Jurnal Pendidikan Teknologi Kejuruan, Vol. 9, No. 4, 2026, pp. 310-323
e-ISSN 2621-1548; p-ISSN 2621-3273

Perceived employability from vocational business education and migration intentions among final-year business education students in Oyo State, Nigeria: A correlational study

Luqman Ayobami Alagbe*, Victor Olunloyo Olabode, Aanuoluwa Oladiran Olayiwola, Abiodun Daniel Aikomo

Department of Business Education, Federal College of Education (Special), **Nigeria**

*Corresponding author: alagbe.luqman2672@fcesoyo.edu.ng
Received: 19 September 2026; *Revised:* 24 November 2026; *Accepted:* 28 November 2026

Cite this https://doi.org/10.24036/jptk.v9i4.52223

Abstract: Nigeria experiences substantial youth emigration, colloquially termed japa, with attendant brain drain and capital flight. Economic factors are established drivers, but whether employability skills acquired through vocational education relate to migration intentions remains unexamined. This study investigates the association between perceived employability from vocational business education (VBE) and migration intentions among final-year business education students in Oyo State, Nigeria. A correlational survey design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 867 final-year business education students in five institutions; 274 questionnaires were administered through proportional allocation and systematic random sampling, and 247 valid responses (90.1%) were analysed. Data were collected using a validated questionnaire (Cronbach's $\alpha = .812$ and .803 for the two scales). Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression were used for data analysis. Students perceived VBE as equipping them with employability skills ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.84$) and reported migration intentions ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.14$). A statistically significant but weak positive association was found between perceived VBE employability and migration intentions ($r = .219$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .048$). The study recommends among others that stakeholders should investigate local skill–opportunity alignment, and career counselling should provide accurate labour-market information.

Keywords: vocational business education; Japa Syndrome; employability skills; migration intentions; brain drain

© The Author(s)
Published by Universitas Negeri Padang
This is an open-access article under the: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

1. Introduction

Nigeria's recent surge in youth emigration, colloquially termed Japa, a Yoruba word meaning "to flee" has become a defining feature of the country's contemporary development landscape (Premium Times, 2022). The term describes the "self-exportation" of skilled professionals and young people abroad in search of better opportunities (Okunade & Awosusi, 2023). The International Organization for Migration has identified Nigeria among the African countries experiencing high rates of skilled migration (International Organization for Migration, 2023). The consequence has been substantial capital flight and brain drain across sectors, with measurable effects on national development (Adedokun & Karzanova, 2019). African emigration is not new. Long-established patterns of intra-continental and transcontinental mobility have been reshaped over the past two decades by globalisation, communication technologies, and widening wage differentials (de Haas, 2008; Czaika & de Haas, 2014). What distinguishes the contemporary Nigerian case is its scale and its social composition with emigration no longer confined to elites but has become an aspiration across the youth population, including among students in vocational and professional programmes.

Many factors have been alluded to this hydra in literature. These factors include poverty, high unemployment, the quest for educational advancement, and insecurity (Okunade, 2021; Nwosu et al., 2022). The principal drivers are however economical which include unemployment and poverty (Duru, 2021; Bashorun, 2023). The unemployment rate stands at 33.3% of the working population (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Nigeria's population is youthful, with over 63% under the age of 25 (World Bank, 2022), and 53.4% of young people unemployed (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Given these conditions, many graduates consider emigration as a livelihood strategy (Carling, 2002; de Haas, 2021).

The literature on Nigerian Japa Syndrome has, however, proceeded largely by documenting economic drivers (Ogu, 2022; Cookey & Ochuba, 2024; Okunade & Awosusi, 2023). It has not examined whether the employability skills graduates acquire through vocational education relate to their migration intentions. This is a consequential omission. Vocational education is explicitly justified in Nigerian policy as a mechanism for producing self-reliant graduates who will create rather than seek employment. If vocational graduates nonetheless intend to emigrate, the assumption underlying that policy warrant is called into question and the question of whether skill acquisition deters or enables emigration becomes central.

Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) has been identified as a potent tool for combating unemployment (Raheem & Ayika, 2019). Vocational Business Education (VBE) is the business-oriented subset of VTE that prepares individuals to acquire the skills needed for personal use, for employment, or for managing a business (Sofolahan, 2023). VBE equips recipients with employable skills intended to overcome the skills mismatch that has long impeded smooth education-to-employment transitions (Ayonmike et al., 2015; Okolie et al., 2019). UNESCO has identified technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as central to addressing youth unemployment in developing economies, particularly where curricula align with industry needs (UNESCO, 2022). In principle, therefore, VBE might mitigate Japa Syndrome by improving employability and creating alternative livelihood paths at home. One might accordingly expect that stronger perceived VBE skills would reduce the desire to emigrate. This study examines that expectation.

