



INFLUENCE OF STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP AND INSTRUCTIONAL FACILITIES ON EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS ACQUISITION AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: *This study determined the influence of Student-teacher Relationship and Instructional Facilities on employability skills acquisition among Business Education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. Survey research design was employed in carrying out the study. Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire which was validated by two Vocational Educators and an expert in Measurement and Evaluation. A reliability estimate of .88, .79 and .87 was achieved for the research variables using Cronbach Alpha Statistical Analysis, after a trial test was conducted using 20 final year Business Education students (University of Uyo) who did not form part of the main study sample. The questionnaire was administered to 400 final year Business Education students using stratified and accidental sampling techniques. Data analysis was done, while two hypotheses were formulated and tested for significance using Simple Linear Regression Statistical Technique. Analyzed data were presented in form of tables and the results revealed significant influence of: student-teacher relationship and provision of instructional facilities on employability skills acquisition among Business Education Students. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that instructional facilities such as computers, and other reprographic materials needed for the students to acquire the right employability skills should be provided in the schools.*

Keywords: *Student-teacher Relationship, Instructional Facilities, Employability Skills, and Students.*

Introduction

Education has received great emphasis all over the world as a result of the enormous role it plays in the socio-economic, political and technological development of the society. Tertiary education (TE) has the mandate to train learners for the work force and self-reliance need. The Federal Government of Nigeria (2013) has stated the relevance of education as an instrument for excellence. Education is conceived as a fulcrum upon which societal advancement revolves. It is the oxygen for development and the manure that stirs societal growth. It is aimed at producing productive and creative citizens with identifiable characteristics that can make them functional members of the society.

Functionality, according to Ben (2010) is the ability of the individual to contribute to himself and the society at large. In order for this to be achieved, the tertiary education which is

the apex of education in Nigeria is programmed to ensure that graduates from there acquire the skills that would enable them live meaningfully in the society. Uchendu (2015) asserted that universities all over the world have the mission of producing skilled manpower necessary to function effectively in their societies. Okute and Olom (2012) stated that tertiary 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 ability to achieve this mandate successfully is what distinguished one university from the other.

One of the major goals of tertiary education as stated in National Policy of Education of Federal Republic of Nigeria

British International Journal of Education And Social Sciences

An official Publication of Center for International Research Development

Double Blind Peer and Editorial Review International Referred Journal; Globally index

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(FRN, 2013) is that students will acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society. But this goal is yet to be achieved. Musari in Chukwurah and Atah (2017) reported that about 4.5 million youths enter the labour market every year without any hope of getting employment for life sustenance due to lack of employability skills.

Employability skills are variously defined by researchers and educationists. Yorke (2005) describes employability as a graduate's achievements and his/her potential for obtaining, and succeeding, in graduate-level job-placement. In this study, employability refers to the set of skills, competency and attributes that increase school leaver's chances of obtaining initial worthwhile employment, maintaining and progressing in the employment, obtaining new employment if required, and being satisfied on the job. These skills include analytical and problem-solving skills, numeracy, confidence, time management, team working, communication skills, information technology, and monitoring skills. Employability skills are diverse. Etuk (2013) identified employability skills to include communication, self-reliance, organization, initiative and enterprise, commercial awareness, problem-solving, team work and leadership, time management, and customer services. Duruamaku-Dim (2004) highlighted a number of employability skills which include visionary, leadership, managerial, tactical, strategic planning, and sense of judgement, delegating, motivation, intellect and knowledge as well as skill of ethics.

However, many researchers have continued to marvel on the probable causes of increased unemployment among fresh graduates of Business Education in Nigeria given these vast of skills they are supposed to possess. A number of factors have been deduced to be responsible for unemployment among youths in Nigeria. Most of the causes are attributed to godfathers, corruption, increased in number of graduates per year, insufficient incises to carter for the increased rate of graduates, lack of vocational skill among others.

Uchendu (2015) said that the products of tertiary education in this 21st century appear to be skill deficient that is they lack basic skills such as computer skills, vocational skills, communication skills, ethical skills, team work skills, entrepreneurship skills, personal management skills, and leadership skills among others. Thus, these graduates lack what it takes to provide employment for themselves and others in the society. This has given rise to producing

graduates who are more of job seekers rather than job creator. The result of this type of education (training) has been high level of unemployment. It increases every year because of the number of graduates that enters the labour market and unemployment rate has increase from 21 percent in 2010 to 24 percent in 2011 (Muslim, 2013). Therefore, one may assume that tertiary institutions especially in Cross River State have not been living up to expectation in solving the problems of life by equipping graduates with employability skills.

