

# Promoting of Emotional Intelligence in Enhancing Employability Skills for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Among Nigerian Technical Education Graduates

Ibrahim Haruna Bako and Ts. Dr Yusmarti Binti Yusof

Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education, University Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia

[hb180009@siswa.uthm.edu.my](mailto:hb180009@siswa.uthm.edu.my); [marwati@uthm.edu.my](mailto:marwati@uthm.edu.my)

## Abstract

Technical education aims at developing students with technical skills for employability after graduation, however, changes in technology posed a serious challenge to the graduates as employers preferred graduates with emotional intelligence (EI) for employability in 21<sup>st</sup> century, this course for the study to identify the needed emotional intelligence competencies for employability skills of technical education graduates in northern Nigeria. In actualizing the objective 249 technical education graduates participated in the study. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS version 23 to ascertain the validity of the data. The result indicated that emotional intelligence competencies are needed for employability skills of technical education graduates in Nigeria as standard deviation values for the 65 competencies ranged from 0.57 to 1.52 and were less than 1.96 that is 95% confidence limit.

## Keywords

Employability skills; Emotional intelligence; Technical education graduates.

## 1. Introduction

Technical education is a course of study where students acquired scientific knowledge, skills and attitude to graduate as a skilled individual's ready to be self-employed or get employed. Technical education trades involve the use of hand tools, industrial training as well as commercial skills work (Odo et al, 2017). Technical education (TE) prepares beginners with careers that are manual or practical skills based such as building technology, woodwork technology, painting and decoration, drafting, automobile technology, mechanical technology, and electrical/ electronic technology (Ede 2001). Bello et al. (2013) stated that technical Education University graduates preparedness to gain flexible employability skills such as emotional intelligence that will enable them compete into a dynamic labour market has become a serious challenge. Because, what the graduates were thought in schools and the real labour market demand are two different concepts. Despite the fact that the graduates believe that they have enough intellectual abilities and technical knowledge to execute their job. On the contrary the students graduated without the new knowledge for employability such as interpersonal skills, communication skills, and emotional intelligence which are prescribed as the required skills to participate into 21<sup>st</sup> century world of work (Singh and Singh, 2008; Atkins, 1999; Omar et al. 2012; & Varghese, Sager, & Agarwal 2013). Emotional intelligence is a collection of non-cognitive skills, proficiencies and abilities that guided an individual capacity in adapting new societal demand and stress. (Talarico, et. al.2013). Daniel Goleman, (1998, p137) stressed that emotional intelligence is the "capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationship." to succeed in our career. Emotional intelligence (EI) is a cluster of emotional skills, work skills, leadership skills and emotional competency which develop in individuals' to easily gain employment after graduation. Bakar and Hanafi (2007); Singh and Singh (2008); Overtoom (2000); Cassidy (2012); Omar, et al. (2012); Tripney et al. (2013); Lippmann ((2015) reported that new knowledge demand by the employer of labour due to the advent of technology and globalization and the demand for employability skills in contemporary labour market has posed a serious challenges to Nigerian technical education graduates. The prevailing unemployment in Nigeria due is to the lack of judicious utilization of resources or preference of priorities by leaders (Ayegba 2015), these constitute a major challenges facing the Nigerian technical education graduates, these observation prompted scholars to investigate using studies to find an appropriate skills that can develop the students' skills for employment (Ayegba 2015; Ibrahim & ado 2018).

Among the observation is the mismatch between the skills needed and the academic education acquire by the graduates' which bring about the increase of unemployment rate among Nigerian graduates (Kayode and Adeyemi,

2016) in which technical education graduates are inclusive. According to report by Nigeria National Bureau of Statistic, the rate of unemployment in Nigeria within three years period from 2016-2018 increased by 12.7%, (NBS, 2019) as indicated in the Figure 1.

