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Education Graduate Skill Development as Perceived by Employers in Institutions and Industries in Delta State

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Abstract
Skill development and training in institution and industries serves s a veritable tool for the improvement of technical education graduates. Skill development through training and on-job-training constitute an inevitable strategy if standard must be improved in the institution and industries. It appears from available evidence that the potentials of skill development in the institutions and industries have not yet reached the collective consciousness of majority of the workers in the industries and institution in Nigeria. This paper attempts to discuss the technical education gradates skill development as perceived by employers in institutions and industries in Nigeria. It was recommended among others that there is need to support skill development by the employers of technical education graduates to attain the best standard in the institutions and industries in Nigeria.

Key Word: Technical Education, Graduates, Skill, Training and Development

Introduction

It is a well established fact that most Nigerian educational institutions of learning do not furnish their students with adequate training in skills to fit them for productive work. The search for better jobs has drawn thousands of Nigerian youth (some without saleable skills) from rural areas to urban cities. Apparently those with requisite education and skills are quickly absorbed into jobs while those who possess neither sufficient academic nor vocational skills live on subsistence level and often out of desperation and frustration constitute a nuisance to the society (Okorie, 2000).

Skill development is important for harnessing a nation's natural resources and for promoting economic stability. The wealth of a society determines to a large extent, the development of that society. Nigeria is endowed with mineral and agricultural resources. If these are to be properly harnessed and economically utilized, there is need for emphasis to be placed on the acquisition of skills by her workforce. In Nigeria experience shows that educational programmes fail at implementation stages due to lack of appropriate skills on the part of the graduates (Nkokelonye, 2008). Skill also serves as a political tool. Skill acquisition promotes personal and national greatness. Skill development is essential for the development of intrinsic potentials in an individual. To enable people develop their intellectual, physical, social, emotional moral, spiritual, biological, political and economic capacities, there is need to provide assistance for people to learn and acquire appropriate skills.

With this, individual can become aware of the challenges that are associated with a worthwhile life that will boost their career, stability and fulfillment in a world of competitive industry. The development of skills is inherent in both formal and information education process, as well as in the various forms of educational objectives (psychomotor, affective and cognitive skills). According to Okorie (2000) he pointed out that skill development also plays pertinent roles in all forms of knowledge, learning and professional training. He further explained that skill development is the ability to do or to perform an activity that is related to some meaningful exercise, work or job. Skills are the manifestation of knowledge acquired during training.

This study is considering skill developed on the job as instrument for growth in the area of work. Skill in technical education is an instrument for change, growth and development. Ndagi (1998) stated that technical education is the

education that provides the skills, knowledge and attitude that lead to the production of individual who are resourceful and productive. Skill development is done through training, teaching, practical experience and on-the-job training that can lead to mastering of practical skills in any area of technical education, skill and knowledge are inseparable entities. A provider of service oriented skills that play a significant role in economic revival of the nation. Nation can only survive with educated technical education graduates with skills and competencies in electrical, electronics, automobile, mechanical, building construction, metal work among others. It is on the recognition of these needs that the National Policy on Education places emphasis on technical skills at the tertiary institution (Akpan and Etokerren, 2009). At the moment the issues of developed skills in technical education graduates seems not obvious and clear to the researcher as a result of sub-standard products in the institutions and industries responsible for the production of human capital and material resources in Nigeria. Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate the skill levels of technical education graduates in the institutions and industries. Skills refer to expertise or accuracy in carrying out tasks. The technical education graduates in different institutions and industries seem to lack this expertise, accuracy and perfection in their work place. It is necessary to find out whether these technical education graduates working within the institutions and outside the institution (industries) possess adequate skill that will make them adaptive and productive so as to achieve the objectives of technical education in Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

The growth of population (Technical Education graduates will result to a very large rise in the number of people, especially young graduates of technical education, available for employment.