Jakpa in Uchendu (2015) observed that Nigeria educational system does not train youths to acquire skills that will make them the needs of the society. The effect of this lack of skills is evident in the activities of the youths. Majority of the youths who are not employed and cannot begin a new business venture of their have resulted to armed robbery, prostitution, political thuggery, vandalization of oil pipe lines, kidnapping among other societal ills that are exhibited in the society. Government and non-governmental organizations have tried to ensure that graduates from various tertiary institutions especially vocational Business Education graduates acquire skills that may help them establish themselves without necessary waiting for the government. For example, entrepreneurship education is embedded into the curriculum, Business Education is equipped with programmes that develop human abilities in terms of knowledge, skill and understanding to carry on activities in the vocation and students are equally allowed for industrial training scheme, establishment of acquisition skills centres all around but the problem still persist. The researcher is presuming that institutional variables such as student-teacher relationship and provision of instructional facilities could be responsible for this lack of employability skills acquisition among undergraduates in tertiary institutions

Institutional variables are centered on students supports provided by the colleges and universities that the students attend. It is concerned with those variables within the school environment that influences the activities of the teacher and students. One key institutional variable is student – teacher relationship, which is the academic relationship between teachers and their students. Teachers who support students in the learning environment can positively impact their social and academic outcomes which is important for the long-term trajectory of school and eventually employment (Baker, 2008). Interestingly, the nature and quality of this relationship with their teachers play a critical and central role in



motivating and engaging students to learn. Student-teacher relationship is the emotional support as perceived by the student and examined with respect to their impact on student outcomes.

Anindo (2006) carried out a study on institutional factors influencing acquisition of employable skills by students in public technical and vocational education and training institutions in Nairobi country, Kenya. Four objectives guided the study and the study adopted descriptive survey design. The study targeted three TVET institutions in Nairobi County. The research instruments used were questionnaires for teachers and students and an interview guide for principals. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and quantitative statistics. Data was presented in frequency tables and percentages. The key study findings were that there is inadequate provision of training equipment, institutions do not have modern equipment that are relevant to those used in the industries, relevance of training equipment and student-teacher relationship influences acquisition of employable skills, workshops were not well equipped, teachers mainly use lecture, demonstration, work based learning and discussion teaching methods due to large class sizes, inadequate training equipment and their influence on skills acquisition, the institutions have inadequate teaching staff hence are forced to hire part-time teachers or merge classes in order complete syllabuses.

The study concluded that the four institutional factors investigated significantly influenced the employable skills acquired by students. It was recommended that industries should support TVET institution by providing industrial attachment programs for teachers, all stakeholders; parents, industries, government and donors should contribute in providing adequate training equipment, TVET teachers should use practically-oriented teaching methods like field trip, project work, simulation and work-based teaching often methods in order to achieve the desired result of imparting the employable skills necessary for the world of work and the government should support TVET institutions in hiring of more trained teachers to curb inadequacy of teachers and merging of classes.

A positive student-teacher relationship involved teachers who shows: their pleasure and enjoyment of students interact in a responsive and respectful manner, offer students help (e.g., answering questions in timely manner, offering support that matches the children's needs) in achieving academic and

social objectives, help students reflect on their thinking and learning skills, know and demonstrate knowledge about individual students' backgrounds, interests, emotional strengths and academic levels and seldom show irritability or aggravation toward students.

Similarly, Gregory (2014) carried out a study on factors affecting acquisition of vocational skills among youth learners in Maranda Division Siaya County. The research adopted a descriptive survey design which involved asking as large group questions about a particular issue. The target population comprised of eight vocational and training centers in Maranda Division Siaya County. A stratified random sampling was used in this study. Questionnaires with open and closed ended questions were be used. The result showed that variables learning resource availability, teacher-student relationship, attitude of the learners towards vocational trainings influence their acquisition of vocational skills. Another essential institutional variable that may influence acquisition of employability skills of undergraduates is the provision of instructional facilities.

Instructional facility provides a sense of place to current and future among students in college and universities. Instructional facilities include general use classrooms, which can be shared by all disciplines, as well as specialized rooms such as science and engineering labs, computer labs, art and music studios, and theatres designed for specified fields. Skills acquisition by students can be achieved when the TVET institutions are adequately funded, equipped with adequate facilities and well-staffed with competent and experienced Tutors that adopt effective and efficient teaching methods (Dasmani, 2011).

