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Enhancing Graduate Job Stability through Employability Skills: A Study of Selected Universities in South-West, Nigeria

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Abstract

Job stability is essential for graduates as it affects their financial security, career advancement, and overall well-being. Despite various initiatives, such as improved career services, internship programs, and collaborations between universities and industries aimed at enhancing job stability, the results have not always been favorable. This is reflected in a significant decline in job stability among graduates, highlighting the need to explore the connection between employability skills and job stability. This study investigated the influence of employability skills on employee income levels in selected universities in South-West Nigeria. The research adopted a survey design, focusing on a population of 64,171 graduates from six universities in South-West Nigeria. A sample size of 497 was determined using the Research Advisor's sample size table, with participants selected through simple random sampling. Data collection involved a structured and validated questionnaire, which yielded Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the constructs between 0.73 and 0.84. The study recorded a response rate of 93.2%. Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics, including multiple linear and hierarchical regression, at a 5% significance level. The study found that employability skills have significant effect on job stability ($\text{Adj.}R^2 = 0.173$, $F(5, 462) = 20.341$, $p = 0.001$) in selected universities in South-West Nigeria. The study concluded that employability skills influenced job stability in selected universities in South-West Nigeria. Therefore, it is recommended that to enhance job stability for graduates, universities in South-West Nigeria prioritize the integration of employability skills into their academic programs through practical training modules, such as internships, industry-led workshops, and simulation-based learning. Additionally, regular curriculum reviews informed by labor market trends and employer feedback should be institutionalized to keep training relevant.

Keywords: Adaptability skills, Communication skills, Employability skills, Job stability, Problem-solving skills

Wordcount: 274

Introduction

Job stability for graduates is crucial as it impacts their financial security, career growth, and overall well-being. While various initiatives, such as enhanced career services, internship programs, and partnerships between universities and industries, have been implemented to bolster job stability, these efforts have not consistently yielded positive outcomes. This is evidenced by a noticeable decline in job stability among graduates, prompting a need to investigate the relationship between employability skills and job stability. In

particular, examining this effect in selected universities in South-West Nigeria is essential to identify gaps in skill development and to inform policy changes that can better prepare graduates for the labor market.

Globally, job stability for graduates has become a pressing concern as economic volatility, technological advancements, and shifting labor market demands challenge traditional employment patterns. The International Labour Organization (2021) estimates that 25% of young graduates faced job insecurity in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with many

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transitioning to temporary or gig-based roles. Automation and digital transformation have further disrupted job stability, particularly for non-STEM graduates, as employers prioritize skills like data analysis and AI proficiency (UNESCO, 2023). Efforts to enhance stability through employability programs and vocational training show mixed results, with only 30% of graduates in developing economies securing permanent contracts within a year of graduation (Schmillen & Umkehrer, 2022). Persistent global inequalities, such as access to quality education and professional networks, exacerbate these challenges, leaving many graduates vulnerable to underemployment and precarious work (Mok & Marginson, 2021).

In the United States of America, job stability for graduates varies significantly by field of study and institutional background, with economic and technological shifts creating uneven outcomes. Approximately 20% of recent graduates in 2022 reported working in temporary or part-time roles, particularly in humanities and social sciences (Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2024). Initiatives like career counseling and STEM-focused training aim to improve job retention, but automation has reduced demand for routine administrative roles, impacting stability for non-technical graduates (Autor & Dube, 2023). Racial and socioeconomic disparities further complicate outcomes, with Black and Hispanic graduates facing higher unemployment rates (12% compared to 8% for White graduates) within six months of graduation (Carnevale et al., 2022). The rising prevalence of gig work, coupled with stagnant wage growth, underscores the need for educational reforms to align skills with stable, high-demand careers (Baum, 2021).

