



ASSESSMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY DEVELOPMENT SKILLS OF NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL BUSINESS STUDIES CURRICULUM

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Abstract

Employability has been a thorny issue in the Nigerian education landscape. Many graduates at various school levels are faced with difficulty of securing jobs after graduating. Opinions differ as to reasons why school leavers are experiencing this hardship. Many blame the students for preparing poorly for work life, while many others lay the blame at the schools doorstep. In recent times however, attention is shifting away from the inadequacies of students and schools to issues bordering on the relevance and adequacy of curriculum contents in school. Employers of labour are looking beyond graduates with good examination results to those who can work independent of much supervision. The question is, do our subject curriculums contain skills that can make graduates work on his/her own independently? The study identified eight employability soft skills that promote employability and assessed the level at which Business Studies curriculum promotes them. A researcher designed employability skills assessment questionnaire was administered to students and teachers of Business Studies. Both teachers and students admitted that the Business Studies curriculum contain enough content that can promote all the eight identified employability skill, they concluded that a significant relationship exist between acquiring those skills from Business Studies curriculum and getting employment after graduation from secondary school.

Key words: *Soft skills, Employability, Team work skills, Problem solving skills*

Introduction

The core problem of the rising unemployment crisis in Nigeria is not solely caused by lack of employment opportunities but lack of employability development. Nigeria's population is said to have reached about 167 million people in 2012 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2013) and about half of the population is made up of youth, defined as individuals between 15 and 34 years of age. Between year 2008-2012, about 22-25 percent of unemployed youth in these age group are graduates of secondary education (NISER, 2013).

It has been observed that the training and educational approaches of secondary schools in Nigeria does not adequately prepare the students for likelihood of successful employability outcomes. A child enters the secondary school as 11-12 years old, and is expected to undergo training over a period of 6 years when he/she becomes 17-18 years old. Expectations of the parent and the students are that such students should have been prepared for a life that can make him move up in a chosen field of endeavour. The Nigerian government seems to have this at the back of its mind when designing the Business Studies curriculum. The government stated that the general objectives of Business Studies are to:



provide the orientation and basic skill with which to start an occupation for those who may not have opportunity for further training;
provide basic business skills for personal use now and in the future;
prepare students for further training in business studies;
relate the knowledge and skills to the national economy; and
develop basic skills in office occupations(NERDC,2009)

The objectives of Business studies curriculum was to prepare students for self employment for those who could not proceed beyond basic education and more importantly to develop basic soft skill required for office related works. However, too many of our graduates at this level of education emerged with no certification in any area of endeavour. Crompton (2016) was of the view that secondary school curriculum is hampering schools' effort to improve and develop the employability skills of their young ones. Schools values examinations results too much, which is just one indicator out many that defines ones capacity to be a great employee, or even an employer at the expense of basic skills that matters in the work place.

Adesulu(2018), observed that unemployment is a big problem in Nigeria especially given its relatively young population. More than half of Nigeria's' nearly 185 million people are under 30 (NPC, 2013) and unemployment for this subset is at about 33.10 percent. Nigeria unemployment rate averaged 10.63 percent from 2006 until 2017, reaching all time high of 19.70 percent in the fourth quarter of 2009 and a record low of 5.10 percent in the fourth quarter of 2010.

**2018 value is a forecast.*

Figure 1 Nigeria unemployment rate

Sources: Trading Economics, National bureau of Statistics, Nigeria, 2017

NISER (2013) reported that over half of unemployed youth in Nigeria did not have an education past primary school. This group accounted for over 50 percent of all unemployed youth in the country.

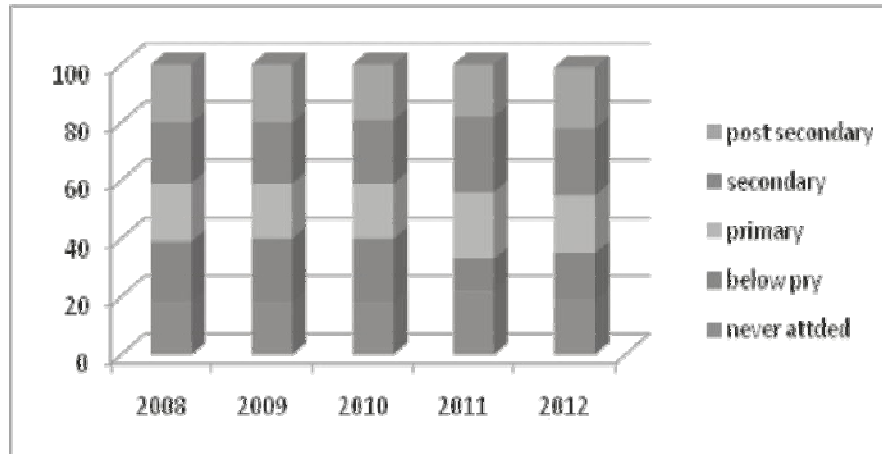


Figure 2 National Youth Unemployment by Education, 2008 - 2012 Source: NISER, 2013

Several factors may be responsible for this, but the most critical for secondary school unemployment is deficiency in school curricular and poor teaching which has contributed to the failure of the educational institutions to provide their students appropriate skills to make them employable (Akande, 2014).