According to Dasmani (2011), TVETs in Ghana suffer from inadequacy in the provision of instructional materials and training equipment which leads to focusing more on theoretical teaching leading to trainees lacking proficiency in their chosen field of specialization. Since TVETs mostly rely on training, their short supply will negatively affect practical skills acquisition. The author added that inadequate supply of instructional materials, large class sizes, inadequate training facilities, weak linkages with local industries for hands-on-experience for both instructors and trainees lead to ineffective and inefficient training of students while emphasizing on passing final examination in the TVET institutions. This led to inadequacy in preparation of students for the job market and brought workplace challenges to the graduates Adequacy of



teaching staff is very keys in the implementation of curriculum in any institution.

Similarly, Mboto (2010) carried out a study on institutional variables as predictors of employability skills acquisition among students in universities in Imo State. The descriptive study used quantitative approach involve a total of 171 respondents which is the engineering employers who were provided placement for industrial training to students of technical institutions. The instrument used in this study were adapted from the instruments of Modul Kemahiran Insaniah Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi Malaysia, Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skill (SCANS) Amerika, Malaysian Qualification Framework (MQF), MyGSI and IKGPP and several models from previous studies. The variables of this study were communication skills, spiritual skills, teamwork, leadership, lifelong learning and information management, critical thinking and problem solving, entrepreneurship, ethics and morality, technology skills, and social skills. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential analysis statistics. The results showed that the level of employability skills among engineering students from the employer's perspective is moderately high. The results also showed that there are no significant differences between student's employability skills that are assessed against the nature of the industry, the position and the employer experience, classroom climate and the location of the industry.

Instructional facilities can have a profound impact on both teacher and student outcomes. With respect to teachers, instructional facilities affect teacher recruitment, retention, commitment, and effort. With respect to students, school facilities affect health, behaviour, engagement, learning, and growth in achievement.

Keyato (2016) also carried out a study on training equipment, teacher's factors and acquisition of employable skills by trainees in public technical and vocational education and training institutions in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study adopted descriptive survey design targeting three TVET institutions in Nairobi County. The key study findings were that there was inadequate provision of training equipment, institutions lacked modern equipment to match those used by the industries, workshops were not well equipped, it was also established that relevance of training equipment influences acquisition of employable skills, for instruction tutors mainly used lecture, demonstration, work-based learning and

discussion teaching methods due to large classes and inadequate training equipment. Challenges faced by TVETs were; inadequate trained teaching staff, rigid and exam-oriented curriculum, inadequate modern training equipment, limited industrial attachment for trainees, and limited support from the industries. The study concluded that availability of training equipment had a major influence on acquisition of employable skills by students.

Instructional facilities can have a profound impact on both teacher and student outcomes. With respect to teachers, instructional facilities affect teacher recruitment, retention, commitment, and effort. With respect to students, school facilities affect health, behaviour, engagement, learning, and growth in achievement. The researcher envisaged that the findings of the study may be beneficial to universities administrators, students, government and staff of various universities.

Over the years, it is observed with dismay that vocational Business Education graduates are deficient in basic skills such as Vocational Skills, computer skills, leadership skills, tactical skills, ethical skills among others. These graduates tend to develop they cognitive domain to the detriment of psychomotor and affective domains. Thus, we have vocational Business Education graduates that are sound in knowledge but lack capacity for utilizing practical skills to solve problems, as such, most of the graduates are found roaming the street with files looking for white collar jobs. Many researchers have tried to examine what probably would have been the causes of this problem. Factors identified include development of students' cognitive domain to the detriment of psychomotor domain and affective domain, lacking capacity for utilizing practical skills to solve problem. The effect of this is evident in increased unemployment among fresh graduates of Business Education which has caused many youths to resort to armed robbery, prostitution, militancy, kidnapping, thuggery and oil bunkery. Potential capitalists have lost their lives due to lack of skills that would have helped in developing themselves and the society at large. Government and administration of universities on their part have tried to bridge this deficiency gap by designed vocational Business Education as a programme aimed at equipping students with marketable skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for initial employment and advancement in business and related occupations. In spite of this attempt, not much has been achieved as high number of unemployed Business Education



graduates has remained unabated. The researcher is asking, could institutional variables such as student-teacher relationship and provision of instructional facilities be responsible for this lack of employability skills acquisition among Business Education students of tertiary institutions? It is in an attempt to answer this question that this research work was carried out.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the influence of institutional variables on employability skills acquisition among Business Education students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Specifically, the study seeks to find out whether:

- i. Student-teacher relationship influences employability skills acquisition among Business Education students in tertiary institutions
- ii. Instructional facilities influence employability skills acquisition among Business Education students in tertiary institutions

Research questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

- i. How does student-teacher relationship influence employability skills acquisition among Business Education students in tertiary institutions?
- ii. What is the influence of instructional facilities on employability skills acquisition among Business Education students in tertiary institutions?