In Europe, particularly the United Kingdom, graduate job stability is influenced by regional economic disparities and post-Brexit labor market changes. Data from 2022 indicates that 15% of UK graduates were employed in non-permanent roles one year after graduation, with arts and humanities graduates most affected (Office for National Statistics, 2022). Government-backed programs, such as degree apprenticeships, aim to improve job retention by combining academic and practical training, yet only 40% of participants secure permanent roles immediately (Hewitt, 2021). The rise of zero-hour contracts and inflationary pressures have further eroded stability, particularly for graduates in lower-wage sectors (McGowan & Andrews, 2024). European initiatives promoting cross-border mobility and digital skills training show promise, but access remains limited for disadvantaged groups, perpetuating instability (European Commission, 2023).

Rapid expansion of higher education has not guaranteed job stability for graduates in India, as an oversupply of degree-holders competes for limited formal-sector jobs. A 2023 survey revealed that 30% of Indian graduates were either unemployed or in temporary roles six months post-graduation, with engineering and management fields particularly affected (Nasscom, 2023). Government initiatives like the National Skill Development Mission aim to enhance employability through technical training, but only 25% of trainees secure

stable jobs due to skills mismatches (Kumar & Gupta, 2021). Economic slowdowns and a reliance on informal employment further destabilize graduate careers, especially in rural areas (World Bank, 2024). Employer preferences for experience over academic qualifications exacerbate the issue, leaving many graduates in precarious, low-paying roles (Sharma & Rao, 2022).

In Nigeria, job stability for graduates is severely constrained by high unemployment, economic volatility, and a disconnect between education and labor market needs. The National Bureau of Statistics (2022) reports that 35% of Nigerian graduates were unemployed in 2021, with many others in informal or temporary jobs. Efforts to improve stability through entrepreneurship training and curriculum reforms have been implemented, but only 20% of graduates from South-West universities secure permanent roles within a year (Akanmu & Adebayo, 2021). Systemic issues, including limited industrial growth and organized crime disrupting economic opportunities, further undermine job security (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2024). Studies emphasize that employability skills like digital literacy are critical for stable employment, yet their integration into university programs remains inadequate, perpetuating instability (Oluwatobi et al., 2023).

Employability skills are essential for enhancing job stability among graduates in Nigeria, as they equip individuals with the competencies needed to secure and retain permanent employment in a competitive and unstable labor market. These skills enable graduates to adapt to workplace demands, navigate economic challenges, and demonstrate value to employers, significantly reducing the likelihood of unemployment or precarious work, with studies showing that graduates with strong employability skills are 40% more likely to secure stable jobs within a year (Oluwatobi et al., 2023). However, Nigerian universities have not given adequate attention to these skills, often emphasizing theoretical knowledge over practical training, which contributes to a skills mismatch and high graduate unemployment rates, reported at 35% in 2021 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Initiatives like entrepreneurship programs and industry partnerships exist, but their limited scope and inconsistent implementation fail to address the scale of the problem, particularly in South-West Nigeria (Akanmu & Adebayo, 2021). This oversight, compounded by inadequate funding and outdated curricula, leaves many graduates vulnerable to job instability, necessitating urgent reforms to prioritize employability skills development (Adeyemi & Salami, 2024; World Bank, 2025).

Numerous studies have investigated the connection between employability skills and job stability among graduates in Nigeria (Aman et al., 2022; Asiedu et al., 2024; Correa & Chand, 2020; González-Cespón et al., 2024; Mvunabandi et al., 2023; Pabilando & Sabonsolin, 2023; Parrella et al., 2024). However, the specific effects of inadequate employability skills on job stability within the Nigerian labor market remain underexplored, this has led to a significant research gap that warrants further investigation (Shiyanbade

