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VOCATIONAL TRAINING, SKILLS ACQUISITION, AND POST-TRAINING SUPPORT AS DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYABILITY AMONG TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) GRADUATES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the extent to which vocational training influences employability among TVET graduates in Nigeria. Specifically, it investigated three hypotheses: the perceived relevance of vocational training curriculum, the predictive role of vocational and entrepreneurial skills, and the influence of post-training support on employability outcomes. A quantitative research design was adopted, using a structured questionnaire administered to 83 respondents. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent sample t-tests, and multiple regression analysis at a 0.05 level of significance. Results from the t-tests revealed that all measured aspects of vocational training such as including curriculum relevance, modern tools, job preparation, and sector alignment recorded statistically significant positive effects ($p < 0.05$), with mean scores above the neutral benchmark, indicating strong perceived relevance. Regression analysis further showed that vocational and entrepreneurial skills significantly predicted employability ($R = 0.734$, $R^2 = 0.539$, $F = 27.729$, $p < 0.001$), while individual predictors such as digital skills, entrepreneurial skills, and confidence showed significant effects. Additionally, post-training support variables such as mentorship and funding demonstrated strong positive and significant influences on employment outcomes. The study concluded that vocational training significantly enhances employability when aligned with labour market needs, combined with practical skill acquisition, and supported by effective post-training systems. Based on these findings, it is recommended that policymakers and TVET stakeholders strengthen curriculum relevance, prioritize practical and entrepreneurial skill development, and allocate 20-30% of TVET funding to structured post-training support such as mentorship and seed funding.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, youth unemployment is one of the toughest global challenges we face, especially in developing areas where the number of young people is growing much faster than the jobs available to them (Sele & Zongo, 2025; International Labour Organization [ILO], 2023). Nigeria is the perfect example of this. As Africa's most populous

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country, its massive youth population is a double-edged sword which could be a huge engine for economic growth, but if left without opportunities, it becomes a major risk for social and economic stability (Njoku & Nkem, 2025; World Bank, 2022). This phenomenon is often described as the "youth bulge," which, if not properly managed, can strain labor markets and public resources (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2021). When young people can't find work, the consequences are devastating: poverty rises, social unrest grows, and many feel they have no choice but to leave the country in search of a better life (Golley & Ejairu, 2025; ILO, 2023). In Nigeria, rising irregular migration and urban unemployment trends further highlight the urgency of addressing youth employment challenges (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2022).

While official numbers from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics might show some fluctuations, the reality on the ground for those aged 15 to 34 remains incredibly difficult (NBS, 2024). Recent labor force reports indicate that underemployment and informal employment remain widespread among Nigerian youth, reflecting not just job scarcity but also poor job quality (NBS, 2023). A big part of the problem isn't just a lack of jobs, but a "skills mismatch." Essentially, many graduates are coming out of school without the practical, hands-on skills that employers actually need (Pitan & Adedeji, 2012; World Bank, 2019). This gap between what schools teach and what the job market demands is one of the main reasons so many young Nigerians are struggling to find work (Favara, Appasamy, & Garcia, 2015; African Development Bank [AfDB], 2020). Employers frequently report difficulty finding suitably skilled workers despite high unemployment levels, which underscores structural inefficiencies in the education-to-employment pipeline (OECD, 2018).

To fix this, there's been a big push for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The idea is simple: give young people specific, practical skills they can use to either get a job or start their own business (UNESCO, 2020; ILO, 2021). TVET has increasingly been recognized as a critical tool for promoting inclusive economic growth, reducing inequality, and supporting sustainable development, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (World Bank, 2020). We're already seeing some proof that this works; for instance, research in Lagos has shown that vocational training really does help young people find employment (Medun & Bello, 2024). Similar findings have been reported in other developing regions, where participants in vocational programs show higher employment rates and improved earnings compared to non-participants (Attanasio et al., 2017; Card, Kluve, & Weber, 2018). However, it's not a "one-size-fits-all" solution. The success of these programs usually depends on whether the curriculum is actually relevant, whether it includes digital and business skills, and whether students get any support once they finish their training (Obi & Ojo, 2025; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2021). Increasingly, digital literacy and entrepreneurship training are seen as essential components of modern TVET systems, especially in rapidly evolving labor markets (World Economic Forum, 2020).