Rapid progress toward fuller utilization of our expanding technical education graduates is an unquestionable urgent need. For many reasons both social and economic, we must not tolerate the present overall unemployment rate and the greatly higher rates of unemployment of technical education graduates. There is little doubt that if unemployment were reduced to the barest minimum, resistance to technological innovations because of concern over unemployment consequences would be greatly lessen. Thus, a broad programme for enlarging the demand for goods and services and otherwise adding momentum to the economy is essential from the viewpoint of advancing industrial productivity as well as our full employment goals.

The need to improve the functioning of the technical education graduate skills and the qualification of the workforce is quit evident. The process by which technical education workers matched with jobs in this country is beset with barriers, inefficiencies, and inadequacies which will require great and specific efforts to overcome. There is equally an urgent need to strengthen and redirect the educational and training process by which workers are prepared for effective performance on the job in industries and institution. To deal adequately with the problems faced by the technical education graduate, both present and prospective will demand study and action on a variety of fronts by many agencies of government – federal, state and local- and by individual groups (Okorie, 2000).

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to ascertain the skills needed and possessed by technical education graduates for higher production in order to meet national objectives and goals of education.

Specifically, the study investigated:

i) To find out institutions and industries employers perception for technical education graduates in Delta State.

ii) To find out the extent of adaptability of institution graduates and industry counterparts in their places of work for higher production as perceived by the employers.

iii) The perception of employers in institution and industries on technical education graduates skills and knowledge developed.

iv) Skills and competences needed by education history graduates for higher production and productivity.

Research question

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

i) What is the perception of employer on skill developed by industries technical education graduates in their various place of work?

ii) What is the perception of employer on skill developed by institution technical education graduates in their various place of work?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of employers' perception on skill development in the institution and industrial technical education graduates in their place of work.

Methodology

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey method. The population was made up of 140 technical education graduates that responded to the questionnaire in institutions and industries who graduated from Delta State University, Abraka.

There was no sampling because of small number of graduates that responded to the questionnaire. The instrument used was questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed using five-point rating scale. Two item questionnaires were designed to elicit information from the institutions and industries. Three experts validated the instrument. These three lecturers are from Delta State University, Abraka. A grand mean value of the employer's perception on the skill development in the institution and industries served as cut-off-point.

Results

Research question 1

What is the perception of employers on skill developed by technical education graduates in the institutions in Delta State?

Table 1 indicated a grand mean of 3.51 and standard deviation of 0.51. The employers in the institutions attested that the technical education graduates had the basic skills for development on the job in their work environment. Table 1 shows different skills as rated by the employers, in different sections of the institutions. The mean value of the developed skills ranged from 2.93 to 3.70. It is indicated in serial number 23 which is aggressiveness reflected the mean value of 2.93 which is below the benchmark value of 3.00. The respondents attested that the worker developed all the listed skills in Table 1 but that of aggressiveness which is below the benchmark.

Table II, reflected the grand mean of 3.41 and standard deviation, deviation of 0.35 as perceived by the industrial employers on the skill developed by their employees. The employers attested that the technical editions graduates are employable with the necessary training to develop and update them with the industrial skills required for production. Table II indicated that the needed

industry had a mean value ranging from 2.57 to 4.28. The employers attested that resourcefulness and aggressiveness had the mean value of 2.57 in Table II while the other items had mean values above 3.00 which is the bench mark. The mean values of other skills and competencies for the jobs and adaptation reflected high mean value above 3.00 (criterion mean), signifying that the employees had the industrial skills satisfactorily and excellently developed for the work environment. Furthermore the skill for resourcefulness and aggressiveness need to be developed by the employees in the industry as attested in the Table II.

From Table III Z – calculated (43.05) is greater than z- Critical (1.98) at 0.005 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected, showing that skill development is dependent on the acquired training programme during training. The high mean value of 3.51 (institution) and 3.41 (Industries) technical education graduates skill development suggested that competencies and skill acquisition of the graduates on-the-job training are high above the bench mark of 3.00.

