



INFLUENCE OF STUDENTS' SELF-ESTEEM AND STUDENTS' LOCUS OF CONTROL AND ACQUISITION OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES SOUTH-SOUTH GEOPOLITICAL ZONE OF NIGERIA

Dr. Cletus Akpo Atah, **Bessong, Emmanuel Bessong and *Ititim Donatus Ugbadu**

*Department of Vocational Education, University of Calabar, Calabar

***Department of Business Education, University of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Abstract: This study determined the Influence of students' self-esteem and students' locus of control and acquisition of employability skills among business education students in Federal Universities South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of the study, two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted a survey research design. The population consisted of four hundred and forty (440) final year business education students in the study area, who were all involved in the study due to the manageable size of the population. A 20-item questionnaire titled "Students' Self-esteem and Students' Locus of Control on the Acquisition of Employability Skills' Scale" (ISSSLCAES) was used for data collection. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha statistical technique which yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.92. The data collected were analysed using mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) to answer the research questions. Similarly, the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using an independent t-test. The findings from data analysis showed that students' self-esteem and students' locus of control significantly influenced the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students in Federal Universities, South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria with High Influence (HI). While the test of hypotheses revealed that, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of the male and female respondents on the students influence of gender on the acquisition of employability skills. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that, the acquisitions of employability skills will help the students of the universities to be self-reliance or to be gainfully employed. It was equally recommended among others that Business Education students should be responsible for enhancing their employability skills so that their employability rate could be enhanced to grab the working opportunity upon graduation.

Key words: Self-esteem, Locus of control, Employability skills and business education

Introduction

Universities turn out large number of graduates into the labour market annually and these graduates are expected to either secure employment or provide one. The truth, however, is that the university system seems to have failed in their mandate of addressing the employability skills of its graduates (Edet, 2017). The scenario that typifies this is that those employability skills that employers seek in employees seem scarcely taught in the

university or when they are taught students may have not developed interest in the acquisition of those skills (Finn, 2000). Employers of labour expect the employee to be technically inclined and generally versed in their field of specialization because there is a relationship between hiring a graduate and his or her possession of employability skills needed by the organization (Atah and Abeng 2019).

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Okute and Olom (2012) stated that university education is aimed at preparing the individual for the acquisition of appropriate knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes that equip the individual for self-employment or paid employment in any chosen career in a public or private sector of the economy. As a result, their training programmes are tailored towards achieving this mandate. The meeting of this mandate implies that the graduates of universities must develop the right skills, knowledge, and attitude, to enable them realize their potential and become self-reliant; which is one of the major goals of tertiary education in Nigeria (FRN, 2013). This means that Business Education Students should acquire employability skills that will not only help them to be gainfully employed but also become entrepreneurs in different sectors, thereby contributing their quota in the national development.

Failure to acquire those employability skills or poorly acquiring them has, over the years, made graduates unemployed, and for those seen as employed, they are at best underemployed and paid pea-nuts (Edet, 2017). More so, Uchendu (2015) had pointed out that some of the youths indulging in nefarious activities and constituting nuisance to the society are those who failed to acquire employability skills in the universities. The continuous lack or poor acquisition of these skills among university graduates made Abbring (2001) to tag the universities products as half-baked and unusable unless they are further trained. On their parts, the Nigerian Employers Consultative Association (NECA) (2000) maintained that organizations are no longer recruiting, but adopting other employment strategies because the graduates are constantly unable to meet the expectations of industry recruiters. This situation is said to be caused by the fact that most of the unemployed graduates do not possess the 'right' degrees (Finn, 2010). According to Finn, there is an over-abundance of graduates in many disciplines in humanities, whereas graduates in

engineering and sciences are very much in high demands.

