



Research Paper

Assessing the Need for Employability Skills Acquisition Content in the Curriculum of Business Teacher Education Programme in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on assessment of the need for employability skills acquisition contents in the curriculum of business teacher education programme (BTEP) in Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design (DSRD) was espoused. The population for the study remained 83 business education lecturers. The all-inclusive population was appraised. The research instrument was a well-thought-out questionnaire titled 'Need for Employability Skills Acquisition Content in Business Education Questionnaire' (NESACBEQ). Three experts validated the instrument and an overall reliability correlation coefficient of 0.79 was acquired by means of Cronbach Alpha method. Out of the 83 copies of the instrument disseminated, 78 copies were successfully regained as well as espoused for data analysis. The instrument was structured on a five-point ranking scale, with response categories as "Very High Extent", "High Extent", "Moderate Extent", "Low Extent" and "Very Low Extent". Mean ratings in addition to standard deviation were espoused to answer the research questions. Findings of the study indicated that emerging workplace technologies and global trends necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition content in BTEP in Nigeria to a high extent. The study concluded that emerging workplace technologies and global trends are basic factors that demand the need for integrating employability skills content in the curriculum of BTEP in Nigeria. The study recommended that business educators must exploit beyond academic and technical curricula experiences by integrating the knowledge, skills, values, and competencies embedded in business education to multi-culture environments and labour. The study correspondingly suggested that curriculum planners in business education through relevant agencies ought to carry out a review of the business education curriculum to incorporate emerging workplace technologies into the curriculum in order to improve the employability opportunities of the students.

KEYWORDS: *Employability skills, Acquisition, Business teacher education programme, Tertiary Institutions*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The high rate of poverty and unemployment among the youths with its attendant manifestations such as pipe line vandalism, kidnapping, armed robbery, terrorism and other social vices have been an epidemic and a clog to progress and national development. It is an obvious fact that graduates of our tertiary institutions often spend years roaming about the streets in search of employment opportunities, which are in most cases not even in existence. It is on these reasons, Okoye and Okwelle (2014) lamented that every year thousands of students obtain their university degrees and other tertiary education certificates ready to be employed by the government and private business organizations but are unable to secure placements.

The high rate of unemployment among Nigeria graduates could be viewed two-fold, first is the recognizable absence of employment openings for the graduates. Secondly, these graduates are deficient in expertise in addition to competencies prerequisite to operate efficiently in Nigerian work environments and in the global world; hence, unemployable. The present economic reality in the country shows that the situation has not improved in any way. In fact, Nwanewezi (2014) buttressed the above point by opining that the high degree of joblessness in the country could be attributed to lack of employment opportunities, as Ordu (2019) explained that this is due to the unemployable nature of Nigerian graduates. It seems that Nigerian graduates are not exposed to qualitative education that would empower them towards becoming employable and self-reliant.

To improve the employability status of Nigerian graduates and thereby reducing unemployment and poverty among the youths, Oba (2012) asserted that the place of youth education and entrepreneurial programmes that would genuinely address and encourage youths acquire relevant entrepreneurial and workplace skills are what the nation needs at this time. Thus, the singular approach to allow the youth is to offer them with acceptable as well as qualitative tutelage imperative to make them self-employed, occupation originators as well as to exterminate insufficiency in their various communities. Countless nations of God's creation not excluding Nigeria have considered business education as appropriate in arming young people with necessary skills and competencies that would empower them participate in skill acquisition and prolific living (Ezeani, 2014).

Business education is a singular programme in colleges of education having entrepreneurial courses in the content. It is a scholastic programme intended to furnish youngsters with obligatory expertise plus capabilities that would qualify them involve in skill fullness attainment in addition to a fundamental wage (Ezeani, 2014). It is an intermediate through which youngsters can obtain workplace in addition to commercial expertise. Business education curriculum is planned to install in the learners diverse abilities as well as understandings that could empower them earn livelihood via becoming a wage earner, impresario, employer as well as self-employed. Aliyu (2012) asserted that business education is geared towards gaining in addition to development of expertise, capabilities as well as traits which are indispensable for proficiency of the economic structure.

It is expected that business education students upon graduation have assimilated relevant expertise that could enable them to be employable in various small-scale enterprises that operate in the country. The acquisition of these skills would indeed help to salvage the country from the shackles of unemployment and poverty. It must be emphasized that the global knowledge economy is rapidly transforming the demands of the labour market into a complex set of skills. Employers today emphasize much on getting applicants with the factual skills for their organizations. International Labour Office (ILO, 2010) posited that arming the personnel with the skills obligatory for present as well as tomorrow is a strategic concern in the national progress plus expansion outlook of all.

