



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

OCTOBER 2013, VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3, 1 - 8

E-ISSN NO: 2289 – 4489

THE IMPACT OF COURSES OFFERED ON EMPLOYABILITY IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

O. P. Akinnubi¹ (PhD) & A. O. Sule² (PhD)

*[1] Dept of Educational
Management,
College of Education,
Al-Hikmah University,
Ilorin, Nigeria*

*[2] Dept of Arts and
Social Sciences
Education, College of
Education,
Al-Hikmah University,
Ilorin, Nigeria*

*Corresponding Author:
College of Education,
Al-Hikmah University,
Ilorin, Nigeria
akinnubipaul@yahoo.com
+2348052214006*

ABSTRACT

The rate of unemployment in Kwara State, Nigeria has become a major concern to all stakeholders in education. This phenomenon can be traced to courses offered in its tertiary institutions. This study investigated the impact of courses offered on employability in tertiary institutions, Kwara State, Nigeria. The research design used was a descriptive survey. Three hundred, that is, 200 lecturers from four tertiary institutions (Al-Hikmah University, Kwara State Polytechnic, The Federal Polytechnic, Offa and University of Ilorin) and 100 employers from both public and private establishments were selected as participants in the study through purposive random sampling technique. An instrument titled: "Courses Offered and Employability Questionnaire" (COEQ) was used to obtain relevant information from the participants. The questionnaire was validated by four experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation. Test re-test method was used to obtain reliability coefficient value of .81 for the COEQ. Two research questions were raised and one hypothesis was formulated to guide the conduct of the study. The research questions raised were answered using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage and rank ordering while Pearson product-moment correlation statistical method was used to test the research hypothesis formulated at the .05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that a significant relationship existed between courses offered and employability in tertiary institutions, Kwara State. It was recommended, among others that, the government should create more job opportunities in order to absorb graduates from its tertiary institutions. Entrepreneurship skill acquisition for graduates should be emphasized to facilitate self-employment.

Keywords: Courses offered, Employability, Tertiary institutions, Kwara State, Nigeria



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

INTRODUCTION

Education over the years has been operating in a climate of rapid change brought about by a continual process of adjustment to meet the challenges of fast social, scientific and technological changes. Such changes usually affect the curriculum content and examination structure as could be seen in the tertiary educational system. Society depends on higher institutions of learning to produce well-adjusted individuals who can properly fit into the workforce. Polytechnics and Universities, as the highest educational institutions are statutorily charged with the responsibility of producing manpower for the nation's economy. In fact, many graduates of senior secondary institutions struggle to gain admission into tertiary institutions. This depicts that, perhaps, people have realized the importance of higher education as a means for social mobility, self-development and self-actualization (Akinnubi, 2010). This probably explains why Ehiamezor (2005) argued that there seems to be a general perception in Nigeria that only a university degree can promise a good future.

It is on this premise that FRN (2004) states the goals of tertiary education as:

- (a) To contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
- (b) To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society;
- (c) To develop the intellectual capacity of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
- (d) To acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of society;
- (e) To promote and encourage scholarship and community services;
- (f) To forge and cement national unity; and
- (g) To promote national and international understanding and interaction (p. 30).

It is important for tertiary institutions in Kwara State to achieve these goals in the interest of the State and the country as a whole.

Courses offered in Nigerian tertiary institutions are based on approval from bodies overseeing the affairs of such institutions. For instance, the National Universities Commission (NUC) ensures that courses offered in Nigerian universities are accredited before they are mounted. Manpower refers to capability of the individual personnel in a given organization. Manpower development implies increased skill, capacity and creativity of personnel to enhance productivity for societal well-being. Every institution has made manpower development, through robust curriculum, a central part of their plan. This is because the development of man will lead to increased productivity and will inevitably catapult society into genuine development and thus overcome backwardness (Okekere & Ekpe, 2002). Hence, this paper investigated the impact of courses offered on employability in tertiary institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria.



