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Contents

GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY: ASSESSMENT OF SKILLS MISMATCH AND WAIT-TIME OF GRADUATES IN A NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This tracer study assessed the issues of curriculum relevance and adequacy from the point of view of the graduates and their employers, this is with a view to ascertaining whether or not a gap exists in the content graduates were e xposed to and the skills needed to perform effectively on the job. The sample for the study consisted of 805 graduates of the University of Ibadan between 1971 and 2008, and their employers. Two instruments: The Graduates' Questionnaire and Employers' Questionnaire were developed for data collection. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. About 68% of the graduates were employed within one year of graduation, while less than 10% waited for over five years. The study found no clear-cut deficiencies in the skills of the graduates. However, their employers

rated the graduates higher in terms of efficiency at work, attitudes towards work, ability .to take initiatives, possession of requisite skills to solve problems at work and so on than the graduates rated themselves on these attributes. Further study is needed to confirm these present findings.

Key Words: Wait-Time, Mismatch, Graduate Employability, Nigeria Graduates, Assessment

Introduction

One of the greatest public concerns in Nigeria is that of the teeming proportion of graduates who are either unemployed, underemployed or employable, compared with the high rate of undergraduate's production. Since the first tertiary institution, University of Ibadan was established in 1948 in Ibadan, the number of universities in Nigeria according to JAMB (2009), has increased to ninety-seven including those owned by federal, state, private and corporate organisations. To match the rapid increase in the number of universities, total enrolment of undergraduates in 1980 rose from 74, 331 to 275,515 in 1998 indicating a growth rate of 15% per annum during the period. Between 1990 and 1998, the rate of enrolment was astronomically high increasing from 147, 121 in 1990 to 275, 515 in 1998 (Bamiro & Adedeji, 2010). During the last two decades, the number of student's enrolment into federal universities alone increased from 55,000 to 500,000 (Bollag; 2009). In the University of Ibadan which is the case study for this research, yearly undergraduate enrolment in the last five years stood at between 2,400 and 3,800 (University of Ibadan, 2010). Besides, the projected total Nigeria university student enrolment for 2010 vis-à-vis other Sub-Saharan countries was put at 1,221,854 (Adei, 2004, as cited by Adekambi, 2008).

Regrettably, employment opportunities have not increased in the same proportion as graduate production. The demand for labour has been low such that unemployment rates among Nigerian university graduates have increased in recent years. For instance, analysis of labour statistics puts unemployment rate of university graduates at 25% approximately (Dabalen, Oni & Adekola, 2000). Fagbemi and Idoko (2009) reported that 80% of Nigerian

graduates are unemployed because they are unemployable, indicating that vast majority of Nigerian graduates are out of jobs. Assessing applications and hire into senior cadre of the Federal Civil Service between 1993 and 1999, majority of whom were university graduates, the proportion absorbed shows a steep plunge from 25.5% in 1993 to 0.35% in 1999 barely seven years after (Dabalen, Oni & Adekola, 2000). In recent times, graduates unemployment has been linked mainly to the quality of university graduates thus raising the issue of skills mismatch, and in particular, the issue of relevance of our university education. Given the sharp increase in graduate production in Nigeria, it is most likely that unemployment would increase unabated except concrete interventions are put in place to check the trend. In order to articulate the nature of intervention to adopt, it is imperative to identify the relevant areas of needs to be addressed. This purpose guided the conduct of this study.

