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UNEMPLOYABILITY OF THE NIGERIAN GRADUATE: THE EFFECT OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS-INDUSTRY DISCONNECT

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ABSTRACT: *The main objective of the study was to examine the effect of tertiary institutions-industry disconnect in Nigeria. To achieve this, primary data was collated using a questionnaire from an online survey from 550 participants. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed to estimate the data. The estimates indicates that practical skills was positive but insignificant, while industrial training and workshop were both positive and significant in aligning the curriculum content with the workplace needs of employers. The logit estimates indicate that grade point average and type of qualification were negative and bear insignificant effect on educational content and workplace readiness. The estimates further showed that ICT skills and additional certification have a positive and significant effect on educational content and workplace readiness. The estimates suggest that there is a 54% chance that employment matches the degree acquired. The estimates also indicate that the coefficient of practical skills is negative and insignificant, while industrial work experience is an eligible link between tertiary institutions and industry. The results suggest that ICT and additional certificates increase employability by 32%-40% and 15.5%-27.9% respectively. Work experience drivers employability by 6.4%. The study concludes that practical skills, industrial training/workshop, and additional certificates as significant factors that can enhance the link between institutions of learning, the demands of the labour market, and graduate employability in Nigeria. Among others, the study recommends the need to integrate industry needs into the educational curricula. The study also recommends the need to ensure collaboration between industry and tertiary institutions. Again, it suggests the need for graduates to acquire professional certificates to enhance their chances of employment.*

KEYWORDS: Employability, unemployability, practical skills, curriculum, workplace readiness

INTRODUCTION

Apparently, one of the stiffest challenges facing the average Nigerian graduate is getting a job that matches his/her academic qualification long after graduating from school. This difficulty to a large extent is not the fault of the graduate per se but can be traced in part to the environmental conditions

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of the country such as lack of job opportunities in the labour market; limited, turbulent and constrained economic activities that hinder investors and businesses to pursue high growth that will require them to hire more people; inadequate curriculum content to cater to the needs of employers, and predominantly the lo w quality of graduates in terms of acquisition of the right skills, competencies, capabilities and logical reasoning required in the labour market, making them unemployable to match the few job openings available. This indeed is a serious case as the country experiences an astronomical surge in its youth unemployment rate, soaring from an average of 23.63% in 2014 to a staggering 38% in 2018. No doubt unemployability is of great concern to policy makers and stakeholders as it is unemployment itself.

The problem of graduate unemployability poses a grave danger to the security, growth and sustainability of the nation's economic development, yet no real significant attention has been given to this debilitating predicament of the Nigerian graduate. Nigeria's record of graduate unemployment keeps skyrocketing every quarter and is currently experiencing youth unemployment rate of 38%. This is quite terrible and absolutely unacceptable especially for the fact that graduates of Nigerian tertiary institutions are considered unemployable even for jobs that are available as employers of labour have continually complained that they lack the skills and competencies required in the industry. Indication from literature is that about 80% of graduates from Nigerian tertiary institutions find it very difficult to get employment every year not necessarily because there are no jobs but because of the disequilibrium and incongruence between the skills required by employers and those acquired by graduates (Adejimola & Olufunmilayo, 2009). Furthermore, the problem of graduate unemployment in Nigeria according to the Vice Chancellor of Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA), Professor Biyi Daramola, is their lack of self-discipline and commitment to a vigorous academic pursuit during their studies. The sorry state of the Nigerian educational system is further reflected in the recent allocation of budget. Nigerian education sector has allocated 15 to 20 percent of national budget recommendation by UNESCO. The Federal Government allocated only a paltry 7.04% of the 8.6 trillion 2018 budget to education. But as long as the status quo continues, Nigerian graduate will continue to be unemployable in today's competitive business environment that prioritizes relevant skills over moribund pre-industrial age skills (Nigerian Tribune, 2018). In fact, it should not be news worthy that graduates produced from such a system as this are gravely incompetent and therefore unwanted by the labour market. As a result, stakeholders in the education sector have also expressed concerns bordering on the increasing rejection of fresh graduates from employment and have called on tertiary institutions to focus intensely on delivering top notch quality education with the capacity to instill the requisite skills and competencies needed in the labour market. Industry professionals even decry the growing disconnect and incompatibility between theoretical learning and employer skill requirements (Ewuzie, 2019). Owing that tertiary institutions are saddled with the responsibility of training graduates for job placement, it is crucial to undertake this research to uncover the problems leading to graduate unemployability and fashion ways to solve them.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Graduate Unemployability and Employability

