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# Assessment of Career Development and Academic Challenges of Students in Achieving Self Actualization

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## ABSTRACT

The study's goal is to evaluate the career and academic problems that Higher National Diploma (HND) holders in Nigeria experience. The study's goals are to identify the challenges that HND holders face in realizing their career goals, to determine the chances that HND holders have of achieving their self-actualization goals in academic pursuits, and to come up with appropriate solutions to the challenges that have been identified. Needs theory, public sector determinism theory, and academic pursuit theory are the three theories that the study is based on. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) in Kaduna, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in Abuja, and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity in Abuja will all perform qualitative research. Data will be collected using a questionnaire and interviews, with the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), the National Universities Commission (NUC), and the Federal Ministry of Labor and Productivity as the target populations. In Abuja, simple random sampling would be utilized to pick 150 officers from the National Board of Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Universities Commission (NUC). The Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity in Abuja was given special attention. 30 officials from the NBTE and 30 officers from the NUC, as well as directors of training and curriculum development from both the NBTE and the NUC. Admission and entry requirements are governed by the policies of the National Board for Technical Education and the National Universities Commission. As a result of the study's findings, the following recommendations were made. Review the HND curriculum to reflect theoretical competency, create a separate four- or five-year HND program depending on the discipline, and review the NBTE and Polytechnic policy objectives to improve public perception of HND holders and public sector confidence, as well as coined with the standard demand of universities. There will be a study of earlier and current bills and edicts creating polytechnics in Nigeria. Challenges and opportunities will be discussed, with a focus on human capital requirements and the country's goal for long-term growth and development in accordance with global best practices.

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## INTRODUCTION

The disparity between the Higher National Diploma (HND) and the Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Nigeria is evident. For a long time, it is leading to the demoralization of prospective human resources being developed. At least two dynamic issues arise from the dichotomy: (1) Prospects for a career (2) Prospects for academics Higher National Diploma is described as a two-year course equivalent to the first two years of university; this means that in the framework of this definition, Higher National Diploma is not tied to national diploma. In another dimension, a Higher National Diploma (HND) is a British-style academic higher education certification that is also available in Argentina, Finland, India, Malta, Nigeria, Ghana, and other nations with British relations. This certificate is similar to a foundation degree or the first two years of a bachelor's degree and can be used to earn advanced entry into universities. The HND is a qualification awarded by numerous awarding organizations in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, including the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality (CTH Advanced diploma), Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), and BTEC (Vocational programs). The Scottish Qualifications Authority awards a Higher National in Scotland (SQA). The level of achievement is about comparable to the second year of a four-year Scottish degree or the first year of a three-year English degree. However, in Nigeria, an HND is a continuation of a National Diploma (ND), however colleges in Nigeria and around the world do not recognize this.

Postgraduate diploma programs are intended to bridge the gap between academic requirements, but they have encountered numerous obstacles in meeting an HND holder's long-term self-actualization needs in the field of future study.

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## STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The nation's socioeconomic demand for sustainable growth has resulted in an increase in the number of university education needs; as a result, every citizen should be provided an equal chance to succeed and progress.

Nonetheless, as polytechnic education expands, so does the demand for its graduates to expand in terms of employment opportunities and academic success. As a result, in assessing the career and academic challenges of the Higher National Diploma (HND) graduate, the study aims to determine

what causes the dichotomy issue that prevents HND graduates from achieving their career and academic goals. This study also aims to fill a knowledge gap by examining how organizations, in this case public, private, and universities, recognize HND as an academic qualification equivalent to BSc.

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## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the areas of concern/ lapses of HND program.
2. To discover the extent of the challenges faced by Higher National Diploma holders in career progression
3. To identify why the public sector embraces University graduates than Polytechnic graduates.

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

Higher National Diploma (HND) graduates are more skill-oriented. Polytechnic is a type of college that focuses on practical arts and sciences rather than academic courses. Polytechnic schools are tasked with teaching applied arts and sciences rather than academic courses. This has revealed the focus of the genesis of the polytechnic education dichotomy in Nigeria, which lacks academic courses to teach. Organizations in the public and private sectors may place a greater emphasis on long-term innovation capability than on the flashy talents frequently anticipated of HND graduates.