Factors responsible for unemployment cannot be easily isolated. The economic downturn witnessed globally, which results in insufficient jobs, invariably leads to high rates of unemployment worldwide, has not excluded Nigerian graduates from this worrisome phenomenon. In Nigeria, skills mismatch further worsens the unemployment problem witnessed in the country, even though the factors responsible for unemployment go beyond mismatch (Akerele & Opatola, 2004; Yorke, 2009). Unemployment could arise from insufficient demand for goods and services in the economy (cyclical unemployment), employers of labour may reduce their employment rate due to stringent polices related to payment of taxes and minimum wage thereby discouraging hiring new workers. And it could be structural as a result of changes in consumer demand and technology over time, resulting in obsolete skills and demand for new employees with requisite skills (McConnel & Brue, 1999). Over the past decades, the demand for labour has been altered as a result of advanced technology. There has been a shift from labour intensive to technology- driven labour, thus changing occupational structure, with emphasis on skills related to cognitive ability rather than manual skills (Frogner, 2002). This has serious implications for the kind of curriculum being operated. Hence, graduate unemployment becomes an issue of grave concern to all and sundry in Nigeria as

employers of labour, parents as well as the graduates themselves complain of high level of unemployment with its resultant negative impact on the society.

Of interest to this study, is the complaint among employers that Nigeria University graduates are poorly trained and thus are insufficiently prepared for the world of work (Obanya, 2004). Graduate unemployment, in recent times, is linked to this complain- especially university graduates low level of technical competence. The purpose of this study is to examine the veracity of this claim from the point of view of employers of university graduates and the graduates. For further clarifications, the study looks at employability as a broad concept, which is opened to many interpretations, and often wrongly used to mean employment. This wrong conception of employability is tied up in the following different perspectives. One, employability as measured by graduates actually securing jobs. This notion of employability is opened to some queries – does obtaining a job mean any job at all? Graduates may secure jobs, but are these jobs commensurate with the level of training, that is, the degrees they obtained? Due to the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria, many of the university graduates have taken up jobs that are below their level of education, thus leading to under-employment.

Two, employability defined in terms of graduates being prepared for employment; that is, having the vocational degree and competence. This appears to be an issue of curriculum relevance conceptualised to be the extent to which the skills acquired through education help the Nigerian graduate to perform well on the job and abilities to adapt within the competitive and changing world of work. However, Yorke (2009) cautions that while curricula processes may facilitate the development of prerequisites needed for a job, it may not guarantee employment. Therefore, it may be a misnomer to think that providing students with the requisite experience through higher education will enhance employability. The graduates themselves may not develop further the needed cognitive, social, behavioural and practical prerequisites for success on the job. The third perspective is that employability is context dependent, that is, defining employability with respect to the demonstration of a set of attributes and achievements that are relevant to a particular job. Never- the- less, it should be noted that

having attributes and achievements may have a value but may be insufficient for some specific job situations.

In this study, employability is taken to mean the knowledge, skills and personal characteristics of graduates that enhance their chances of being employed and function well on the job. With experience, the skills must be improved continuously. Wait-time is defined in this study, as the length of time it takes a graduate to secure a job after graduation. Purcell and Elias (2002) are of the view that the time it takes graduates to be employed differs with different disciplines. Differential employment status of graduates could also be made in terms of regional differences and individual background factors. Skills mismatch is the imbalance between the competence of graduates in terms of their skills or knowledge, which may be quantitative or qualitative in nature (Proctor & Dutta, 1998) and the skills demanded by the job. It is a gap created by deficiencies in skills of an employee and the required skills to perform on the job. Skill gaps in a workforce, which can be at the individual level and or overall, prevent the firm from attaining the business objectives (Frogner, 2002; Haskel & Martin, 2001; Mcintosh, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Globally, graduate employability is currently a topical issue, especially in Nigeria where the number of graduates produced annually tremendously outstrips the jobs available. Public opinions as well as empirical findings mostly attribute graduate unemployment problem to inadequate skills required to perform effectively on the available jobs. Graduate employability issue is complex, none-the-less, it can be linked with the changing demands of the labour market witnessed in recent times. According to the National policy on Education (2004), the expectation from university graduates is that they will impact tremendously on the nation's economic growth and development. However, there is a dearth of empirical data on skills mismatch in Nigeria. Only few research findings confirm mismatch (Ajayi, Adeniyi & Adu, 2008; NUC, 2004; Boatent & Ofori-Sarpong, 2002; Dabalen, Oni & Adekola, 2000). Public opinions majorly seem to be the main source of information on the topic. Hence, the study assessed the veracity of the claim of skills mis-match occasioned by poor

preparation of graduates for the world of work from the perspectives of employers of university graduates and the graduates themselves. It also, assessed the extent to which these graduates wait before securing jobs.

