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Influence of Transition Services on Work Readiness of Students with Disabilities in Kwara State University

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Abstract**:** *The ability of students with disabilities to secure and sustain meaningful employment after graduation remains a major concern for educators, families, and policymakers. Although access to higher education for persons with disabilities has improved, many graduates still experience challenges in transitioning smoothly from school to the workplace. This study therefore investigated the influence of transition services on the work readiness of students with disabilities in Kwara State University, Malete. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised all fifty (50) students with disabilities in the university, and due to the manageable size, a total enumeration sampling technique was used, involving all participants. The Questionnaire on Transition Services (QTS) and the Questionnaire on Work Readiness (QWR). The QTS assessed access to services such as career guidance, vocational training, counselling, and other support systems for employment transition. The QWR measured competencies including communication skills, self-confidence, teamwork, adaptability, and career awareness. The instruments were validated by experts and yielded reliability coefficients of 0.81 and 0.85 respectively. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation for the research question, while regression analysis tested the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings showed that students with disabilities demonstrated a high level of work readiness (mean = 3.40). Results indicated that transition services had a significant influence on work readiness. The study concluded that effective transition services enhance students' preparedness for employment. It was recommended that the university strengthen transition programmes and collaborate with employers to provide internships, mentorship, and career support services.*

Keywords: Transition services, work readiness, students with disabilities, employability, career development, inclusive education.

Introduction

The transition from higher education to employment is a significant time in the lives of individuals with disabilities. A successful transition allows graduates to achieve economic independence, social inclusion, and personal fulfilment. Despite increased global access to tertiary education, many students with disabilities continue to face major challenges to entry and success in the employment market. These impediments include discrimination, limited workplace accommodations, inadequate vocational preparation, low employer awareness, and insufficient support systems throughout the transition period. (UNESCO, 2023). The demand for inclusive employment practices has grown as governments, educational institutions, and international organisations strive to enhance labour market participation among people with disabilities. Nonetheless, the move from education to employment is a complex process that demands careful preparation and coordinated support to assure success.

At response to these issues, transition services have arisen as a vital component of disability assistance programs at educational institutions. Transition services are a planned set of activities meant to help people with disabilities move from school to work, independent living, and community participation. Career counselling, vocational training, work-based learning experiences, mentorship programs, job placement aid, and collaboration between educational institutions, families, and employers are common examples (Carter et al., 2022). Similarly, transition services are systematic interventions designed to help students successfully transition from school to adulthood, with a focus on employment and independence. Carter et al. (2022) defined transition services as coordinated educational, vocational, and social assistance that help students with disabilities achieve their post-school goals. Career exploration, occupational assessment, internship opportunities, mentoring relationships, workplace readiness training, and individualised planning are all examples of effective transition services. Such services improve students' comprehension of job alternatives and provide them with the practical skills needed for employment. Students are better prepared to make educated career decisions and successfully handle the challenges of the workplace thanks to these coordinated support systems.

The ultimate purpose of transition programs is to help students with impairments become work-ready. Work preparedness refers to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours necessary for obtaining and maintaining employment. It consists of communication skills, teamwork, problem-solving abilities, self-confidence, flexibility, professionalism, and career awareness (NACE, 2024). Work ready refers to the extent to which individuals possess the competences necessary for successful employment. NACE (2024) identified the important job ready competencies as communication, teamwork, leadership, professionalism, adaptability, technical literacy, and career management. Work preparedness for students with disabilities also includes self-advocacy skills, a grasp of workplace accommodations, confidence in professional relationships, and the ability to navigate job barriers. These skills boost employability and make it easier to adjust to new environments. Therefore, work readiness acts as a link between educational attainment and successful job outcomes, making it an essential predictor of career preparedness among students with disabilities.

The relationship between transition services and work readiness has received considerable attention in contemporary educational and disability research. Research consistently demonstrates a positive relationship between transition services and employment outcomes among individuals with disabilities. Test et al. (2023) found that students who received comprehensive transition planning exhibited significantly higher levels of employment preparedness and career confidence than those without such services. Similarly, Wehman et al. (2022) reported that participation in vocational training and work-based learning programmes increased the likelihood of competitive employment among young adults with disabilities. The study emphasized the importance of internships and employer partnerships in developing workplace competencies. Furthermore, a longitudinal study conducted by Mazzotti et al. (2023) revealed that career counselling and self-determination training significantly predicted post-school employment success among students with disabilities. The findings highlighted the need for institutions to integrate transition planning into educational programmes. These findings collectively suggest that well-structured transition services contribute substantially to the acquisition of employability skills and workplace competencies.