The term "dichotomy" is defined by Mariam Webster as "the partition of something into two groups that are typically mutually exclusive or conflicting" (as in "the dichotomy between good and evil"). This sense, like (meaning "division into three parts"), signifies separation into various elements, but it also has an opposite connotation. A item that appears to have contradictory properties is referred to as a dichotomy in the modern term.

The situation in Nigeria on the issue of dichotomy has sparked widespread concern. For example, the Punch newspaper (October 23, 2019 online) reported that the National Assembly passed a bill aimed at ending perceived discrimination against polytechnic graduates (HND holders) and removing the challenges they face, particularly in the public sector. In his opening remarks, Pwajok stated that the "discrimination" against polytechnic graduates "had no moral validity." When it comes to job concerns, the congressman claims that "those with first degrees (university graduates) are placed on Grade level 8, while those with HND are placed on Grade level 6 or 7." According to him, discrimination is reflected in salaries, with some firms paying degree holders N100,000 at entry level and HND holders N70, 000. In the Ministry of Interior, the Federal Government erased the distinction between the two groups of degree holders. The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Prisons Service, and Federal Fire Service were among the agencies affected.

The Civil Defence, Fire Service, Immigration, and Correctional Services Board has recommended the eradication of the distinction between holders of a Bachelor's Degree and those with a Higher National Diploma in the Ministry of Interior's services. "At the Board's meeting on the 9th and 10th of May, 2019, in Abuja, the Honourable Minister of Interior, retired Gen. Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau, gave the approval." As a result, a Technical Committee was formed right once to work out implementation details, including the harmonization of ranks in accordance with the abolition." "The House of Representatives has passed a bill removing the disparity between polytechnics' Higher National Diplomas and Nigerian universities' Bachelor of Science degrees," the statement read. Ali Isa and Edward Pwajok of Gombe and Plateau States, respectively, sponsored the measure, which was passed for a second reading in April 2017. The bill also aims to eliminate perceived prejudice against polytechnic graduates and the issues that HND holders, particularly those in government, encounter. The House of Representatives has passed a law that "ends the long-standing divide in the country between holders of Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and Bachelors of Science (BSc) degrees" (TVC News, Wednesday 23 Oct., 2:30pm). According to the station, the bill, titled "a bill for an act to abolish and prohibit dichotomy and discrimination between first degrees and HND in the same profession," aims to end long-standing discrimination against polytechnic graduates and address other issues that HND holders face in the public sector. Despite all of the aforementioned efforts, something is accomplished, but the true or, more accurately, the core cause of the dichotomy remains unaddressed. For many individuals, career refers to the aspect of life that is focused with work. From a professional standpoint, it refers to the total of all the jobs you may take during the course of your life. These definitions, however, fall short of capturing the true meaning of a career. Thinking of a profession in a broader sense reflects a more life-encompassing perspective, recognizing that the decisions you make about a job or a college major are important parts of a lifelong journey. Career can be defined as the sum total of decisions that guide your educational, social, economic, political, and spiritual activities and represent your distinctive personality traits and essential life values when evaluated in this light. Academic career: According to Post (2015), an academic career is the path you take during your schooling (but indeed, not necessarily your education). In our academic careers, we progress from freshmen to seniors, to graduate students, and finally to doctors of various kinds, much as you would in a Roman political career (regardless of whether a job in academia awaits at the end). By that metric, we turn conventional thought on its head and discover that Drexel University students are not career-oriented at all. Self-actualization: The highest level in Maslow's hierarchy, self-actualization refers to a person's potential realization, self-fulfillment, personal growth, and peak experiences. This level is defined by Maslow as the desire to achieve everything possible, to become the best version of oneself. Universities remain a developing educational sector that leads both the public and private sectors, with no agreed-upon definition of its limits, changing character, or theoretical underpinnings embraced by academics and practitioners. Universities' duty as knowledge repositories and generators includes the responsibility to equip graduates with the skills they need to find work.

