

Learning Achievement and Employability Skill: Nigeria Experience

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Abstract: Youth unemployment has become one of Nigeria's greatest challenges for economic growth. One expects that any employment generated should be readily filled up without delay, given the high level of unemployment rate in the nation. But that is not always the case because the teeming population of young graduates failed to demonstrate the employability abilities necessary to take-up and keep the few available jobs. This remains a source of concern, and one question in this regard is whether the level of learning (academic and vocational) achievement attained by Nigerian graduates is adequate or not. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between learning achievement and employability skill in Nigeria. A survey research was adopted for the study. 384 entrepreneurs were selected from the total population of 22500 entrepreneurs in Ogun State Nigerian (Ogun Business.com). Respondent were selected base on multi stage (stratified, quota and random) sampling techniques. The necessary data were collected with a questionnaire tagged employability scale. The psychometric properties (validity and reliability) of the instrument were verified during a pilot survey of 50 participants, with the aid of component factor analysis and cronbach alpha analysis respectively. The hypotheses test was conducted via regression analysis with the aid of SPSS. The finding of this study revealed that: there is a significant statistical relationship between employability skills and learning achievement ($B=.928, t= 76.055, p<.05$); that leaning achievement is a potent factor in prediction of employability skill ($r^2 =.969$); that learning achievement and employability skills are good correlates ($r=.97$). Base on the findings it was recommended that higher educational institutions should enhance their curriculum to suit the employability need of their graduating students.

Keywords: Employability Skill, Learning Achievement, Labor Markets and Curriculum Adjustments.

I. INTRODUCTION

Employability is the potential and skills that are built into a person through the learning process and give him access to a larger range of employment prospects. Concern over employability skills has been legitimately voiced by policy makers, employers, and academia all throughout the world. According to findings from earlier studies, the high unemployment rate that is currently affecting many developed and developing countries around the world is to blame for this. For instance, Eurodata statistics from February 2012 were obtained from www.gfmag.com. (Source: Sodipe, 2014)

contrasts the global unemployment rate for the United States of America (U.S.A), Europe, and the United Kingdom (U.K). "In the U.S the unemployment rate had a record high in 2010 (9.6%), steadily and slowly decreasing to 7.7% in 2013. The Euro Area was very hard hit, 9.6% in 2009, growing steadily to 11.7% in 2012. Greece had 7.7% in 2008, grew to 23.8% in 2012. Ireland 6.3% in 2008 to 14.8% in 2012. Spain, 8.3% in 2007 to 24.9% in 2012. In the U.K, 5.4% 2007 to 7.9% in 2010 to 8.1% in 2012".

The crisis takes on a more serious tone in Nigeria. About 70% of the country's population is under the age of 24, and 54% of them are unemployed (Youth Survey Report by National Bureau of Statistics 2012). The most energetic and engaged group in every society, however, is the youth, who have a wealth of economic potential that may be used to spur faster economic growth in a country. Because youngsters are restless and would always seek out alternate methods to channel their energy, which is typically towards social vices, no nation could afford to waste such young talent under the cover of unemployment. That may help to explain the high rate of social ills the country is currently dealing with, including militancy, prostitution, drug use, bunkering, piracy, human trafficking, drug sales, armed robberies, kidnappings, banditry, and cultism.,

Three factors contribute to the concern about employability: the quickening pace of change in industrial practice, which necessitates the use of both technical and generic skills at a high level for effective performance; globalization, which continues to increase industry competition; and the current higher education curriculum, which does not equip graduates with the kind of professional and lifelong learning skills necessary to succeed in the competitive and fast-paced workplace (Pitan 2016; Adebakin, A.B., Ajadi, O. T. & Subair, S. T. 2015; Oliver 2015) As a result of the aforementioned, it is crucial for new graduates to have business-related skills in addition to strong academic performance.

Problem Statement

With the trend of globalization, the business world is changing, and workers are constantly presented with the uncomfortable problem of becoming multiskilled workers

(ajiboye 2013). It is depressing to see so many young people in Nigeria roaming the streets in search of employment that hardly exist. Ironically, despite the abundance of recent graduates, companies have trouble filling the few open positions since they lack the necessary skills for the modern workforce and industry. Unfortunately, the higher education system, which is supposed to make it easier to acquire skills, isn't making a difference. The curriculum in higher education falls short of teaching students the skills they need to succeed in the workplace and in modern business. The unemployment crisis must be resolved as quickly as possible, or else the societal problems we are currently experiencing will only be the tip of the iceberg in comparison to what lies ahead. In light of this, the study's goal was to determine the connection between academic success and employability, and it therefore stated its hypothesis as follows:

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between learning achievement and employability skill.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Employability

It is worthy of note that employment and employability do not have the same meaning and need to be distinguished, likewise it should be noted that employability does not have a consensus definition. According to Oliver (2015), to be employed means having a job, while employability means the possession of necessary qualities to get employment, maintain it and progress in it. Thus, employability means more than just getting a job. However, several other researchers (such as Hillage and Pollard 1998; Yorke and Knight 2006; Pool and Sewell 2007; Bridgstock 2009; Harvey 2010; Cavanagh et al. 2015) have conceptualized employability from a more holistic perspective, though in different contexts.