Research Questions

The study sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. How long does it take graduates of the University of Ibadan to secure a job after graduation?
2. How adequate is the content of education received as rated by the graduates?
3. How well prepared are the graduates as perceived by their employers?
4. How efficient are the graduates on their job from the perspective of their employers?
5. What was the attitude of the sampled UI graduates to work?

Methodology

Population

The target population consisted of all graduates of the University of Ibadan from 1971 to 2008 and all employers of labour in Oyo State within this period. Oyo State was chosen as the study site being the immediate catchment area of the university graduates.

Sampling Procedure and Sample

(a) Graduates: Stratified sampling procedure was used to select first degree graduates from various establishments based on those whose address could be traced. From these establishments, the following were sampled; educational institutions (tertiary, secondary and primary) (437), Ministries and Local Government secretariats (155), public establishments (e.g. banks, hospitals and law courts) (162) and private establishments (e.g. production industries, publishing houses, small scale firms, service providers) (51). Thereafter, the graduates were clustered into five based on the year of

graduation: 1970-1980, 1981-1990, 1991-2000, and 2001-2010. In all, 805 graduates constituted the graduate sample.

(b) Employers of Labour: Stratified sampling procedure was used to select all employers of the University of Ibadan graduates that were traceable, and they automatically became the employers' sample. The employers totaling 264 were drawn from various employments as earlier listed. From educational institutions, five employers from secondary and primary schools respectively were selected per LGA while all colleges of education, polytechnics and universities in the State were used. All the ministries and local government secretariats within the State were selected. Public – private establishments such as banks were selected in the ratio of 3:2 for first and second generation banks respectively; hospitals in the ratio of 1:3 public to private, and courts ratio 1:1:1 for court of appeal to high court to customary court where they were available per LGA. From other establishments, two were sampled from publishing houses, three from production industries (e.g. Coca-cola Bottling Company), four small scale industries (e.g. bakeries, water packaging companies) and service providers (media houses, communication companies). On the whole, employers were from medical profession (9), law (12), engineering (2), teaching (130), media and public relations (15), banking (16), civil service (64), maintenance and services (14) and the self employed - agriculture (2).

Instrumentation

Two instruments were developed to elicit information from the two groups of respondents:

(a) **The Graduates' Questionnaire:** This instrument had three sections. Section A contained general characteristics of the graduates, what they have been doing since graduation and for how long. Section B sought for information on adequacy of the education the graduates were exposed to in the university in terms of their preparation for the world of work. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha of 0.80 shows the validity and internal consistency of the graduates' questionnaire.

(b) **Employers' Questionnaire:** It consisted of three sections. Section A sought for information on the identity of the

establishment, number of graduates in their employment and the kind of jobs they are employed to do. Section B required the employers to rate the graduates' efficiency at work, their attitudes to work and the adequacy of education received in terms of their preparation for the world of work. The Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha of 0.95; 0.97 and 0.94 were established as measures of validity and internal consistency indices for the sub -components of the employers' questionnaire.

Data Collection and Analysis

The investigators were assisted by twelve research assistants who were postgraduate students with experience in data collection. The research assistants visited the 33 Local Government Areas of Oyo State but respondents were found in only 15 of these. These are: Afijio, Ibadan North, Ibadan North East, Ibadan North West, Ibadan South East, Ibadan South West, Ifedapo, Iseyin, Kajola, Ogo-Oluwa, Ogbomoso North, Ogbomoso South, Ori-ire, Oyo East and Surulere. The investigators conducted the documentary analysis and other aspects of data collection. Data analysis involved the use of descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings

Table1: Descriptive Statistics of U.I. Graduates with first Degree who are in Employment

Years	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1971-1980	15	1.9
1981-1990	117	17.0
1991-2000	488	60.6
2001-2008	164	20.4
No response	5	0.5
Total	**805**	**100%**

Table 1 presents the years the study respondents in gainful employment obtained their first degree. A larger proportion of the sampled graduates 488 (60.6%), obtained first degree between 1991 and 2000. One hundred and sixty-four (20.4%) and 117 (17%) of the sampled graduates obtained first degree between 2001-2008 and 1981-1990 respectively. Before the year 1980, the

number of first degree graduates in employment sampled was 15 (1.9%).

