

Employability and vocational skills needed by University graduates for employment in Pig Production in Delta State

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Abstract: *The study was designed to identify employability and vocational skills needed by University graduates for employment in pig production in Delta State. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The population of the study was three hundred and forty four (344) respondents who comprised of two hundred and eighty five (285) registered pig farmers and fifty nine (59) University Agricultural Science lecturers. All the subjects in the population were used for the study. Data was collected from respondents using structured questionnaire and hypotheses were tested using t-test. The results of the analysis revealed that the University Graduates needed: seventeen (17) employability skills to run pig production enterprise; fourteen (14) vocational skills to plan a pig production enterprise; twenty-three (23) vocational skills to feed and rear different categories of pig to marketable size; The stated hypothesis was rejected. Based on the findings above, it was recommended that the employability and vocational skill items identified by the study should be used by skill acquisition centers in the State to train university graduates who intend to enter pig production enterprise; the skills should be made available to unemployed/employed university graduates by the government through the media and libraries to enable unskilled graduates to acquire the identified needed skills for employment in pig production.*

Keywords: Employability, Vocational Skills, University graduates, Pig production.

1. Introduction

Mass unemployment of qualified and able-bodied men/women has generated much concern all over the world. International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2011) noted that despite the rapid recovery in the global economy that took place in 2010, following two years of severely adverse labour market conditions, global unemployment remained elevated in 2010. According to ILO (2011) the number of unemployed stood at 205 million (6.2%) in 2010.

The above scenario propelled Nigerian government like other nations' government around the world to take some practical steps towards alleviating unemployment. In spite of the frantic efforts towards the eradication of this phenomenon, it is sad to know that Nigeria economy continues to experience increase in unemployment rate. Lack of employment opportunities in Nigeria has resulted in poverty; leading to alienation of poor people from political-economic functions of the society.

Lack of employable skill is no doubt, a major contributing factor to the problem of unemployment world over and especially in Nigeria. Subsequent increase in population, as Adebayo (2006) observed, necessitates establishment of more schools and higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. This in turn produced school leavers and graduates, whose numbers are always on the increase year after year without commensurate provision of employment opportunities both in the public and private sectors. Adebayo (2006) corroborated this stance by saying that the primary and secondary schools in Nigeria had been rapidly expanded and student's enrolment in higher

institutions had almost tripled in the last two decades. Despite this upsurge number of tertiary institutions (especially Universities) in recent time; enrolment rate; and increased graduate turnout, the issues of graduate unemployment and underemployment with their attendant consequences (such as increased crime rate, unfulfilled dreams, suicide, impaired financial position etc) are posing a great challenge to many developing countries of which Nigeria is one. In south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria, which Delta State is part of, there are about 401,234 registered unemployed university graduates (NDE, 2007).

These unemployed university graduates tend to be more anxious, depressed and unhappy with their attendant sleeplessness than those with jobs (Adeyemi, 2012). This situation has not only posed a great challenge to the economy but also retarded the economic growth of Delta State. The graduate unemployment in Nigeria is attributable to the fact that employees' education and skills acquired are inadequate to meet the demands of modern day jobs (Adebisi and Oni, 2012). This situation is seen as a generalized waste of human resources. This is so because, the educational system operated at post-independence era in the country placed emphasis on liberal education rather than acquisition of vocational skills, which prepare the individual for better employment opportunities. In other words, the then system focused on and produced school leavers and graduates without vocational skills that could enable them to be self-reliant.

Vocational education refers to a form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupations. Here, vocational education is seen as a source of skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective employment in specific occupations. Nevertheless, Okorie

(2001) saw vocational education as that type of education, which develops the mental and physical qualities of people thereby increasing their skills, knowledge and attitudes required for utilizing the natural resources needed for economic development of the nation and for their own self-employment.

Employability is the possession by an individual of the qualities and competencies required to meet the changing needs of employers and customers and thereby help to realise his or her aspirations and potential in work (CBI, 2009). Employability of graduates relates to their being equipped for a job and capable of being employed, rather than job acquisition (Harvey, 2001; Van der Heijden, 2001). Knight (2001) and Yorke (2001) consider employability to be a 'synergic combination of personal qualities, skills of various kinds, subject understanding, capability of exploiting their assets, marketing them and selling them. The increasing importance of employability in labour market policy can be partly sourced to an "emphasis on skills based solutions to economic competition and work-based solutions to social deprivation" (Hillage and Pollard, 1998). Within this context, the drive for employability is more than a means of offering workers the opportunity to develop flexible skills as an alternative to security of tenure. According to White (2000), the basic employability skills include, verbal communication, team work, commercial awareness, analysis and investigation skills, initiative and self motivation, drive, written command, planning and organizing skills, flexibility, time management, global skills of languages, negotiating and persuading skills, leadership, numeracy, computing skills, self-awareness, personal impact confidence, life learning, stress tolerance, integrating, independence, professionalism, action planning, decision making and creativity.