As earlier noted, studies of Nigerian Japa Syndrome have examined economic, security, and social drivers (Ogu, 2022; Cookey & Ochuba, 2024; Okunade & Awosusi, 2023). None has examined the association between perceived employability from VBE and migration intentions. The novelty of the present study lies in its examination of perceived employability from a Vocational Business Education (VBE) rather than general economic drivers.

2. Theoretical framework

This study draws on Bandura's self-efficacy theory. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to execute the behaviours necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (1997, 2001) argued that an individual's cognitive awareness of a given ability propels them to set goals and to expect corresponding rewards, and that this awareness shapes their decision-making. Social cognitive career theory extends this logic to career choices, holding that self-efficacy beliefs influence the range of options individuals consider and pursue (Lent et al., 1994). As applied here, VBE students' awareness of the employability skills they have acquired is expected to inform the decisions they make about their career, economic, and non-economic life goals. Self-efficacy is thus the mechanism through which perceived employability may relate to migration intention. The direction of the relationship is theoretically ambiguous. Three mechanisms are plausible, and they predict different outcomes.

© The Author(s)
Published by Universitas Negeri Padang
This is an open-access article under the: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

© The Author(s)
Published by Universitas Negeri Padang
This is an open-access article under the: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

First is an anchoring mechanism where VBE students perceive accessible local employment, enterprise finance, and markets for their skills, enhanced self-efficacy should strengthen attachment to the local labour market and reduce emigration intention. On this account, vocational training operates as a retention mechanism. Second is a portability mechanism whereby VBE-acquired competencies such as bookkeeping, business analysis, customer relationship management, project management, and digital business skills are not jurisdictionally bounded. Where domestic absorptive capacity is weak, the same competencies that raise confidence to work locally also raise confidence to compete in international labour markets (Beine et al., 2008; Docquier & Rapoport, 2012). On this account, vocational training operates as an enabling mechanism for emigration. Lastly is a selection or reciprocal mechanism where students who already intend to migrate may construe their skills as more globally portable, or may invest more in acquiring them, producing a positive association between perceived employability and migration intention without any causal influence of training on migration (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

Human capital accounts of migration reinforce the ambiguity. Emigration decisions are commonly modelled as a function of expected returns to skills across locations, so that higher skill endowments can raise the expected gain from moving to where returns are higher (Becker, 1993; Stark et al., 1997; Dustmann & Glitz, 2011). The aspirations–capabilities framework similarly treats skills as a capability that facilitates the realisation of an aspiration, whatever its direction (de Haas, 2021). Because these mechanisms predict different outcomes, the direction of the association between perceived VBE employability and migration intentions is an empirical question. This study takes that question as its starting point.

The growing trend of japa among Nigerian youth is a matter of national concern, with thousands emigrating annually to Europe, North America, and Asia. Among the array of factors identified as responsible for the syndrome, unemployment and poverty stand out (Duru, 2021; Bashorun, 2023). To address these twin drivers, vocational business education has the potential to equip Nigerian youth with adaptive skills for self-employment and small and medium enterprise participation, and UNESCO (2022) has identified TVET as central to addressing youth unemployment. However, existing studies have focused on particular drivers of japa among Nigerian youth (Ogu, 2022; Cookey & Ochuba, 2024; Okunade & Awosusi, 2023); none has examined whether perceived employability from vocational business education is associated with migration intentions. The mass exodus of young Nigerians has resulted in human capital flight across critical sectors, constraining the country's development (Adedokun & Karzanova, 2019). If vocational education is to be justified in part as a retention strategy, the empirical basis for that justification must be established. This study accordingly examines whether, and in what direction, perceived employability acquired through vocational business education is associated with migration intentions among final-year business education students in Oyo State tertiary institutions.

3. Research objectives, questions, and hypothesis

The study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which final-year business education students perceive vocational business education (VBE) as equipping them with employability and self-reliance skills.
2. Determine the association between perceived employability from vocational business education and migration intentions (Japa Syndrome) among final-year business education students.

The study was guided by the following questions:

RQ1. To what extent do final-year business education students perceive vocational business education (VBE) as equipping them with employability and self-reliance skills?
RQ2. What is the association between perceived employability from VBE and migration intentions (Japa Syndrome) among final-year business education students?