Research hypotheses

The hypothesis were stated in the null form as follows

- i. Student-teacher relationship has no significant influence on employability skills acquisition among Business Education students in tertiary institutions
- ii. Instructional facilities have no significant influence on employability skills acquisition among Business Education students in tertiary institutions

Research methodology

The study adopts a survey research design. 400 Business Education (final year) students, out of a population of 800

Business Education (final year) students in all the public tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria were sampled in the study. This is presented in Table 1. The sample was drawn using stratified and accidental sampling techniques. Stratified technique was used to divide the area into four strata according to the number of institutions in the area. In each stratum, 50% was applied to select the number of respondents (final year Business Education students) used for the study. While accidental technique was employed to administer the questionnaire to the Business Education final year students that participated in the study. Four point rating scale researcher-made questionnaire was developed starting from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) to answer for items on student-teacher relationship; Adequately Available (AA), Moderate Available (MA), Available (A), Not Available (NA) to answer for items on provision of instructional facilities and response options of Highly Acquired (HA), Acquired (A), Moderately Acquired (MA), and Not Acquired (NA) were used to answer for items on employability skills acquisition.

The questionnaire was validated by two vocational educators and one expert in measurement and evaluation. To guarantee the reliability of the instrument, the researcher conducted a trial test on 20 final year Business Education students in University of Uyo who were not part of the main study and data obtained were analyzed having Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates of .88, .79 and .87 for student-teacher relationship, provision of instructional facilities and employability skills acquisition respectively. The researcher together with two trained research assistants visited the institutions, obtained permission from the Heads of the Department before proceeding to the final year lecture halls to administer the questionnaire to the respondents. The four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire were all administered and retrieved giving rise to a 100% return rate. Data collected were analyzed using simple linear regression statistical tool. Table 1 below shows the population distribution and sample of the study.



Table 1: Distribution of the population and sample of the study

S/N	Institutions	No. of Business Edu Students	Sample (50%)
1.	University of Calabar	88	44
2.	Cross River University of Technology	264	132
3.	College of Education, Akamkpa	237	118
4.	College of Education Obudu	211	106
TOTAL		800	400

Sources: Records, HOD office Voc. Edu University of Calabar, 2014/2015 session
 Exams and records office Business Education Depart. CRUTECH 2014/2015 session
 Records, HOD Office College of Education Akamkpa 2015/2016 session
 Records, HOD office College of Education Obudu 2015/2016 session

Results

Hypothesis one

There is no significant influence of student-teacher relationship on employability skills among undergraduates. The independent variable is student-teacher relationship while the dependent variable is employability skill measured continuously. To test this hypothesis, simple regression analysis was used and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Simple Linear Regression Analysis of the influence of student-teacher relationship on employability skills acquisition

Variable	R	R ²	Adj R ²	Std. Error	
Student-teacher relationship	.313 ^a	.098	.096	6.82524	
Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	2016.654	1	2016.654	43.291	.000 ^b
Residual	18540.386	398	46.584		
Total	20557.040	399			

Table 2 shows that the correlation coefficient of the variable as .313 which implied that there is a weak positive relationship between student-teacher relationship and employability skills among undergraduates. More so, the result showed that Adj R² = .098 which implied that the variation in the dependent variable (employability skills acquisition) can be accounted for by 2.8% of students-teacher relationship. A cursory look at the Table also showed an analysis of variance result of (F=43.291, p<.000). Since p (.000) is less than p (.05), this implied that even though the percentage contribution is small, the result showed that student-teacher relationship significantly influenced employability skills among undergraduates. Hence the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant influence of instructional facilities on employability skills among undergraduates.