Table 2: Graduate Wait- time before Employment

Year	Frequency	Percentage (%)
>1	271	33.7
1	273	33.9
2	120	14.9
3	49	6.1
4	31	3.9
5	25	3.1
6	15	1.9
7	8	1.0
8	6	0.7
9	1	0.1
10	4	0.5
11	-	-
12	1	0.1
Total	**805**	**100**

Length of time it took the graduates of the University of Ibadan to secure a job after graduation is presented in Table 2. About 544 or 67.6% of the sampled graduates were employed within one year of graduation; 14.9% waited for about 2years before they were employed. Less than ten percent of respondents (7.4%) waited for over 5year before employment. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of U.I. graduates' views of the adequacy of the education they have received. About 53% of the graduates are of the view that they had rigorous academic activities at the University, but 52.1% of these would like to see an increase in the number of courses and units offered to increase the knowledge base of graduates and for effective job performance. Forty-nine percent agreed that they do not have enough intellectual knowledge base to cope with their jobs. Fifty-one percent indicated that they have had to consult senior colleagues and other materials for professional support and to increase their knowledge base in their area of specialisation. Table 3 also shows that between 49% and

50% of the graduates agreed that they do not find it easy to integrate into the world of work, and have had to contend with the challenges of their chosen careers and had to undertake on the job training in specific skills to cope with assigned duties after graduation.

Table 3: U.I. Graduates' Assessment of Adequacy of Education Received

S/N	Statement	Responses	
		% Correct	% Incorrect
1	I found learning at U.I. very rigorous	425(52.8%)	366(45.5%)
2	As a U.I. graduate I find it easy to integrate into the world of work.	387(48.1%)	408(50.6%)
3	I had enough intellectual knowledge to cope with my job.	389(48.3%)	398(49.4%)
4	I have had to undertake on the job training in specific skills to cope with my work since graduation.	417(51.8%)	369(45.8%)
5	I would support the offering of more courses in my subject area to improve the knowledge of any recipient.	420(52.1%)	366(45.5%)
6	I have had to consult further materials to expand my knowledge base in my area of specialization.	374(46.4%)	415(51.6%)
7	I would support any opinion to increase the course units in my subject.	327(40.6%)	466(57.9%)
8	I have had to contend with the challenges of my chosen career path.	417(51.8%)	369(45.8%)
9	I have had to ask for professional support from my senior colleagues.	374(46.5%)	411(51.0%)
10	I believe that the number of course units covered before graduation are not sufficient for effective job performance in my establishment.	419(52.0%)	373(46.3%)

Further analyses were done to find out if there was any difference in the ratings of adequacy of education received by different cohorts as defined by their year of graduation. These are presented in Tables 4a, 4b and 4c.

Table 4a: Graduates' Assessment of Adequacy of Education Received by Cohorts

Year	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
1970 - 1980	14	25. 57	4. 58	1. 208
1981 - 1990	133	23. 77	4. 67	.405
1991 - 2000	489	23. 45	5. 63	.255
2001 - 2010	164	26. 96	5. 91	.462
No Response	5	29. 40	4. 16	1. 860

Table 4b: ANOVA Summary of Group Difference in Assessment of Adequacy of Education Received

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Sum of Squares	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1703.827	4	425.957	13.982	.000*
Within Groups	24371.398	800	30.464		
Total	26075.225	804			

*Significant at $P<0.05$

Table 4c: Post-Hoc Analysis of Group Differences

Year of Graduation	Year of Graduation			
	1970-1980	1981-1990	1991-2000	2001-2010
1970-1980				
1981-1990				
1991-2000				
2001-2010		*	*	