The following null hypothesis guided the study:

$H0_1$: There is no significant association between perceived employability from vocational business education and migration intentions (Japa Syndrome) among final-year business education students in Oyo State tertiary institutions.

4. Methods

4.1 Research design

We adopted a correlational survey research design. This design allowed us to collect data from a sample at a single point in time in order both to describe characteristics of the population and to examine associations between variables without manipulating either. We emphasise at the outset that the design is associational: it cannot establish causal direction between perceived employability and migration intention, and we have framed our objectives and claims accordingly.

4.2 Population and eligibility

Our target population comprised all final-year business education students in colleges of education and universities in Oyo State, Nigeria, during the 2024/2025 academic session. We drew our accessible population from five institutions that offer business education: Emmanuel Alayande University of Education (EAUED), Oyo; Lead City University, Ibadan; Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo; Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate; and Best Legacy College of Education, Ogbomoso. We defined eligibility by three criteria: (a) enrolment as a final-year student in a business education programme at one of the five institutions; (b) presence on campus on the scheduled data-collection day; and (c) voluntary consent. We excluded students on industrial attachment or approved leave, because they were not available at the point of data collection. The institutional population counts we obtained were: Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo = 260; Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo = 218; Lead City University, Ibadan = 172; Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate = 130; Best Legacy College of Education, Ogbomoso = 87. Total N = 867.

4.3 Sample size and proportional allocation

We determined the sample size using the Taro Yamane formula, as presented in Equation (1):

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(d^2)} \quad (1)$$

where N = 867 and e = 0.05 (5% margin of error at the 95% confidence level). Substituting these values into Equation (1):

$$n = \frac{867}{1 + 867(0.05^2)} = 273.77 \approx 274$$

We then allocated this sample proportionally across the five institutions according to their student

© The Author(s)
Published by Universitas Negeri Padang
This is an open-access article under the: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

© The Author(s)
Published by Universitas Negeri Padang
This is an open-access article under the: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

populations, so that each institution's share of the sample reflected its share of the accessible population. The allocations were: Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo = 82; Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo = 69; Lead City University, Ibadan = 54; Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate = 41; Best Legacy College of Education, Ogbomoso = 28. Total = 274.

4.4 Sampling procedure

Because proportional allocation alone does not constitute a probability sample, we specified the within-institution selection procedure explicitly. At each institution, we used the enrolment register of final-year business education students, held by the Head of Department, as our sampling frame. We then applied systematic random sampling by generating a random starting point between 1 and k, and selected every kth student on the register, where $k = N_i/n_i$ (the ratio of the institutional population to the institutional allocation). Where a selected student was unavailable, we substituted the next student on the register and recorded the substitution. This procedure gave us probability-based selection within each institution.

4.5 Demographic characteristics of respondents

In Table 1, we report the distribution of the 247 respondents across the five participating institutions. Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo contributed the largest share (30.0%), followed by Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo (25.1%), Lead City University, Ibadan (19.8%), Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate (15.0%), and Best Legacy College of Education, Ogbomoso (10.1%). Our sample comprised slightly more females (53.0%) than males (47.0%). Most respondents were aged 20–24 years (58.3%), with a further 31.6% aged 25–29 years and 10.1% aged 30 years or above. Just over half of the respondents were NCE III students at colleges of education (55.1%), and the remainder were 400-Level students at universities (44.9%).

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by institution, gender, age, and level of study (**N** = 247)

Variable	Category	F	%
Institution	FCE (SP), Oyo	74	30.0
	EAUED	62	25.1
	LCU	49	19.8
	OYCOED	37	15.0
	BELCOED	25	10.1
Gender	Male	116	47.0
	Female	131	40.0
Age	20–24 years	144	58.3
	25–29 years	78	31.6
Level of study	NCE III (Colleges of Education)	136	55.1
	400 Level (Universities)	111	44.9

