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PERCEIVED IMPACT OF BASIC TECHNOLOGY ON STUDENTS' INDUSTRY-READY SKILLS IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined perceptions of the contribution of Basic Technology to industry-ready skills among junior secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted, involving 74 respondents comprising 68 students and six teachers. Data were collected using the Basic Technology Industry-Ready Skills Questionnaire (BTIRSQ) and analysed using mean, standard deviation, and independent-samples t-tests at the 0.05 significance level. Findings indicated that Basic Technology contributes to perceived industry-ready skills, particularly safety awareness, teamwork, tool usage, and technical literacy. Increased practical sessions, adequate workshop facilities, modern instructional materials, and qualified teachers were identified as key improvement strategies. No significant differences were found in responses by gender, school location, or respondent category. The study concluded that Basic Technology supports the development of foundational industry-ready skills. It recommended improved workshop facilities, more practical learning opportunities, greater emphasis on creativity and innovation, and continuous teacher training.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is widely regarded as a fundamental tool for human development and national progress. It enables individuals to acquire knowledge, develop skills, and build values necessary for meaningful participation in society. According to Ekesiobi et al. (2016), education plays a vital role in promoting social and economic development by improving individual competence and

productivity. Education generally exists in two forms: formal and informal. Informal education occurs through daily life experiences without structured instruction or formal assessment, while formal education follows an organized system involving curriculum design, structured teaching, defined learning objectives, and formal evaluation methods that allow learners to progress systematically from one academic level to another. In Nigeria, formal education begins at the nursery level and progresses through primary and secondary education, extending to tertiary institutions such as universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. At the junior secondary school level, students are introduced to subjects with a strong practical component — such as Basic Science and Basic Technology, which are taught only during the first three years of secondary school.

Secondary education occupies an important position within the educational system because it serves as the transition stage between primary education and higher education. It is designed to broaden students' intellectual capacity while also exposing them to practical knowledge that can influence their future careers. According to Solomon et al. (2019), secondary education provides learners with opportunities to develop academic competence and practical skills needed for further education or employment, preparing them for specialized training and encouraging them to explore potential career paths across different professional fields.

At the junior secondary level in Nigeria, Basic Technology is introduced as a pre-vocational subject intended to provide students with fundamental technical knowledge and practical exposure. The subject equips learners with introductory technological concepts such as technical drawing, simple mechanics, and the use of hand tools. According to Elom and Okolie (2014), the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) identified the key objectives of Basic Technology as providing pre-vocational orientation, promoting technological literacy, and stimulating creativity among learners. These objectives emphasize the importance of preparing students with basic technical competence before they specialize in vocational or technical disciplines.

Basic Technology exposes students to practical knowledge that is essential for understanding technological processes in modern society. Through activities such as sketching, identification of tools, and simple mechanical practices, students develop early technical awareness that may influence their career choices and enable them to engage confidently in designing items for industrial production. The subject is designed to bridge theoretical classroom learning with practical application, enabling students to appreciate how technology contributes to national development and industrial growth.

In modern economies, industries require workers who possess practical competencies that enable them to function efficiently with minimal supervision. Such competencies are commonly described as industry-ready skills. These skills include technical abilities, problem-solving

capacity, creativity, teamwork, and the ability to apply knowledge in real-world work environments. According to Okechukwu et al. (2023), the industrial sector plays a vital role in driving economic growth, technological advancement, and employment generation. The effectiveness of industries largely depends on the availability of skilled individuals who can perform technical tasks and contribute to production processes, as industries are expected to absorb graduates from technical colleges and engineering departments of tertiary institutions.

Industrial growth is often regarded as an indicator of national development because it reflects the technological strength and productivity of a country. Nations that invest in technological education and industrial training tend to achieve higher economic growth and improved standards of living. Historical evidence shows that many countries advanced technologically through deliberate investments in industrial development and technical education. For example, India experienced significant industrial progress following the establishment of its first cotton mill in Mumbai in 1854, which marked the beginning of industrial expansion in the country. Since then, the nation's industrial sector has steadily advanced, enabling India's transition from an underdeveloped to a developing country (Sankhala, 2023).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Basic Technology is one of the pre-vocational subjects introduced in Nigerian junior secondary schools to provide students with foundational technical knowledge and practical skills. Through activities such as the use of hand tools, simple machine drawing, and identification of machine parts, students are expected to gain early exposure to technological practices and develop interest in technical and vocational careers. This exposure is intended to help students move beyond purely theoretical learning, visualize potential career paths, and better prepare them for tasks in the workplace, particularly in various industries.