* Significant at $P<0.05$

Table 4 (a) shows that graduates of 2001 to 2010 had a higher mean score (X = 26.96; SD = 5.91) than the others, followed by those of 1970 to 1980 (X = 25.57; SD = 4.58); 1981 to 1990 (X = 23.77; SD = 4.67) and 1991-2000 (X= 23.45; SD= 5.63). Table 4(b) shows there was a significant mean difference in the content received among the various groups of graduates clustered within 10 years of graduation (F $_{(4,800)}$ = 13.982, P < 0.05). The post-hoc analysis reveals that the 2001 to 2010 set were significantly different from the 1981 – 1990 and 1991- 2000 sets (Table 4 c).

Table 5: Employers' Assessment of U.I. Graduates Adequacy of Education Received

S/N	Statements: In this establishments, U.I. graduates	Responses	
		% Age Correct	% Age Incorrect
1	Settle easily into new roles.	151(57.2)	111(42.0)
2	Have knowledge of what is to be done at work.	154(58.3)	109(41.3)
3	Have requisite skills to solve problems at work.	151(57.2)	112(42.5)
4	Discuss intelligently at meetings.	148(56.0)	114(43.2)
5	Take initiatives that influence corporate image of the establishment.	147(55.7)	115(43.6)
6	Are creative with their ideas.	147(55.7)	114(43.2)
7	Welcome innovations easily.	152(57.6)	110(41.7)
8	Are better equipped with theoretical aspects of their job.	131(49.6)	129(48.9)
9	Are quick to identify links.	132(50.0)	128(48.5)
10	Are quick at taking decisions.	150(56.9)	111(42.1)
11	Are better equipped with the practical aspects of their job.	118(44.7)	143(54.1)
12	Are quick at sharing acquired knowledge with others.	118(44.7)	143(54.2)

Table 5 presents the results of employers' assessment of the adequacy of education received by U.I. graduates. According to the table, between 56-58% of the employers reported that U.I. graduates welcome innovations easily, have knowledge of what is to be done at work, settle into new roles easily, have requisite skills

to solve problems at work, and are quick at taking decisions. Also, these graduates discuss intelligently at meetings, take initiative that influence corporate image of their establishment and are creative with their ideas. Table 5 equally shows that 50% U.I. graduates are quick to identify links. However, the employers claim that they are not better equipped with; the practical aspects of their jobs (54.1%), theoretical aspects of their jobs (50%). The efficiency of the graduates on their job from the perspective of their employers is presented next. Information from Table 6 shows that between 60-63% of the employers perceive that U.I. graduates use criticisms as springboard for improvement and handle work materials, equipment, etc. with dexterity. Also, between 56 -57% reported that U.I. graduates are resourceful, systematic in executing given assignments, possess foresight and insight as well as produce quality work. Table 6 also shows that 51% of the employers reported that U.I. graduates complete given assignments on schedule.

Table 6: Employers' Assessment of U.I. Graduates Efficiency at Work

S/N	Statements: In my establishments, U.I. graduates	Responses	
		% Age Correct	% Age Incorrect
1	Complete given assignment on schedule.	134(50.7)	129(48.9)
2	Produce quality work.	148(56.1)	114(43.2)
3	Are very resourceful.	151(57.2)	111(42.1)
4	Use criticisms as springboard for improvement.	165(62.5)	95(36.0)
5	Handle work materials, equipment, etc. with dexterity.	158(59.9)	104(39.4)
6	Systematic in executing given assignment.	150(56.8)	112(42.5)
7	Possess foresight.	154(56.4)	114(43.2)
8	Possess insight.	149(56.5)	113(42.8)