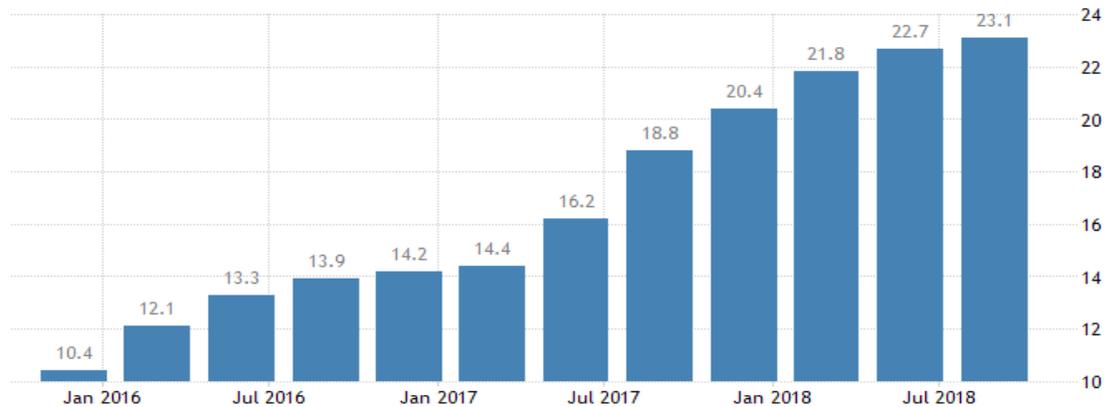


Figure 1. Nigerian Youth Unemployment Rate from 2016-2018 (Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, 2019)

The report from the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2019) indicates the rapid increase of unemployment rate among Nigerian graduates who are enrolled in technical education program. One of the solutions to this menace is the inclusion of emotional intelligence as a course into national educational curriculum to support the graduates to immediately gain employment after graduation. Kayode and Adeyemi (2016); Ibrahim and Ado (2018) recommended that if the government will introduce the teaching of emotional intelligence into the curricula at all level of education, this will lead to a better academic achievement and employability skills. It is pertinent to give emotional intelligence skills a due receptiveness for its immense important to the graduates for employment. Employment and employment opportunity is what measured the quality of citizens and society level of development.

The world prosperity and the future of any developing countries depends essentially on technical and technology related occupations for growth. Lack of knowledge of new affective work abilities (emotional intelligence), poor performance of job satisfaction from the graduates of technical education and the incessant negatives complain from the employers of labour toward work abilities by technical education graduates is a serious threat in Nigeria. This course for the study to identify the needed emotional intelligence competencies for employability skills of technical education graduates in northern Nigeria.

### 1.1. Objectives

To identify the emotional intelligence competencies needed for employability skills of technical education graduates in Northern Nigeria.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Concepts of Employability Skills

Employability is having something doing either self or get employ whereas unemployment is a circumstance where people with the intention to engage in an employment in self or of giving wage cannot find jobs due to the lack of specific skills. Lack of these specific skill has become a major problem among our Nigerian technical education graduate which result in the graduates involving in so many ill-activities such as socially delinquent behavior as a result of technological dynamism that brought about a new specific skills apart from the technical skill acquired by the graduates, the new skills such as industrial 4.0 and other social skill which indicate the need of emotional intelligence among the Nigerian technical education graduate since industrial 4.0 is all about use of computer and robotic machine. Industrial 4.0 is an industrial revolution is the current automation of earlier manufacturing and industrial practices, using modern smart technology. Large scale machine-to-machine communication (M2M) and the internet of things (IoT) are integrated for increased automation, improved communication and self-monitoring,

and production of smart machines that can analyze and diagnose issues without the need of human intervention while other skills such as communication skill, adaptability and emotional intelligence are the needed employability skills by 21<sup>st</sup> century employers. Frameworks relating to employability skills were developed by various scholars with the intent to identify skills that are appropriate to reach the demand of labour market in the current working environment; a study carried out by Suarta (2017) identified that communication skill, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and teamwork skills are the attributes of employability skills with highest importance level. The table 1 below shows a summary of research on employability skills framework developed by Suarta (2017).