For instance, employability was defined by Hillage and Pollard (1998) as the capacity to secure a first job and find a new one if necessary. Employability was defined by Pool and Sewell (2007) as "having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding, and personal characteristics that makes a person more likely to choose, secure, and retain occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful; the argument of these authors is based on the fact that a person may be successful in their chosen profession without being satisfied (Pitan 2016). Employability, according to Yorke (2006), referenced in Divan et al (2016), is a collection of accomplishments - talents, understandings, and personal traits - that increase graduates' chances of finding employment and succeeding in their chosen occupations.

Employability, according to Oliver (2015), is the "ability to acquire, adapt, and continually improve the skills, understandings, and personal characteristics that increase one's likelihood of finding and creating meaningful paid and unpaid work that benefits one's self, the workforce, the

community, and the economy."As a result of the aforementioned, employability can be defined as a collection of abilities obtained through a controlled process that equipped a person to be relevant in the labor market, to the extent that he is able to not only obtain a job but also to keep it, change it, and advance in it satisfactorily.

It's also important to make clear that employability cannot be linked with a high degree categorization (Frankham 2016).

Elements of Employability Skills

Despite the numerous research and reports that have developed a list of soft talents in recent years Cinque (2016) According to Ornellas (2018), there are six components that all work together to make up employability abilities. (1) fundamental/basic abilities, such using technology, reading, and math; (2) people-related skills, like collaboration, interpersonal, and customer service (3) conceptual/thinking abilities, such as gathering and organizing data, solving problems, organizing and planning, learning-to-learn abilities, imaginative and creative thinking, and systems thinking; (4) personal qualities and abilities like being dependable, resourceful, adaptable, able to manage one's own time, and having self-esteem; (5) business qualities like innovation and entrepreneurship; (6) community qualities like civic or citizenship knowledge and skills.

Causes of Unemployable University Graduates in Nigeria

Pitan (2016) listed a number of elements that are detrimental to Nigeria's ability to produce employable graduates, including: Poor Curriculum System. Lack of Career Services and Guidance Units, Poor Learning Environment, Inadequate Funding, Inadequate Collaboration between Universities and Graduate Employers, Graduates' and Employers' Views on Employability Differing, Inadequate and Unsatisfactory Student Industrial Work Experience Program (SIWES),

Theoretical Review

Human Capital Theory and Competency Theory served as the study's theoretical foundations. Human Capital Theory: According to Human Capital Theory, "the expectation of higher earnings over the course of a person's lifetime is the main determinant of demand for higher education, and higher income is necessary to compensate for the high costs associated with higher education." This theory applies to our situation in Nigeria because many tertiary students are working to advance their education in order to make more money. Given the state of the economy right now, the cost of higher education is disheartening. Despite this, they nevertheless go out of their way to carry the load necessary to do this. This expectation, however, is merely an illusion for many graduates in Nigeria and society at large given the current issue wherein a lack of employable skills

contributes to unemployment (with all its attendant consequences, such as increases in the dependency ratio, poverty level, social ills and delinquent behavior, and increases in recruitment costs). (Pitan 2016)

Competency (learning) Theory: According to theory in the field of learning, acquiring competency frequently starts with a feeling of doubt (Collins, Mellon, and Young, 1987); persons who lack competency frequently underestimate their abilities as well as their limitations (Duning & Kruger, 1999 cited in Gross & Latham, 2007). This could imply that those who lack abilities are unaware of it and so unwilling to seek help (Duning & Kruger, 2009; Duning, Johnson, Erlinger & Kruger, 2003 cited in Gross & Latham, 2012). This idea is relevant to this study since many Nigerian graduates initially assume they have the essential skill and competency before discovering they are primarily unemployed due to.