In the view of Enyakit and Enyenili (2007), vocational education includes preparation for employment in any occupation for which specialized education is required, for which there is a social need, which can be most appropriately done in schools. One form of vocational education is vocational agriculture; it is an aspect which emphasizes skills, knowledge and attitude required in all areas of agriculture for proficiency in agricultural production. In other words it is an area that equips its recipients with the skills required to achieve sustainable human food supply

One major way of curbing the menace of unemployed university graduates in Delta State is by equipping them with skills required in vocational agriculture as it will not only equip them with employability skills but also make them self-reliant. Agriculture provides primary means of employment for Nigerians and account for more than one-third of the total gross domestic product (GDP) and labour force (FAO, 2003). The livestock sub-sector is equally vital to the national economy since it is the main supplier of the highly essential animal protein. The importance of livestock sub-sector is in line with recommendation of the FAO (2003) that on an average basis, a man's daily protein intake should be between 65-72 grams and 53% (about 35 grams) of this should be animal based. In Nigeria, the daily animal protein intake is below the recommended minimum level of 65 gm per caput per day. Ajala, Adesehinwa and Mohammed (2007) observed that only 8.4gm of the 53.8gm of protein consumption level of Nigerians is derived from animal sources, less than 16% contribution of animal products to protein consumption of Nigerians. This is very poor indeed when compared with countries like USA with about 69% of the total protein derived from animal sources.

Due to this acute shortage of animal protein in the diet of average Nigerians, there is the need to increase the production of domestic animals, which are conventional sources of animal protein. Pig has some unique advantages over all other animals, which make them a good species of animals to multiply extensively to combat protein shortages and economically viable to serve as a means of employment especially through its production.

Pigs have the ability to convert different kinds of feed even including kitchen waste to meat (Rahman, Barthakur and Kalita, 2008). Considering general feed conversion, pig is by far the most efficient among farm animals in the conversion of feed energy to body energy (Pond and Manner, 2004). Pig is equally important for agro-based industries like feed mills for provision of bone and blood which are used for production of bone meal and blood meal respectively, which are good source of calcium in animal nutrition. Its skin is also useful for light leather production (Babatunde and Fetuga, 1990). Deltans also have high value for pig because it is one of the requirements in their marriages and burial rites, many other feast and festivals have special provision for pork meat. Unfortunately, pigs in most cases are left to the small scale native (producers). It is therefore, pertinent to equip university graduates with skills needed in pig production since it can serve as means of employment considering the advantages of pig and its acceptability by consumers. Therefore, this study seeks to elicit the employability and vocational skills needed by University graduates for employment in pig production in Delta State.

Objectives of the study

The general purpose of this study is to identify the employability skills needed by University graduates for employment in pig production in Delta State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. identify the employability skills needed by university graduates in running pig production enterprise;
2. identify the vocational skills needed by university graduates in planning a pig production enterprise; and
3. determine the vocational skills needed by university graduates in feeding and rearing of pigs to maturity.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the research work:

1. What are the employability skills needed by university graduates in running a pig production enterprise?
2. What vocational skills are needed by university graduates in planning a pig production enterprise?
3. What vocational skills are needed by university graduates in feeding and rearing of pigs to maturity?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of university agricultural education lecturers and pig farmers in employability skills needed by university graduates in running pig production enterprise.

2. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population is made up of three hundred and forty four (344) which comprised of two hundred and eighty five (285) registered pig farmers (ADP, 2012) and fifty nine (59) University Agricultural Science lecturers (NUC, 2013). The

higher institutions used for the study include: Delta State University, Abraka; College of Education, Agbor (Delta State University affiliated programme); College of Education, Warri (Delta State University affiliated programme) and Federal College of Education (Tech), Asaba (University of Benin affiliated programme). All the subjects in the population were used for the study. This was decided because of the size of the population.