Table 1; Adopted from Suarta, (2017) “*Employability skills required by the 21st century workplace: A literature review of labor market demand.*”

Table 1. Summary of Research on Employability Skills

Research focus	Methodology	Approach	Employability skills attribute
Employers’ perspectives.	The questionnaire, the respondents consist of 180 employers in various field of engineering.	The instruments used in this study were adapted from the SCANS model.	The analysis show that personal quality is the highest mean values follows by interpersonal skills, resource skills, basic skills, information skills, thinking skills, and system and technology skills.
Graduates and employers perceptions.	The questionnaire to assess the information perceived by graduates and employers. There were 34 graduates and 39 employers who returned the questionnaire	The instrument used in this study adapted from survey of the Employability Skills Needed in the Workforce, originally designed by J. Shane Robinson.	Problem solving and analytic, decision making, organization and time management, communication ability, interpersonal skills, leadership and influence, creativity, innovation, flexibility and ability to conceptualize, lifelong learning, professional behavior, motivation-personal strength.
Examine employers and instructors perspectives.	Data collected using a questionnaire which was analyzed using descriptive and inferential analysis	Focusing on seven core skills comprising communications skills; critical-thinking and problem-solving skills; lifelong learning and information management; integrity and professional ethics; entrepreneurship skills; and leadership skills.	The highest rank perceived by employers and university instructors are communication skills, integrity and professional ethics. The lowest ranked is leadership skills and entrepreneurship skills.
Investigate the importance of employability skills as perceived by employers.	The data was collected using questionnaire. Employers participating in this research was an operational manager; supervisor and chief executives.	The instrument used in this study were adapted from the SCANS model. Employability Skills 2000+ from Conference Board of Canada and Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF)	The finding of the study showed that employers place great importance on communications skills; problem-solving skills; teamwork skills; and personal qualities. Graduates also need to emphasis on leadership skills, entrepreneur ship skills technical skills and information’s skills.

Employability skills are sets of skills, an attributes, personal capability, and ability, an important components for career success, communication skills, management’s skills, interpersonal skills and emotional competence.

Employability according to Beukes (2010) is defined as the application and continuous development of a range of supportive competencies and attributes through series of reiterative developmental stages that enhance the individual opportunities for accessing and sustaining employment opportunities. Beukes (2010) also stated that Communication skills, Basic skills, and Creatives-thinking is an attributes for employability and it is an individual's unique personal skills which induce a positive affects in individual's that results in powerful social influence, these skills help graduates to attend the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century world of work. In another study by Rasul et al. (2013) described employability skills as Interpersonal skills, Thinking skills and Personal qualities as well as ability to work as a team and communication skills which technical education graduates needs to compete and get employ in modern days world of work, the authors further mentioned that study reveals that "Nationally and Internationally" nowadays employers of labours prefers graduates' that possess new sets of skills such as team work and communication skills. In the study by Omar et.,al. (2012) employability skills is a skills that cut across all jobs without specification be it industries and corporate organization. In addition , Zeidner et al. (2004); Rasul et al. (2013); Salim et al., (2017); Nguyen,( 2019) described employability skills as but not limited to team work, interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, communication skills, adaptability skills and social skills, a personal qualities and social skills (Atkins, 1999; Bakar and Hanif, 2007; Rasul et al. 2013), it also included a generic skill, as well as transferable core skill which individual use as a handy and a facilitating knowledge required by 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce (Rasul, et al. 2013). It's also believes to be a sets of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes (Beukes 2010). Which can serve as a stimulus, as it is predicted that job in the future will need people that can apply knowledge into their work (Rasul et al. 2013). Scholars are increasingly recognizing the important of employability skills as an attributes for people's career competencies in 21<sup>st</sup> century, (Beukes 2010; Syed et al. 2014) which an individual's most acquire to secured employment in the competitive labor market of 21<sup>st</sup> century. An employability skill is the appropriate application of communication skills, social skills and emotional intelligence (Beukes 2010; Syed et al. 2014; Suarta et al 2017). Development of emotional intelligence as desirable for enhancing individual employability and career success(Ayogu 2015) has become a household name were every job now need emotional intelligence to succeed looking at the rapid changes in technology were machine perform human work, introduction of fourth industrial revolution or industrial 4.0 and other specific skills thus has necessitate the technical education graduate to be emotionally intelligent and put into effect others skills into his/her work to succeed in this dynamic technological era.