The independent variable is instructional facilities while the dependent variable is employability skill measured continuously. To test this hypothesis, simple regression analysis was used and the result is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Simple Linear Regression Analysis of the influence of instructional facilities on employability skills acquisition



Variable	R	R ²	Adj R ²	Std. Error	
Instructional facilities	.572 ^a	.327	.325	5.89726	
Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	6715.540	1	6715.540	193.099	.000 ^b
Residual	13841.500	398	34.778		
Total	20557.040	399			

Table 3 shows that the correlation coefficient of the variable as .572 which implied that there is a moderately strong positive relationship between instructional facilities and employability skills among undergraduates. More so, the result on Table 3 showed that Adj R² = .325 which implied that the variation in the dependent variable (employability skills acquisition) can be accounted for by 32.5% of instructional facilities. A cursory look at the Table also showed an analysis of variance result of (F= 193.099, p<.000). Since p (.000) is less than p(.05), this implied that even though the percentage contribution is small, the result showed that instructional facilities significantly influenced employability skills among undergraduates. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of findings

Student-teacher relationship and employability skills acquisition in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria The finding in this aspect of the study indicated that there is a significant influence of students-teacher relationship on employability skills acquisition among undergraduates. The findings collaborates with the assertion of Baker (2008) although most research regarding teacher-student relationships investigate the elementary years of schooling, teachers have the unique opportunity to support students' academic and vocational skills development at all levels of schooling. However, those students who have close, positive and supportive relationships with their teachers will attain higher levels of achievement than those students with more conflict in their relationships.

The finding of the study was in line with that of Anindo (2006) that carried out a study on institutional factors influencing acquisition of employable skills by students in public technical and vocational education and training institutions in Nairobi county, Kenya. The study found that there is inadequate provision of training equipment, institutions do not have modern equipment that are relevant to those used in the industries, relevance of training equipment influences acquisition of employable skills, workshops were not well equipped , teachers mainly use lecture, demonstration, teacher-students relationship was poor, work

based learning and discussion teaching methods due to large class sizes, inadequate training equipment and their influence on skills acquisition, the institutions have inadequate teaching staff hence are forced to hire part-time teachers or merge classes in order complete syllabuses.

The teacher in the school plays a crucial role in the development of skills of the students. It is true that most of the times students finds it difficult to understand certain concepts and practical steps that are used in a training session and would require that they interact with their teachers for clarification. Where this is done, it would help the students to learn more and acquire those skills that may not have been acquired. For example, where the teacher is friendly and works with the students, the students are likely to acquire team work skill as well as learn communication skills as well. The finding is also in line with that of Gregory's (2014) that carried on factors affecting acquisition of vocational skills among youth learners in Maranda Division Siaya County and revealed that learning resource availability, teachers-students relationship, attitude of the learners towards vocational trainings influences their acquisition of vocational skills.

Provision of instructional facilities and employability skills acquisition in tertiary institutions in Cross River State

The finding in this respect indicated that there is a significant influence of provision of instructional facilities on employability skills acquisition among undergraduates. The



finding of the study collaborates with that of Dasmani (2011) that asserted that skills acquisition by students can be achieved when the TVET institutions are adequately funded, equipped with adequate facilities and well-staffed with competent and experienced Tutors that adopt effective and efficient teaching methods. Facilities like the computer, internet facilities are all relevant for the Business Education student's to acquire the right skills for employability. People have begun life with just a laptop and some with a desktop among others. The availability and utilization of these facilities in the school by students can help them acquire the right skills and competences that would give them an edge in the world or work. More, instructional facilities availability in school would help the students to learn other skills especially when they have access to internet that helps them to read widely.

The finding is in line with the results of Mboti (2010) on institutional variables as predictors of employability skills acquisition among students in universities in Imo State. The result showed that availability and utilization of facility greatly influence employability skills acquisition among students and there was no significant differences between student's employability skills that are assessed against the nature of the industry, the position and the employer experience, classroom climate and the location of the industry. The finding is also in line with that Keyato (2016) that carried out a study on training equipment, teachers factors and acquisition of employable skills by trainees in public technical and vocational education and training institutions in Nairobi County, Kenya and found that there was inadequate provision of training equipment, institutions lacked modern equipment to match those used by the industries, workshops were not well equipped. The study also established in line with the finding that relevance of training equipment influences acquisition of employable skills, for instruction tutors mainly used lecture, demonstration, work-based learning and discussion teaching methods due to large classes and inadequate training equipment. In this technological age, graduates who must be sellable are those with the right skills. This is because there is nothing that is done in this age without the utilization of instructional facilities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that provision of instructional facilities, students-teacher relationship, teacher quality, instructional methods adapted by

the teacher and classroom climate significantly influence employability skills acquired by students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- i. Teachers should ensure that they create an environment of friendliness that can facilitate their student interaction with them.
- ii. Instructional facilities such as computers, and other reprographic materials needed for the students to acquire the right employability skills should be provided in the schools

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