In its simplest connotation, employability focuses primarily on an individual's: in this case a graduate's skillsets and competencies brought to bare in the employment equation. Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie defined graduate employability as "*the perceived ability to attain sustainable employment appropriate to one's qualification level"* (2009, p. 2), in a specific field or discipline. Yorke (2004) sees employability as *"a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations".* While unemployability means lacking all prerequisite skill and competencies to be employed. Unemployability is also seen as the *"state or condition of being unemployable, i.e lacking the average standard required to be considered for employment*" (Orakpoghenor, 2015). William Fox, a Professor of Industrial Relations and Management at the prestigious University of Florida, in his 1965 article published in Business Horizon referred to these set of graduates as unemployables. He used the word unemployables in reference to those seeking for employment but are not wanted by employers (Fox, 1965).

Although one cannot ratify the absoluteness of this trending assertion that the Nigerian graduate is ''unemployable", but if this is true as is peddled everywhere even by employers, then the capacity and qualifiability of the lecturers in the tertiary institutions has to be seriously questioned and scrutinized, as no one can give what they do not have. Dave opinionated that even though not all Nigerian graduates are unemployable, most of them is brilliant but that brilliance is not what employers are looking for. He further argues that their constraints are that Nigerian graduates do not prepare for interviews, do not know the role of the position they seek to occupy, and therefore cannot communicate properly what they are capable of doing. He also assert that graduates searching for jobs most times do not approach job seeking as them bringing solution to the employer. Meanwhile, the employer is looking for someone to come in and solve their problems (Ebi, 2018).

Despite the huge responsibility of tertiary institutions in training and equipping graduates with the requisite job skills, literature categorized graduate employability into two aspects: absolute and relational. The absolute conceives employability as a measure of the degree to which a person has succeeded in matching their human capital profile with the demands of the industry (Thijssen, Heijden, & Rocco, 2008). Here, tertiary institutions, training and other avenues via which skills are acquired are construed as the means to an end. This means the individual can to a large extent, is the influencer of his/her employableness (Tholen, 2015). Employability is typically viewed from this perspective as something that can be measured objectively and improved upon through skills development programmes, acquisition of knowledge and experiences. Conversely, the other aspect of employability is seen understood to be relative and is influenced by factors outside the control

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of the individual person(s) and their actions. When framed as relational, it seen to be contextual, conflictual and structured by inequalities, opportunities and power relations which are entrenched within social contexts. This view gives credence to the outside influencers of the labour market. For instance, employment opportunities available by ethnicity, religion, gender, age, perceived status of tertiary institution attended, social class and tribe, etc. (Allen, Quinn, Hollingworth, & Rose, 2013; Jackson, 2014). These influences cannot be cured by tertiary institutions-industry collaboration. However in this research, we will focus on the absolute aspect of employability.