Table 7: Employers' Assessment of U.I. Graduates Attitude to Work

S/N	Statements	Responses	
		% Correct	% Incorrect
1	Are very punctual to work.	149(56.5)	114(44.1)
2	Take their assignments very seriously.	149(56.5)	113(44.4)
3	Plan their work well.	149(56.4)	114(43.6)
4	Execute given assignments systematically.	143(54.1)	120(43.4)
5	Handle assignments with zeal.	149(56.5)	114(43.2)
6	Enjoy long hours of work.	132(50.0)	130(49.3)
7	Are polite to all cadres of staff.	141(53.4)	121(45.8)
8	Find it easy to work with others.	147(55.7)	117(44.4)
9	Do not seem to accept failure easily.	133(50.4)	129(48.8)
10	Have good sense of time.	143(54.2)	120(45.4)
11	Show concern to the needs of the establishment	147(55.7)	116(44.0)
12	Have good attitude to work.	151(57.2)	111(42.1)
13	Work unaided.	143(54.2)	118(44.7)

The result of employers' assessment of U.I. graduates' attitude to work is presented in Table 7. The employers, between 56-57%, were of the opinion that U.I. graduates have good attitudes to work, are punctual to work, plan their work well, and take their assignments very seriously. They also handle assignments with zeal, show concern to the needs of the establishment and find it easy to work with others. Table 7 also shows that the employers between (50-54%) assessed U.I. graduates as being able to work unaided, have good sense of time, execute given assignments systematically, are polite to all cadres of staff, enjoy long hours of work and do not seem to accept failure easily.

Discussion

The study findings indicate that 60.6% of the sampled University of Ibadan graduates obtained their first degree between

1991-2000 academic sessions. About 18.4% and 20.9% of them graduated prior to 1991 and after 2000 academic sessions respectively. Findings in terms of the length of time these graduates waited after graduation before securing a job indicate that majority of the graduates (67.6%) waited for less than 1 year, 22.3% waited between 2-5 years, whereas only a negligible proportion (10.1%) waited longer than five years. Certainly, from these findings, many of the sampled U.I. graduates did not have to wait for too long before gaining employment. Though the situation of graduate unemployment in the last decade in Nigeria has been on the increase and although the findings in this study seem not to conform with the general situation, however, when U.I. graduates are isolated from this general trend, they seem to enjoy a better platform for employment than others as exemplified by the findings of this study. Also, many recent U.I. graduates are not in paid employment because they had imbibed the tenets of enterprise education; a frame of reference they were exposed to while in U.I. Coupled with this they are exploiting the possibility of enhancing their current qualification through higher degrees in a bid to further increase their potential for employment. It was also observed that many of the graduates who belong to the 1971-1980 and 1981-1990 cohorts are no longer in service of Oyo State. This might be due to retirement on account of age or length of service. Fewer graduates of the 2001-2008 cohorts were found in the State mainly because of the stringent employment policy of the State and in the country at large in the last decade, with its attendant low employment rate during this period.

In a study of this nature, it is ideal to adopt the principle of triangulation by which relevant information is obtained from various sources to guide data collection, interpretation and making of appropriate inferences and conclusion. In view of this, relevant information on adequacy of the programme received was obtained from the graduates and their employers. The employers also provided an assessment of the graduates' knowledge, skill and attitudes to work. In terms of adequacy of education received, 52.8% of the graduates agreed they had rigorous academic training, about 49.4% agreed that they did not have enough knowledge base to cope with their jobs or find it easy to integrate into the world to work. As a consequence, 46.5% reported that they

have had to consult senior colleagues, other materials and undertake on the job training in specific skills in their area of specialisation to cope with assigned duties. The broad nature of many disciplines at the undergraduate level might serve to explain this observation; hence the need to undertake on-the-job training in specific skills to cope with assigned duties. The graduates, therefore, agreed that they would like to see an increase in the number of courses and units offered to increase the knowledge base of graduates and for effective job performance.