Discussion and findings

The findings of the study showed that there is a significant difference between the views of industrialists and institution employers on technical education graduate skill development. It showed that there is a statistical significance difference between the perception of industrialist and the institutions.

The study showed that through on-the-job training, the technical education graduate can acquire developmental skills to enable them survive and adapt to the work environment in both industries and institutions as their place of work. The finding is in line with the recommendation made by Okoli (2010) that industrial organizations should help the universities in producing highly skilled human power by making available funds, technical staff, and science, technical and technology equipment to the institutions. The findings also revealed that the skills acquired by technical education graduates in different areas can be enhanced when the industrial organizations can provide the necessary human and material resources to the institutions to enable then forge ahead in their task of producing skilled scientists, technologists, engineers and technical education graduates to generate and sustain the country's industrial growth. Marcel (2010) highlighted some items on skill development as facilitating improved access by people to appropriate vocational and technical education and encouraging the use of information

and communication technologies for acquisition of useful knowledge and informed decision making in industries and institutions. Marcel further pointed out that engaging in productivity through the transfer of practical skills that are in school curricula. Building of technical industrial skills in people is a collaboration work of curriculum and educational instructions in schools.

With reference to the first research question of the study, the respondents agreed that in the institution are demonstrating high degree of skill developed as a result of their long experience in their place of work. These findings agree with the view of Bosah (1997) that there should be effective supervision, improvement and training of employees to improve their skills in their work place.

With reference to the second research question of the study revealed that employers perceived that in the industries there is high mean value above the bench mark, indicating that industrialist spend higher income to retrain technical education graduates to enable them fit into their industries for effective performance on-the-job. The results of this study at the moment revealed to a great extent the state of the art with respect to the skill developmental drive of the industry to enable the technical education graduate meet up with the new trend in the industries. Experience has shown that most of the industries normally train their employees to fit into their industries especially where special skills are needed in the industry. The driving force economically scientifically and technologically all over the world today is advanced in skill development of employees. Onwuka agreed with the popular finding of the study when he pointed that the millennium development goals are set as benchmarks for poor nations to develop at equal rates. A nation develops when its citizenry are adequately empowered. A nation develops when it can find its footing in the area of globalization that has infiltrated all aspects of human endeavour (Ibam, 2006). Turner (2003) leading credence to foregoing opinion added that a nation's growth and development is anchored on the acquisition of skills and proper utilization of developed skills for nation building.

Conclusion

Skill development in different areas of technical education is tools that will enable Nigeria achieve the goal of becoming a strong prosperous and self confident nation (Turner, 2003). Okorie (2000) pointed out that skill development also palsy pertinent roles in all forms of knowledge, learning

and professional training in technical, engineering, technology computer and other relevant field of human endeavour. Achieving and maintaining global partnership for development as contained in the millennium developmental goals requires skill acquisition, availability and utilization. The skill developed by workers provides the ladder through which other MDGs can be attained.

Recommendations

Technical education curriculum review of courses taught in our institution programme should be prompt, current and in line with emerging technologies because of its dynamic nature.

Government should provide fund to enable the technical education graduate acquire training in the areas of information and communication technology (ICT) through granting of loan and scholarship scheme for the acquisition of emerging skills.

The industries and institution should provide a link that can enable them modify and ratify the technical education curriculum to accommodate new emerging technological advancement.

Training programmes of technical education in skills and utilization of developed skills should be entrenched and enforced at all levels of education system.

Skill development experts and industrial organization should be consulted in the designing of technical education curriculum with a view of integrating those aspects of the skills in technical education into the curriculum design.

The government should create a medium where industrialists that are well trained in the industries in technical skilled areas are given opportunities to teach in the institution to impart their knowledge on the school workshops or as instructors.