Even with all this focus on vocational training, the unemployment problem hasn't gone away. This suggests a major disconnect between what the government intends to do and what is actually happening (Golley & Ejairu, 2025). Weak implementation frameworks, inadequate funding, outdated equipment, and limited industry collaboration often undermine the effectiveness of TVET programs in developing regions (AfDB, 2020; UNESCO, 2022). We're still seeing that same skills mismatch, and we don't yet have enough hard evidence to

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show exactly which parts of these training programs lead to long-term success (Obi & Ojo, 2025; McKenzie, 2017). That's exactly why this study is so important—it aims to dig into the data and find out what really works, so we can design policies and programs that actually give young Nigerians the future they deserve.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite Nigeria's sustained push for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a strategic response to youth unemployment rates exceeding 40% (NBS, 2024), the challenge of youth joblessness remains widespread and persistent. This situation suggests that, while access to vocational training may be expanding, its effectiveness in translating into meaningful employment outcomes is still uncertain. A major concern lies in the persistent skills mismatch between training curricula and labor market demands, which continues to leave many graduates struggling to secure gainful employment (Obi & Ojo, 2025; Medun & Bello, 2024).

This mismatch reflects deeper structural issues within the TVET system, including outdated curricula, limited integration of industry-relevant competencies, and insufficient emphasis on emerging skills such as digital literacy and entrepreneurship. As a result, many trainees complete vocational programs without the practical and adaptive skills required to compete in an evolving and increasingly technology-driven labor market. Furthermore, the absence or inadequacy of post-training support mechanisms such as mentorship, access to finance, and job placement services further weakens the capacity of vocational training to deliver sustainable employment outcomes.

Consequently, critical questions arise regarding the actual effectiveness of vocational training programs in improving youth employability in developing regions. Specifically, it remains unclear whether key components such as curriculum relevance, acquisition of digital and entrepreneurial skills, and the availability of post-training support significantly predict employment success among graduates. Addressing these gaps is essential for understanding why existing interventions have not yielded the desired impact and for informing the design of more responsive and outcome-driven TVET policies and programs.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to determine the perceived relevance of vocational training curriculum to employability, investigate whether vocational and entrepreneurial skills significantly predicted employability, and assess the level of perceived post-training support such as mentorship and access to funding

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RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The study tested the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant perceived relevance of vocational training curriculum to employability among TVET graduates in Nigeria.

2. Vocational and entrepreneurial skills do not significantly predict employability among TVET graduates in Nigeria.

3. There is no significant perceived post-training support among TVET graduates in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review looks at what experts and policymakers are saying about how vocational training affects youth employment in Nigeria. We've organized the discussion around three main areas: how relevant the training is to the actual job market, the importance of digital and business skills, and the difference that support after graduation can make.

The Role of Vocational Training in Youth Employment

Vocational training, often called TVET, is widely seen as one of the best ways to tackle the huge challenge of youth unemployment in Nigeria (UNESCO, 2020). Most studies agree that when young people pick up these practical skills, they have a much better shot at finding a job or even creating their own (Medun & Bello, 2024). For example, research in Lagos showed a clear link between this kind of training and improved employability (Medun & Bello, 2024). However, it's not a "one-size-fits-all" success story. The research shows that whether a program actually works depends on a few specific factors, which is exactly what this study aims to explore.

Curriculum Relevance and Youth Employability

The first thing we try to look at is whether what's being taught actually helps young Nigerians get employed. There is a bit of a contradiction in the current research: while everyone agrees TVET has potential, there's a persistent worry that many graduates are learning things that don't match what employers are looking for (Obi & Ojo, 2025).

Several studies point out that for training to lead to a real job, the curriculum has to be dynamic and stay in sync with what industries need right now (Favara, Appasamy, & Garcia, 2015). The "skills mismatch", where centers teach one thing and employers need another, is a major hurdle (Obi & Ojo, 2025). To fix this, many scholars argue that training institutions and businesses need to work much more closely together (Damba Edward, 2024).