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rate of unemployment in Kwara State has become a major concern to all stakeholders in education. This phenomenon can be traced to courses offered in her tertiary institutions. One area of dispute among employers and even successful entrepreneurs who have been able to combine academic prowess with intellectual sagacity is the quality and calibre of graduates being produced by Nigeria's institutions of higher learning, such as Polytechnics and Universities. For many, it is appropriate for them to doubt the quality of these graduates who are unfortunately victims of the rot in the nation's academic sphere- a sphere filled with self-centered administrators, lackadaisical lecturers and confused students (Makinde, 2013). Taiwo (2003) cited in Akinnubi (2010) opined that despite the information superhighways providing opportunities for global transfer of knowledge, developing countries are not yet properly equipped with necessary exportable goods (knowledge) and vehicles (technology) for use in these superhighways. The obsolete telecommunication facilities, high costs of connection, low levels of technological awareness and bureaucratic interference in technology usage may inhibit countries such as Nigeria from active participation in the global provision of education programs.

The paradoxical disparity between educational philosophy and objectives on the one hand and the practice on the other; inadequate or lack of effective planning and implementation of plans; paucity of academic staff as well as poor infrastructural facilities are factors militating against efficient and effective teaching and learning in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives of this study are:

1. To examine level of students' demand for courses offered in tertiary institutions, Kwara State.
2. To examine patterns in preferential demand by establishments for courses offered in tertiary institutions, Kwara State.
3. To determine the relationship that existed between courses offered and employability in tertiary institutions, Kwara State.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of students' demand for courses offered in tertiary institutions, Kwara State?
2. Is there any pattern in preferential demand by establishments for courses offered in tertiary institutions, Kwara State?



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between courses offered and employability in tertiary institutions, Kwara State.

METHODOLOGY

The research design used for this study was a descriptive survey. Three hundred, that is, 200 lecturers from four tertiary institutions (Al-Hikmah University, Kwara State Polytechnic, The Federal Polytechnic, Offa and University of Ilorin) and 100 employers from both public and private establishments were selected as participants in the study through purposive random sampling technique. An instrument titled: "Courses Offered and Employability Questionnaire" (COEQ) was used to obtain relevant information from the participants. The questionnaire was validated by four experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation. Test re-test method was used to obtain reliability coefficient value of .81 for the COEQ based on the pilot study conducted. Two research questions were raised and one hypothesis was formulated to guide the conduct of the study. The researchers, with the help of two trained research assistants administered copies of the questionnaire in the sampled tertiary institutions and establishments. The research questions raised were answered using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage and rank ordering while Pearson product-moment correlation statistical method was used to test the research hypothesis formulated at the .05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question One: What is the level of students demand for courses offered in tertiary institutions, Kwara State?

Table 1

Level of students demand for courses offered in tertiary institutions, Kwara State

S/N	Institutions	High		Moderate		Low		Total	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin	12	24	34	68	4	8	50	100
2	Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin	25	50	24	48	1	2	50	100
3	The Federal Polytechnic, Offa	33	66	17	34	-	-	50	100
4	University of Ilorin, Ilorin	41	82	9	18	-	-	50	100
Total		111	55.5	84	42	5	2.5	200	100



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

The results in Table 1 show that almost all the courses offered in tertiary institutions in Kwara State are demanded by students. The reason for differences in the responses to the level of students demand for courses offered in tertiary institutions, Kwara State might be due to differences in fees charged, demand by employers and mode of advertisement on the part of the institution's management. Utilization implies the degree or extent to which an item has been put into effective use. In other words, it is the extent of usage of an equipment or item. If the item or equipment is not used maximally then, we can talk of under-utilization of such item, but if maximally used, such an item is described as effectively utilized. If there is much pressure on the use of an item, this may result in over utilization, which usually leads to breakdown of such item or equipment.

This will invariably reduce students' admission into the institutions. Resource is usually a scarce commodity whether material or human and no institution can succeed when denied its provision and adequate utilization. That is, students' level of demand for courses offered in Tertiary institutions, Kwara State largely depends on the availability and utilization of the facilities provided by the institutions. To corroborate this statement, Akinnubi (2010) noted that students often demand for courses in institutions where there are adequate human and material resources which will enable them to defend their certificate at a given point in time.

Akinsolu's (2006) study concluded that it was not just important for schools to be richly endowed with educational facilities, it is equally very important that such facilities should be well managed by school administrators to facilitate effective teaching and learning. There is no denying that level of students demand for courses offered in tertiary institutions, Kwara State can be traced to students' anticipation for future employment.