et al., 2023). The observed decline in job stability of graduates has sparked concerns among those in the education and employment sectors (Malokani et al., 2022). The alarming decline in job stability for graduates is largely attributed to the disparity between the skills learned in educational institutions and the demands of modern employers, resulting in a workforce that is often perceived as unprepared for the complexities of contemporary roles (Ogunola, 2022). Consequently, many graduates face precarious employment situations characterized by short-term contracts, frequent layoffs, or reliance on informal work arrangements, which undermine their financial security and career progression (Ajibola & Tiamiyu, 2024). This instability not only leads to heightened anxiety and dissatisfaction among young professionals but also has far-reaching implications for the economy, as a lack of job security stifles consumer spending and limits overall economic growth (Popoola & Fagbola, 2023). Furthermore, the erosion of job stability has created a culture of uncertainty, prompting graduates to prioritize immediate survival over long-term career development, resulting in a workforce that is disengaged and unmotivated (Chiedu et al., 2022). This trend not only diminishes the potential for innovation and productivity but also exacerbates youth unemployment, as the lack of stable employment opportunities drives many to seek opportunities abroad or engage in unproductive ventures (Nwachukwu et al., 2022). Ultimately, the interplay between declining job stability and employability skills poses a significant challenge for Nigeria, as it hampers the nation's ability to harness the potential of its graduates, sustain economic development, and compete effectively in an increasingly competitive global economy (Orunbon et al., 2022).

Literature Review

Employability Skills

Hains-Wesson and Ji (2020) defined employability skills as the essential skills and personal attributes that individuals need to succeed in the workplace. These skills go beyond technical expertise and include qualities such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, and time management (Kamaroellah et al., 2021). Employability skills enable individuals to work effectively with others, manage their responsibilities, and navigate challenges in a professional environment. These skills are crucial for career progression, as they ensure that individuals are not only capable of performing specific tasks but can also contribute to a positive, productive work culture (Yolanda et al., 2023). Well-developed employability skills provide significant benefits to graduates, enhancing their versatility in the workplace and enabling them to take on diverse tasks and responsibilities. This adaptability is particularly important in today's rapidly changing technological landscape and evolving job demands (Dhaliwal & Misra, 2020). Graduates with strong employability skills often experience greater job satisfaction, as they feel more competent and confident in managing workplace tasks and navigating professional relationships (Arsenis et al., 2022). Moreover, these skills facilitate continuous learning, helping graduates remain

relevant in their fields and explore new career paths. Ultimately, employability skills not only improve personal career prospects but also contribute to long-term success and fulfillment in the workforce, benefiting both the individual and the employer (Briones et al., 2021).

Communication Skills

Communication skills are defined as the ability to effectively exchange information, thoughts, and ideas through various channels such as speaking, writing, and non-verbal cues (Li et al., 2022). These skills encompass both the ability to express oneself clearly and the ability to actively listen and understand others (Tompkins et al., 2022). Good communication involves not only articulating messages in a concise and engaging manner but also being receptive to feedback, adapting messages to the audience, and using appropriate tone and body language. Strong communication skills are essential in building relationships, resolving conflicts, and achieving success in both personal and professional environments (Alakbarov, 2021). Effective communication skills offer significant benefits to graduates, enhancing their ability to persuade others and making their arguments more compelling, which leads to more efficient decision-making processes (Prokofiev et al., 2021). Strong communication is also vital for conflict resolution, as it enables graduates to express differing viewpoints calmly and constructively, thereby minimizing misunderstandings and fostering mutual respect. In the digital age, as noted by Nasaruddin et al. (2023), communication skills have evolved to include written communication, presentations, and virtual meetings, making them essential for maintaining professional relationships. Whether delivering a message in person or online, the ability to articulate ideas clearly and respectfully ensures that interactions remain productive and positive. Ultimately, communication skills not only facilitate personal growth but also enhance overall effectiveness in the workplace, promoting cooperation, understanding, and success (Suh, 2022; Tang et al., 2021).