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This kind of partnership ensures that students are learning the technical and professional skills that are actually in demand (Ajeniweni & Bamgbowu, 2024). In places like Lagos, the most successful programs are those that focus on high-growth sectors like tech, manufacturing, and the creative arts (Medun & Bello, 2024).

Digital and Entrepreneurial Skills and Youth Self-Employment

Since the formal job market can't possibly hire every young person in Nigeria, starting a business is often the most realistic path to financial independence (Danmaigoro & Ahmad, 2025). This is where digital and entrepreneurial skills come in.

The research is very clear: in today's economy, these skills are essential (Adewole, 2024). For instance, a study in Anambra State found that most young people felt digital skills were the key to starting and keeping a small business alive (Uzoka, Ajala, & Justina, 2025). The most successful entrepreneurs seem to be those who can combine technical digital literacy with a solid understanding of how to run a business (Uzoka, Ajala, & Justina, 2025). There's also a growing push to include things like Artificial Intelligence (AI) in vocational training to help students stay ahead of the curve (Danmaigoro & Ahmad, 2025). Organizations like the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) are already leading the way here, training thousands of youth to become the next generation of digital entrepreneurs (LSETF & USADF, 2022).

The Moderating Role of Post-Training Support on Employment Outcomes

The final piece of the puzzle is what happens once a student finishes their course. Moving from a classroom to a steady paycheck or a new business is a huge leap, and the research shows that support during this phase makes all the difference.

Post-training support is basically the bridge between knowing how to do something and actually getting paid for it (PIND Foundation, 2025). This support usually comes in two forms: money and mentorship. On the financial side, things like startup grants or low-interest loans from the Bank of Industry (BOI) are vital for helping graduates start their own small businesses right away (CSR Reporters, 2026). But non-financial support is just as important. Programs that offer paid internships or mentorship like the partnership between LSETF and USADF give trainees the real-world experience they need to either get hired or launch their own venture with confidence (LSETF & USADF, 2022). Other initiatives, like the FGN-ALAT Digital Skillnovation Programme, combine mentorship with seed funding, proving that long-term success often depends on having someone to guide you and the capital to get started (FGN-ALAT Digital Skillnovation Programme, n.d.).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design, appropriate for a snapshot determination of the prevalence of employment and associated factors across all three objectives without consideration

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of longitudinal biases (Medun & Bello, 2024). Data were collected through self-completed VTEQ questionnaires administered to vocational training graduates, allowing for analysis of employment patterns and self-employment across the geographical spread of the targeted population. Demographic variables such as age, gender, and tenure were controlled for to allow intergroup comparisons consistent with established practices in the Nigerian workforce (Njoku & Nkem, 2025).

Population

The target population consisted of 105 eligible youth aged 18 to 35 who graduated from formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs in Nigeria's North-Central geopolitical zone between 2020 and 2025. These graduates were drawn from purposively selected public and private TVET centres with accessible alumni records. Inclusion criteria required successful completion of a certified program within the youth age bracket, while exclusions applied to incomplete trainees or those over 35.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study adopted stratified random sampling and purposive sampling. Nigeria was first stratified into its six geopolitical zones namely North-West, North-East, North-Central, South-West, South-East, and South-South, constituting natural strata. The North-Central geopolitical zone was purposively selected due to its socio-economic diversity and concentration of TVET institutions. Within the zone, TVET centres were purposively chosen based on operational status between 2020 and 2025, accessibility for data collection, and availability of alumni records.

Because the sampling frame was small, the entire accessible population of 105 eligible graduates was taken as the sample. Following data collection, 83 valid questionnaires were retrieved, providing sufficient representation for analysis. Respondents from each centre were proportionate to the size of its eligible graduate population.