Business education graduates need adequate employability skills for them to effectively work in the contemporary office environment. McQuaid (2015) defined employability skills as the convertible skills desirable by an individual to make him/her 'employable'. Along with upright technical thoughts plus subject knowledge, employers frequently outline a set of skills that they want from an employee. These skills are what they consider will enhance the personnel to display their roles adequately to the best of their abilities. Employability is subject to knowledge, skills as well as attitudes exhibited by employees in addition to how those assets utilized, plus how you present them to employers.

It is observed that far-reaching vicissitudes have transpired in the 21st Century workplace and business environs as a consequence of emerging workplace technologies in addition to globalization. The latter instituted huge trials to distinct workers, business managers, organizations as well as the society at large. The above scenario requires every well-meaning nation for prompt transposing or transformation in its education largely in addition to business education in precise. The transformation is to guarantee that the skills assimilated by scholars remain pertinent in the 21st Century to qualify them get the anticipated affluence in addition to attractive livelihood and contribute completely to the socio-economic plus industrialized expansion of their republics (Ezenwafor, 2015).

With particular reference to emerging workplace technologies, Bhat (2013) noted that we live in a global world where technology, especially information and communication technology, is changing the manner in which businesses create, strive and capture value, how and where we work, and how we interact and communicate. Houston (2017) presented some technologies that are transforming the very foundations of global business and the organizations that drive it: cloud and mobile computing, big data and machine learning, sensors and intelligent manufacturing, advanced robotics and drones, and clean-energy technologies. These technologies are not just helping people to do things better and faster, but they are enabling profound changes in the ways that work is done in organizations. Another serious scenario is the fact that due to the intense ravaging of corona virus the world can never be the same. Ordu (2020) opined that covid-19 pandemic has changed the social bearing of both humans and organizations, and this has totally impacted education delivery.

Global trends are another factor that has also brought about changes in the contemporary business environment. Globalization implies competing not just with organizations within the state or national boundaries but also with those within the global expanse. The products, technology and services need to be manufactured keeping in mind the global audience. Clover (2012) defined globalization as "the economic, political, and societal forces pushing 21st century higher education towards greater international involvement. Interestingly, the influx of graduates yearly into the labour market with limited hope for gainful employment has become a worrisome experience especially in developing countries. This unusual trend has been attributed to economic changes in countries and global labour market, which increasingly resulted in new requirements to the quality of graduates and new approaches to their competitiveness (Cameron & Pickering, 2012), Ordu and Tambari (2020).

Undoubtedly, the emerging workplace technologies and globalization have brought about a change in the employers' job skills requirements thereby making the labour market more competitive. Thus, business education programme must equip its recipients with appropriate employability skills necessary for global competitiveness. It is against this background that Ezewanfor and Olaniyi (2018) cautioned that failure to equip business education students with job employability skills critical to job success is equivalent to placing employability barriers in their paths and to allow students to graduate with these deficiencies has far reaching implications. Already, the Nigerian economy cannot generate sufficient employment opportunities to absorb the teeming youth graduates. It is likely that a large number of young potential workers will face a bleak future through being unemployed except something is done to reverse the trend. Thus, to enhance the graduates' chances of securing appropriate jobs that suit their education and training, tertiary institutions offering business education programme need to equip students with relevant competencies for the labour market that will increase their capacities to meet specific workplace demands. Hence, the need for integration of employability skills contents in business education programme.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that emerging workplace technologies and globalization is one major challenge of higher education in less developed economies. Its resultant consequences have increasingly impacted mostly on business education and employability of its recipients. Despite the appropriateness of the objectives of business education in Nigeria for knowledge development, the various learning experiences lack practical and employability skills needed by students to be analytical and critical thinkers and have global perspectives of economic opportunities. Employability skills contents of the various learning experiences in business education programme has been inconsistent with Nigeria labour market realities as many graduates are yet to use acquired skills productively to effect economic change. Skills, values, and competencies embedded in business education programme are yet to sufficiently promote self-reliance, self-employment, a deficiency, which is obviously inconsistent with economic changes and responsible for the ever-increasing unemployment in the country.