4.6 Instrument

We developed a structured questionnaire titled the Vocational Business Education and Japa Syndrome Questionnaire (VBEJSQ), organised into three sections. Section A collected demographic data (gender, age, institution, and level of study). Section B contained nine items

measuring Perceived Employability from Vocational Business Education, assessing students' perceptions of the practical skills, entrepreneurial abilities, and confidence for self-employment gained from their VBE programme. Section C contained ten items measuring Migration Intentions (Japa Syndrome). In constructing Section C, we deliberately combined items worded toward migrating with items worded toward remaining, so that the scale could register either increased or decreased migration intent. We used a four-point Likert scale for all items: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Agree = 3, Strongly Agree = 4. We chose four points deliberately to avoid a neutral midpoint on a bipolar construct, forcing respondents to indicate direction. To establish face and content validity, we submitted the instrument to two experts in Business Education and one in Test and Measurement, who reviewed it for construct coverage, clarity, and freedom from leading wording. To assess reliability, we conducted a pilot with 30 Business Education students drawn from an institution outside the main study and computed Cronbach's alpha. The coefficients were .812 for the Perceived Employability scale and .803 for the Migration Intentions scale, indicating high internal consistency for both.

4.7 Data collection, coding, and analysis

We collected data between March and April 2025. We administered questionnaires in person at each institution, assisted by trained research assistants. Of the 274 questionnaires we administered, 247 were properly completed and returned, yielding a valid response rate of 90.1%. We excluded the 27 non-returned or incomplete questionnaires; the principal reasons we recorded were absence from campus on the data-collection day and refusal to complete the instrument. We refer to participants throughout as final-year students; they are not graduates.

We coded all items on the 1–4 scale described above. We had no missing values on the analytic variables, because each returned questionnaire was complete; the exclusion of partially completed instruments accounts for the difference between the number administered and the number analysed. We predefined a case for exclusion where more than 10% of item-level responses were missing, but no returned questionnaire met this criterion. We assessed univariate outliers using standardised scores; no case exceeded the $|z| > 3.29$ criterion on either scale. Items 13, 15, and 17 are worded in the direction of remaining in Nigeria. We therefore reverse-coded these three items before computing the migration-intention composite, so that higher scores uniformly indicate stronger migration intent. We report item-level means in Table 3 in the direction of original wording; the composite we used in all inferential analyses is the reverse-coded composite. For item-level descriptive interpretation, we used the midpoint of the four-point scale (2.50) as the threshold. The basis for this threshold is because a four-point scale has no neutral response option, the midpoint represents the boundary between net disagreement (below 2.50) and net agreement (above 2.50). We adopted the rule: means above 2.50 = agreement; means of 2.50 or below = disagreement. We applied this rule consistently in Tables 2 and 3; accordingly, we classify the item with a mean of exactly 2.50 as disagreement.

We used descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) to summarise the demographic data and the two scale variables. We report categorical demographics as frequencies and percentages, and scale scores as means and standard deviations. For inferential analysis, we used Pearson's product-moment correlation and simple linear regression, treating the scale composites as continuous measures. We used two-tailed tests throughout, with $\alpha = .05$. We report correlation and regression results with exact p values, and we report 95% confidence intervals for regression coefficients. We performed all analyses in SPSS version 26.

© The Author(s)
Published by Universitas Negeri Padang
This is an open-access article under the: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

© The Author(s)
Published by Universitas Negeri Padang
This is an open-access article under the: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

5. Results

5.1 RQ1: Perceived employability from VBE

To what extent do final-year business education students perceive vocational business education (VBE) as equipping them with employability and self-reliance skills?

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for perceived employability from vocational business education items (**N** = 247)

No.	Item	M	SD	Remark
1	VBE has given me industry-relevant technical skills	3.00	0.77	Agree
2	VBE has equipped me to analyse business opportunities	2.71	0.81	Agree
3	VBE provides hands-on learning experiences relevant to the workplace	3.16	1.05	Agree
4	VBE has given me entrepreneurship skills for starting a business	3.29	1.06	Agree
5	I am confident in using technology for business	3.13	0.61	Agree
6	I can effectively analyse financial statements	2.87	0.98	Agree
7	I have skills in customer relationship management	3.13	0.71	Agree
8	I can manage business projects from planning to execution	3.10	0.82	Agree
9	I have strategies to adapt to changes in the business environment	2.97	0.74	Agree
	Composite Score	**3.04**	**0.84**	**Agree**

In Table 2, we report that students perceived vocational business education as equipping them with employability skills, with a composite mean of 3.04 on a four-point scale (SD = 0.84). All nine items yielded means above the 2.50 threshold, and we therefore classified all as agreement. The highest-rated items related to entrepreneurship skills (M = 3.29, SD = 1.06) and hands-on learning experiences (M = 3.16, SD = 1.05), suggesting that students felt particularly confident in the practical and enterprising dimensions of their training. The lowest-rated item concerned the capacity to analyse business opportunities (M = 2.71, SD = 0.81), followed by the capacity to analyse financial statements (M = 2.87, SD = 0.98). We emphasise that these are students' self-reported perceptions of their employability, not evidence that the programme has objectively equipped graduates with skills; the respondents were final-year students at the point of data collection, not graduates in the labour market.