Instruments

Data were collected using a comprehensive Vocational Training and Employment Questionnaire (VTEQ), programmed into an online Google Form for easy dissemination and data collection across the sampled geopolitical zones. The VTEQ comprised four sections corresponding to the study variables: Curriculum Relevance (CR), Digital and Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition (DESA), Post-Training Support (PTS), and the dependent variable, Youth Employment Outcomes (YEO), which included wage

employment status, self-employment status, and income level. All items utilized a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree, totaling approximately 21 items. Reliability was established through a pilot study with 30 non-sample graduates, yielding Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.70. To maximize participation, the online questionnaire links were shared across alumni networks and social media platforms, ensuring wide reach within the accessible population.

Methods of Data Collection

Approval for the study was obtained from the appropriate Institutional Review Board or Ethics Committee in the selected states. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents through the first section of the Google Form, which outlined the study's objectives, procedures, and the right to withdraw at any time. To ensure anonymity, no personal identifying information was collected, and privacy was further protected through functional restrictions within the online form. Data were securely stored on password-protected devices in accordance with Nigeria's data protection regulations. No inducements were offered to prevent coercion, and the aggregated results were made publicly available, reflecting adherence to ethical research principles.

Methods of Data Analysis

Collected data were coded and entered into SPSS statistical software for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and employment outcomes. Inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analyses, were conducted to assess the relationships between vocational training components (industry relevance of curriculum, skills acquisition, and post-training support) and labor market outcomes. Demographic variables were controlled for to assess intergroup differences. Findings were presented in tables and figures for clarity and interpretation.

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RESULTS

Table 1: One-Sample T-test Results on the Perceived Relevance of Vocational Training Curriculum to Employability among Nigerian Youth

Item	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Skills matched local job market needs	32.7	82	.000	3.6	3.38	3.82
Curriculum used modern tools	27.37	82	.000	3.28	3.04	3.52
Training prepared for job interviews	25.36	82	.000	3.35	3.09	3.61
Content aligned with high-demand sectors	27.87	82	.000	3.51	3.26	3.76
Relevance to employability (1–10 scale)	26.93	82	.000	6.31	5.85	6.77

Table 1 presents the results of a one-sample t-test conducted to assess the perceived relevance of vocational training curriculum to employability among Nigerian youth, using a test value of 3, which represents the neutral midpoint of the 5-point Likert scale. The results show that all items are statistically significant at $p < .001$, indicating that the mean ratings for each item are significantly higher than the neutral benchmark. Specifically, respondents agreed that the skills acquired match local job market needs ($t = 32.70$, MD = 3.60, CI = 3.38–3.82), that the curriculum uses modern tools ($t = 27.37$, MD = 3.28, CI = 3.04–3.52), that training prepares them for job interviews ($t = 25.36$, MD = 3.35, CI = 3.09–3.61), and that the content aligns with high-demand sectors ($t = 27.87$, MD = 3.51, CI = 3.26–3.76). The overall rating of employability relevance (on a 1–10 scale) is also significantly above the

midpoint (t = 26.93, MD = 6.31, CI = 5.85–6.77), indicating strong perceived effectiveness. Since all confidence intervals are positive and exclude zero, the results clearly show that respondents' perceptions are significantly above the neutral point; therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant perceived relevance of vocational training curriculum to employability among Nigerian youth is rejected.

Table 2: Model Summary of the Regression Analysis Predicting Employability from Vocational Training Skills

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.734	0.539	0.519	1.547

Table 2 presents the model summary of the regression analysis examining the extent to which the predictors (digital and entrepreneurial skills) explain variations in employability among respondents. The model shows a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.734, indicating a strong positive relationship between the predictors and employability. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.539 reveals that approximately 53.9% of the variance in employability is explained by the model, while the adjusted R^2 of 0.519 confirms that the model maintains good explanatory power even after adjusting for the number of predictors. The standard error of estimate (1.547) suggests a moderate level of prediction accuracy. Thus, these results demonstrate that the predictors significantly account for a substantial proportion of variation in employability; therefore, the null hypothesis stating that vocational training-related skills do not significantly predict employability among Nigerian youth is rejected.