It is quite unfortunate that many students choose to study business education as their career and yet they refuse to work hard enough to acquire enough skills expected of them. Soludo (2012) declared that unemployment situation is not a problem in Nigeria rather Nigerian graduates is not employable and they are misfit for today's workplace. Business education as a programme is aimed at providing a functional training that would help the students acquire relevant employable skills. In this regard, the high rate of unemployment and its attendant consequences among business education graduates can only be stemmed if they acquire adequate employability skills. In fact, It seems that a gap exist between the employability skills content of business education programme and expectation of skills required by business organizations. Hence, the problem of the study focused on assessing the need for employability skills content in business education in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to assess the need for employability skills acquisition content in BTEP in Nigeria. Specifically, the study assessed the extent:

1. Emerging workplace technologies necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition content in business education programmes in Nigeria.
2. Global trends necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition content in business education programmes in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do emerging workplace technologies necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition content in business education programmes in Nigeria?
2. To what extent do global trends necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition content in business education programmes in Nigeria?

II. METHOD

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study and the area was Rivers State. The population of the study comprised of 83 lecturers teaching business education courses in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The entire population was studied. Therefore, there was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was a researcher developed questionnaire which was validated by three entrepreneurship education lecturers. The instrument was titled "Need for Employability Skills Acquisition Content in Business Education Questionnaire" (NESACBEQ). To establish the reliability of the instrument, copies of the instrument were distributed to 10 business education lecturers outside the area of the study. Cronbach Alpha formula was used to

analyze the data using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 so as to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. Reliability coefficient values of 0.78 and 0.80 were obtained for clusters B1 and B2 respectively with an overall coefficient value of 0.79. The questionnaire had 18 items in the two clusters. The instrument was structured on a five-point rating scale, with response categories as “Very High Extent”, “High Extent”, “Moderate Extent”, “Low Extent” and “Very Low Extent”. The researcher with the help of two research assistants administered copies of the instrument on the respondents in their various institutions. Out of 83 copies of the instrument distributed, a total of 78 copies were successfully retrieved and were used for data analysis. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. In order to answer the research questions, a decision rule based on mean ratings between 4.50-5.00 were regarded as very high extent, items with mean ratings of 3.50-4.49 were considered as high extent and items with 2.50-3.49 were regarded as moderate extent. Furthermore, items with mean ratings of 1.50-2.49 and 0.50-1.49 were considered as low extent and very low extent respectively.

III. RESULTS

Research Question 1

To what extent does emerging workplace technology necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition content in business education programmes in Nigeria?

Table 1:
Respondents’ mean ratings on the extent emerging workplace technologies necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition content in business education programmes in Nigeria N = 78.

S/N	Items on Emerging Workplace Technologies	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Creates ubiquitous working environments supported by different sorts of working panachesin addition to conditions	4.25	.55	High Extent
2.	Creates novelas well as higher-skill jobs in organizations	4.56	.62	Very High Extent
3.	Displaces workers with little or obsolete skills	4.40	.78	High Extent
4.	Creates a mismatch between skills demanded by employers and those already possessed by employees	4.80	.60	Very High Extent
5.	Leads to the demand for workers with new skills and competences	4.45	.64	High Extent
6.	Creates a more competitive work environment	4.66	.74	Very High Extent
7.	Creates jobs that require more technical competencies and specific knowledge and capabilities to perform	4.20	.77	High Extent
8.	Emphasizes on practicability than theory	4.50	.65	Very High Extent
Cluster Mean		4.47	.67	High Extent

The data in Table 1 illustrates that all the items numbered 1, 3, 5 and 7 have mean ratings ranging from 4.20 to 4.45 meaning that all the items emphasize the need for employability skills acquisition contents in BTEP inNigeriato a high extent. Items 2, 4, 6 and 8 have mean ratings of 4.50 and 4.80 respectively meaning that they emphasize the need to a very high extent. The cluster mean score of 4.88 indicate that, in the opinion of the respondents, emerging workplace technologies necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition content in BTEP in Nigeriato a high extent. The standard deviations of 0.55 to 0.78 show that the respondents are consistent in their responses.

Research Question 2

To what extent do global trends necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition content in BTEP in Nigeria?

Table 2:
Respondents’ mean ratings on the extent global trends necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition content in BTEP in Nigeria N = 78.

S/N	Items on globalization	Mean	SD	Decision
9.	Global trends require having skills and to have the capabilities to function effectively in a global context	4.55	.46	Very High Extent
10.	Global trends requires students to possess broad – based jobs skills	4.43	.55	High Extent

11.	Global trends requires students to possess skills to assume new roles in multi-cultural environment	4.72	.64	Very High Extent
12.	Global trends requires students are trained to possess skills in analytical and critical thinking	3.79	.83	High Extent
13.	Global trends require students possess adequate skills in human relationships	4.63	.70	Very High Extent
14.	Global trends require students possess rich understanding of cultural diversity	4.57	.62	Very High Extent
15.	Global trends requires students possess specific IT skills such as programming, web designing and so on	4.55	.47	Very High Extent
16.	Global trends requires students possess Knowledge of contemporary issues in trade and businesses	4.58	.56	Very High Extent
17.	Global trends requires students possess initiative and enterprises Skills	4.34	.63	High Extent
18.	Global trends requires students possess problem solving and adaptability skills	4.65	.57	Very High Extent
Cluster	Mean	4.48	.60	High Extent