Further analyses indicate that there was significant variation in the education received by U.I graduates from one period to another. Graduates who obtained the first degree between 2001-2010 were significantly different from those who graduated between 1981-1991 and 1991-2000 academic sessions. The observed difference in training between the recent cohorts of graduates (2001-2010) and the later sets may be attributed to two things. First is the response to stakeholders demand for continuous update and review of the tertiary curriculum to meet societal needs. Second are the issues of globalisation, modernisation and vigorous introduction of technology especially the super-highway internet connectivity to teaching and learning at the tertiary level of education in the last decade. The effects seem to be manifesting gradually.

From the perspective of the employers, between 50% and 58% of them are of the opinion that the education received by U.I. graduates offer them good advantage to exhibit all of the capabilities indicated. For example, about 58% of them felt that UI graduates have the requisite knowledge of what is to be done at work, possess requisite skills to solve problems at work (57.2%), handle materials, equipment with dexterity (59.9%) and discuss intelligently at meetings (56.0%). The employers (57.2%) also agree that U.I graduates possess good and positive attitude to work. The findings in this study with respect to attitude is in contrast to that of Okwilagwe (2002) who after studying the attitude of Nigerian undergraduates in three universities reported that they possessed divergent attitudes that were both positive and negative to academic work. The positive attitude as observed in this study is interesting in that the undergraduates seemed to have improved on their attitudes to work, when compared to the earlier findings by

Okwilagwe (2002). It confirms that there is a sharp difference between job and schooling environment.

Possession of positive attitudes expresses itself in creative attitudes that should lead to the creation or achievement of other positive outcomes. This view is in line with that of Bowkett (2007) who contends that positive attitudes underline the achievement of core skills. By extension, such attitudes are essential ingredients for creativity and achievement. Previous studies also contend that the possession of positive attitude is as important as intelligence both in the process of education and in the practical affairs of everyday life, since a person's attitude is representative of that person's personality (Ebel, 1972; Obemeata, 1984).

In terms of skills mismatch and U.I. graduates employability, findings did not indicate a clear imbalance, meaning that for the set of U.I. graduates sampled in this study, the level of mismatch is not as alarming as being echoed by employers of labour in the country. Still, the finding is unexpected, in spite of the concerted efforts to update or review first degree programmes in the University. However, it would appear that most of the graduates involved in this study were out of the university before the implementation of the revised curriculum which attempted to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The views of Yorke (2009) that though curricula processes may facilitate the development of prerequisites needed for employment, but may not guarantee employment is very apt here. It, therefore, points to the fact that other factors such as the individuals home experience (family factors), attitude, risk taking behaviour among others (Obialo, 2010) are germane to being efficient and effective, either in the search for, or creating employment and performance on the job.

Summary and Conclusion

The findings of this study did not reflect any clear cut mismatch in the level of competence of U.I graduates and expected competence needs as rated by their employers. About 58% of the employers felt that UI graduates have the requisite knowledge, possess requisite skills to solve problems at work, handle materials, equipment with dexterity and discuss intelligently at meetings. The employers (57.2%) also agree that U.I graduates

possess good and positive attitude to work. From the graduates' point of view, there appears to be a spilt, somewhat midway between those who felt they had enough capacity to cope with the world of works and those who felt otherwise. Even though in the last decade, improvement in infrastructure and staff development in the University of Ibadan have aided advancement in the frontiers of knowledge and quality of graduate production, it would appear that most of the graduates that participated in the study did not have the opportunity of training under the improved learning environment that currently exists in the university. Therefore, further study is needed to confirm these present findings. Also, there should be increased government funding, and private partnership with the nation's tertiary institutions to further improve staff capacity and quality output.

Recommendations

In view of the major findings in this study, the way forward to effecting graduate employability rest in the following:

(i)   There is the need for curriculum review to ensure relevance;

(ii)   Skills development in our undergraduates should be given priority, with the dwindling rate of government jobs. Development of appropriate skills and the creation of enabling environment may encourage graduates to look inward for employment. Generic skills, personal skills, and perspective skills are the important skills to focus on. These will ensure competence, whether graduates get government jobs or are self - employed.

(iii) Staff capacity development is also germane in order to ensure adequate knowledge and skills transfer to the students.

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