The instrument had a face and content validity and reliability coefficient of 0.94 using the test-retest method which was high enough to support the use of the instrument in the research (Inomiesa, 1993). All the copies (100%) of the questionnaires distributed were duly completed questionnaires were returned. Items with mean value of 3.0 and above were accepted while items with less mean weight were rejected. The questionnaire was coded with nominal values designed for each response that was expected from the respondents. Each of the items was scored on the basis of the following code. The items are on 5 point scale of very highly Needed (VHN); highly needed (HN); averagely needed (AN), slightly needed (SN); and not needed (NN). The data were analysed using means, standard deviation while t-test was used to analyse the hypotheses

3. Results

Table 1 showed that most of the respondents were pig farmers (82.53%) while Agricultural Science lecturers represented 17.46% of the respondents. Response on place of work indicated most of the lectures were teaching in the College of education (15.87%) while pig farmers represented 82.53% of the respondents. Response on teaching or farming experience indicated that most the respondents (80.95%) have above 3 years of experience in their profession.

Table 1: Respondents Demographic information

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Job Type		
Agricultural Science Lecturer	55	17.46
Pig Farmers	260	82.53
Place of Work		
University	5	1.58
College of Education	50	15.87
Pig Farm	260	82.53
Teaching or Farming Experience (Years)		
1 – 3	61	19.30
4 – 6	78	24.76
7 – 9	55	17.46
10 – 12	101	32.06
Above 12	21	06.67

Field Work, 2015

The result presented in Table 2 showed that the seventeen (17) statement items had a mean range of 3.01 to 4.14. The means were above the cut-off point of 3.00, which indicated that the respondents agreed that all the statement items were needed by University graduates to run a pig farm enterprise. The standard deviation of the items ranged from 0.53 to 0.81. This indicated that the respondents were unanimous in their responses as they were not far from the mean.

Table 2: Mean responses of respondents on employability skills needed by university graduates in running a pig production enterprise (N=315)

S/N	Statement items	Agric Lecturers (x ₁)	Pig Farmers (x ₂)	X	S.D	Remark
1	Good verbal communication with customers and workmate	3.61	3.01	3.31	0.63	Needed
2	Team work with workmates in the farm	3.51	4.11	3.81	0.71	Needed
3	Ability to create commercial awareness of your venture	3.56	3.56	3.56	0.61	Needed
4	Ability to initiate sellable ideals to move the venture or enterprise forward	3.13	2.89	3.01	0.53	Needed
5	Self motivation of carrying the sellable ideals	3.36	3.66	3.51	0.71	Needed
6	Drive and personal confidence on your venture or enterprise	3.78	3.22	3.50	0.81	Needed
7	Professionalism with activities carried out in the farm	3.93	3.69	3.81	0.65	Needed
8	Good decision making with opportunities	2.89	3.27	3.08	0.68	Needed
9	Being creative with ideals different from what other ventures do	4.11	3.33	3.72	0.72	Needed
10	Stress tolerance especially with cleaning and other activities in the pig farm	3.91	3.75	3.83	0.74	Needed
11	Learning from experiences to solve problems in future	4.01	3.81	3.91	0.81	Needed
12	Good leadership style with your employees	3.03	3.03	3.03	0.72	Needed
13	Good numeracy and computing skills with business activities	3.26	3.78	3.52	0.75	Needed
14	Have analysis and investigation skills	3.81	3.21	3.51	0.76	Needed
15	Global skills of languages	3.00	3.06	3.03	0.73	Needed
16	Ability to manage time	4.02	3.42	3.72	0.62	Needed
17	Have good written command	4.31	3.97	4.14	0.88	Needed

Field Work, 2015

The result in Table 3 showed that statement items had a mean range of 3.01 to 4.61. The means were above the cut-off of 3.00. The result indicated that the identified were vocational

skills needed by university graduates to plan pig production enterprise. The standard deviations of the statement items ranged from 0.54 to 0.83, which indicated that the respondents' responses were close to one another and also were not far from the mean.

Table 3: Mean responses of respondents on vocational skills needed by university graduates in planning a pig production enterprise (N=315)

S/N	Statement items	Agric Lecturers (x ₁)	Pig Farmers (x ₂)	X	S.D	Remark
1	Ability to carry out feasibility study before embarking on pig production	4.90	4.12	4.51	0.63	Needed
2	Considering local market demand for pig	3.01	3.61	3.31	0.72	Needed
3	Choose appropriate pig breed	4.04	3.08	3.56	0.74	Needed
4	Consideration of the breeds and feed and water supply	3.33	3.69	3.51	0.78	Needed
5	Ability to consider labour and time for the production	4.29	4.93	4.61	0.68	Needed
6	Consideration of available resources and access to credit facility	4.51	3.55	4.03	0.54	Needed
7	Identify the differences between free roaming, semi-intensive and intensive system rearing pig	3.66	3.24	3.45	0.67	Needed
8	Taking account of housing and equipments	3.22	2.80	3.01	0.73	Needed
9	Considering	4.77	3.23	4.00	0.68	Needed