5.2 RQ2: Migration intentions

What is the association between perceived employability from VBE and migration intentions among final-year business education students?

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for migration intentions (Japa Syndrome) items (**N** = 247)

S/N	Item	M	SD	Remark
10	I have active plans to relocate and work abroad	3.45	1.10	Agree
11	I would migrate for better economic opportunities	3.65	1.05	Agree
12	My VBE skills are more valued abroad than in Nigeria	3.28	1.15	Agree
13	I can build a successful career in Nigeria	2.40	1.20	Disagree
14	My VBE skills give me confidence to secure a job abroad	3.20	1.08	Agree
15	Local opportunities would make me prefer to remain in Nigeria	2.35	1.25	Disagree
16	VBE has increased my interest in opportunities abroad	3.15	1.12	Agree
17	I have a responsibility to contribute to the Nigerian economy	2.50	1.18	Disagree

S/N	Item	M	SD	Remark
18	I am more likely to migrate because my skills are globally demanded	3.18	1.05	Agree
19	I see my long-term future outside Nigeria	3.40	1.22	Agree
	Composite Score	**3.11**	**1.14**	**Agree**

In Table 3, we report that respondents endorsed migration intentions, with a reverse-coded composite mean of 3.11 (SD = 1.14). Items expressing direct intent to migrate scored highest: item 11, migration for better economic opportunities (M = 3.65), item 10, active plans to relocate and work abroad (M = 3.45), and item 19, seeing a long-term future outside Nigeria (M = 3.40). Items linking VBE skills to global mobility also attracted agreement: item 12, skills more valued abroad (M = 3.28), item 18, greater likelihood of migrating because skills are globally demanded (M = 3.18), item 14, confidence to secure a job abroad (M = 3.20), and item 16, VBE having increased interest in opportunities abroad (M = 3.15).

The three positively worded (pro-remaining) items all fell at or below the decision threshold. Respondents tended to disagree that they could build a successful career in Nigeria (item 13, M = 2.40) and that local opportunities would make them prefer to remain (item 15, M = 2.35); the item on responsibility to contribute to the Nigerian economy sat exactly at the threshold (item 17, M = 2.50), and we therefore classified it as disagreement under the rule we stated in 6.6. We interpret these item-level results as suggestive of a pattern of weak attachment to local career prospects; they are not confirmation that respondents lack confidence in the Nigerian economy generally, nor do they establish anything about the respondents' actual obligations.

5.3 Hypothesis testing

$H0_1$: There is no significant association between perceived employability from vocational business education and migration intentions (Japa Syndrome) among final-year business education students in Oyo State tertiary institutions.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation between VBE Employability and Japa Syndrome (N = 247)

Variable	N	M	SD	df	r	p	Decision
Perceived VBE employability	247	3.04	0.84	245	.219	< .001	$H0_1$ rejected
Migration intentions	247	3.11	1.14				

Table 5. Simple linear regression predicting migration intentions from perceived VBE employability (**N** = 247)

Model Fit

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	p
1	.219	.048	.044	12.34	< .001

Model coefficients – VBE employability

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	95% CI for B
(Constant)	2.207	0.267	-8.27	-	< .001	[1.681, 2.732]
Perceived VBE employability	0.297	0.085	.219	3.51	< .001	[0.130, 0.464]

Our correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant, though weak, positive association between perceived employability from VBE and migration intentions (r = .219, p < .001). Our regression model was statistically significant, F(1, 245) = 12.34, p < .001, and indicated that

© The Author(s)
Published by Universitas Negeri Padang
This is an open-access article under the: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

perceived VBE employability accounted for approximately 4.8% of the variance in migration intention ($R^2 = .048$, adjusted $R^2 = .044$). The unstandardised slope ($B = 0.297$, 95% CI [0.130, 0.464]) indicates that a one-point higher perceived VBE employability score is associated with a 0.297-point higher predicted migration intention. The standardised coefficient ($\beta = .219$) expresses the same relationship in standard-deviation units and is, as expected in a single-predictor model, equal to the correlation coefficient. The intercept ($B = 2.207$, 95% CI [1.681, 2.732]) is the predicted migration-intention score when perceived employability is zero, a value outside the observed range of the predictor and therefore not substantively interpretable on its own.