Problem-Solving Skills

Hebebe and Usta (2022) stated that problem-solving skills are defined as the ability to analyze a situation, identify potential issues, and develop effective solutions to address those issues. These skills involve logical thinking, creativity, decision-making, and the ability to evaluate different approaches. A strong problem solver can break down complex problems into simpler components, explore various solutions, and choose the most effective course of action (Saengrith et al., 2022). Additionally, problem-solving requires flexibility and the ability to adapt when faced with new information or unexpected challenges, making it an essential skill in both everyday life and professional environments (Guntur & Setyaningrum, 2021). Problem-solving skills provide significant advantages to graduates, enhancing their confidence in decision-making and their ability to tackle challenges effectively (Fitriani et al., 2020). This confidence boosts self-esteem and reduces anxiety in difficult situations, leading to improved leadership and collaboration in group settings, where effective problem resolution is crucial for

achieving goals. Additionally, as noted by Araiza-Alba et al. (2021), strong problem-solving skills play a vital role in managing stress; individuals who can identify and address the root causes of their stressors experience less frustration and are better equipped to handle their emotional responses. Moreover, these skills are highly valued in the workplace, making graduates with strong problem-solving abilities more likely to receive promotions or leadership opportunities (Purwaningsih et al., 2020). Overall, problem-solving skills enhance a graduate's capacity for success, support mental well-being, and enable adaptation to an ever-changing world.

Teamwork Skills

Teamwork skills are defined as the abilities that allow individuals to work collaboratively with others towards a common goal (Batts et al., 2023). These skills include effective communication, cooperation, adaptability, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. They enable individuals to contribute to group efforts, support colleagues, and respect diverse perspectives while striving for shared objectives (Rodríguez-Sabiote et al., 2022). Strong teamwork skills as stated by Bonavia and Julián (2022) help create a positive, productive environment where each member's strengths are utilized, leading to better outcomes and a more harmonious working relationship. Teamwork skills offer substantial benefits to graduates, fostering trust and camaraderie among team members, which enhances relationships and contributes to a positive work environment. When individuals collaborate effectively, they learn to value one another's contributions, cultivating mutual respect. Additionally, teamwork helps reduce stress and workload by distributing tasks, ensuring that no single person feels overwhelmed (Vardakosta et al., 2023). This collaborative approach not only promotes efficiency but also increases job satisfaction, as graduates feel supported and connected to a shared purpose. Ultimately, teamwork skills are essential for both personal and collective achievement, enabling individuals to accomplish more together than they could alone, fostering personal growth, and contributing to a productive and harmonious workplace (Besschetnova et al., 2022).

Adaptability Skills

According to Leung et al. (2022), adaptability skills are defined as the capacity to adjust effectively to new, different, or changing situations and environments. These skills involve being open-minded, flexible, and resilient in the face of uncertainty or unexpected challenges. People with strong adaptability skills are able to pivot their strategies, learn new concepts quickly, and remain productive despite disruptions (Sousa et al., 2022). They are proficient in managing change, staying calm under pressure, and finding solutions to problems that arise in evolving circumstances. These skills are essential for personal growth and success in rapidly changing work and life environments (Bozkurt, 2022). Adaptability skills provide significant advantages to graduates, equipping them for success in an ever-changing world. One of the primary benefits is the ability to handle uncertainty and change with resilience, allowing graduates to navigate challenges effectively (Bonney et al., 2022). As noted by Yun

and Lee (2023), in rapidly evolving environments whether in the workplace, society, or personal situations being adaptable enables individuals to remain calm, focused, and efficient when confronted with new challenges. This flexibility is particularly valuable in the workforce, where industries, technologies, and market conditions frequently shift (Supriatna et al., 2023). Overall, adaptability skills empower graduates to thrive in dynamic settings, enhancing their career prospects and personal growth.

Technical Skills

According to Tiong et al. (2024), technical skills are defined as the specialized knowledge and abilities necessary to perform specific tasks or operate particular tools and technologies. These skills can include proficiency in software applications, programming languages, data analysis, engineering principles, and the use of machinery or equipment (Bharadwaj et al., 2022). Technical skills are often acquired through education, training, and hands-on experience, allowing individuals to effectively tackle complex challenges in their respective fields. As industries evolve and technological advancements continue, strong technical skills have become increasingly vital for career success, enabling professionals to innovate, improve processes, and enhance overall productivity (Venatius et al., 2023). Technical skills offer numerous benefits to graduates, empowering them to solve complex problems independently and enhancing their critical thinking and analytical abilities (Sánchez-Sánchez, 2022). In collaborative environments, graduates with diverse technical skills can share knowledge and insights, leading to more effective teamwork and improved project outcomes (Güngör & Baydemir, 2023). Moreover, the cultivation of these skills not only enhances individual competencies but also contributes to the overall growth and competitiveness of organizations in the global marketplace (Jogerst et al., 2022). Ultimately, strong technical skills equip graduates for success in their careers and foster innovation within their workplaces.