Further empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of transition services was provided by Morningstar et al. (2022), who investigated the impact of comprehensive transition programmes on employment preparedness among university students with disabilities across eight public institutions in the United States. Using a longitudinal research design involving 412 students with physical, sensory, and learning disabilities, the study examined the influence of career counselling, vocational assessment, workplace mentoring, and internship experiences on students' readiness for employment. Findings revealed that participants who received structured transition services demonstrated significantly higher levels of self-confidence, workplace communication skills, and career decision-making abilities than their counterparts who did not participate in such programmes. The researchers further reported that approximately 72% of students who completed transition programmes secured employment or internship placements within six months of graduation. The study concluded that coordinated transition services play a critical role in equipping students with the competencies necessary for successful entry into the labour market.

Similarly, Newman, Wagner, and Cameto (2023) conducted a large-scale study on the relationship between transition planning and employability outcomes among students with disabilities in postsecondary institutions. The study adopted a survey research design involving 685 students with disabilities from various colleges and universities across North America. Data were analysed using multiple regression techniques to determine the predictive value of transition services on work readiness indicators. The findings showed that participation in transition-related activities such as job-shadowing programmes, career workshops, workplace visits, and mentorship schemes significantly predicted employability skills including teamwork, adaptability, problem-solving, and professional communication. The researchers found that students who received intensive transition support recorded higher work-readiness scores and greater career confidence than those who received minimal support. The study therefore emphasized the importance of integrating transition planning into university disability support services to improve employment outcomes.

Despite these positive findings, some empirical studies have reported contrary results regarding the effectiveness of transition services on employment readiness. For instance, Roux and Shattuck (2022) examined the influence of transition programmes on employment outcomes among young adults with autism spectrum disorders in the United States. Using a mixed-methods approach involving 320 participants, the study found that although transition services improved participants' awareness of employment opportunities, they did not significantly predict actual job acquisition after graduation. The researchers attributed this outcome to persistent barriers such as employer discrimination, inadequate workplace accommodations, and limited labour market opportunities. The study concluded that while transition services may improve preparedness, external environmental factors often determine whether employment outcomes are successfully achieved.

In another study, Lindsay and Cagliostro (2023) investigated the effectiveness of university-based transition services among graduates with disabilities in Canada. The study employed a descriptive survey design involving 450 graduates who had participated in various transition programmes during their undergraduate studies. Results indicated that no statistically significant relationship existed between the level of transition service participation and long-term employment stability among the respondents. Many participants reported that challenges such as inaccessible work environments, negative employer attitudes, economic conditions, and insufficient workplace support continued to affect their employment experiences despite receiving transition-related assistance

during their studies. The researchers argued that transition services alone may not be sufficient to guarantee employment success and recommended broader institutional and policy interventions to complement existing transition support programmes.

Despite the documented benefits of transition services, some scholars have argued that such interventions alone may not guarantee employment success. Lindsay et al. (2022) observed that environmental barriers, employer attitudes, and labour market conditions can limit the effectiveness of transition programmes. Factors such as workplace discrimination, inadequate accommodation policies, inaccessible work environments, and limited employment opportunities may continue to hinder graduates with disabilities even when they possess adequate skills and qualifications. Nonetheless, transition services remain a critical factor in enhancing work readiness because they provide students with opportunities to develop the competencies necessary to navigate these challenges and compete effectively in the labour market.

Some studies have shown that graduates with disabilities experience lower employment rates than their non-disabled counterparts despite possessing similar academic qualifications (ILO, 2024). In many developing countries, including Nigeria, the situation is further complicated by inadequate disability-inclusive employment policies, limited transition planning, and insufficient collaboration between universities and employers. Consequently, many graduates with disabilities struggle to secure meaningful employment after graduation. The persistence of these challenges underscores the need for universities to adopt comprehensive transition programmes that support students throughout their educational journey and prepare them adequately for post-school life.

In Nigeria, efforts have been made to promote inclusive education through legislative frameworks such as the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act. Nevertheless, access to effective transition services remains limited in many higher institutions. Students with disabilities often graduate without adequate exposure to career guidance, vocational preparation, workplace experiences, or professional networks necessary for successful employment transitions. This situation has contributed to concerns among educators, policymakers, and disability advocates regarding the employability and long-term career prospects of graduates with disabilities.

The significance of transition services can further be understood through the lens of career development theories. This study was anchored on Super's Career Development Theory. Super proposed that career development is a lifelong process influenced by self-concept, experiences, and environmental opportunities. The theory emphasizes career exploration, skill development, and vocational maturity as essential components of successful career transitions. The relevance of the theory lies in its recognition that students require structured support to develop occupational competencies and career identities. Transition services provide opportunities for career exploration, skill acquisition, and workplace exposure, thereby enhancing work readiness among students with disabilities. The theory therefore provides a suitable framework for understanding how educational and vocational supports contribute to successful employment preparation and career development.