Aquah (2014) noted that, business education came to limelight and was accorded prominence status by the FGN in 1977 through the National Policy on Education. Business Education as a programme of study aims at equipping the learners with employability skills and knowledge which could embolden them to create, secure and stay on the job, as well as grow in it. Although this program may be offered across all educational levels, the government's purpose in providing it is to prepare students for entry level jobs in occupations not requiring post-secondary training (FGN, 2014). This being true, those who proceed further to acquire university business education training should have a broader, well-equipped, functional and productive know-how of not just becoming employed but employers themselves.

Essentially, General Business Education encompasses all programmes of study whether formal or informal such as apprenticeship schemes, seminars and workshops, publications, computer assisted/managed instructions, training courses, exhibitions and even television programmes which are designed to make recipients knowledgeable and intelligent consumers of products and services (Azuka and Nwosu, 2018).

Edet, (2017) in Atah and Abeng (2019) affirmed that, the programme has been implemented for more than three decades now, yet university graduates of business education seemed to be plagued with biting unemployment syndrome despite the laudable prospects of this promising type of education. Even though government have tried to ensure that graduates from various fields of education especially business education graduates acquire employability skills that may help them establish themselves without necessarily waiting for the government. For example, entrepreneurship education is embedded into the curriculum and business education is equipped with programmes that could develop human abilities in terms of knowledge, attitude,



skill but the problem still persists. It is believed that many factors might have influenced the acquisition of these employability skills by university business education graduates. These variables includes; Self-esteem (Makki, Javaid&Bano, 2016); (White & Lindsay 2017); locus of control (Millet, 2018), (Lather, 2016).

Locus of control typically refers to how students perceive the causes of their academic success or failure in school. Students with an “internal locus of control” generally believe that their success or failure is a result of the effort and hard work they invest or did not invest in their education (Millet, 2018). Locus of control is a psychological concept that refers to how strongly people believe they have control over the situations and experiences that affect their lives (Lather, 2016). Internal Locus of Control is a personality trait that describes the extent to which an individual views rewards, punishments or other events in their lives as being caused by their own actions. While External Locus of Control is a personality trait that describes the extent to which an individual views rewards, punishments or other events in their lives as being caused by the actions of other people beyond their control such as luck.

Gaa, (2012) affirmed that Locus of controlled forms during childhood and stabilizes during adolescence; and it depends on various experiences the individual goes through including culture, religion, societal influence, sex, age, and training. Locus of control attempts to explain the rationale for different causes of behaviour among students. Most students attribute failure or instability to acquire skills required of them by internal and external causes. Nurita (2010) revealed that internal and external locus of control has insignificant influence on the respondents. The study of Mohamad in Chukwurah and Atah (2018) opinion that average level of employability skills among the students.

Millet (2018) in Atsu, Ateb and Atah (2021) revealed that Locus of control has notable influence on the

differences between the individuals in the study sample, with persons of external locus of control having a less favourable point of departure at the start of vocational rehabilitation compared to other groups. Dennis and Joseph (2016) revealed that locus of control significantly predicted employability. In a study on locus of Control, Student Motivation, and employability skills acquisition by Ahmad (2013), show that internals acquire skills more than the externally achieved, suffered less from debilitating test anxiety, scored higher on a mastery approach, spent more hours working, and tended more to be of white ethnicity than externals. Olaronke (2015) study revealed that locus of control, work motivation and information use significantly influence decision making of the respondents.

Robinson (2000) described self-esteem as the positive or negative attitudes that people have about themselves. High self-esteem means that people feel that they are good enough whereas a low self-esteem means that they feel that they are not. White and Lindsay (2017) described self-esteem as the evaluative dimension of the self-concept. Battle (2002) defined self-esteem as the perception that people have of their self-worth. It develops gradually and becomes more differentiated with adulthood and because of interaction with others. Makki, Javaid&Bano (2016) refer to self-esteem as a predictor of human behaviour and an indication of how people could react to certain events. They also regard self-esteem as an indication of psychological wellbeing. Students’ self-esteem is directly related to their school performance. By ensuring that student self-esteem is healthy, the environment for learning becomes one where education and learning thrives. Self-esteem activities for students are an excellent way to help boost a student’s confidence and increase learning. Self-esteem among students explains the different set of behaviours, perceptions and thinking they have about the employability skills they required to possess.