Data in Table 2 shows that items numbered 10, 12 and 17 have mean ratings ranging from 4.37 to 4.43 meaning that all the items emphasize the need for employability skills acquisition contents in BTEP in Nigeria to a high magnitude. Items 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 18 have mean ratings of 4.55 and 4.72 meaning that they emphasize the need to a very high extent. The cluster mean score of 4.47 indicate that, in the opinion of the respondents, global trends necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition content in business education programme in Nigeria to a high extent. The standard deviations of 0.46 to 0.64 show that the respondents are consistent in their responses.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The research findings disclosed that emerging workplace technologies necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition content in business education programmes in Nigeria to a high extent. The result revealed the major ways emerging technologies impact of the contemporary work environment, which inadvertently necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition contents in business education programmes. These includes creates ubiquitous working environments supported by divers sorts of working strategies plus circumstances, creates new-fangled as well as higher-skill jobs in organizations, displaces workers with little or obsolete skills, creates a mismatch between skills demanded by employers and those already possessed by employees, leads to the demand for workers with new skills and competences and so on. This finding is in agreement with Field (2017) who stated that emerging workplace technologies usually create new and challenging jobs in varied industries as well as demand workers to learn novel skills.

Furthermore, Field (2017) stated that new jobs occasioned by emerging technologies are more prospective to request higher-level intellectual skills plus entail non-routine responsibilities that are doubtfully to be substituted via computerization. Such variations in the nature of work will necessitate unceasing learning, which in turn can be strengthened by building the capability as well as readiness to unlearn and relearn. Thus, the emerging workplace technologies usually bring about a paradigm shift in the ways organizational functions are usually carried out. For business education students to effectively secure, retain and advance in their jobs in contemporary business organizations, they must be well equipped with functional employable skills. Hence, the need to integrate these employability skills contents in the curriculum of business education programme in relevant tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The integration of these employability skills content in business education curriculum will adequately prepare the students to cope with the challenging contemporary work environment.

Findings of the study disclosed that global trends necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition content in business education programmes in Nigeria to a high extent. The result revealed the major ways global trends impact of the contemporary work environment, which inadvertently necessitate the integration of employability skills acquisition contents in business education programmes. These includes having skills and capabilities to function effectively in a global context, possessing broad –based jobs skills, possessing skills to assume new roles in multi-cultural environment, possessing skills in analytical and critical thinking and so on. This finding is in consonance with Ikpesu (2017) whose who carried out a study on globalizing business education curriculum involvements in Nigeria advanced education for improved scholars' employability. Ikpesu, study showcased the necessity to expose the scholars to multi-cultural environments,

critical as well as logical viewpoints of global economic opportunities, as well as entrepreneurial skills that can aid them operate efficiently in local and intercontinental trade settings. Specifically, business education curriculum must have value-goal-oriented learning contents that is capable of producing the desirable changes in behaviour. Adeyemo (2015) referring to the progressives' approach to curriculum planning advocate for change in the conception of knowledge, scientific knowledge and learning process and connecting the formal education to the life of the learner and changing demands of the larger society.

V. CONCLUSION

Following the outcomes of our research, it was established that emerging workplace technologies in addition to global trends are basic factors that necessitate the need for integrating employability skills content in the curriculum of business education programmes in Nigeria. Undeniably, the challenge posed by these contemporary issues makes it imperative to delve into the necessity for the incorporation of employability expertise in business education curriculum. This is to fully furnish the scholars with relevant and functional skills necessary to secure employment in the present, ever competitive work environment.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the research outcomes, the corresponding recommendations were made

1. Business educators must exploit beyond academic and technical curricula experiences by integrating the knowledge, skills, values, and competencies embedded in business education to multi-culture environments and labour.
2. Curriculum planners in business education through relevant agencies should carry out a review of the business education curriculum to incorporate emerging workplace technologies into the curriculum in the bid to boost the employability opportunities of the students.
3. Employability skills should constitute an integral part of the programme of study for business education students in order to accommodate employers' needs. Added to this, tertiary institutions offering business education ought to organize personnel's skill necessity appraisals to ascertain appropriate prerequisites to enhance students' acquisition of employability skills.
4. There should be an organized institution-labour market linkage and cooperation. This linkage will align the labour market expectations with the curriculum contents of business education programmes.

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