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Table 1: Perception of Employers on Skill Developed in the Institution

S/N	Rating Factors	Un-satisfactory	Average	Above average	Excellent	Very excellent	$\overline{X}$	SD
1.	Loyalty	1	10	32	20	17	3.53	1.01
2.	Attitude	-	11	32	22	12	3.44	0.91
3.	Maturity	1	6	36	21	16	3.56	0.93
4.	Motivation	-	14	29	23	14	3.46	0.98
5.	Tactfulness	1	11	40	16	12	3.34	0.94
6.	Quality of work	1	8	37	19	15	3.49	0.95
7.	Honesty	-	6	31	26	17	3.68	0.90
8.	Personality	-	5	32	27	16	3.68	0.87
9.	Judgment	-	7	39	22	12	3.49	0.86
10.	Industriousness	-	7	32	25	16	3.63	0.91
11.	Job Knowledge and skill on the job	1	5	35	23	16	3.60	0.92
12.	Dependability	2	7	40	21	10	3.38	0.91
13.	Persistence	1	9	35	20	15	3.49	0.97
14.	Quality of work	1	3	34	23	19	3.70	0.92
15.	Co-cooperativeness	-	13	30	20	17	3.51	1.01
16.	Resourcefulness	2	6	31	26	15	3.58	0.97
17.	Adaptability	-	7	35	24	14	3.56	0.88
18.	Imaginative ability	1	8	30	26	15	3.58	0.95
19.	Initiative	-	6	37	20	17	3.60	0.91
20.	Relationship with people	-	8	32	28	12	3.55	0.87
21.	Enthusiasm	1	9	37	20	13	3.44	0.94
22.	Leadership	3	8	34	22	13	3.43	1.00
23.	Aggressiveness	11	20	27	8	14	2.93	1.27
24.	Skill competency in specific technical job	2	2	41	19	16	3.56	0.93
25.	Creativity	-	7	38	20	15	3.54	0.90
	Grand Mean						**3.51**	**0.15**

Table II: Perception of Employers on Skill Developed in the Institution

S/N	Rating Factors	Unsatis-factory	Average	Above average	Excellent	Very excellent	$\overline{X}$	SD
1.	Loyalty	1	4	20	28	7	3.60	0.85
2.	Attitude	-	2	5	27	26	4.28	0.76
3.	Maturity	2	-	9	24	25	4.20	0.82
4.	Motivation	-	13	20	22	5	3.32	0.91
5.	Tactfulness	2	2	31	19	6	3.42	0.85
6.	Quality of work	-	8	22	28	2	3.40	0.76
7.	Honesty	3	7	25	22	3	3.25	0.91
8.	Personality	2	6	21	26	5	3.43	0.91
9.	Judgment	-	7	29	12	2	3.32	0.72
10.	Industriousness	-	6	27	20	7	3.46	0.83
11.	Job Knowledge and skill on the job	3	8	24	22	3	3.37	0.80
12.	Dependability	-	14	19	23	4	3.28	0.90
13.	Persistence	2	7	20	27	4	3.40	0.91
14.	Quality of work	-	6	27	20	7	3.41	0.83
15.	Co-cooperativeness	-	2	29	24	5	3.53	0.70
16.	Resourcefulness	11	20	17	8	4	2.57	1.41
17.	Adaptability	2	2	31	19	6	3.42	0.85
18.	Imaginative ability	-	7	28	20	5	3.38	0.81
19.	Initiative	1	9	25	20	5	3.32	0.89
20.	Relationship with people	-	5	22	27	6	3.57	0.79
21.	Enthusiasm	-	8	22	28	2	3.40	0.76
22.	Leadership	1	4	25	23	7	3.52	0.85
23.	Aggressiveness	11	20	17	8	4	2.57	1.14
24.	Skill competency in specific technical job	2	4	31	19	4	3.32	0.83
25.	Creativity	2	1	25	26	6	3.55	0.83
	Grand Mean						**3.41**	**0.35**

Table III: Z – Summary on Employers' Perception on Technical Education Graduates Skill Development in Institution and Industries

Responses	Mean	SD	N	Df	2-cal	z-crit	Level of sig.	Remark
Institution	3.51	0.15	80	138	43.05	1.98	0.05	Reject null Hypothesis
Industries	3.41	0.35	60					