Research Question Two: Is there any pattern in preferential demand by establishments for courses offered in tertiary institutions, Kwara State?

Table 2

Patterns in preferential demand by establishments for courses offered

S/N	Discipline	Responses	Rank
1	Agriculture	24	3
2	Engineering	22	4
3	Humanities	78	1
4	Medicine	18	5
5	Sciences	54	2

Table 2 indicates patterns in preferential demand by establishments for courses offered in Tertiary institutions of Kwara State. Humanities was ranked the most occurring courses offered, while medicine was ranked the least. Sciences, Agriculture and Medicine are not in high demand in the State. It can be inferred that there are



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

inadequate establishments to absorb the products of these disciplines. The orientation of any educational system is to generate jobs that will pay attention to the quality of the education in whatever field and taking specific measures to ensure that educational contents are skill-oriented and market-relevant so that high quality education will enhance productivity and high productivity in turn will produce demand for more products which can expand employment (Umo, 1996).

The importance of courses offered is evident in the way students are desperate to read some courses in tertiary institutions. The pursuance of some courses of study in the University and Polytechnic are not made attractive, because they do not attract any financial aid from employers of labor, whereas other courses in sciences and engineering -- especially petroleum and civil engineering -- have the option of choosing which scholarship scheme they would want to target (Yahaya, 2008).

This may suggest to the students in other disciplines that their courses of study are neither valued nor needed. Oyedepo (2011) further buttressed this claim by stating that students tend to struggle to read courses with longer duration of study so as to improve their possibility of employment, and it is science courses that attract longer duration of study. Although the Agriculture sector employs a larger percentage of Nigerian populace, some of the graduates are not ready to practice the profession, but prefer white collar jobs which are not enough to absorb large number of students turned out yearly by tertiary institutions in Kwara State.

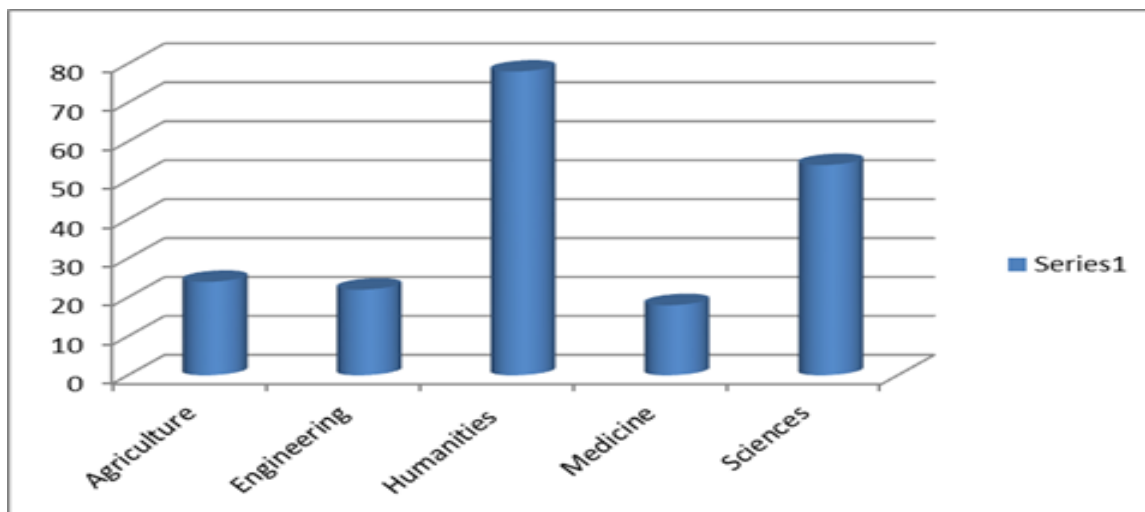


Figure 1. Further explains patterns in preferential demand by organizations for courses offered in tertiary institutions, Kwara State.

As shown in figure 1, courses offered in humanities are mostly demanded by establishments in Kwara State. The growth rate in the establishment of private schools and other allied service providers may account for this. The health sector has been contributing positively in the reducing the unemployment rate in Kwara State. University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital (UIH) takes the lion's share in employment of graduates in sciences while doctors have few placements in Kwara State.