Tertiary Institutions-Industry Connect

More ever than before, the need for tertiary institutions to connect and partner with industry is without doubt on the rise, as tertiary institutions are encouraged to embrace partnerships with indutry for the purpose of galvanizing responsiveness to the demands of employability skills and competence in graduates seeking employment (Wedekind & Mutereko, 2016). Although the awareness of the imperativeness and urgency for tertiary institutions-industry collaboration is not a new phenomenon (Kruss, 2005a; Borrell-Damian, 2009; Kruss, 2005b; Kruss, 2009), the Nigerian education system is still inimical to form partnerships with industry players and this is affecting the employability status of its graduates negatively. According to Abimbola Olashore, chairman Board of Governors, Olashore International School, Osun State, it is quite unfortunate that many Nigeria institutions of higher learning still experience a damaging disconnect between her institutions and the skill gaps of the industry. It is a given, that for tertiary institutions especially in Nigeria to remain relevant considering the accelerated changes and overwhelming complexity as it borders on social and technological transformations, they must be willing to be flexible and adaptable in their responses to the changing demands of the labour market. It is expected that tertiary institutions showcase their responsiveness to these environmental changes via partnerships with industry to collaboratively design and implement curriculum that would be fit for job performance in the different industries (Badroodien & Kraak, 2006). In fact, partnership between tertiary institutions and industry is the fulcrum showcasing their responsiveness to the needs of their environments. It is a fact that tertiary institutions-industry connection will result in the development of curricula to meet specific needs thereby producing focused qualifications for the industry benefit.

Tertiary institutions are expected to play a pivotal role in the rescue of industry manpower needs by solving the problem of graduate unemployability by imbuing graduates with industry relevant skills and competencies but apparently and unfortunately, this is not the case in Nigeria. Other than preparing students for employment or entrepreneurship, tertiary institutions-industry collaboration can foster innovation and help schools develop new programmes for specific industries. For instance, the collaboration between the University of Technology South Africa and the Paper and Pulp Industry helped the University's department of Chemical Engineering enrich both their undergraduate and graduate programmes; and also developed a new department entirely specifically suited for the Paper and Pulp Industry for which many graduates have emerged with the desired skills and competencies needed in the industry (Wedekind & Mutereko, 2016).

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Some of the positive aspect of tertiary institution-industry collaboration as garnered from literature includes linking students to internship and eventually job placements; update of curriculum to match industry needs; provision of research funds for research students to carry out problem solving researches leading to innovation and technological advancements; and tutelage/mentorship by professionals from industry etc. (Stephan, 2001). However, care must be taken because the curriculation of qualifications that are narrowly focused on one industry may limit articulation and portability of skills between different industries by graduates. Although tertiary institutions-industry partnership is normal in advanced economies like USA, Canada, Europe and parts of Asia, it has not taken root yet in developing countries, especially Nigeria. It is believed that tertiary institutions have at least three critical mandates to deliver in every country; teaching, research and outreach. The outreach aspect involving connecting tertiary institutions' activities with society and its economy is yet to be pursued vigorously by most tertiary institutions in Africa (Joshua, Azuh, & Olanrewaju, 2015). Here are examples of some ongoing tertiary institution-industry collaborations in developed economies: Microsoft, Cisco and Intel are in collaboration with the University of Melbourne; AALTO University is in collaboration with the industrial sector; Technical University of Munich (TUM) is in partnership with Audi Motor Company; University of California is also in partnership with the industrial sector of the economy to mention just a few (Belfield, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

The data for this study was collated via a well-structured questionnaire which was posted to various online groups. This was done to make sure that the participants cut across the country. Five hundred and fifty graduates participated in the survey.

Section A of the questionnaire comprises of the bio-data and demographics of each respondent while section B comprises subsets of the alignment of tertiary institutions' curriculum content with the workplace needs of employers of labour in Nigeria; the skills acquired in higher institutions and its impact on the 21st-century workplace performance; the educational content and how it impacts the workplace readiness of graduates; the disconnect between tertiary institutions and industry in Nigeria; the suitability of curriculum content to the workplace needs of the 21st-century work environment; the distinctive competencies and skills needed in the labour market in Nigeria, and finally, and the challenges faced by graduates in gaining initial employment.

This study employs descriptive and inferential statistical methods to analyze and estimate the primary data that will be collected for the study. Specifically, simple mean, standard deviation, other descriptive statistical techniques and regression techniques were used to analyze and estimate the primary data collated for the study. The mean help define the average responses and inclination of the respondent groups. The variance and standard deviation help ascertain if the responses were within a handy interval to the center and the level of magnitude. This helped the researcher to

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know whether there is variability and if the mean factually depicts the response groups (Saunders et al., 2012).