Empirical Review

In the course of this study, the work of the following individuals, among others, who have all demonstrated a link between learning and employability skill, was reviewed: In his research, Rubeena (2015) sought to understand how management students, faculty, and business professionals perceived employability skills. It was discovered that employability skills are viewed as being the most crucial for management students to become employable by students, faculty, and industry. Ediagbonya and Oyadonga (2013) looked into the idea of employability for graduates of business education. It was discovered that business education is important for developing employable skills. In order to ascertain the degree to which Alabama business/marketing educators understood the significance of particular soft skills for employment success in the twenty-first century and the incorporation of soft skills into the business/marketing education curriculum, Mitchell (2008) conducted a study. The majority of respondents, it was discovered, said that having soft skills is essential for students to succeed in the workplace.

In his study, Priya (2007) studied the current management education system in an effort to instill comprehensive quality management so that business schools can adapt to modern paradigms. concluded that whole quality management should be incorporated to increase the effectiveness of management education. Students should not only be educated with technical abilities and expertise, but also the proper mindset. Through Malaysian Today, the government of Malaysia conducted a survey on the employability skills of Malaysian university graduates in 2005 and discovered that about 60,000 Malaysian graduates were jobless due to a lack of experience, poor English communication skills, and study of courses that were not necessary for the market.

Pauw and Westhuizen (2008) discovered that a large number of university graduates in South Africa were

unemployed due to a lack of soft skills and workplace readiness. They claimed that many students lack time management skills when their graduate careers first begin. According to Boateng and Ofori-(2002) Sarpong's research in Ghana, employers frequently view young university graduates as lacking the fundamental abilities to accomplish straightforward routine tasks.

Additionally, Lawrence (2002) argued that the absence of transferrable skills among university graduates is a contributing factor to the job gap in the United States of America. Lawrence emphasized that these employability skills are fundamental abilities that are applicable to all occupations. Employers of university graduates seek to hire graduates who have a balanced background, combining academic aptitude with employability skills like interpersonal, communication, and problem-solving abilities.

Adebakin et al. (2015) noted that both public and private organizations in Nigeria have criticized the caliber of university graduates produced by Nigerian universities and the need to devote significant amounts of financial and human resources to newly hired university graduates in order to get the desired outcomes from the graduates recruited. Venkatesan Iyengar (2015) studied the demands placed on aspirants and business schools to meet employers' expectations of recent business school graduates and those being considered for positions in their organizations. It was determined that presentation abilities, oral communication, listening skills, and writing skills were important for recruitment. In their study from 2015, Tejbir Kaur, Jaskaran Singh Dhillon, and Rubeena Bajwa sought to understand how employers, faculty, and management students view employability skills. In Punjab, India, the sample included 150 management students, 50 faculty members, and 30 employers. Communication skills, cooperation skills, planning and organization skills, ICT abilities, and self-awareness were shown to be the most crucial for management students to become employable.

III. METHODOLOGY

Ogun State Nigeria was chosen as the area for this investigation. A survey research design was adopted for the study. Multi-stage (stratify, Quota and simple random) sampling technique was employed to select 384 respondents from the population of 225,000 entrepreneur in Ogun State Nigeria. The sample size was determined using Cochran (1977) technique for larger population.

The necessary information (data) was elicited through questionnaire tagged employability Skill Scale, which was adopted from University of Oregon USA employability skill survey. The psychometric properties (validity and reliability) of the instrument were tested in a pilot survey of 100 participant with the use of factor analysis and cronboach alpha statistic respectively. Hypothesis test was carried out by

means of simple linear regression with the aid of SPSS. The regression model for the analysis was stated as:

$$ES = f(LA)$$

$$ES = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LA + \dots + u_i$$

Where: SE= Employability Skills

LA= Learning Achievement

U_i = Error term

β_0 = Constant

β_1 = Correlation coefficient

IV. RESULT AND INTREPETATION

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|------------------|--|------------|
| .876 | .877 | 30 |

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2020.

Table 1 revealed a reliability value $\alpha = .876$, which implied that the instrument used for this study was highly reliable.

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 8.066 | 26.887 | 26.887 | 8.066 | 26.887 | 26.887 |
| 2 | 7.465 | 24.883 | 51.769 | 7.465 | 24.883 | 51.769 |
| 3 | 5.852 | 19.508 | 71.277 | 5.852 | 19.508 | 71.277 |
| 4 | 3.891 | 12.970 | 84.247 | | | |
| 5 | 2.866 | 9.552 | 93.799 | | | |
| 6 | 1.860 | 6.201 | 100.000 | | | |

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2020.

Table 2 showed a total cumulative variance of 71.277. This implied that the instrument of this study was valid.

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|----------------------|---------|----------------|-----|
| EMPLOYABILITY | 62.4289 | 3.76243 | 380 |
| LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT | 67.7263 | 3.92796 | 380 |

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2020.