## 2.2. Concept of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a combinations of abilities that allows one's to be aware of his/her personal emotions, understand his/her ability, limitations and act according to accepted present situations as agreed within he/she emotional insinuation. , and an individual ability to be in control of he/she emotional states and it's also very instrumental for an individual to recognize and understand the emotional states of others to achieve success within and outside his/her working environment, (Salovey and Mayer, 1995; Petrides 2003; Goleman 1995). Emotional intelligence start developing in human brain from the age of fifteen, the age that individuals' maturity begin developing and increasing in thinking ability that permit he/she differentiate between emotions and thinking (Ibrahim and ado 2018) Emotional competency skills is the basics characteristics that individuals' use to have opportunity of been ahead of others and remain at the top in any area of choosing career, (Goleman 2003), similarly, Hein (2004), defined emotional intelligence as a cognitive trait that one's has as an innate abilities which give the person emotional feeling and inherent behavior for emotional learning management skills which can help in determining the longevity in strength, joy and continuity in one's life time. Therefore, emotional intelligence is a cumulative mental ability and cognitive techniques that individual showcase to stand different from others in term of performance in workplace. According to Pandita (2012) emotional intelligence is an individual's capacity to recognize, regulate and appraise his/her emotions. Emotions are feelings that individuals control, experience and manifest, which bring about interpersonal relationships (Goleman, 1998). Therefore, emotional intelligence is an individual instincts, thinking process and visions that aids ones' to triumph. According to Goleman, (1998) an individual who has the ability to recognize, control and regulate his own and others emotions is termed as emotionally intelligent. Emotional intelligence is contextually view as one's ability to recognize and understand emotion within himself/herself and others, appraise and regulate them in order to produce appropriate response that lead to interpersonal and intrapersonal outcomes. Emotional intelligence and emotional competency are interrelated constructs (Cherniss 2010). Similarly, Boyatzis 2009; Cherniss and Boyatzis (2013) commented that characteristic behavior of emotional intelligence and emotional competency are work skills traits. Therefore, emotional intelligence and emotional competence all geared towards skills competence that brings out the best in one's employability. According to Goleman (2011) emotional intelligence competencies are self-ability and social-ability as indicate in the diagram as the Figure 2.

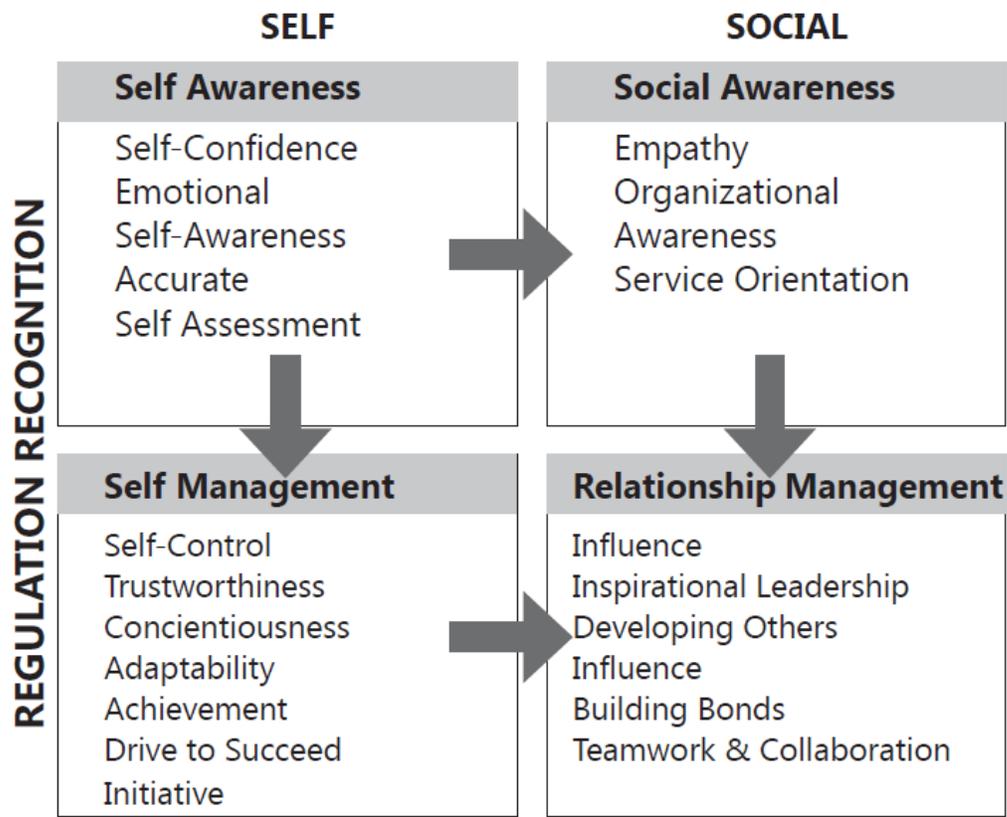


Figure 2. Emotional Intelligence Model (Pandita, 2012).