To ascertain the impact of educational content, skills acquired and workplace needs in Nigeria, this study adopts the binary logit regression technique. The logistic distribution was used to predict the probability of a dependent variable that is dichotomous. The general form of the probability is specified below:

$$P_i = \frac{e^{\beta_i X_i}}{1 + e^{\beta_i X_i}}$$

Where *P* predicts the probability of being employed or not (i.e. employed = 1 or 0), and the X is the vector of the independent variables. While the left-hand side is a conventional probability scale, the right-hand side is a non-linear function of the predictors, and there is no easy way to explain the impact of increasing a predictor by one unit while keeping the other variables constant on the probability. We can get a rough estimate by calculating derivatives with respect to X_i, but this is only useful for continuous predictors. Using the quotient rule we get:

$$\frac{\delta P_i}{\delta P_{ij}} = \beta_i P_i (1 - P_i)$$

Thus, the effect of the j-th predictor on the probability P_i depends on the coefficient β_i and the value of the probability. It is a usual practice to evaluate this product setting P_i to the sample mean (the proportion of cases with the attribute of interest in the sample). The result approximates the effect of the covariate near the mean of the response. As a result, the impact of the j-th predictor on the probability P_i is determined by the coefficient βi and the probability value. Pi is usually set to the sample mean when evaluating this product (the proportion of cases with the attribute of interest in the sample). Near the response mean, the outcome approximates the impact of the covariate.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the regression estimates from the field work. The results are presented in tables and discussed subsequently.

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Table 1
Data statistical properties

Variables	Mean	Std.Dev.	Max	Min
Employed	0.609	0.489	1	0
ICT skill	0.935	0.246	1	0
ICT level	2.024	0.485	4	1
Additional certificate	0.558	0.497	1	0
Matches	0.354	0.479	1	0
Industrial related	0.605	0.490	1	0
Industrial Workshop	0.537	0.499	1	0
Industrial training	0.595	0.492	1	0
Practical skill	0.500	0.501	1	0
CGPA	3.583	0.632	4.93	1.50
Grade	2.459	0.699	4	1
Qualification	2.597	0.693	3	1
Age	2.980	0.905	4	1
Sex	0.541	0.499	1	0
Experience	4.624	4.322	27 Years	2 months

Table 1 depicts the descriptive statistics of the variables employed in this study. As Table 1 shows, about 61% are employed; 94% have ICT knowledge but with 50% above the average skill level; 56% have an additional certificate; 35% current jobs matched school degree; 61% are industrial related; 54% have attended the industrial workshop; 60% went for industrial training; 50% were exposed to the practical aspect of their course of study; average CGP is about 3.58; most students were barely above average, and most graduates are having a little year of experience.

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Table 2
Dependent variable: Employment (Yes = 1, No = 0)

Variable	Coeff. /Std.	Marginal
Practical skill	0.061	0.015
	(0.284)	(0.066)
Industrial training	0.508*	0.119*
	(0.290)	(0.066)
Industrial Workshop	0.846***	0.200***
	(0.258)	(0.059)
Constant	0.279	
	(0.219)	
Mc-Fadden R^2	0.033	
LR-Stat	12.986***	
BIC	388.541	

****** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.1***

Table 2 depicts the binary logit regression estimate to ascertain the alignment of tertiary institutions' curriculum content with the workplace needs of employers of labour in Nigeria. The result shows that the coefficient of practical skill (0.061) is statistically insignificant; this, however, contradicts the theoretical expectation as graduates who have a high level of skills have a higher likelihood to be employed. It is pathetic that most students only studied to get higher grades in examinations and not to acquire the skills required in the field. No wonder most employers prefer students with practical knowledge that the memorized knowledge. Students who could display their skill during the industrial training period are likely to be retained than their counterparts from the same or other fields who could not practicalized what they have acquired so far while in the school. This is supported by the regression estimate as having industrial training experience marginally increased the chance of gaining employment by 11.9%. Students have begun to realize the importance of attending workshops and seminars as most employers especially international organizations, corporate bodies, and industries now enlist it among the prerequisite for employment. It can be deduced from the result that industrial workshops marginally increased the chance of gaining employment by 20%.