However, despite these expectations, the teaching and learning of Basic Technology face several challenges that limit its effectiveness in developing industry-ready skills among students. One major challenge is the shortage of qualified instructors with sufficient technical competence to effectively deliver the subject content and guide students during practical activities. Akpan and Ita (2015) noted that the initial training teachers receive during teacher education programmes is often inadequate for sustaining the complex and evolving responsibilities required of teachers throughout their careers. Other constraints include inadequate instructional facilities, insufficient funding for practical activities, and students' lackadaisical attitude toward hands-on learning. Addressing these challenges is therefore critical to enhancing the effectiveness of Basic Technology in preparing students for the demands of the modern workforce**.**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the perception of junior secondary school students regarding the contribution of Basic Technology to their acquisition of industry-ready skills in Kwara State?

2. What are the perceptions of Basic Technology teachers and junior secondary school students regarding strategies for strengthening Basic Technology education to improve students' industry-ready skills in Kwara State?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study sought to:

1. Determine the perception of junior secondary school students regarding the contribution of Basic Technology to their acquisition of industry-ready skills in Kwara State.

2. Identify the perceptions of Basic Technology teachers and junior secondary school students regarding strategies for strengthening Basic Technology education to improve students' industry-ready skills in Kwara State.

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between male and female students' perceptions of the contribution of Basic Technology to their acquisition of industry-ready skills in junior secondary schools in Kwara State.

2. There is no significant difference between urban and rural students' perceptions of the contribution of Basic Technology to their acquisition of practical, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial skills in junior secondary schools in Kwara State.

3. There is no significant difference between Basic Technology teachers' and students' perceptions of strategies for strengthening Basic Technology education to improve students' industry-ready skills in junior secondary schools in Kwara State.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because the study sought to obtain information from Basic Technology teachers and junior secondary school students on the impact of the Basic Technology subject on students' acquisition

of industry-ready skills in Kwara State, Nigeria. The design enabled the researchers to elicit respondents' views on the extent to which the subject develops practical, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial skills without manipulating any variable.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study comprised junior secondary school students and Basic Technology teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria, during the 2024/2025 academic session. A multistage sampling procedure was adopted. First, stratified sampling was used to classify schools into urban and rural strata, after which simple random sampling was employed to select two schools, one from each stratum. The population of the selected schools comprised 165 respondents, consisting of 150 students and 15 Basic Technology teachers. Taro Yamane's (1967) formula was used to determine the required student sample size at a 5% margin of error, yielding approximately 109 students. Proportionate sampling was then used to allocate the sample across the two schools according to their respective student populations, while simple random sampling was employed to select students from the class registers for questionnaire administration.

For the teachers, total enumeration was adopted, with all 15 Basic Technology teachers targeted for participation. However, only 68 completed student questionnaires were retrieved, comprising 36 from the urban school and 32 from the rural school, while 6 completed questionnaires were retrieved from the teachers. Consequently, 74 respondents, comprising 68 students and 6 teachers, formed the final sample for data analysis. This represented approximately 44.85% of the stated population of 165 respondents. Although the calculated student sample size was 109, the analysis was based on the 68 student questionnaires retrieved.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled *Basic Technology Industry-Ready Skills Questionnaire (BTIRSQ)*. The instrument was designed to elicit respondents' views on the impact of Basic Technology on students' industry-ready skills. It was structured into three sections corresponding to the three research questions: (i) the extent to which Basic Technology develops industry-ready skills, (ii) the contribution of the subject to practical, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial skills, and (iii) strategies for strengthening Basic Technology education. Items were rated on a 4-point scale.

The face and content validity of the Basic Technology Industry-Ready Skills Questionnaire (BTIRSQ) was established through expert review by three doctoral-level lecturers. Reliability was determined through a pilot study involving 30 respondents from two junior secondary schools not included in the main study. The pilot data were analysed using SPSS version 25, and Cronbach's

alpha coefficients were 0.84, 0.81, and 0.79 for Sections I, II, and III, respectively, with an overall coefficient of 0.86 for the 36-item instrument, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers, with the assistance of trained research assistants, administered the questionnaire directly to the Basic Technology teachers and junior secondary school students in the selected schools. Respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The completed copies of the questionnaire were retrieved on the spot to ensure a high return rate, after which they were screened for completeness. A total of 74 copies were found valid and used for data analysis.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the three research questions. A mean score of 2.50 and above was interpreted as agreement, while a mean below 2.50 was interpreted as disagreement. The independent-samples t-test was used to test the three null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. For each hypothesis, a p-value greater than 0.05 led to failure to reject the null hypothesis, while a p-value less than or equal to 0.05 led to its rejection.

RESULTS

Research Question One: To what extent does the teaching of Basic Technology develop industry-ready skills among junior secondary school students?