The need to criticize governmental policy, as well as social and economic life, in a rational and timely manner The position of universities in civil society and the state as huge and prominent bodies Graduates' long-term role in fostering community cohesion and tolerance. The National Board Technical Education (NBTE) has a core value of being a world-class regulatory body for the promotion of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Nigeria, while the National Universities Commission (NUC) has a core value of respect. Willingness to understand and accept the various ways in which another person acts and thinks. • Social Commitment. • Responsibility. • Service. ... • Quality. • Innovation. • Compliance..

The Executive Secretaries serve as the chief executive officers of both the NBTE and the NUC. Assisting the executive secretaries are primarily permanent staff based in the NBTE and NUC headquarters in Kaduna and Abuja, respectively. The philosophy of HND programs is internally structured, with the NBTE serving as the regulatory agency. This role can also be filled by the executive secretary. Conceptual framework Theory of academic enrichment Theory of career requirements Theory is required for self-actualization.

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## **METHODOLOGY**

The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), the National Universities Commission (NUC), and the federal ministry of labor and productivity in Abuja are among the agencies involved in regulating tertiary education programs and careers in this study. In addition, three departments from each business were purposefully chosen to discover course difficulties and prospects of Higher National programs coursing dichotomy. The scope of this study is limited to the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), the National Universities Commission (NUC), and the Federal Ministry of Labor and Productivity in Abuja. Only departments dealing with programs, curriculum creation, and employment policies are included..

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## **INSTRUMENT OF DATA COLLECTION**

Within the time frame, a review of departmental documents and records was undertaken to identify areas of enrichment and review from each department. Questionnaires (both open-ended and closed-ended) were used to assess the officers' perspectives on the career and academic challenges that Higher National Diploma (HND) holders face in achieving self-actualization, and an in-depth literature review was conducted to assess how other countries use HNDs in the areas of career development and higher education pursuit. Data analysis instrument Data collected through questionnaires from multiple departments will be processed in an SPS.

Data was collected via questionnaires from multiple departments and analyzed in an SPSS environment before being presented.

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## **POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

Because of the nature of this research, the participants were limited to officers from the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Universities Commission (NUC), as well as individuals from the Federal Ministry of Labor and Productivity's department of recruitment and selection who were deemed to have knowledge of tertiary education. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), the National Universities Commission (NUC), and the Federal Ministry of Labor and Productivity will each interview 100 employees. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) has roughly 1500 members, the National Universities Commission (NUC) has 1800, and the Federal Ministry of Labor and Productivity has 2500. From this group, 150 officers were chosen to participate in the research

### ***Sample Size***

The interviewed sample size was limited to three (10) officers of those who hold authoritative positions within the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National Universities Commission (NUC), and Federal Ministry of Labor and Productivity due to the use of interviewed guides and questionnaires for this topic. The whole National Board for Technical Education's ninety offices (NBTE). A questionnaire would also be sent to the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Federal Ministry of Labor and Productivity. Sampling/Technique

### ***Sampling Technique***

The possibility of this study's subject was chosen using the purposive sampling technique. The selection of (150) officials for the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), (150) officers for the National Universities Commission (NUC), and (200) officers for the Federal Ministry of Labor and Productivity was a clear priority. The rationale for this particular pick was that these individuals had academic and professional experience and understanding. From a total population of 55000 workers at the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National Universities Commission (NUC), and Federal Ministry of Labor and Productivity, simple random sampling will be used to select 280 officers as study subjects. A questionnaire will be administered to 10% of the total number of workers in the three sectors. The data collection tool would include both quantitative and competitive data. Unstructured interviews provide you unlimited creative control over the content and format of your interview. The interview guide included open-ended questions that probed the interviewee's professional background. Anticipated questions that the interviewed scenarios necessitated were also raised. The data for the study was gathered via questionnaires. There were both open-ended and closed-ended questions on the questionnaire.

### ***Data Collection***

The information was gathered through the respondents' responses and questions that were retrieved. The researcher and the researcher assistants directly administered questionnaires during the interview.

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## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The study has shown that Higher National Diploma (HND) programs will continue to flourish in the wake of repositioning the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), revisiting its policy objectives and thus enhance the curriculum content and duration of the Higher National Diploma (HND) programs to bridge the theoretical content demand. This will also alter the public perception particularly the public and private sector organisations, a better position to Professional membership and other privileges will be enhanced.

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