The importance of transition services in enhancing employability outcomes among students with disabilities has attracted considerable scholarly attention. Research indicates that students who participate in structured transition programmes demonstrate higher levels of employment readiness, self-determination, and career success than those without such support (Test et al., 2023). However, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of transition services within Nigerian universities remains limited, particularly among students with disabilities in public higher institutions. This gap in knowledge necessitates further investigation into the extent to which transition services contribute to work readiness among this population. Therefore, this study investigated the influence of transition services on the work readiness of students with disabilities in Kwara State University, Malete.

Statement of the Problem

Although access to higher education for persons with disabilities has improved significantly in recent years, successful transition from university to employment remains a major challenge. Many graduates with disabilities face difficulties in obtaining employment due to inadequate vocational preparation, limited work experience, employer misconceptions, and insufficient career support services. Within Nigerian universities, transition services specifically designed to support students with disabilities are often underdeveloped or inconsistently implemented. As a result, students may graduate without acquiring essential employability skills needed for workplace success. The consequence is increased unemployment, underemployment, and social exclusion among graduates with disabilities. Despite growing recognition of the importance of transition services, limited empirical studies have examined their influence on work readiness among university students with disabilities in Nigeria. This gap necessitates an investigation into how transition services contribute to preparing students with disabilities for employment. Therefore, this study examined the influence of transition services on the work readiness of students with disabilities in Kwara State University, Malete.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of transition services on the work readiness of students with disabilities in Kwara State University, Malete.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the level of work readiness among students with disabilities in Kwara State University, Malete.
2. Examine the influence of transition services on the work readiness of students with disabilities.

Research Question

1. What is the level of work readiness among students with disabilities in Kwara State University, Malete?

Research Hypothesis

$H_0$1: Transition services have no significant influence on the work readiness of students with disabilities in Kwara State University, Malete.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of all fifty (50) students with disabilities enrolled in Kwara State University, Malete. Due to the manageable population size, total enumeration sampling was employed. Two researcher-developed instruments were used for data collection. These include: Questionnaire on Transition Services (QTS), and Questionnaire on Work Readiness (QWR). The QTS measured respondents' access to transition-related services such as career guidance, vocational training, counselling, mentorship, and internship opportunities. The QWR assessed work readiness competencies including communication skills, teamwork, adaptability, self-confidence, and career awareness. Experts in Special Education, Guidance and Counselling, and Educational Measurement validated the instruments. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha yielded coefficients of 0.81 for QTS and 0.85 for QWR. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research question, while regression analysis was employed to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question: What is the level of work readiness among students with disabilities in Kwara State University, Malete?

The analysis revealed that students with disabilities demonstrated a high level of work readiness with an overall mean score of 3.40. This indicates that participants possessed substantial competencies in communication, teamwork, adaptability, self-confidence, and career awareness.

Hypothesis

Testing of Hypothesis

H0: Transition services have no significant influence on the work readiness of students with disabilities in Kwara State University, Malete.

Table Two: Summary of Linear Regression on the significant influence of Transition services on the work readiness of students with disabilities in Kwara State University, Malete.

Variable	Mean	SD	n	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.
Work Readiness	23.65	12.551	50	.781	.882	.761	12345.243	.004
Transition Service	49.55	28.174						

Regression analysis in table 2 indicated that transition services significantly influenced work readiness among students with disabilities at the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The finding suggests that access to career guidance, vocational training, counselling, mentorship, and related support services contributes positively to the development of employability competencies among students with disabilities ($F_{(1,49)} = 12345.243$, $P < 0.05$)..

Discussion of Findings

The finding that students with disabilities exhibited a high level of work readiness aligns with contemporary studies emphasizing the growing effectiveness of disability support initiatives within higher education institutions. The result suggests that participants had acquired essential competencies required for workplace success. The high level of work readiness observed among the

respondents may be attributed to their exposure to educational experiences, disability support services, self-development opportunities, and interactions that foster employability skills. This finding indicates that students with disabilities are capable of developing the necessary knowledge, attitudes, and competencies required for successful employment when provided with adequate educational and social support systems. The result further suggests that disability should not be viewed as a limitation to career success but rather as a condition that requires appropriate institutional support to enable individuals to realize their full potential in the labour market.