Brockner and Guare (2003) found out that people with low self-esteem are more likely to perform poorly and achieve less compared to people with high self-esteem. In addition, Baumeister (2007) work revealed that people with low self-esteem do not seem to have a clear sense of who and what they are and are not confident that they will succeed in what they try. Therefore, it seems that people with low self-esteem are less likely to have well developed employability skills compared to people with high self-esteem. Various authors found that one could improve low self-esteem through training (Fugate, 2004). Therefore, one can conclude that training will help graduates and people who are looking for work to develop self-esteem. Willie (2017) The results revealed that; there is a positive significant relationship to exist between self-esteem and employability attributes. The study therefore examined the influence of students' self-esteem and students' locus of control and acquisition of employability skills among business education students in Federal Universities South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain influence of students' self-esteem and students' locus of control and acquisition of employability skills among business education students in Federal Universities South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to ascertain the influence of:

1. Self-esteem on the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students in Federal Universities, South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.
2. Locus of control on the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students

in Federal Universities, South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.

Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions

1. What is the influence of self-esteem on the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students in Federal Universities, South -South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of locus of control on the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students in Federal Universities, South–South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following Null Hypotheses was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

H0₁: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of low and high esteemed respondents of the influence of self-esteem on the acquisition of employability skills.

H0₂: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of internal and externally driven respondents on the influence of locus of control on the acquisition of employability skills

Result

Research Question 1

What is the influence of self-esteem on the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students in Federal Universities, South -South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria?

The data providing answers to the above research question are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Responses of Respondents on influence of self-esteem on the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students (N =411)

S/N	Influence of self-esteem on the acquisition of:	N	X	SD	Decision
1	Marketing skills for employability	411	3.21	2.10	HI
2	Sale management skills for employability	411	2.77	2.22	HI
3	Tax assessment skills for employability	411	2.56	2.29	HI



4	Productivity skills for employability	411	2.72	2.38	HI
5	Flexibility skills for employability	411	3.00	2.36	HI
6	Social skills for employability	411	2.68	2.44	HI
7	Facilities management skills	411	2.70	2.45	HI
8	Creative writing skills for employability	411	2.89	2.56	HI
9	Word processing skills for employability	411	2.67	2.55	HI
10	Peace studies and conflict resolution skills	411	2.81	2.59	HI
Grand Mean			2.80	2.40	HI

Note: \bar{x} = Mean; HI = High Influence

From the results displayed in Table 1, the grand mean of 2.80 revealed that Business Education students agreed that self-esteem has high influences on the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students in Federal Universities, South–South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. All the items 1 to 10 obtained the mean scores between 2.56 and 3.21. This indicates that business education students’ agreed that students’ variable, self-esteem has a high influences on the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students in Federal Universities, South -South

Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range indicating that respondents are homogenous in their mean ratings.

Research Question 2

What is the influence of locus of control on the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students in Federal Universities, South–South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria?

The data providing answers to the above research question are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Responses of Respondents on influence of locus of control on the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students (N = 411)

S/N	Influence of locus of control on the acquisition of:	N	X	SD	Decision
1	Office manipulating technology skills	411	2.90	2.67	HI
2	IT skills for employability	411	2.72	2.70	HI
3	Time management skills for employability	411	2.76	2.72	HI
4	Initiative skills for employability	411	2.69	2.74	HI
5	Communication skills for employability	411	2.72	2.84	HI
6	Media literacy skill for employability	411	2.90	2.79	HI
7	Office team work skills for employability	411	2.73	2.89	HI
8	Financial management skills	411	2.63	2.98	HI
9	IMS skills for employability	411	2.67	3.02	HI
10	Problem solving skill for employability	411	2.82	3.04	HI
Grand Mean			2.75	1.20	HI

Note: \bar{x} = Mean; HI = High Influence

From the results displayed in Table 2, the grand mean of 2.75 revealed that business education students agreed

that locus of control has a high influence on the acquisition of employability skills among Business



Education students in Federal Universities, South–South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. All the items ten (10) obtained the mean scores above 2.50 which is the cut – off point. This indicates that business education students’ agreed that locus of control as a students’ variable influences the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students in Federal Universities, South -South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.