Job Stability

Job stability is defined as the degree of consistency and security a person experiences in their employment over time (Aitken & Singh, 2023). It refers to the likelihood of retaining a job without the risk of sudden layoffs, terminations, or frequent job changes. According to Pridaphatrakun et al. (2022), job stability can be influenced by factors such as the nature of the industry, the economic environment, company performance, and the employee's role or skillset. Stable jobs are often associated with long-term career growth, benefits, and a predictable income stream, offering individuals a sense of financial security and professional continuity (Zhou, 2023). Job stability offers numerous advantages to graduates, significantly enhancing their personal well-being and professional growth. One primary benefit is financial security; with a stable job, graduates can confidently predict their income, facilitating long-term planning for goals such as purchasing a home, saving for retirement, or furthering their education (Murphy & Turner, 2023). This financial predictability alleviates stress, enabling them to concentrate on both their professional responsibilities and personal lives

without the anxiety of potential unemployment. Furthermore, job stability promotes career development and skill enhancement (Oviedo-Gil & Cala Vitery, 2023). Graduates who remain in consistent positions can gain specialized knowledge and expertise, leading to promotions, salary increases, and greater job satisfaction. Additionally, as noted by Mejia and Albrecht (2022), tenure allows employees to develop a deeper understanding of a company's culture and operations, fostering meaningful contributions and opportunities for advancement into leadership roles.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the Skill Acquisition Theory, notably advanced by Robert DeKeyser, provides a robust framework for understanding how graduates in selected universities in South-West Nigeria can develop employability skills to enhance job stability (Button et al., 2021). This theory posits that skill development progresses through three distinct stages: the cognitive, associative, and autonomous stages. In the cognitive stage, graduates learn the foundational components of employability skills, such as communication and critical thinking, often requiring explicit instruction and guidance (Undiyaundeye & Otu, 2022). As they move to the associative stage, they refine these skills, reducing errors and gaining efficiency through practice, such as internships or practical training. In the autonomous stage, skills like problem-solving and digital literacy become second nature, enabling graduates to perform tasks effortlessly in professional settings (Tang, 2020). The theory assumes that deliberate practice and structured learning environments are essential for skill mastery, which directly supports the study's focus on how targeted skill development can lead to stable employment outcomes.

The relevance of Skill Acquisition Theory to the study of employability skills and job stability in South-West Nigeria lies in its emphasis on progressive skill development as a pathway to workplace competence and job retention. By applying Fitts and Posner's model, the theory highlights how graduates can transition from novice learners to proficient professionals, allocating mental resources to complex tasks like teamwork and adaptability as skills become automatic (Tang, 2020). This progression is critical in Nigeria's competitive labor market, where employers prioritize practical competencies to ensure organizational stability (Undiyaundeye & Otu, 2022). However, the theory's assumption of structured learning environments underscores a challenge in Nigerian universities, where limited resources and outdated curricula often hinder effective skill acquisition (Button et al., 2021). By aligning educational practices with the theory's stages through enhanced training programs and industry partnerships universities can better equip graduates to achieve job stability, addressing the skills mismatch that undermines employment outcomes in the region.