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Table 3
Dependent variable: Employment (Yes = 1, No = 0)

Variable	Coeff. /Std.	Marginal	Coeff. /Std.	Marginal
CGPA	0.282	0.067	0.204	0.048
	(0.207)	(0.049)	(0.222)	(0.052)
Grade	-0.012	-0.033	-0.088	-0.021
	(0.190)	(0.045)	(0.202)	(0.048)
Qualification	0.209	-0.050	-0.012	-0.003
	(0.193)	(0.046)	(0.208)	(0.050)
ICT			1.232*	0.298**
			(0.641)	(0.144)
Additional Cert.			1.360***	0.314***
			(0.298)	(0.064)
Constant	-0.771		0.172	
	(0.929)		(0.136)	
Mc-Fadden R^2	0.012		0.103	
LR-Stat	3.795		32.556***	
BIC	334.551		316.719	

****** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.1***

Table 3 depicts the binary logit regression estimate to ascertain the impact of the educational content on the workplace readiness of graduates. It can be seen that none of the coefficients in the first model is significant; however, only the coefficient of the ICT and the additional certificate are significant at the conventional levels. It can be deduced from the result that employers are not interested in the CGPA, grade, or the types of qualification, but the practical skills acquired. The knowledge of ICT has become of great importance both in the micro and macro sectors of the economy; most modern economic activities require at least little knowledge of the internet, personal computer usage, and smartphone handling. The regression estimate shows that the knowledge of ICT marginally increased the chance of gaining employment by about 30%. Likewise, additional or professional certificates are of no doubt will increase the chance of being employed. This are the kind of knowledge that is not incorporated in the school syllabus are

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requires extra cost and effort to acquire. And these are the types of qualities the employers want from employees. There is about 31.4% more chance of being employed than those with no additional or professional certificate.

Table 4
Dependent variable: Employment (Yes = 1, No = 0)

Variable	Coeff. /Std.	Marginal	Coeff. /Std.	Marginal
Matches	3.605***	0.547***	3.521***	0.537***
	(0.535)	(0.041)	(0.536)	(0.042)
Practical skill	-0.034	-0.007	-0.120	-0.024
	(0.299)	(0.061)	(0.305)	(0.062)
Industrial related	0.506*	0.100*	0.626**	0.123**
	(0.303)	(0.059)	(0.313)	(0.060)
Industrial Workshop			0.589*	0.120*
			(0.302)	(0.062)
Constant	-0.017		-0.184	
	(0.236)		(0.252)	
Mc-Fadden R^2	0.261		0.271	
LR-Stat	102.406***		106.257***	
BIC	311.959		313.788	

****** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.1***

Table 4 shows the regression estimates to ascertain the disconnection between the tertiary institutions and industries in Nigeria. It is assumed that students should be gainfully employed in the area within the scope of their study; that is, employment should match the skills acquired. There is about a probable chance (50-50) that this situation holds in Nigeria. The result shows that there is about a 54% chance that employment matches the course studied. Also, just like the previous result in Table 3, the coefficient of practical skill is insignificant. This is a shred of evidence that the majority of students in Nigeria are not well-grounded in the practical aspect of course while in school; it is probably that there is no provision for that by the school authority or that there is a lack of personnel with such knowledge. Students that are privileged to study abroad have access to a wide range of practical resources which made them internationally competitive. It can also be deduced from the result that students who studied industrial related courses have a

higher likelihood of being gainfully employed than their other counterparts; there are about 10% to 12.3% more chances to demand graduates with industrial related degrees than the others. This is true, mostly, for science-related courses. A few other courses, like economics and actuarial science, for instance, are also in high demand by some firms and industries. Just like the result in table 2, the industrial workshop is shown to eligibly determine employability.