10	marketing information and knowledge regarding production and planning for the pig enterprise	3.11	3.31	3.12	0.83	Needed
11	Consideration of hygiene and safety requirements	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.70	Needed
12	keeping records about the pig herd	3.18	3.44	3.31	0.60	Needed
13	Finding the appropriate cost/feed ration	4.01	2.21	3.11	0.74	Needed
14	Evaluate the opportunity of moving downstream in the supply chain by adding value to pork with a small-scale processing enterprise.	3.62	3.26	3.44	0.81	Needed

Field Work, 2015

Table 4 showed that twenty-three (23) out of the twenty-four (24) statement items had a mean range of 3.32 to 4.33 while an item had a mean scores of less than the cut-off point of 3.00. This indicated that the respondents agreed that most of the statement items were needed by university graduates to feed and rear pigs to maturity. The standard deviation of the items ranged from 0.74 to 1.24. This indicated that respondents were close to one another in their responses as they were not far from the mean.

Table 4: Mean responses of respondents on vocational skills needed by university graduates in feeding and rearing of pigs to maturity (N=315)

S/N	Statement items	Agric Lecturers (x ₁)	Pig Farmers (x ₂)	X	S.D	Remark
Feeding and rearing boars						
1	Feed boars in-doors and on individual basis	3.58	4.00	3.79	1.13	Needed
2	Give green vegetables and balanced diets daily	3.69	3.77	3.73	1.07	Needed
3	Provide 2.3kg full ration of balanced diet for boars less than 15 months of age	3.97	3.17	3.57	1.11	Needed
4	Feed 3.0kg of balanced diet to boars more than 15 months old	4.27	3.29	3.78	1.10	Needed
5	Feed the boars 2 times daily	3.98	3.58	3.78	1.16	Needed
6	Provide cool and fresh drinking water regularly	4.23	3.49	3.86	1.24	Needed
7	Give 2.7kg of concentrate feed daily to dry sows and gilts	3.02	3.98	3.50	1.13	Needed
8	Increase the feed from 2.7kg to 4.0kg for sows just before their second pregnancy	3.51	3.27	3.39	1.09	Needed
Feeding and rearing Pregnant Sows						

9	Provide 1.8-2.2kg of concentrate feed containing 13% crude protein one week after mating	3.78	2.86	3.32	1.12	Needed
10	Feed high level of vegetables and antibiotics	4.32	3.86	4.09	1.08	Needed
11	Feed on individual basis	3.58	4.24	3.91	0.94	Needed
12	Increase the ration from 2.2kg to 2.7kg of concentrate per day to enable the foetus have adequate feed from the mother	4.55	3.87	4.21	0.88	Needed
13	Replace the 2.7kg of concentrates with 2.7kg of wheat or rice bran at farrowing time	3.73	4.11	3.92	0.92	Needed
14	Provide the animals with drinking water	4.03	3.59	3.81	0.74	Needed
15	Provide enough balanced feed to lactating sows	4.85	3.81	4.33	1.07	Needed
16	Give 2.0-4.0kg of concentrate feed per day to sows with 10 or less for piglets	2.34	3.22	2.78	0.88	Not Needed
17	Give 4.0-5.0kg of the concentrate feed per day to sows with 9 piglets and above	3.55	4.29	3.92	0.99	Needed
18	Serve more of wet fed than dry feed to stimulate appetite	3.91	3.65	3.78	0.83	Needed
Feeding and rearing weaners and growers						
19	Provide protein and concentrate diet to growers of 20-60kg weight	3.87	3.37	3.62	0.78	Needed
20	Feed weaners and growers ad libitum	3.46	3.66	3.56	0.86	Needed
21	Weigh weaners/growers once in a week to monitor weight gain	3.07	3.59	3.33	0.79	Needed
Feeding and rearing finishers/fatteners or market pigs						
22	Feed 3.5kg protein and energy diet to finisher pig of 60kg above	3.69	3.85	3.77	0.86	Needed
	Give dry feed if self or automatics feeders are involved	3.91	3.91	3.91	0.90	Needed
23	Provide wet ration if manual feeders are involved	4.07	3.55	3.81	0.88	Needed
24	Give bulky feed ingredients ad libitum to finisher or market pigs	3.87	3.69	3.78	0.91	Needed

Table 5 presents the t-test summary analysis of items on employability skills needed by university graduates in running pig production enterprise. The data revealed that the t-value was greater than the critical t-value or t-tab at 0.05 level of significance. With this result; the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected. This indicates that there is significant difference between the mean ratings of Agricultural Education Lecturers and pig farmers on employability skills needed by university graduates in running pig production enterprise.