Conceptual Model

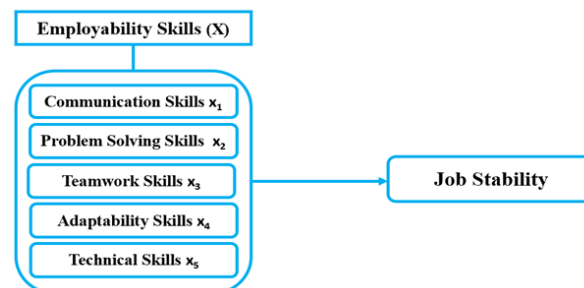


Figure: Conceptual Model for Employability Skills and Job Stability

Source: Researchers' Conceptualization (2025)

Methodology

The research employed a survey design, targeting a population of 64,171 graduates from six universities in South-West Nigeria. A sample size of 497 was calculated using the Research Advisor's sample size table, and participants were selected via simple random sampling. Data was gathered using a structured, validated questionnaire, with Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the constructs ranging from 0.73 to 0.84. The study achieved a 93.2% response rate. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including multiple linear and hierarchical regression, were used to analyze the data at a 5% significance level.

Model Specification

Y = Dependent Variable

X = Independent Variable

Y = Job Stability (JS)

X = Employability Skills (ES)

Where

$X = (x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5)$

x_1 = Communication Skills (CS)

x_2 = Problem Solving Skills (PSS)

x_3 = Teamwork Skills (TS)

x_4 = Adaptability Skills (AS)

x_5 = Technical Skills (TS)

And

Y = Job Stability (JS)

Regression Model

The models formulated for each of the hypotheses are written as:

$$JS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CS + \beta_2 PSS + \beta_3 TS + \beta_4 AS + \beta_5 TS + \epsilon_i \text{ -----}$$

----- Equ. I

Results and Discussion

Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 27.0, with a 5% significance level set for all statistical tests to meet the study's objectives. A total of 497 questionnaires were distributed to graduates from selected universities in South-West Nigeria. Of these, 463 questionnaires, representing 100% of the

distributed copies, were returned and deemed suitable for analysis.

Restatement of Research Hypothesis

H₀: Employability skills have no significant effect on job stability in selected Universities in South-West, Nigeria

Table 4.1: Summary of Multiple Regression

Table 1: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypothesis Four

N	Model	B	T	Sig.	ANOVA (Sig.)	R	Adjusted R ²	F (5, 462)
463	(Constant)	7.581	3.476	.001	0.001 ^b	0.427 ^a	0.173	20.341
	Communication Skills	-.093	-1.324	.186				
	Problem Solving Skills	.271	3.343	.001				
	Teamwork Skills	.086	1.053	.293				
	Adaptability Skills	.066	.780	.436				
	Technical Skills	.367	5.658	.000				
	a. Dependent Variable: Job Stability							
	b. Predictors: (Constant), Technical Skills, Communication Skills, Teamwork Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Adaptability Skills							

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

Interpretation

The results of the multiple regression analysis presented in Table 1 were used to test the hypothesis, which states that employability skills have no significant effect on job stability. The analysis revealed that technical skills ($\beta = 0.367$, $t = 5.658$, $p < 0.05$) and problem-solving skills ($\beta = 0.271$, $t = 3.343$, $p < 0.05$) exhibit a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with job stability. These results indicate that employees with greater technical expertise and stronger problem-solving abilities tend to experience more stable employment. However, communication skills ($\beta = -0.093$, $t = -1.324$, $p > 0.05$), teamwork skills ($\beta = 0.086$, $t = 1.053$, $p > 0.05$), and adaptability skills ($\beta = 0.066$, $t = 0.780$, $p > 0.05$) show no statistically significant effect on job stability in this analysis.

The model demonstrates a moderate relationship between the predictors and job stability, as shown by the R value of 0.427. The adjusted R² of 0.173 suggests that approximately 17.3% of the variation in job stability can be explained by this combination of employability skills, while the remaining 82.7% is influenced by other factors not included in the model. The ANOVA results ($F = 20.341$, $p < 0.05$) confirm that the overall regression model is statistically significant. While technical skills and problem-solving skills significantly contribute to job stability, communication, teamwork, and adaptability skills do not show statistically significant effects. These results suggest that technical competencies and problem-solving abilities are particularly important for maintaining stable employment. The study highlights the varying importance of different employability skills, with technical and problem-solving skills emerging as key factors

in employment stability. The predictive and prescriptive multiple regression models are thus expressed:

$$JS = 7.581 + -0.093CS + 0.271PSS + 0.086TS + 0.066AS + 0.367TSS + U_i \text{-----Eqn i (Predictive Model)}$$

$$JS = 7.581 + 0.271PSS + 0.367TSS + U_i \text{----Eqn i (Prescriptive Model)}$$

Where:

JS = Job Stability

CS = Communication Skills

PSS = Problem Solving Skills

TS = Teamwork Skills

AS = Adaptability Skills

TSS = Technical Skills

The regression model establishes a baseline job stability value of 7.581 when all employability skills variables are held constant, indicating a positive starting point for job stability. Among the five employability skills examined, problem-solving skills ($\beta=0.271$, $p=0.001$) and technical skills ($\beta=0.367$, $p=0.000$) emerge as statistically significant positive predictors of job stability. These results suggest that a one-unit improvement in problem-solving skills would increase job stability by 0.271 units, while a similar improvement in technical skills would yield an even greater 0.367-unit enhancement in job stability. Three skills show non-significant relationships with job stability: communication skills ($\beta=-0.093$, $p=0.186$), teamwork skills ($\beta=0.086$, $p=0.293$), and adaptability skills ($\beta=0.066$, $p=0.436$). While teamwork and adaptability show positive coefficients, their effects are not statistically significant. Notably, communication skills show a negative (though non-significant) relationship with job stability, suggesting this skill may not contribute to stability in the current context. The overall model demonstrates significant predictive power, as

evidenced by the F-statistic $(5, 462) = 20.341$ ($p=0.001$), explaining approximately 17.3% of the variance in job stability (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.173$). The moderate effect size ($R=0.427$) indicates that while employability skills collectively influence job stability, other unmeasured factors likely play important roles as well. While communication, teamwork, and adaptability skills do not show statistically significant effects, the model confirms that technical skills and problem-solving abilities do significantly enhance job stability. These findings suggest that workforce development programs aiming to improve job stability should particularly focus on strengthening technical competencies and problem-solving capabilities, as these skills demonstrate the strongest positive relationships with job stability outcomes. The results further indicate that different employability skills may have varying impacts on different employment outcomes, with technical skills showing particularly strong effects across multiple dimensions of job quality. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) stating that employability skills have no significant effect on job stability was partially rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that employability skills have significant effect on job stability. The study's finding that employability skills significantly affect job stability aligns closely with a wealth of empirical research demonstrating their critical role in securing and maintaining employment. Mariano and Tantoco (2023) found that employability skills, such as communication and technical competence, enhance TVET graduates' adaptability to job market demands, directly improving their employment prospects and stability. Similarly, Martin-Cruz et al. (2022) showed that LEGO Serious Play activities bolster teamwork skills among business students, a key employability attribute that fosters effective collaboration in professional settings, contributing to sustained job tenure. McGunagle and Zizka (2020) further reinforced this by revealing that STEM employers prioritize both technical and soft skills like problem-solving and communication, with well-rounded graduates being more likely to secure stable positions. These studies collectively affirm that employability skills are foundational to job stability, echoing the study's core conclusion.

This alignment is further evidenced in the context of experiential and reflective learning. Mello et al. (2021) demonstrated that reflective processes in science placement modules heighten students' awareness of their employability skills, enhancing their readiness for stable employment through self-assessed competence. Muftiyanto et al. (2021) found that work-based learning models, such as group investigation, significantly improve problem-solving and collaborative skills in vocational students, bolstering their employability and ability to retain jobs. Medvide and Kenny (2022) added that structured work-based learning fosters professional skills alongside hope and self-efficacy, key psychological traits that support long-term job stability. These findings suggest that practical, reflective training enhances employability skills, aligning with the study's assertion that such skills underpin employment security.