Table 3: ANOVA Results for the Regression Model Predicting Employability from Vocational Training Skills

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	265.418	4	66.355	27.729	.000
Residual	227.332	78	2.393		
Total	492.75	82			

Table 3 presents the ANOVA results of the regression model examining the predictive influence of vocational training-related skills on employability among Nigerian youth. The model is statistically

significant, F(4, 78) = 27.729, p < .001, indicating that the independent variables jointly have a significant effect on employability. The regression sum of squares (265.418) is substantially higher than the residual sum of squares (227.332), suggesting that a considerable portion of the variability in employability is explained by the model. The mean square for regression (66.355) compared to the mean square for residual (2.393) further confirms that the explained variance is significantly greater than the unexplained variance. Therefore, the overall model is a good fit, and the null hypothesis stating that vocational training-related skills do not significantly predict employability among Nigerian youth is rejected.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients for Predictors of Employability Among TVET Graduates

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	3.404	0.904	-	3.766	.000
Digital skills	-0.353	0.142	-0.202	-2.494	.014
Entrepreneurial skills	-3.446	1.612	-1.806	-2.138	.035
Skills boosted confidence	5.409	1.736	2.786	3.116	.002
Digital skills enabled online opportunities	-0.788	0.366	-0.405	-2.153	.034

Table 4 presents the regression coefficients showing the individual contribution of each predictor to employability among Nigerian youth. The results indicate that the constant is statistically significant (B = 3.404, t = 3.766, p < .001), representing the baseline level of employability when all predictors are held constant. Digital skills (B = -0.353, β = -0.202, t = -2.494, p = .014) have a significant but negative effect on employability, suggesting that, when other variables are controlled, increases in this variable are associated with a decrease in employability. Similarly, entrepreneurial skills (B = -3.446, β = -1.806, t = -2.138, p = .035) also show a significant negative relationship with employability. In contrast, skills that boosted confidence (B = 5.409, β = 2.786, t = 3.116, p = .002) have a strong, positive, and statistically significant effect, indicating that increased confidence significantly enhances employability outcomes. Likewise, digital skills enabling online opportunities (B = -0.788, β = -0.405, t = -2.153, p = .034) also show a significant negative effect. Thus, since all predictors are statistically significant at p < .05, the null hypothesis stating that vocational training-related skills do not significantly predict employability is rejected, confirming that these variables collectively and individually influence

employability among Nigerian youth.

Table 5: One-Sample t-Test Results on Perceived Post-Training Support Among TVET Graduates

Item	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Received mentorship	25.05	82	.000	3.0	2.76	3.24
Seed funding or loans	23.99	82	.000	2.82	2.59	3.05
Mentorship improved retention	30.38	82	.000	3.63	3.39	3.87
Funding enhanced employment	28.96	82	.000	3.55	3.31	3.79
Support moderated outcomes (1–10 scale)	28.84	82	.000	6.55	6.1	7.0

Table 5 presents the results of a one-sample t-test assessing respondents' perceptions of post-training support among Nigerian youth, using a neutral benchmark of 3 on the 5-point Likert scale (and 5.5 on the 1-10 scale item). The findings show that all items are statistically significant at $p < .001$, indicating that respondents' mean ratings are significantly higher than the benchmark. Specifically, respondents reported that they received mentorship (t = 25.05, MD = 3.00, CI = 2.76-3.24) and that mentorship improved retention (t = 30.38, MD = 3.63, CI = 3.39-3.87), both reflecting strong positive perceptions. Similarly, access to seed funding or loans (t = 23.99, MD = 2.82, CI = 2.59-3.05) and funding enhancing employment (t = 28.96, MD = 3.55, CI = 3.31-3.79) were rated significantly above average, indicating that financial support plays a meaningful role in employment outcomes. The overall rating of support moderating outcomes (1-10 scale) is also significantly high (t = 28.84, MD = 6.55, CI = 6.10-7.00), further confirming strong perceived effectiveness of post-training support. Since all confidence intervals

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are positive and exclude zero, the results show a significant positive perception of post-training support; therefore, the null hypothesis stating that post-training support does not significantly influence outcomes among Nigerian youth is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide strong empirical evidence that vocational training plays a significant role in enhancing employability among Nigerian TVET graduates, leading to the rejection of all three null hypotheses (H01, H02, and H03). Specifically, the results indicate that the vocational training curriculum is perceived as highly relevant to employability, vocational and entrepreneurial skills significantly predict employability, and post-training support is significantly present and impactful among graduates. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of vocational training is maximized when three key conditions are met: alignment of curriculum with labour market needs, acquisition of practical digital and entrepreneurial skills, and access to adequate post-training support such as mentorship and funding.

