has shown that it's the foundation of all sector development in the country. This means that, education plays significant roles in the development of

humans for all sectors of the economy. Therefore, there is no nation that attains her desired national development sustainability without the university education.

University education is saddled with responsibilities of human training and development. Adebakin, Ajadi & Subair (2015) opined that university education is the main instrument to prepare individuals for a rapidly-changing, increasingly-demanding world of work and to improve their employability. This is a type of formal training and development for students that have successfully completed their secondary education. These students are expected to be a minimum of sixteen years old and are expected to spend a minimum of four years in the university education. University education is a fundamental tool used for empowering the citizens with high-level technical skills and abilities that can be used for national development. This level of education diversifies its programme in order to develop the necessary manpower for the nation. These programmes in the universities are expected to reflect the manpower requirements and knowledge production of the nation. In the attainment of university of education, there is the need to ensure that the diversified programmes are centred on skilled-oriented education.

Skilled-oriented education is fundamental to the career competence of individuals, as well as, attainment of educational goals and objectives. These set of skills, knowledge and capabilities acquired at the university level will enhance the employability status and career competence of individuals. Skilled-oriented education is the study of

abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to effectively handle the demands and challenges of everyday life (Borah, 2016). Maclean and Wilson's (as cited in Junejo, Sarwar & Ahmed, 2017) posited that skilled-oriented education is the study on the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupants in various sectors of economic and social life. Skilled-oriented education is the process of emphasizing on the application of relevant knowledge and attitudes required for employment competence in a particular occupation or cluster of related occupations in any field of social and economic activities (Fien, Rupert & Man-Gon, 2009). Skilled-oriented education involves the development of individuals' work-related knowledge, attitudes, understanding and character in order for such persons to effectively and efficiently attain career competence. This means, skilled-oriented education is the development of sets of abilities, capabilities, knowledge and personal attributes that can make an individual to be successful in the chosen career to the benefit workforce, community and nation's economy. Chang's diary (as cited in Adebakin, Ajadi & Subair, 2015) reported that an individual's skilled orientation depends on the ability to secure and retain employment, ability to improve productivity and income-earning prospect of such individuals.

Skill-based education consist of a set of transferable skills and behaviours that are necessary for everyone to be employable and these skills are: communication, team-working, problem-solving skills, initiative and enterprise skill (being self-motivated),

planning and organizing, self-management skills, learning skills/ability to learn and adapt and technology (ICT) (Famiwole, Oke & Amadi, 2012). Ritika (2016) posited that the following type of skills should be include in the curriculum: analysing skills, decision making skills, adaptability skills, negotiating skills, organising and planning skills, persuading skills, leadership skills and initiative skills. The mapping of skilled attributes shows that, in the main, most universities tend to focus on seven clusters of attributes, including: written and oral communication, critical and analytical (and sometimes creative and reflective) thinking, problem-solving (including generating ideas and innovative solutions), information literacy, often associated with technology, learning and working independently, learning and working collaboratively, and ethical and inclusive engagement with communities, cultures and nations (Oliver, 2011).

In recent time, there has been increasing national concern in Nigeria, over the continuously rejection of university graduates by employers of labour. There has been disturbing statement that university graduates do not possess the relevant and necessary skills that will be needed for career competence. In Nigeria, there seems to be very low implementation of skilled-oriented education that will make university graduates to be competent in their chosen careers. It could be that these individuals in the university are either weak or uninterested to develop their skills or the curriculum implemented at the university lacks the requisite skilled-oriented programmes. Individuals without the right

skills and abilities for the world of work may have challenges handling the demands of career competence. The research of Adebakin (2014); Adams (2006) stated that many of the university graduates are poorly prepared for employment competence and there is a huge mismatch in the training of undergraduates and societal labour needs. Akanmu (2011) also supported that, many graduates who fulfilled employment requirements in spite of everything; their employers raised serious concerns about their skills and fit for the job. Pitan and Adediji (2012) also reported that an overall mismatch skills of 60.6% among employed university graduates, have critical deficiencies in communication, information technology, decision-making, critical thinking, interpersonal relationship, entrepreneurial, technical and numeracy skills.