The role of tailored interventions and technological advancements also supports this narrative. Migliore et al. (2022) showed that restructured management information systems improve employability skills for individuals with disabilities, leading to better job placements and stability through accessible skill-building tools. Mittal and Raghuvaran (2021) highlighted that e-learning platforms in entrepreneurship education enhance skills like adaptability and critical thinking, preparing students for stable careers in dynamic markets. Terblanche (2022) found that transformative transition coaching equips individuals with adaptability and decision-making skills during career shifts, significantly boosting their ability to secure sustainable employment. These studies collectively illustrate that targeted skill development, whether through technology or coaching, enhances job stability, resonating with the study's findings.

Soft skills and adaptability emerge as recurring themes across diverse contexts. Thant Sin (2022) emphasized that problem-solving and adaptability skills enable employees to overcome workplace challenges, enhancing job retention across industries. Thompson and Soccio (2022) noted that architecture students with digital literacy, collaboration, and adaptability skills were better prepared for a post-pandemic job market, underscoring the enduring value of these competencies for stability. Tigas et al. (2022) found that graduates with strong communication, problem-solving, and teamwork skills reported higher job satisfaction, a factor closely tied to long-term employment. Vardakosta et al. (2023) further showed that design thinking in higher education enhances teamwork and problem-solving, preparing students for stable, collaborative roles. These findings align with the study, highlighting that versatile employability skills are essential for maintaining job security.

The emphasis on comprehensive skill development rounds out this alignment. Thoresen et al. (2021) revealed that inclusive employability training, focusing on communication and technical skills, improves outcomes for all graduates, particularly those with disabilities, by fostering stable employment. Tiwari and Malati (2020) found that vocational students with job-specific skills have higher employability, suggesting that practical training enhances job retention. Tiong et al. (2024) demonstrated that integrating technical and soft skills in training programs leads to superior performance and better job outcomes in specialized fields. These studies collectively reinforce the study's conclusion that employability skills spanning technical expertise, soft skills, and adaptability significantly bolster job stability by equipping individuals to meet diverse workplace demands.

Relating these findings to Skill Acquisition Theory, the connection is supported. Akintayo et al. (2021) describe skill acquisition as a progressive process involving knowledge acquisition, practice, and mastery, mirrored in Mariano and Tantoco (2023) and McHenry and Krishnan (2022), where structured training enhances competence and job stability. Okute et al. (2022) emphasize that contextual learning and feedback refine skills, aligning with Mello et al. (2021) and Muftiyanto et al. (2021), where reflective and work-based

approaches build employability skills critical for sustained employment. Salman et al. (2020) highlight that repeated practice in relevant settings solidifies expertise, a principle reflected in Terblanche (2022) and Tiong et al. (2024), where coaching and comprehensive training ensure adaptability and performance, key to job retention. Thus, the study's finding that employability skills affect job stability not only aligns with empirical research but also embodies Skill Acquisition Theory, illustrating how systematic skill development fosters the resilience and competence needed for enduring employment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study's findings confirm that employability skills have a positive and significant impact on job stability among graduates from selected universities in South-West Nigeria. These skills empower graduates to meet employer expectations, adapt to dynamic workplace demands, and secure permanent roles in a challenging labor market characterized by high unemployment and economic volatility. The evidence highlights the pivotal role of skill development in reducing job insecurity, as graduates with robust employability skills are better positioned to maintain stable employment and contribute to organizational success. However, the limited integration of these skills into university curricula, coupled with systemic issues like inadequate funding and outdated teaching methods, continues to hinder widespread job stability, underscoring the need for targeted educational and policy interventions.

To enhance job stability for graduates, it is recommended that universities in South-West Nigeria prioritize the integration of employability skills into their academic programs through practical training modules, such as internships, industry-led workshops, and simulation-based learning. Policymakers should allocate increased funding to support these initiatives and foster stronger collaborations between universities and industries to ensure alignment with market needs. Additionally, regular curriculum reviews informed by labor market trends and employer feedback should be institutionalized to keep training relevant. Faculty development programs should also be implemented to equip educators with modern pedagogical approaches for teaching employability skills. These measures, combined with efforts to address broader economic challenges, such as unemployment and informal sector dominance, will strengthen graduates' job stability and support sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

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