Table 3 showed a brief description of the data used in the study. The mean score of the variables Employability Skill (ES) and Learning Achievement (LA) were 62.4289 and 67.7263 while the standard deviations were 3.76243 and

3.92796 respectively. Table 3 also indicated that 380 responses were analyzed.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix

| | | EMPLOYABILITY | LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Pearson Correlation | EMPLOYABILITY | 1.000 | |
| | LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT | .969 | 1.000 |
| Sig. (1-tailed) | EMPLOYABILITY | . | .000 |
| | LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT | .000 | . |
| N | EMPLOYABILITY | 380 | 380 |
| | LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT | 380 | 380 |

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2020.

Table 4 showed that Learning Achievement (LA) was positively correlated with Employability Skill (ES) with an estimated value of $r = .97$. The above implied that both were good correlates of each other.

Table 5: R Square

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .969 ^a | .939 | .938 | .93307 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT | | | | |
| b. Dependent Variable: EMPLOYABILITY | | | | |

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2020.

Table 5 showed the summary of the size of effect of the independent variable (Learning Achievement (LA) on the dependent variable Employability Skill (ES). The result revealed an R-square value $r^2 = .939$, which implied that about 94% of total variance in Employability Skill was accounted for by the independent variable Learning Achievement (LA). The remaining 6% was accounted for by other variables not included in the model.

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | |
|---|----------------|----------|-------------|----------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 5035.984 | 1 | 5035.984 | 5784.308 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 329.098 | 378 | .871 | | |
| | Total | 5365.082 | 379 | | | |
| a. Dependent Variable: EMPLOYABILITY | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT | | | | | | |

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2020.

Table 6 showed that there was a positive statistical significant relationship between Employability Skill (ES) and Learning Achievement (LA) at 5% significant level. This was evidenced by the result of the f-statistic, (f

$(1/378) = 5784.308$, $P < 0.05$. This implied that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was rejected at 95% confident interval.

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | .422 | .828 | | -.510 | .610 |
| | LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT | .928 | .012 | .969 | 76.055 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: EMPLOYABILITY

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2020.

Table 7 showed the summary of the relative influence of the independent variable, Learning Achievement (LA) on the dependent variable Employability Skill (ES). The result revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between Learning Achievement (LA) and Employability Skill (ES) ($\beta = .928$; $t = .76.06$; $P < 0.05$). The result also indicated that a unit increase in Employability Skill lead to 0.93 unit increase in Employability skill.

Discussion of Findings

The hypothesis of this study was set to estimate the magnitude and the direction of relationship between Employability Skill (ES) and Learning Achievement (LA) as well as the size of the effect of the independent variable LA on the dependent variable ES. It was discovered from the findings of the study that there is not only significant positive statistical relationship between the variables of interest but that the size of the effect of the determinant variable on the outcome variable is high. The finding of the study corroborates the assertions of Ediagbonya and Oyadongha (2013), Pauw, and Westhuizen (2008) Malaysian Today, (2005) Adebakin et al., 2015 among others.

It was made obvious by comparing the study's findings to the review literature that employers of labor are growing more concerned about potential hires' competency. They are more interested in hiring employees who will be highly productive, easy to train, and adapt to the constantly changing business environment. However, only graduates who possess the necessary skills for the job market are considered employable by the relevant industries.

It is important to note that Nigerian graduates' misconception that they have sufficient skills is typically not acknowledged until they enter the workforce and discover that their abilities fall short of what companies are looking for. In a similar vein educational institution fails to acknowledge that

they are not impacting the necessary employment skills on students. Considering the aforementioned, it is essential that the government, educational institutions, and industrialists work together to take decisive action to reverse the negative trend.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be deduced that businesses are wary of the constantly expanding and changing business environment and are only willing to hire graduates who are capable of adapting to the changes. Additionally, tertiary institutions must collaborate with industry to research and comprehend labor markets in order to modify their courses to meet market demands.

Finally, it is imperative for government to get involve in the curricular adjustment process through provision of regulations to fast track the process; since the process will not only reduce difficulties in organizations' recruitment process, but reduce training cost, increase productive/efficiency and in turn lead to organizational growth as well as national development.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Educational institutions should adjust their curriculum to suit the the needs of labour market.
- The industries and educational institution should collaborate in highlighting the needs of the labour market.
- Government should endeavour to finance researches toward identification of labour market needs.
- Government should also provide the necessary regulation for curriculum adjustment process.

Suggestion For Future Research

This study focused mainly on the relationship between learning achievement and employability skill. Future researchers may attempt to focus on highlighting of the elements of employability skill and their respective relevant in industrial setting.

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