The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range indicating that respondents are homogenous in their mean ratings.

H0₁: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of low and high esteemed respondents on the influence of self-esteem on the acquisition of employability skills.

Table 11: Independent t-test of Mean Ratings of low and high esteemed respondents of the influence of self-esteem on the acquisition of employability skills

Items	Self Esteem	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	Alpha	p-val	Decision
1	High	156	3.2436	.91137	409	-.320	0.05	.749	NS
	Low	255	3.2000	2.57700					
2	High	156	2.7436	1.12377	409	-.250	0.05	.994	NS
	Low	255	2.7961	2.69251					
3	High	156	2.5769	1.08977	409	.110	0.05	.913	NS
	Low	255	2.5608	2.78410					
4	High	156	2.7179	1.24846	409	-1.010	0.05	.313	NS
	Low	255	2.7333	2.87527					
5	High	156	2.9744	1.08924	409	-.278	0.05	.781	NS
	Low	255	3.0196	2.87735					
6	High	156	2.6218	1.17689	409	-.477	0.05	.633	NS
	Low	255	2.7255	2.97018					
7	High	156	2.7051	1.11424	409	.714	0.05	.476	NS
	Low	255	2.7098	2.99641					
8	High	156	2.8333	1.24866	409	-.131	0.05	.896	NS
	Low	255	2.9294	3.11381					
9	High	156	2.6667	1.13213	409	-.231	0.05	.818	NS
	Low	255	2.6863	3.12149					
10	High	156	2.6795	1.13585	409	-.469	0.05	.639	NS
	Low	255	2.9020	3.17752					
	High	165	27.761	17.5421	409	-.218	0.05	.409	NS
	Low	255	27.543	18.0821					

Note: level of Sig. = 0.05; NS = Not Significant; S = Significant.

The result of the t-test analyses presented in Table 3 above indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of the respondents on influence of self-esteem on the acquisition of employability skills in

Federal Universities South – South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. This is because data in Table 11 showed that the p-val .409 is greater than 0.05. since the p-values are greater than p(.05), this implies that there is no



significant difference in the mean rating of low and high esteemed respondents of the influence of self-esteem on the acquisition of employability skills. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained

H0₂: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of internal and externally driven respondents on the influence of locus of control on the acquisition of employability skills

Table 4: Independent t-test of Mean Ratings of internal and externally driven respondents on the influence of locus of control on the acquisition of employability skills

S/N	locus of control	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	Alpha	p-val	Decision
1	Internal	182	2.5879	1.20792	409	-.215	0.05	.032	S
	External	229	3.1572	3.40172					
2	Internal	182	2.3681	1.18540	409	-2.368	0.05	.018	S
	External	229	3.0000	3.44124					
3	Internal	182	2.4231	1.10354	409	-2.254	0.05	.025	S
	External	229	3.0306	3.49987					
4	Internal	182	2.3352	1.03143	409	-2.376	0.05	0.19	S
	External	229	2.9782	3.53236					
5	Internal	182	2.3956	1.15514	409	2.118	0.05	.035	S
	External	229	2.9913	3.65027					
6	Internal	182	2.5440	1.19194	409	-2.330	0.05	.020	S
	External	229	3.1878	3.57190					
7	Internal	181	2.4365	1.01795	409	-1.886	0.05	.060	NS
	External	227	2.9780	3.75399					
8	Internal	182	2.2473	1.15599	409	-2.348	0.05	.019	S
	External	229	2.9389	3.83723					
9	Internal	174	2.2701	1.03774	409	-2.358	0.05	.019	S
	External	223	2.9865	3.90135					
10	Internal	182	2.4451	1.15378	409	-2.248	0.05	.025	S
	External	229	3.1223	3.93064					
	Internal	182	23.531	10.0723	409	-2.326	0.05	0.21	S
	External	229	28.227	11.1921					

Note: level of Sig. = 0.05; **NS** = Not Significant; **S** = Significant.