Table 5
Dependent variable: Employment (Yes = 1, No = 0)

Variable	Coeff. /Std.	Marginal	Coeff. /Std.	Marginal
CGPA	0.153	0.036	0.545**	0.123**
	(0.198)	(0.047)	(0.225)	(0.051)
ICT	1.328**	0.320***	1.696**	0.400***
	(0.561)	(0.122)	(0.693)	(0.140)
Additional Cert.	1.192***	0.279***	0.682**	0.155**
	(0.254)	(0.058)	(0.283)	(0.064)
Experience			0.282***	0.064***
			(0.050)	(0.011)
Constant	-1.980**		-4.591***	
	(0.856)		(1.078)	
Mc-Fadden R^2	0.086		0.203	
LR-Stat	33.650***		79.943***	
BIC	383.612		342.001	

****** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.1***

Table 5 shows the regression result to ascertain the distinctive competencies and skills needed in the labour market in Nigeria. The result shows that the coefficient of CGPA becomes significant when the experience variable is included as a control variable. Although contrary to the result in Table 3, it can be however be deduced here that CGPA is one of the determinants of employability status in Nigeria. It is not news that most organization requires graduates with either first-class or very strong two-one as criteria for joining the pool of staff. Some foreign schools only accept students with first-class for their post-graduate scholarship programmes. The result shows that a unit increase in CGPA will marginally increase the chance of gaining employment by 12.3%. There is a consistency in results on the importance of ICT and an additional certificate in

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determining graduate employability in table 3 and table 5; ICT and additional certificates are shown to marginally increase the chance of gaining employment by 32%-40% and 15.5%-27.9%. The control variable, experience, is shown to significantly determine graduate employment status; a well-experienced graduate is likely to be more desirable by the firms or industry due to reduced manpower training costs. This can be shown in the result that there are about 6.4% more chances to demand experience graduates than the others. In another word, the higher the year of experience, the higher the chances of being gainfully employed.

Table 6
Dependent variable: Employment (Yes = 1, No = 0)

Variable	Coeff. /Std.	Marginal	Coeff. /Std.	Marginal
CGPA	0.581***	0.131***	0.666***	0.152***
	(0.225)	(0.051)	(0.232)	(0.053)
ICT	1.662**	0.393***	1.740**	0.408***
	(0.561)	(0.149)	(0.722)	(0.142)
ICT level	0.219	0.050	0.200	0.046
	(0.308)	(0.070)	(0.323)	(0.074)
Experience	0.314***	0.071***	0.199***	0.045***
	(0.049)	(0.010)	(0.060)	(0.013)
Age			0.695***	0.158***
			(0.226)	(0.052)
Sex			-0.343	-0.078
			(0.296)	(0.066)
Constant	-4.898***		-6.616***	
	(1.125)		(1.301)	
Mc-Fadden R^2	0.190		0.212	
LR-Stat	74.674***		85.034***	
BIC	347.271		348.278	

****** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.1***

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It is obvious nowadays that employers enlist various criteria to be met by job seekers of which some are stumbling blocks to most graduates. Table 6 depicts the regression result with the most likely variables that pose challenges to graduates in gaining initial employment. It can be deduced that CGPA, just like the previous result, significantly determines employability status. This implies that graduates with lover CGPA have lower chances of being employed; there is about 84.8% (1-0.152) to 86.9% (1-131) probability for graduates with lower CGPA not to be employed in comparison with those with higher CGPA. Also, just like in Table 3 & 5, graduates who are ICT skilled is shown to have higher chances of about 39.3%-40.8% more than those with no ICT knowledge. However, the level of ICT expertise is shown not to be necessary on average. Notwithstanding, some industries and firms such as the mobile and telecommunication industries and the engineering and robotic firms demand higher ICT skills. Also, in line with the previous result, experience is shown to be one of the requirements for gainful employment; there is about a 4.5%-7% marginal increase in the chance of being employed with an increasing year of experience. However, it is pathetic that this does not favour most of the fresh graduates who have little or no experience in their field or related ones. This has prompted most Nigerian graduates to become self-employed rather than applying for positions which they will eventually deny due to their inexperience. The two bio-information variables, age and sex, are also included to examine the influences of age and sex discrimination on graduate employability. Although, the result shows sex not to be significant, signifying sexual indiscrimination. However, some industries, such as the fashion and hotel industries prefer female to male applicants. The age variable on the other hand is shown to be significant and an increase in age by a year increases the chance of employment by about 15.8%. This is likely to be a result of a high correlation between experience and age. However, this is not always true, especially in the banking industry. Ageing is a disadvantage to graduates applying to deposit money banks (DMBs); the banking industry prefers young graduates in their earlier twenties to the late twenties.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of the study was to examine the effect of tertiary institutions-industry disconnect in Nigeria. This was with a view to uncover the determinants of graduate unemployability in Nigeria. To achieve this, primary data was collated using a questionnaire from an online survey from five hundred and fifty participants. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed to estimate the data.