The assessment of emotional intelligence competencies is begun as a search for early identification of talent (Boyatzis and Fabio 2004). Emotional intelligence is label as cognitive ability centered on person's behavior; an individual's ability to recognize, understand and use the emotional information on oneself and others is a sign of emotional competence (Boyatzis and Fabio, 2004). In Hay Group (2011) emotional and social competency is a learned capability, based on emotional intelligence. Significant developments surface concerning the role of emotional intelligence competency for students as a skill for employability. So many studies prove the extent relevance of emotional intelligence competency to employability in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Researchers conducted studies specifying emotional intelligence competency as a skills for employability, (Beukes, 2010; Syed et al. 2014; Suarta et al 2017).

Proponent emotional intelligence scholars Salovey and Mayer (1990); Goleman (1998) conceptualize emotional intelligence as abilities. Salovey and Mayer (1990) in their study identify four branches of emotional intelligence thus perceiving emotions, facilitating thought, understanding emotions and managing emotions; the first two are experiential emotional intelligence and the last two are strategic emotional intelligence use in identify emotional intelligence in young graduates. On the other hand, Daniel Goleman, (1998) identify five domains of emotional intelligence with twenty five emotional competencies. Upon series of statistical analysis by Richard Boyatzis in (2000), reduces the twenty five emotional competencies to twenty, with the reason that competencies within each domains differs theoretically and empirically thus in the social awareness clusters and the relationship management clusters, (Boyatzis et al. 2000). Ongoing research on emotional intelligence competencies, Goleman, Boyatzis and McKeein (2002) further refine the emotional competencies from twenty to eighteen competencies clusters in order to have fewer, clearer, and more distinct competencies. In trying to identify more specific emotional intelligence competencies with higher psychometric standards that contributes to effective skills the eighteen emotional competencies were slash to twelve, (Boyatzis et al. 2007). According to Boyatzis & Goleman, (2011) the twelve

emotional intelligence competencies focus more on human behavior, the relationship between them that are observable, recognizable and distinct.

### **2.3. Emotional Intelligence Clusters and Technical Education Graduates'**

Clusters of emotional intelligence developed by Goleman et al. (2002) as the ability model that defines emotional competency that are work and life outcomes and or an alternate demonstration of purpose thus;

#### **2.3.1 Cluster one**

Self-awareness is the ability to accurately perceive one's emotional state and be aware of them as they happen. Self-awareness is an individual capacity to increase in understanding his/her strengths and limitations while seeking professional and personal opportunities for growth. (Goleman 1998). Self-awareness is an individual ability to accurately assess his/her emotional state, understand and judge oneself and others as well as capacity to address others confidently within one's limited strength to achieve personal opportunity and growth. These three competencies in this case are emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence. (Goleman 1998). These competencies are expected personal qualities that technical education graduates' needs in readiness to address 21<sup>st</sup> century labour market challenges.

#### **2.3.2 Cluster two**

Self-management or regulations is one's ability to adapt with new environment as well as ability to control impulses using self-awareness skills. Learning to control your emotions and respond to others in an appropriate way is positive self-management. One example of positive self-management is having the ability to defuse your anger by listening and recognizing the feeling of others even they wrong (Goleman 1998). Self-management or regulation is an individual's flexibility in recovering and controlling anger, anxiety, loss, stress, and fear as well as ability to honestly pledge and deal with new environment optimistically and at same time to be self-oriented in making achievement in one's career, (Goleman 1998). These six competencies are emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, orientation, initiative and optimism. (Goleman 1998). The six competencies will contribute immensely in individuals to have total control of his/her emotions and also in adapting new environment when successfully employed. These competencies are of relevance technical education graduates to use self-confidence competency for interview and adaptability competency for new environment.

#### **2.3.3 Cluster three**

Social-awareness is the ability to accurately sense others' emotions and understand what is really going on. Being empathetic, acknowledging the emotions of others, being thoughtful and considerate and making decisions that take other feeling into considerations can help build your social-awareness (Goleman 1998). These competencies to technical education graduates is of immense benefit, developing empathy is a manipulating skills use win the love of friends and colleagues.