The result of the t-test analyses presented in Table 4 above indicated that there is significant difference in the mean rating of the respondents on influence of locus of control on the acquisition of employability skills in Federal Universities South – South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. This is because data in Table 4 showed that the p-val0.21 is less than 0.05. Since p(.021) is less than p(0.05), this implies that there is a significant difference

in the mean rating of internal and external locus of control of respondents on the perceived influence of locus of control on the acquisition of employability skills. Hence, then null hypothesis is rejected. A cursory look at the result showed that the mean of students with external locus of control (X=28.227) is greater than the mean of students with internal locus of control. This implies that students with external locus of control



acquire more of employability skills. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Influence of self-esteem on the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students in Federal Universities, South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria

The findings of this study regarding the first research question showed that, there is High Influence (HI) of students' self-esteem on the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students in Federal Universities, South -South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The findings of the study support Brockner and Guare (2003) who in their work revealed low self-esteem are more likely to perform poorly and achieve less compared to students with high self-esteem. However, this result was equally in agreement with Willie (2017) who in his study revealed that; there is a positive significant relationship exist between self-esteem and employability attributes.

The findings of hypotheses tested showed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of low and high esteemed respondents of the influence of self-esteem on the acquisition of employability skills. This finding is in consonance with Adeboye (2017) who findings revealed that low and high self-esteem had no significant influence on the acquisition employability skills among students. Makki, Javaid & Bano (2016) noted that Students' self-esteem is directly related to their school performance. Self-esteem activities for students are an excellent way to help boost a student's confidence and increase learning.

Influence of locus of control on the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students in Federal Universities, South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria

The findings of this study regarding the sixth research question revealed High Influence (HI) of students' locus of control on the acquisition of employability skills

among Business Education students in Federal Universities, South–South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The findings could be due to the fact that students' acquisition of employability skills is influenced by factors other than the students' interest. Social climate of the school, parental influence, school teacher-students relationship, job prestige, societal value of the occupation could influence the student's acquisition of those skills in order to be employable. The findings is agreement with Millet (2018) who noted that internals locus of control acquire skills more than the externally achieved. The result is equally in agreement with Dennis and Joseph (2016) pointed out that the trainees used mainly external locus of control and had generally moderately negative employability. Locus of control significantly predicted employability acquisition among universities students.

The findings on the hypotheses tested showed that there is significant difference in the mean rating of internal and externally driven respondents on the perceived influence of locus of control on the acquisition of employability skills. The finding of the study is in consonance with Nurita (2010) who findings revealed internal and external employability was insignificant among the respondents. However, Mohamad (2017) findings recorded average level of employability skills among the students. The students of the universities must be responsible for enhancing their employability skills so that their employability rate could be enhanced to grab the working opportunity upon graduation.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study it was concluded that, students' self-esteem and locus of control, significantly influenced the acquisition of employability skills among Business Education students in Federal Universities, South–South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the research recommended that:



1. Business Education students should be responsible for enhancing their employability skills so that their employability rate could be enhanced to grab the working opportunity upon graduation.

2. Business Education students should have personal self-development interventions can be proposed to assist in the development of the self-esteem to enhance employment opportunities.

3. Business Education Students should believe in what they can do as graduates of business education

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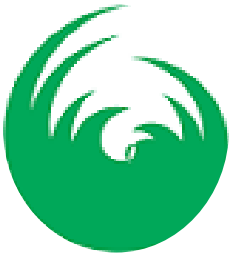
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