An employee may not have flourish career competence if he or she does not acquire the relevant indicators of personal management skill such as: self-esteem, self-motivation, goal setting, work responsibility, work adaptability and ability to learning continuously at work. An employee may also encounter some challenges on career competence if he or she does not know how to organize tasks on short, medium and long time management. Hence, this study focused on skill-oriented education and career competence among postgraduate students in University of Lagos, Nigeria.

The quality of skilled-oriented education is the capability of university graduates to satisfy recruitment and selection process, as well as, acquire the ability to perform and

deliver on the job with little or no problems to employers. But, it is unfortunate that in Nigeria many university graduates roam about the streets unduly without commiserate job to show. It is not that there is no job but these graduates lack the relevant and necessary skills needed for career competence. It seems that many of the university graduates in Nigeria are mismatch to the labour market requirements of career competence. It also seems that many of these university graduates do not acquire the required and relevant skills needed to manage one's self, as well as, conform to the daily routine and demands of work.

There has been national outcry by employers of labour that many university graduates are known to be 'paper tigers' and half baked. For many of these graduates are unfit for career competence, for they lack general industrial skills needed for the world of work. This seems that the implementation of university curriculum does not suit the conditions, abilities, needs and capabilities of university graduates.

In the light of this observed problem, the researchers examined how skilled-oriented education (personal management skill and information technology skills) relate to career competence among postgraduate students in University of Lagos, Nigeria.

## 2. RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research questions were postulated to guide the study:

1. In what way does personal management skill relate career

competence among postgraduate students in University of Lagos, Nigeria?

2. What is the relationship between information technology skill and career competence among postgraduate students in University of Lagos, Nigeria?

## 3. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between personal management skill and career competence.
2. Information technology skill and career competence are not significantly related.

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Co-relational survey research design was used to generate, analyse and interpret existing relationship between skilled-oriented education and career competence among postgraduate students in University of Lagos, Nigeria. The total population for the study was 9,070 postgraduate students (as at 2017/2018 academic session) in University of Lagos. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 810 postgraduate students for the study. The research instrument used to collect data for the study was self-developed questionnaire. The research instrument was validated by two Professors in the department of Educational Management. The researchers administered 810 copies of the questionnaire and 800 copies (representing 98.8% return rate) were in usable state. The data collected

were analyzed using descriptive statistics (specifically: mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (specifically: Pearson Product Moment Correlation).

## 5. RESULT

**5.1. Research Question One:** In what way does personal management skill relate career competence among postgraduate students in University of Lagos, Nigeria? Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation scores of participants' responses on personal management skill. The mean values of the statements raised were above the acceptable mean score (2.50), which means the

participants agreed to all the statements raised for personal management skill.

**5.2. Research Question Two:** What is the relationship between information technology skill and career competence among postgraduate students in University of Lagos, Nigeria? Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation scores of participants' responses on time management skill. The mean values of the statements raised were above the acceptable mean score (2.50), which means the participants agreed to all the statements raised for time management skills.

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of participants' responses on Personal Management Skill and career competence among postgraduate students**

S/No	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Teaching university students on necessary professional attitude indicators needed at the world of work.	2.86	0.28	Agreed
2	Teaching university students the required work responsibilities will enhance their career competence.	3.00	0.26	Agreed
3	Work adaptability training for university students will enhance their career competence.	2.92	0.51	Agreed
4	Training the university students on the emphasis of periodic professional development will promote their career competence.	2.77	0.29	Agreed
5	Career competence of university students will be enhanced if they are trained on self-motivation indicators.	3.01	0.51	Agreed
6	Training university students on temper control strategies will enhance their professional competence.	2.75	0.54	Agreed
7	Emphasising on professional integrity to university students will help them to flourish in their chosen career.	3.05	0.26	Agreed

**Mean Mid point is 2.5**

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of participants' responses on information technology skill and career competence among postgraduate students**

S/No	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Teaching university students on basic computer skills will enable them to integrate properly into the world of work.	3.00	0.52	Agreed
2	Career competence of university graduate will be enhanced if they are taught how to manage relevant office records online.	2.88	0.33	Agreed
3	Professional work completion of university graduates will be enhanced when they learnt about online communication.	3.06	0.52	Agreed
4	My participation in classroom discussions on information technology will enhance my future competence at work.	3.22	0.43	Agreed
5	Using video conferencing to participate in a group project will help career integration after university education.	3.13	0.54	Agreed
6	Teaching students on desktop publishing skills will help their future career competence.	3.33	0.41	Agreed
7	Students' knowledge on advanced search techniques on how to locate information in a database will prepare them for the world of work.	3.21	0.50	Agreed