#### **2.3.4 Cluster four**

Relationship management is one's ability to use awareness of oneself emotions and emotions of others' to manage interaction successfully. The basis of relationship management is developing and maintaining good relationship. Clear communication, inspiring and influencing others, working well in a team, and managing conflict all contribute to relationship management (Goleman 1998). Relationship management is an intellectual develop emotional ability that one's use to intelligently resolve conflicts, developing and maintaining good relationship, convincing interactions. This an individual abilities to interact will fellow coworkers or associate, technical education graduates need these competencies in building working relationship with she/he boss.

### **2.4 Importance of Emotional Intelligence, as an Attribute for Graduates' Employability Skill for 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The importance of emotional intelligence is progressively highlighted by scholars with recent over demand of work skills from the labour employers in the recent time. Scholars indicated that, the transition phase from higher education to work life does not follow a clear and well-defined path, often resulting in it being a challenging and problematic time for graduates as they often feel ill-prepared for the challenges and reality of employment (Jameson et al. 2015, December). McArthur (2011) stated that "re-design" and "re-brand" in higher education will improve graduates economic role. Perking (2015) learning and personal development, academic excellence, and effective thinking, critical thinking, and active citizenship are the key factors attributes for graduates. However,

graduates' that are emotionally intelligent perform better than those with lower emotional intelligence, graduates' with low emotional intelligence find it difficult to emphasize, exchange feelings appropriately, join forces to achieve goals, consequence to the loss of confidence in identifying priority upon employment opportunity, (Ibrahim and Ado 2018), ill-development of emotional intelligence will have negative consequences on our technical education graduates in terms of filling gaps on employment opportunity in government and private organization and alike. The interrelation between academic intelligence IQ and emotional quotient EQ is that former is traditional skills while latter is 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and both are employability skills; graduates' having both skills is more privilege in term of employability opportunity. Intelligence quotient IQ is the estimates of intelligence which is used for educational placement such as intellectual intelligence for example academics or specific skills (technical skills) while emotional intelligence is the measure of individuals' competencies and abilities, such as ability to accurately perceive one's emotional state, ability to adopt with new environment, ability to acknowledge the emotional state of others, ability to successfully interact with other. In other words, to perceive emotions, regulate emotions, understand emotions and manage emotions (Goleman et al. 1990). Therefore, a person with high IQ does not necessarily have high emotional intelligence. IQ offers little to explain different achievement of people with generally equal promise, schooling, and opportunity, similarly, academic intelligence in some cases has little to do with emotional intelligence and success in life, an emotionally intelligent graduates stand the chance to quickly gain employment than the graduates having only academics or technical skills in 21<sup>st</sup> century world of work. The needed emotional intelligence by the graduates is self-awareness; self-management; social awareness and relationship management to use as tools for successful career in 21<sup>st</sup> century labour market.

### **3. Methods**

The study was carried out in northern Nigeria. The study used structured questionnaire for the quantitative data from the sample of 249 final year students of technical education in northern Nigeria. The questionnaire contained 65 emotional intelligence competency items, and the data collected from the survey was analyzed using statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, version 23.0), and substantial agreement for the four clusters of emotional intelligence competencies in the test had high Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients ranged from 0.76-0.89.

### **4. Data Collection**

The instrument for the survey was pilot test and the result in the table 2 below show the reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) of the 65 items of emotional intelligence competency needed based on the four clusters of emotional intelligence by Danial Goleman (2002)

### **5. Results and Discussion**

The findings of the study reveal that all the 65 emotional intelligence competencies were needed for employability skills of technical education graduates in northern Nigeria and prominent among the competencies include ability to share other people feelings as a technical education graduate, feeling of wanting to help when someone is in need as a technical education graduate, working independently to accomplish responsibility as a technical education graduate, ability to read groups and individual intent behaviour through mutual discussion within group or organization, identify where one needs improvement and ability to understand organizational priorities as a technical education graduate.