We found the association statistically significant, but the low R^2 indicates that perceived VBE employability explains only a small portion of the variance in migration intentions. We therefore reject the null hypothesis. We emphasise, however, that statistical significance is not substantive importance: with a large enough sample, even trivially small associations will be statistically significant. The magnitude of the association we report here ($\beta = .219$, $R^2 = .048$) is weak by conventional standards and should be interpreted accordingly.

6. Discussion

We found that final-year business education students in the five participating Oyo State institutions perceived VBE as equipping them with employability skills (composite $M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.84$) and reported migration intentions ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.14$). We found the two constructs to be weakly but statistically significantly and positively associated ($r = .219$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .048$). Two features of this result require emphasis at the outset. First, the magnitude of the association is small: perceived VBE employability explains approximately 4.8% of the variance in migration intention. Second, the design is cross-sectional and correlational, so our result is associational; it cannot establish causality, causal direction, or mechanism.

Our finding that students perceived VBE as equipping them with employability skills is consistent with a body of Nigerian and international work. Adedeji and Ibironke (2022) reported that business education can equip recipients with the skills needed for national development; Ayonmike et al. (2015) and Okolie et al. (2019) documented the potential of vocational and technical programmes to improve graduate outcomes when curricula are aligned with labour-market needs. Internationally, Tomlinson (2017) and Clarke (2018) have argued that graduates' perceptions of their own employability are shaped not only by skills but by the interaction of human capital, social capital, and identity. Our result is consistent with these accounts.

Respondents particularly endorsed entrepreneurship skills ($M = 3.29$) and hands-on learning ($M = 3.16$), and these are the dimensions on which VBE programmes most visibly differ from general business education. But our data are self-reported perceptions, not objective measures of programme effectiveness. Students may overestimate their readiness relative to what employers would judge (Yorke, 2006; Jackson, 2015). Our finding therefore establishes that students believe themselves to be well equipped; it does not establish that they are, nor that the programme is responsible.

Also, our finding that migration intentions were reported by a substantial share of respondents aligns with the broader pattern in Nigerian and African migration research. Afrobarometer (2025) reported that around six in ten Nigerian youth had considered emigrating. Okunade and Awosusi (2023) documented the salience of japa among Nigerian youth and its concentration among the relatively educated. De Haas (2008, 2021) and Olayiwola (2024) have argued that emigration aspirations are widespread in contexts of constrained local opportunity, and that aspiration without

© The Author(s)
Published by Universitas Negeri Padang
This is an open-access article under the: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

capability does not translate into movement. Carling (2002) similarly emphasised that involuntary immobility, that is the gap between the desire to migrate and the capability to do so is itself a defining condition of many sending contexts.

Our correlation and regression results (Tables 4 and 5) indicate a weak positive association between perceived employability from VBE and migration intentions. Because our design is correlational, the appropriate phrasing is that a one-point higher perceived employability score is associated with a 0.297-point higher predicted migration intention, not that employability causes migration intention to increase. The low R^2 (4.8%) reinforces the point that perceived employability accounts for less than one-twentieth of the variance in migration intention, leaving the overwhelming majority of variance to other factors.

7. Conclusion

We set out to determine whether perceived employability from vocational business education (VBE) is associated with migration intentions (Japa Syndrome) among final-year business education students in Oyo State, Nigeria, a relationship the existing japa literature had not examined. Among the 247 respondents we drew from five institutions, perceived employability from VBE was moderately high (composite $M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.84$), and migration intentions were also high ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.14$). We found the two constructs to be weakly but statistically significantly and positively associated ($r = .219$, $p < .001$), with perceived employability explaining approximately 4.8% of the variance in migration intention ($R^2 = .048$). From the results, two major findings emerged. First, the association is positive rather than negative as students who perceived their VBE-acquired skills more highly also reported slightly stronger intentions to emigrate, not weaker ones. Second, the association is weak: perceived employability accounts for less than one-twentieth of the variance in migration intention, and the overwhelming majority of variance remains to be explained by other factors.