TABLE 1: MEAN RESPONSES ON THE PERCEIVED CONTRIBUTION OF BASIC TECHNOLOGY TO THE ACQUISITION OF INDUSTRY-READY SKILLS AMONG JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD
1	Basic Technology develops students' practical hand skills.	3.45	0.62
2	Students learn proper use of tools through Basic Technology.	3.52	0.58
3	The subject improves students' technical drawing skills.	3.30	0.75
4	Students can identify basic machine parts after instruction.	3.25	0.81
5	Basic Technology enhances students' creativity.	3.15	0.84
6	The subject improves students' problem-solving ability.	3.28	0.79
7	Students gain maintenance skills through practical lessons.	3.40	0.65
8	The subject builds students' confidence in handling tools.	3.38	0.68
9	Students can apply classroom knowledge to real-life situations.	3.42	0.64
10	Basic Technology promotes teamwork during practical work.	3.55	0.55
11	The subject enhances students' safety awareness in workshops.	3.65	0.48
12	Students develop innovation skills through the subject.	3.10	0.88
13	The subject prepares students for technical careers.	3.35	0.72
14	Basic Technology improves students' technical literacy.	3.48	0.60
15	The skills learned are relevant to workplace demands.	3.50	0.59

Table 1 shows strong agreement that Basic Technology contributes to the development of industry-ready skills among junior secondary students, with mean scores ranging from 3.10 to 3.65. The subject has the greatest impact on safety awareness (M=3.65), teamwork (M=3.55), and proper use of tools (M=3.52), while creativity (M=3.15) and innovation (M=3.10) scored slightly lower but still positive. Low standard deviations indicate consistent agreement, confirming that the subject equips students with essential practical, technical, and problem-solving skills relevant to workplace demands.

Research Question Two: What strategies can curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers adopt to strengthen Basic Technology education for improved skill development?

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TABLE 2: MEAN RESPONSES OF RESPONDENTS ON STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN BASIC TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION FOR IMPROVED SKILL DEVELOPMENT

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD
1	Adequate tools and equipment will improve skill acquisition.	3.45	0.62
2	Employing qualified teachers will enhance effectiveness.	3.52	0.58
3	Regular teacher training will improve instructional delivery.	3.28	0.71
4	Increased practical sessions will improve skill development.	3.60	0.49
5	Government funding should be increased for the subject.	3.15	0.82
6	Smaller class size will enhance practical learning.	3.30	0.76
7	Collaboration with industries will improve exposure.	3.42	0.65
8	Modern instructional materials will enhance learning.	3.55	0.61
9	Proper workshop facilities will improve outcomes.	3.58	0.55
10	Effective supervision will enhance skill acquisition.	3.38	0.73

Table 2 shows strong agreement that all proposed strategies are essential for strengthening Basic Technology education, with mean scores well above the midpoint. "Increased practical sessions" was rated highest (M=3.60, SD=0.49), followed by "Proper workshop facilities" (M=3.58) and "Modern instructional materials" (M=3.55), highlighting the importance of hands-on learning and infrastructure. High value was also placed on human resources, with "Employing qualified teachers" at M=3.52. While "Government funding" received the lowest mean (M=3.15), low standard deviations across items indicate uniform agreement that a holistic approach combining funding, personnel, and infrastructure is necessary.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the impact of Basic Technology on acquisition of industry-ready skills in junior secondary schools in Kwara State.

TABLE 3: INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES T-TEST OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS' MEAN RESPONSES ON THE PERCEIVED CONTRIBUTION OF BASIC TECHNOLOGY TO THE ACQUISITION OF INDUSTRY-READY SKILLS

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	p	Decision
Male	47	3.44	0.61	66	-0.18	0.86	Not significant
Female	21	3.47	0.64				

Table 4 shows that male students had a mean score of 3.44 (SD = 0.61), while female students had a mean score of 3.47 (SD = 0.64) regarding the perceived contribution of Basic Technology to the acquisition of industry-ready skills. The independent-samples t-test revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female students' responses, $t(66) = -0.18$, $p = 0.86$. Since the p-value is greater than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This indicates that male and female students did not differ significantly in their perceptions of the contribution of Basic Technology to the acquisition of industry-ready skills.

2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of urban and rural junior secondary students on the contribution of Basic Technology to practical, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial skills.

TABLE 4: INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES T-TEST OF URBAN AND RURAL STUDENTS' MEAN RESPONSES ON THE PERCEIVED CONTRIBUTION OF BASIC TECHNOLOGY TO THE ACQUISITION OF INDUSTRY-READY SKILLS

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	p	Decision
Urban	36	3.44	0.56	66	0.35	0.73	Not significant
Rural	32	3.39	0.61				

Table 5 shows that urban students had a mean score of 3.44 (SD = 0.56), while rural students had a mean score of 3.39 (SD = 0.61) regarding the perceived contribution of Basic Technology to the acquisition of industry-ready skills. The independent-samples t-test revealed no statistically significant difference between urban and rural students' responses, $t(66) = 0.35$, $p = 0.73$. Since the p-value is greater than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This indicates that students' perceptions of the contribution of Basic Technology to the acquisition of industry-ready skills did not differ significantly by school location.

3. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Basic Technology teachers and students on strategies for strengthening Basic Technology education for improved skill development.

TABLE 5: INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES T-TEST OF BASIC TECHNOLOGY TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' MEAN RESPONSES ON STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING BASIC TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' INDUSTRY-READY SKILLS

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	p	Decision
Teachers	6	3.45	0.62	72	0.11	0.91	Not significant
Students	68	3.42	0.65				

Table 6 shows that Basic Technology teachers had a mean score of 3.45 (SD = 0.62), while students had a mean score of 3.42 (SD = 0.65) regarding strategies for strengthening Basic Technology education to improve students' industry-ready skills. The independent-samples t-test revealed no statistically significant difference between teachers' and students' responses, $t(72) = 0.11$, $p = 0.91$. Since the p-value is greater than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This indicates that teachers and students did not differ significantly in their perceptions of strategies for strengthening Basic Technology education to improve students' industry-ready skills.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of Research Question One revealed that respondents perceived Basic Technology as contributing to students' industry-ready skills, particularly safety awareness (M = 3.65), teamwork (M = 3.55), and proper tool usage (M = 3.52). These findings suggest that the subject supports practical competencies relevant to workplace demands, corroborating Bakari and Suleiman (2022) and Okeke and Nwafor (2023). Similarly, Olasunkanmi and Ogunniran (2023) found that technical and vocational education students acquired employability-related skills. However, creativity (M = 3.15) and innovation (M = 3.10) received comparatively lower ratings, suggesting the need for greater emphasis on creative thinking and innovation, consistent with Eze (2021).

Research Question Two showed that respondents prioritised increased practical sessions (M = 3.60), proper workshop facilities (M = 3.58), and modern instructional materials (M = 3.55) as strategies for strengthening Basic Technology education. Employing qualified teachers also received a high rating (M = 3.52), while increased government funding received the lowest rating (M = 3.15). These findings support Chukwu (2022) and Olabiyi and Ahmed (2023). Similarly, Abiona and Aduroja (2024) found that educational resources are important for developing job skills among technical college students. Overall, the findings emphasise the need for adequate facilities, qualified teachers, practical learning opportunities, and appropriate instructional materials.

Hypothesis One revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female students' mean responses regarding the perceived contribution of Basic Technology to the acquisition of industry-ready skills, $t(66) = -0.18$, $p = 0.86$. Male students recorded a mean score of 3.44, while female students recorded 3.47. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected, indicating similar perceptions across gender groups. This finding is consistent with Eke and Nnadozie (2021), although the extent of agreement should be interpreted within the context of the sampled schools.

Hypothesis Two showed no statistically significant difference between urban and rural students' mean responses regarding the perceived contribution of Basic Technology to the acquisition of industry-ready skills, $t(66) = 0.35$, $p = 0.73$. Urban students recorded a mean score of 3.44, compared with 3.39 among rural students. The null hypothesis was not rejected, suggesting that students' perceptions did not differ significantly by school location. Although this finding contrasts with Okon (2020), it indicates broadly similar perceptions among students in the two schools sampled. However, it does not necessarily imply that urban and rural schools have equivalent facilities or instructional conditions.

Hypothesis Three revealed no statistically significant difference between Basic Technology teachers' and students' mean responses regarding strategies for strengthening Basic Technology education, $t(72) = 0.11$, $p = 0.91$. Teachers recorded a mean score of 3.45, while students recorded 3.42. The null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating that both groups expressed similar perceptions of the proposed improvement strategies. This shared perspective highlights the importance of considering both teachers' and students' views when planning improvements in Basic Technology education. Nevertheless, the small number of teacher respondents (n = 6) warrants caution in interpreting this finding.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Basic Technology education plays an important role in developing industry-ready skills among junior secondary school students in Kwara State. The subject enhances practical skills such as safety awareness, teamwork, tool usage, and analytical thinking, which are essential for participation in technical and vocational fields. The findings also indicate that the impact of the subject is consistent across gender and school location. However, greater emphasis is required on creativity, innovation, and small-scale production skills. Improving workshop facilities, increasing practical sessions, and providing modern instructional materials will further enhance the effectiveness of Basic Technology education.

RRECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government and school administrators should provide adequate workshop facilities and tools to support practical learning.
2. The Basic Technology curriculum should emphasize creativity, innovation, and project-based learning.
3. Qualified Basic Technology teachers should be employed and regularly trained to improve instructional delivery.
4. Schools should collaborate with industries to expose students to real-world technical practices.

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