The emotional intelligence competency items was highly reliable for employability skills of technical education graduates in Nigeria

Summarily, this finding agreed with the opinion of Charnis (2000) that emotional intelligence competency is the measuring mechanism in predicting individual performance. The findings also agreed with ideas of Goleman (2011), Goleman et al. (2002) that it is compulsory for every graduate and individual worker to possess emotional intelligence competence to enable him/her performance effectively to the satisfaction of client and the employer as well, as in Jameson et al. (2015) the transition phase from higher education to work life does not follow a clear and well-defined path, often resulting in it being a challenging and problematic time for graduates as they often feel ill-prepared for the challenges and reality of employment. The authors therefore saw emotional intelligence competency as a set of traits and social competence skills which the graduates need to improve in their capability, consciousness and empathy in order to retain his/her work. Furthermore, the study finding indicated that it necessary for technical education graduates to improve and prepare themselves based on the items in the emotional intelligence as an employability skills through media such as books, social media, television among others.

### 5.1. Numerical Results

Statistical Reliability Estimates for the Items of Emotional Intelligence Competency Needed for Employability Skills of Technical Education Graduates

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha

S/N	Item statements	No of items	Cronbach alpha reliability Coefficients (Rho)	Remarks
A	Self-awareness competency	12	0.76	High Reliability
B	Self-regulation competency	15	0.84	High Reliability
C	Social awareness competency	17	0.86	High Reliability
D	Relationship management competency	21	0.89	High Reliability
	Total	65	0.91	Substantial Agreement

Analysis in Table 2 reveals that each of the four competencies had high Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients ranged from 0.76-0.89. Also, the reliability coefficient of the entire item was computed to be 0.91 which indicated that the test was a refined test in consonance with the recommendation of (Landis & Koch, 1977) which stated that acceptable reliability of test or agreement of the raters on test given to trainees/students in education is generally in the range of 0.41 to 1.00.

Therefore given the high reliability coefficients or substantial agreement for various competencies in the test, the answer to research question about the reliability of the test would be in the affirmative. Thus, the items in the emotional intelligence competency were reliable and the result of the test could be considered in the study.

### 5.2 Summary of factorial validity/analysis emotional intelligence competency needed for employability skills of technical education graduates in Nigeria

The data reveals that 65 items had factor loadings that ranged from 0.405 to 0.859 and were above the factor loading of 0.40 at 10% over lapping variance with four components. This indicated that all the 65 items were valid for the emotional intelligence competency needed for employability skills of technical education graduates in northern Nigeria. In general, all the 65 items are valid enough as the emotional intelligence competency needed for employability skills of technical education graduates in Nigeria. This finding agreed with Bakare (2014), Giachino and Gallington (1977) that if content has no components of non – loading items, it is assumed that the factorial validity of the tasks or content is high.

### 6. Conclusion

Unemployment is seen as one of the problems facing Nigerian technical education graduates and this is because these graduates were not well trained with emotional intelligence competencies and employability skills. In order to respond to these challenges, it is necessary to prepare the graduates with the needed employability skills and abilities in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The authors agreed with finding of Goleman (2011), Goleman et al. (2002) that it is compulsory for every graduate and individual worker to possess emotional intelligence competence to enable him/her performance effectively to the satisfaction of client and the employer as well.

And also Suarta (2017) that communication skill, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and teamwork skills are the attributes of employability skills with highest importance level and that will improve individual chances of getting employment.

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## Biography

**Ibrahim Haruna Bako** is a Ph.D. candidate in the field of Technical Education, Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education, Universiti Tun Huessein onn Malaysia.

**Yusmarwati Yusof** is a Senior Lecturer in Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia. She has completed her Ph.D. in the field of technical education at University of East London, U.K, in 2011. Yusmarwati Yusof has approximately 20 years of working experience in higher education sector and her passion for research and teaching will never end. She is actively participates in research projects and publications, as well as consultation at national and international levels, specifically in the field of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Her research interests include both educational and technical aspects. Among them are; pedagogical approaches, instructional design, Building Construction and development, problem based learning, development of competency, social development and cultural exchange with concentration in indigenous people. Recent work has focused on developing model and framework for improving sosio economy among minority groups, with particular emphasis on indigenous people as well as study on emotional intelligence. Additionally, she is also a certified skill and vocational trainers, and a member of the Malaysian Board of Technologies. As part of the community, she believes that the ways we make sense of who we are and how we got here, helps to shape the societies we are striving to build.