8. Recommendations

We offer the recommendations below as following from the pattern we observed. They are policy implications supported by our data. First, we recommend that government agencies and institutional stakeholders investigate whether local employment and enterprise opportunities match the skills VBE graduates acquire. Our item-level results in Table 3 suggest that VBE students perceive their skills as more valued abroad than in Nigeria (item 12, $M = 3.28$) and express limited confidence in building a career locally (item 13, $M = 2.40$). If this perceived skill–opportunity mismatch is confirmed on a wider scale, targeted enterprise-finance and internship pipelines may warrant consideration. We frame this as a call for diagnostic enquiry, not for a specific intervention. Second, we recommend that career counselling units be established and made functional across tertiary institutions to provide accurate, current information about local and international labour markets. Such units would enable final-year students to make informed career decisions, whether those decisions involve remaining in Nigeria, pursuing opportunities abroad, or some combination of the two. Third, we recommend that institutional leaders and employers consider how enterprise incubation, internship pipelines, and startup finance can be integrated into VBE programmes. The purpose of such integration would be to strengthen the local deployment of VBE-acquired skills

Author's declaration

Author contribution

Alagbe Luqman Ayobami: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Validation, Data Curation,

© The Author(s)
Published by Universitas Negeri Padang
This is an open-access article under the: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Investigation, Writing – Original Draft. **Aikomo Abiodun Daniel:** Conceptualization, Validation, Investigation. **Olabode Victor Olunloyo:** Methodology, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing – Review & Editing. **Olayiwola Aanuoluwa Diran:** Methodology. **All authors:** Writing – Review & Editing. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Funding statement

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the participating students and institutions for their cooperation. No external assistance was provided.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Ethical clearance

Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee, Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo. This study was assessed as exempt from full ethical review under minimal-risk survey research with consenting adults. All participants received an information sheet explaining the purpose, procedures, and intended use of the data. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained in writing before data collection, and respondents could withdraw at any point without penalty. No personally identifying information was collected on the questionnaire.

AI statement

This article is the original work of the authors. The authors declare that AI tools were used solely for grammar checking and proofreading of the manuscript. No AI tool was used for data collection, analysis, interpretation, or the generation of substantive content, and the authors take full responsibility for the final text.

Publisher's and Journal's note

Universitas Negeri Padang as the publisher, and the Editor of Jurnal Pendidikan Teknologi Kejuruan state that there is no conflict of interest towards this article publication.

© The Author(s)
Published by Universitas Negeri Padang
This is an open-access article under the: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

References

Adedeji, E. O., & Ibironke, J. O. (2022). Skill acquisition in business education as a catalyst to sustainable national development. *KWASU International Journal of Education*, 5(1), 260–268. https://www.kije.com.ng/index.php/KIJE/article/view/50

Adedokun, O. A., & Karzanova, I. V. (2019). Impact of migration on the economy of Nigeria: Recent trends. *Vestnik NSUEM*, (2), 204–211. https://doi.org/10.34020/2073-6495-2019-2-204-211

Afrobarometer. (2025). Facing lack of economic opportunity, Nigerian youth want government action on jobs and cost of living. https://www.afrobarometer.org/publication/ad998-facing-lack-of-economic-opportunity-nigerian-youth-want-government-action-on-jobs-and-cost-of-living/

Ayonmike, C. S., Okwelle, P. C., & Okeke, B. C. (2015). Towards quality technical vocational education and training (TVET) programmes in Nigeria: Challenges and improvement strategies. *Journal of Education and Learning, 4*(1), 25–34. https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v4n1p25

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1

Bashorun, B. (2023). Migration trajectories: A case study of high-skilled youths in Nigeria [Bachelor's thesis, Malmö University]. DiVA. https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:mau:diva-62398

Becker, G. S. (1993). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis with special reference to education (3rd ed.)*. University of Chicago Press.

Beine, M., Docquier, F., & Rapoport, H. (2008). Brain drain and human capital formation in developing countries: Winners and losers. *The Economic Journal*, 118(528), 631–652. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0297.2008.02135.x

Carling, J. (2002). Migration in the age of involuntary immobility: Theoretical reflections and Cape Verdean experiences. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 28*(1), 5–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830120103912

Clarke, M. (2018). Rethinking graduate employability: The role of capital, individual attributes and context. *Studies in Higher Education, 43*(11), 1923–1937. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1294152

Cookey, I. F., & Ochuba, O. I. (2024). Unemployment and migration in Nigeria: An empirical investigation. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 8*(1), 223–235. https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijriss/articles/unemployment-and-migration-in-nigeria-an-empirical-investigation/

Czaika, M., & de Haas, H. (2014). The globalization of migration: Has the world become more migratory?. *International Migration Review, 48*(2), 283–323. https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12095

De Haas, H. (2008). The myth of invasion: The inconvenient realities of African migration to Europe. *Third World Quarterly, 29*(7), 1305–1322. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590802386435