Table 5: t-test analysis of the mean ratings of the responses of University Agricultural Education Lecturers and Pig Farmers on employability skills needed by university graduates in running pig production enterprise

Job Type	N	Mean	SD	t-value	t-tab
Agric	55	4.12	0.81	3.12	1.96
Lecturers					
Pig Farmers	260	4.09	0.76		
Total	315				

SD= Standard deviation

4. Discussion of Results

Respondents Demographic Information

The result in Table 1 showed that most of the respondents were pig farmers (82.53%) while Agricultural Science lecturers represented 17.46% of the respondents. The result also

indicated that most the respondents (80.95%) have above 3 years of experience in their profession. This implies that the population is experienced enough to give advice to intending farmers on skills needed to be successful in pig production business. Ridler and Hishamunda (2001) agreed that experience as a risk management factor. They argued that that new farmers in any venture are at a higher risk compared to experienced farmers.

Employability skills needed by university graduates in running pig production enterprise

The result in Table 2 indicated that the respondents agreed that all the statement items identified were needed by University graduates to run a pig farm enterprise. For one to be employable he or she needs to possess transferable skills and fostering attributes that will enable him to find appropriate employment, progress in their work and thus facilitate the success of their organisations and contribute to society and the economy. The findings agrees with the opinion of Kelvin, Stuart, Dely and Jon (2011) who stated that employers expect graduates to have technical and discipline competences from their degrees but require graduates also to demonstrate a range of broader skills and attributes that include team-working, communication, leadership, critical thinking, problem solving and managerial abilities. Employable graduates needs to be equipped with specific and general skills so as to be self-reliant and asset to the society.

Vocational skills needed by university graduates in planning a pig production enterprise

The result in Table 3 indicated that the identified were vocational skills needed by university graduates to plan pig production enterprise. The findings of the result highlighted the necessity that all farmers involved in such a project, carry out a feasibility study. In a feasibility study, the primary factor to consider with regards to pig production is local market demand for pigs, piglets, pork and related products. The university graduates who want to enter pig farming also need to evaluate the opportunity of moving downstream in the supply chain by adding value to pork with a small-scale processing enterprise. Intending pig farmers need to consider such aspects as market demand, estimate what prices can be made and work backwards from this information to verify if there is a potential business (FAO, 2005).

Vocational skills needed by university graduates in feeding and rearing of pigs to maturity

The result in Table 4 showed that the respondents agreed that most of the statement items were needed by university graduates to successfully feed and rear pigs to maturity. The findings indicated that the physiological state of the pig determines the care and feed type used for the pig. However, pigs generally eat a wide range of feeds, such as pasture grasses and other fibrous materials, as well as alternative energy and protein sources. Pigs should be fed daily, using a diet that meets the basic nutritional needs of given categories of pigs as currently defined the National Research Council (NRC, 2012). In line with the findings, Freams (2003) stated that pigs of all ages may be offered feed in the form of meal, pellets or as slurry mixed with water. He explained that whichever system is used, fresh water should always be available as pigs easily die from salt poisoning if water intake is severely restricted. The author added that feeds given to pigs essentially supply

carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, fats, oils and water for different metabolic activities.

The result in Table 5 showed that there was significant difference among the mean ratings of Agricultural Education lectures and Pig farmers on employability skills needed by university graduates in running pig enterprise. This implies that the groups of respondents rated the statement items from different perspective due to level of experience.

5. Conclusion

Pig production has been identified by the study as an aspect of livestock production capable of employing unemployed University graduates due to its economic and social potential in the country and especially Delta state. Employable graduates needs to be equipped with specific (area of specialization) and general skills so as to engage in pig production enterprise successfully. Specific vocational skills in planning a pig enterprise; and feeding and rearing are needed by university graduated to be for employed in pig production

University graduates who are intending to enter pig production or already in it can utilize the identified skills to be self employed and have a sustainable livelihood instead waiting for white collar jobs to be employed.

6. Recommendations

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

1. Employability and vocational skill items identified in the study can be used by skill acquisition centers in the State to train university graduates
2. The findings of the should be made available to employed university graduates by the government through the media and libraries to enable many of unskilled graduated to acquire the identified skills

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