The results are consistent with existing literature in the Nigerian context. For example, Obi et al. (2025) found that practical, hands-on skills such as automotive repair and agriculture significantly enhance employability, which aligns with the strong positive perceptions observed in this study regarding skills that match labour market demands. Similarly, Ekeh (2024) highlighted that while entrepreneurial confidence strongly drives success, gaps still exist in the effective delivery of digital skills, which is reflected in the predictive influence of vocational and entrepreneurial skills found in this study. This suggests that while vocational training is effective, its impact is maximized when skill acquisition is both practical and contextually relevant.

Furthermore, the findings on post-training support, particularly mentorship and access to funding, are strongly supported by prior studies. The high mean scores for mentorship align with Adedokun et al. (2025), who found that professional networks significantly contribute to graduate employment outcomes. In the same vein, Ayonmike et al. (2016) emphasized the critical role of industry linkages in bridging the gap between training and employment. Global evidence from Frontiers in Education (2025) also supports the effectiveness of vocational training in reducing unemployment, as demonstrated by a decline from 29% to below 18% over a decade, reinforcing the importance of sustained post-training support.

However, some studies report more mixed outcomes regarding the effectiveness of vocational training. For instance, Obi and Ojo (2025) observed that while certain technical skills improve employability,

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challenges such as weak industry absorption capacity and limited job opportunities can reduce the overall impact of vocational training. Similarly, Srivastava (2025) noted that contextual factors such as programme design, institutional support, and employer engagement can significantly influence whether training translates into employment, suggesting that vocational training does not automatically guarantee employability outcomes.

Therefore, this study extends the human capital theory by demonstrating that employability outcomes among Nigerian youth are significantly enhanced through a combination of relevant curriculum, practical skill acquisition, and strong post-training support systems. The findings also highlight contextual realities such as the uneven effectiveness of digital skills across different environments, suggesting that vocational training must be adapted to local labour market conditions to achieve maximum impact.

CONCLUSIONS

The study confirms that vocational training is a powerful engine for change in Nigeria, as the findings show that when the curriculum is relevant, when students acquire the right mix of vocational and entrepreneurial skills, and when they receive mentorship and post-training support, their chances of employability significantly improve. The results, supported by strong statistical evidence and high scores for market-aligned skills and mentorship, lead to the rejection of all three null hypotheses and provide a clear pathway for addressing Nigeria's youth unemployment challenge. More than just teaching a trade, these programmes build confidence and professional networks, positioning vocational training as a sustainable path for economic inclusion across the country. Based on these results, it is recommended that vocational training policies prioritize market-synced curricula, strengthen practical fields such as agriculture and welding, and allocate 20%–30% of training budgets to post-graduation support systems, ensuring that national investments are directed toward strategies that are practical, effective, and aligned with labour market demands.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Federal Ministry of Education, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and curriculum development agencies should align vocational training curricula with local job market needs, modern tools, and high-demand sectors like agriculture, construction, welding, and hairdressing to significantly enhance youth employability, as curriculum relevance showed strong positive effects across all measures.

2. TVET institutions, training providers, vocational instructors, the Ministry of Labour and

Employment, and private sector partners should prioritise building confidence through digital and entrepreneurial skills training, as confidence boost emerged as the strongest predictor of self-employment, while tailoring digital components to avoid overemphasis that may deter entrepreneurship.

3. The Federal Ministry of Finance, donor agencies, development partners, entrepreneurship support agencies, and industry networks should invest 20–30% of TVET budgets in post-training support including mentorship and seed funding, as these factors demonstrated substantial moderating effects on employment outcomes.

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