De Haas, H. (2021). A theory of migration: The aspirations-capabilities framework. *Comparative Migration Studies, 9*(1), 8. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-020-00210-4

Docquier, F., & Rapoport, H. (2012). Globalization, brain drain, and development. *Journal of Economic Literature, 50*(3), 681–730. https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.50.3.681

Duru, I. U. (2021). Examination of the causes and consequences of international migration in Nigeria. *Asian Development Policy Review, 9*(4), 180–193. https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.107.2021.94.180.193

© The Author(s)
Published by Universitas Negeri Padang
This is an open-access article under the: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Dustmann, C., & Glitz, A. (2011). Migration and education. In E. A. Hanushek, S. Machin, & L. Woessmann (Eds.), *Handbook of the economics of education* (Vol. 4, pp. 327–439). https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-444-53444-6.00004-3

International Organization for Migration (2023). World migration report 2024. https://www.iom.int/world-migration-report-2024

Jackson, D. (2015). Employability skill development in work-integrated learning: Barriers and best practice. *Studies in Higher Education, 40*(2), 350–367. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2013.842221

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45*(1), 79–122. https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1994.1027

Mazzarol, T., & Soutar, G. N. (2002). "Push-pull" factors influencing international student destination choice. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 16(2), 82–90. https://doi.org/10.1108/09513540210418403

National Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Labour force statistics: Unemployment and underemployment report (Q4 2020). https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/1238

Nwosu, I. A., Eteng, M. J., Ekpechu, J., Nnam, M. U., Ukah, J. A., Eyisi, E., & Orakwe, E. C. (2022). Poverty and youth migration out of Nigeria: Enthronement of modern slavery. *SAGE Open*, 12(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221079818

Ogu, C. (2022). Examining the relationships among the effects of international migration, unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. *African Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences, 12*(2)., 347-360. https://journals.aphriapub.com/index.php/AJSBS/article/view/1559

Okolie, U. C., Igwe, P. A., & Elom, E. N. (2019). Improving graduate outcomes for technical colleges in Nigeria. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, *28*(1), 21-30. https://doi.org/10.1177/1038416218772189

Okunade, S. K. (2021). Irregular emigration of Nigerian youths: An exploration of core drivers from the perspective and experiences of returnee migrants. In I. Moyo, J. P. Laine, & C. C. Nshimbi (Eds.), Intra-Africa migrations: Reimagining borders and migration management (pp. 50–69). Routledge. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003091721-6/irregular-emigration-nigeria-youths-samuel-kehinde-okunade

Okunade, S. K., & Awosusi, O. E. (2023). The japa syndrome and the migration of Nigerians to the United Kingdom: An empirical analysis. *Comparative Migration Studies, 11*(1), 27. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-023-00351-2

Olayiwola, A.O. (2024). Reducing Overseas Emigration of Nigerians for Greener Pastures Through Entrepreneurial and Technological Revolution. *Journal of Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education (BAJOVEED), 1*(1), 75-83. https://bauchijove.com.ng/archive_journal.php?id=20

Premium Times. (2022). Japa!, by Toyin Falola. https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/551986-japa-by-toyin-falola.html

Raheem, S., & Ayika, S. N. (2019). Technical vocational education and training (TVET) as a panacea to solving Nigeria's youths' problem of unemployment. *Continental Journal of Social Sciences, 1*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3562073

Sofolahan, V. (2023). Vocational business education for sustainable economic development in Nigeria. *Al-Hikmah Journal of Business Education*, 3(1). 24-32. https://alhikmahuniversity.edu.ng/AJOBED/index.php/journal/article/view/51

Stark, O., Helmenstein, C., & Prskawetz, A. (1997). A brain gain with a brain drain. *Economics Letters, 55*(2), 227–234. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0165-1765(97)00085-2

Tomlinson, M. (2017). Forms of graduate capital and their relationship to graduate employability. *Education + Training, 59*(4), 338–352. https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-05-2016-0090

© The Author(s)
Published by Universitas Negeri Padang
This is an open-access article under the: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

UNESCO (2022). Transforming technical and vocational education and training for successful and just transitions: UNESCO strategy 2022–2029. https://unesdoc.unesco.org

World Bank. (2022). World development indicators. https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators

Yorke, M. (2006). Employability in higher education: What it is – what it is not. Higher Education Academy.

© The Author(s)
Published by Universitas Negeri Padang
This is an open-access article under the: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/