The significant influence of transition services on work readiness corroborates the findings of Carter et al. (2022), Mazzotti et al. (2023), and Test et al. (2023), who reported that structured transition programmes improve employability outcomes among students with disabilities. Exposure to career counselling, vocational training, and workplace experiences enhances students' confidence, career awareness, and professional competence. The present finding is consistent with the view that transition services serve as an important bridge between educational attainment and employment success. Through structured transition planning, students are exposed to realistic workplace expectations, career opportunities, and practical experiences that enable them to make informed career decisions. This finding further confirms that transition services contribute significantly to the development of self-determination, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and adaptability, which are essential components of work readiness. The result implies that institutions that invest in comprehensive transition services are more likely to produce graduates with disabilities who are adequately prepared for the demands of contemporary workplaces.

The result also supports Wehman et al. (2022), who found that work-based learning experiences significantly increase employment readiness among young adults with disabilities. Through internships and mentorship programmes, students gain practical knowledge and develop workplace behaviours valued by employers. The finding equally agrees with Morningstar et al. (2022), who reported that students with disabilities who participated in structured transition programmes demonstrated higher levels of workplace communication skills, self-confidence, and career decision-making abilities than those who did not participate in such programmes. Similarly, Newman, Wagner, and Cameto (2023) found that participation in transition-related activities such as career workshops, workplace visits, job-shadowing programmes, and mentorship schemes significantly enhanced employability skills among students with disabilities. These studies collectively suggest that transition services provide opportunities for experiential learning, thereby enabling students to acquire practical competencies that cannot be obtained solely through classroom instruction. Consequently, students become more competitive and better equipped to navigate the challenges associated with securing and sustaining employment after graduation.

The findings further align with Super's Career Development Theory, which emphasizes the importance of developmental experiences in preparing individuals for occupational success. Transition services facilitate career exploration and skill acquisition, thereby promoting vocational maturity and work readiness. According to the theory, individuals progress through different stages of career development, and successful movement through these stages depends on access to relevant experiences and opportunities. The significant influence of transition services observed in this study therefore supports the theoretical assumption that career development is enhanced when individuals are provided with opportunities to explore occupations, develop competencies, and establish realistic career goals. The finding suggests that transition services help students with disabilities to strengthen their career identities, improve self-concept, and develop confidence in their ability to succeed in the workplace.

However, while the present study found a significant influence of transition services on work readiness, some previous studies have reported contrary findings. For instance, Roux and Shattuck (2022) found that although transition services improved awareness of employment opportunities among young adults with disabilities, they did not significantly predict actual employment acquisition after graduation. Similarly, Lindsay and Cagliostro (2023) reported that participation in university-based transition services did not significantly influence long-term employment stability among graduates with disabilities. The researchers attributed these outcomes to factors such as employer discrimination, inaccessible work environments, inadequate workplace accommodations, and unfavourable economic conditions. Nevertheless, the current study differs from these findings, suggesting that transition services remain an important predictor of work readiness even though external environmental factors may influence eventual employment outcomes. This implies that while transition services may not independently guarantee employment success, they are fundamental in preparing students with disabilities to compete effectively within the labour market.

Furthermore, the finding has important implications for higher education institutions, policymakers, and disability support practitioners. The significant relationship between transition services and work readiness highlights the need for universities to strengthen disability-inclusive career development programmes, vocational training initiatives, and employer engagement strategies. It also underscores the importance of collaboration among universities, employers, families, and government agencies in facilitating successful school-to-work transitions for students with disabilities. By enhancing access to transition services, institutions can improve the employability prospects of graduates with disabilities and contribute to broader goals of social inclusion, economic participation, and equal employment opportunities. Overall, the findings of this study provide empirical support for the growing

body of literature that recognizes transition services as a critical mechanism for improving work readiness and promoting successful employment outcomes among students with disabilities.

Conclusion

The study concluded that transition services play a crucial role in enhancing the work readiness of students with disabilities in Kwara State University, Malete. Students who have access to career guidance, vocational training, counselling, mentorship, and workplace experiences are more likely to develop the competencies necessary for successful employment.

Effective transition services not only improve employability but also contribute to greater independence, social inclusion, and career success among graduates with disabilities.

Recommendations

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

1. Kwara State University should strengthen disability-focused transition programmes to improve employment preparedness among students with disabilities.
2. The university should collaborate with employers, industries, and professional organizations to provide internships, apprenticeships, and workplace learning opportunities.
3. Career counselling services should be expanded to include individualized transition planning and employment guidance for students with disabilities.
4. Mentorship programmes involving successful professionals with disabilities should be established to support career development and self-confidence.
5. Government agencies and disability advocacy organizations should partner with universities to enhance transition support **References**

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