The binary logit estimates on the alignment of tertiary institutions' curriculum content with the workplace needs of employers shows that the coefficient of practical skill was positive but statistically insignificant, while industrial training and work experience were both found to be positive and statistically significant factors aligning tertiary institutions with the demands of industry in Nigeria. It is concluded that practical skills are a prerequisite for the chances of graduate employability in Nigeria.

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The binary logit estimates on the impact of the educational content on the workplace readiness of graduates indicated that grade point average, grade, and type of qualification were negative and statistically insignificant determinants of educational content and workplace readiness in Nigeria. The estimates further showed that practical skills like ICT knowledge and additional or professional certification have positive coefficients and is a statistically significant determinant of educational content and workplace readiness in Nigeria. In fact, the study finds evidence that the chances are 30% and 31.4% respectively in Nigeria. It is concluded that workplace readiness is a function of practical ICT knowledge and additional or professional certifications in Nigeria.

The regression estimates on the disconnect between the tertiary institutions and industries suggests that there is a 54% significant chance of graduates being gainfully employed in their areas of specialization; that is, employment matches the skills acquired. The estimates also indicate that the coefficient of practical skills is negative and insignificant. This evidence implies the absence of practicality in our tertiary educational system. The estimates further suggest that graduates that studied industrial related courses have a higher likelihood of being gainfully employed; there are about 10% to 12.3% more chances to demand graduates with industrial related degrees than the others. Finally, findings also hold that industrial work experience is an eligible link between tertiary institutions and the workplace. To bridge the gap between industry and tertiary institutions, it is imperative to synchronize theory and practicality in our educational curriculums.

The analysis to ascertain the distinctive competencies and skills needed in the labour market grade becomes significant when experience is included as a control variable. Although contrary to the result in Table 3, it can be however be deduced here that CGPA is one of the determinants of employability status in Nigeria. There is a consistency in results on the importance of ICT and an additional certificate in determining graduate employability in table 3 and table 5; ICT and additional certificates are shown to marginally increase the chance of gaining employment by 32%-40% and 15.5%-27.9%. The control variable, experience, is shown to significantly determine graduate employment status. This can be shown in the result that there are about 6.4% more chances to demand experience graduates than the others. In other words, the higher the year of experience, the higher the chances of being gainfully employed.

The study notes that graduate employability can be enhanced by bridging the link between the curriculum and the needs of the workplace. Thus, the study concludes that practical skills like ICT knowledge, industrial training/workshop, and additional or professional certificates are significant factors enhancing graduate employability in Nigeria.

The study makes the following recommendations:

1. That regulators of tertiary institutions should integrate industry needs into the educational curriculum. This will help expose students to skills and competencies required in the workplace.

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2. That there is the need for a policy to regulate the relationship between industry and tertiary institutions. This may help bridge the gap between the two groups.
3. That supervised industrial work experience should form a basic part of our educational curriculum. This may enable students to practice and have first-hand experience in the workplace.
4. That graduates should endeavour to acquire additional or professional certificates to enhance their chances of employment.
5. That a board of experts should be instituted by regulatory bodies to timely review curriculum, monitor and implement innovative pedagogical methods and other educational policies to meet the needs of the society.
6. That tertiary institution should be deliberate in designing schemes to groom employability skills in their students in order to enhance marketability after graduation.

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