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

Table 3

Courses offered and employability in tertiary institutions, Kwara State

Variable	N	df	Calculated r-value	p-value	Decision
Courses offered	300	298	.672	.000	Ho: Rejected
Employability	300				

From Table 3, the p-value < .05 level of significance and for 298 degrees of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that a significant relationship existed between courses offered and employability in tertiary institutions in Kwara State. In a situation where courses offered in Polytechnics and Universities are not of high demand, this may increase the rate of unemployment in the State as graduates from this institutions will not find placement in the available establishments. To corroborate this, Ayodele (2003) submitted that education is essential to employment by stating that educational qualifications are used in Nigeria as proxies for measuring background characteristics with respect to employment opportunities at a given point in time.

Educational training affects the employment and consequently productivity, that is why Oni (2001) as reported by Oyedepo (2011) stated that the education of human resources culminates in meaningful employment for the educated. It allows for the skills acquired to be used for national development so as to reap the anticipated economic benefits from educational investment, which leads to lucrative employment and subsequent increased productivity. Employment is very essential in the life of individuals as it enables them to be economically self-supporting and assume their rightful place in society. Work is one of the prime realities of life, a very important focus of human motivation, for formal education. Work has a therapeutic effect, being a stabilizing force in life that paves the way for attainments, independence and self-esteem. Work has social value in that much of the recognition a man receives even in his or her home or community is accounted for by what he does. Jobs provide one with money to meet one's personal needs and fulfil societal obligations and helps one contribute to the socio-economic activities of the community and the nation at large, thereby affirming one's sense of pride (Oyedepo, 2011).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are increasing societal demands on Nigerian modern educational institutions for good results in terms of the functionality of the type of education given. Polytechnic and University education in particular are looked upon for meeting the manpower needs of the country's economy. Thus, tertiary institutions (Polytechnics and Universities) are complex organizations with multiple goals which are accomplished through their major roles of teaching, research and community service (FRN, 2004). Thus, the government should create more job opportunities in order to absorb graduate from her tertiary institutions, especially in the humanities where large numbers of students are turned out. More emphasis should be placed on entrepreneurship skill acquisition for the graduates to be self-employed. Sensitization programmes should be organized for polytechnic and universities students on the need to read in order to improve their intellectual and mental ability and not for academic purposes.



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

REFERENCES

- Akinnubi, O.P (2010). *Strategic plan implementation, resources utilization and internal efficiency in Nigerian Universities*(Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis). University of Ilorin, Ilorin.
- Akinsolu, A. O. (2006). School facility depreciation and types of maintenance required by school administrators in Nigeria: Planner's view. *International Journal of Educational Management (IJEM)*, 4(1), 19-27.
- Ayodele, A. S. (2003). *Labour, output and employment connection in Nigeria: The job-competition orthodoxy*. Nigerian institute of social and economic research (NISER). Ibadan; series 2.
- Ehiametalor, E. T. (1995). *Strategies in the management of education*. Ibadan: Evans.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2004). *National Policy on Education (Revised)*. Abuja: Federal Government Press.
- Makinde, T. (2013). Nigeria's higher institutions and their shortcomings. The Guardian newspaper, June 4.
- Okekere, O. O., & Ekpe, A. E. (2002). *Development and under development: Politics of the North-South Divide*. Enugu: John Jacob's Classical Publisher.
- Oni, B. (2001). *Labour market prospects of University graduates in Nigeria. Paper presented at the stakeholders conference on curriculum review of University Education in Nigeria*. National University Commission .Abuja : April 23-24.
- Oyedepo, B. (2011). *Relationship among course offered, employability and productivity of Nigerian University Graduate* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis). University of Ilorin, Ilorin.
- Taiwo, B. M. (2003). Sandwich N.C.E. Programme of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin: Issues, problems and prospects. *Journal of Teachers Education*, 1(1), 230-237
- Umo, J. U (1996). Full employment implication of educational investment in contemporary Nigeria. Abuja (81 - 95). In Joe U. Umo (Ed.), *Towards full employment strategy in Nigeria* (pp. 81-95). Abuja. National Manpower Board Publication.
- Yahaya, M. (2008). Agricultural Engineering Education in Nigeria. *Agricultural Engineering International*, the CIGR-E Journal Invited Overview, 10(7). Retrieved from www.cigr-ejournal.tamu.edu