**Mean Mid point is 2.5**

### 5.3. Test of Research Hypothesis

**5.3.1. Research Hypothesis One:** There is no significant relationship between personal management skill and career competence. Evidence from Table 3 shows that the calculated r-value (0.112) is greater than the critical r-value (0.09) given 798 degree of freedom at 0.05 significant level. The null

hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between personal management skill and career competence is rejected; while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means, personal management skill is significantly related to career competence among postgraduate students in University of Lagos.

**Table 3: Relationship between personal management skill and career competence**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	r-cal	r-critical	Decision
Personal management skill	800	13.52	2.38	798	0.112	0.09	H <sub>0</sub> : Rejected
Career competence		30.65	2.70				

**5.3.2. Research Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant relationship between information technology skill and career competence. Evidence from Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value (0.131) is greater than the critical t-value (0.09) given 798 degree of freedom at 0.05 significant level.

The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between information technology skill and career competence is rejected; while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means, information technology skill is significantly related to career competence among



postgraduate students in University of Lagos.

**Table 5: Relationship between information technology skill and career competence**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	r-cal	r-critical	Decision
Information Technology Skill	800	17.73	2.24	798	0.131	0.09	H <sub>0</sub> : Rejected
Career competence		30.65	2.70				

## 6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The research hypothesis one shows that there is a significant relationship between personal management skill and career competence is rejected; while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means, personal management skill is significantly related to career competence among postgraduate students in University of Lagos. The findings of the study show that mean values of the statements raised were above the acceptable mean score (2.50), which means the participants agreed to all the statements raised for personal management skill. Majority of the participants agreed on the following statement: teaching university students on necessary professional attitude indicators needed at the world of work, teaching university students the required work responsibilities will enhance their career competence, work adaptability training for university students will enhance their career competence, training the university students on the emphasis of periodic professional development will promote their career competence, career competence of university students will be enhanced if they are trained on self-motivation indicators, training university students on temper control strategies will enhance their professional competence, and emphasising on professional integrity to

university students will help them to flourish in their chosen career. The findings of the study corroborate with study of Drucker (2011); McNamara (2010) which generally showed that personal management elements are essential to employees at workplace, for these elements will enhance their professional competence.

The research hypothesis two shows that there is a significant relationship between information technology skill and career competence is rejected; while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means, information technology skill is significantly related to career competence among postgraduate students in University of Lagos. The findings of the study show that mean values of the statements raised were above the acceptable mean score (2.50), which means the participants agreed to all the statements raised for time management skill. Majority of the participants agreed on the following statement: teaching university students on basic computer skills will enable them to integrate properly into the world of work; career competence of university graduate will be enhanced if they are taught how to manage relevant office records online, professional work completion of university graduates will be enhanced when they learnt about online communication and my participation in classroom discussions on information technology will enhance my

future competence at work among others. The results of the study are in line with the studies: Adebakin et al (2015); Oliver (2011); Ritika (2016) which revealed that effective time management will enable university graduates to know how to assign time slots to professional activities as per their level of importance. This will enhance graduates professional critical thinking and competence.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The research findings show that skill-oriented education relate to career competence among postgraduate students in University of Lagos, Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, the independent variable elements (such as personal management skill and information technology skill) are significantly related to career competence. Skilled-oriented education is necessary for the survival and adaptation of university graduates in Nigeria. It is the pivotal to career success of any individual. The reorganization of university education system will equip graduates with necessary and relevant skills needed for professional creative thinking, critical thinking and decision making.

## 8. RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends that:

1. Universities should periodically conduct surveys on professional skills requirement in order to identify real skills needed for the world of work.
2. Every programmes in the university should be laced with necessary

skilled-oriented elements that are imperative to professional success.

3. The National Universities Commission should ensure that the universities in Nigeria should fully implement practical oriented curriculum at all programmes.

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