The unemployment rate could be reduced if employability inputs are infused into the secondary school curriculum. Regrettably, the closest most students at this level get are school trips to some industries once in a while or career counseling programme where experts are invited to speak about their professions which offer limited benefits to the students (Adesulu, 2018). Matters (2008) reported eight employability framework identified by Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2002) consisting key skills like;

- communication that contributes to productive and harmonious relationship between employees and customers;
- teamwork that contributes to productive working relationships and outcomes;
- problem solving that contributes to productive outcomes;
- initiative and enterprise that contribute to innovative outcomes;
- planning and organizing that contribute to long- term and short term strategic planning;
- self- management that contributes to employee satisfaction and growth;
- learning that contributes to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcome; and
- technology that contributes to effective execution of tasks.

The absence of employability development among graduates of secondary schools constituted a problem for most of the graduates. Employability development is the mastery of those soft generic skills that are necessary for getting, keeping and being successful in any employment sector. These skills and attitudes enable the prospective employee to get along with their colleagues to make critical decisions, solve problem, develop respect and ultimately become a strong representative for the organisation.



Purpose of the Study

Graduate and youth unemployment prevalence in Nigeria has been alarmingly high in recent years. Most government's actions towards ameliorating the problem seems to have failed partly due to poor planning and programming and mostly due to wrong diagnostic of the unemployment and employability problems. The secondary school contributions to employability issues in Nigeria seem to have been overlooked and ignored. Most efforts were concentrated on tertiary educations graduate employability problems.

This study seeks to evaluate the potentials of the current Business Studies curriculum at addressing secondary school graduates unemployment. The major employability skills that employer of labour look for in job seekers as identified by Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry(2002) were used as the basis for testing the adequacy of Nigerian Business Studies curriculum's capability of impacting these soft skill on the students.

Research Hypotheses

- H₀: The business studies curriculum does not significantly influence students employability after graduation.
- H₁: The business studies curriculum do not significantly influence teamwork and cooperative skills of students
- H₂: The business studies curriculum do not significantly influence enterprise and initiative skills of students
- H₃: The business studies curriculum do not significantly influence communication skills of students
- H₄: The business studies curriculum do not significantly influence problem solving skills of students

Method

The study is basically a survey research aimed at finding out the potentials of Business Studies curriculum at impacting on the students' employability skills. The study used random sampling technique to select 200 students in the Basic 9 schools. Since the Business Studies curriculum used in the schools is the same, 5 Basic 9 students were selected randomly by lottery method in 50 public schools in Kwara Central Senatorial Zone. In each of the selected school, 1 Business Studies teacher taking the Basic 9 class was purposively selected making 50 teachers.

The instrument for the study was a researcher designed questionnaire titled "Business Studies Employability Skills Questionnaire". It raised questions on the entire eight employability skills framework reported by Matters (2002). It was administered on the sampled students and teachers to know their opinions and perceptions about the potential of the curriculum to adequately impact employability skills on the students. Descriptive statistics of percentage was used to analyze demographic data of the respondents while the main hypothesis was tested using inferential statistics, ranking, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and correlation matrix with the use of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. Decision for each of the hypotheses was taken at 0.05 alpha level of significance to determine whether the hypotheses is rejected or upheld.



Research Question

What is the perception of students and teachers about the potentials of Business Studies curriculum to create employment after secondary school?

Results and Findings

Research Question 1: What is the perception of students and teachers about the potentials of Business Studies curriculum to create employment after secondary school?

Table 1: Mean scores and ranked order items of the perception of students and teachers about the potentials of Business Studies curriculum to create employment after secondary school

S/N	Employability and Development Skills in Secondary School Business Studies	Very Certain	Fairly Certain	Certain	Not Certain	Mean	Rank
A Communication skills: business Studies Curriculum							
1	Give adequate skills of reading and writing independently	62 (20.7%)	118 (39.3%)	60 (20.0%)	60 (20.0%)	2.61	4 th
2	Teach the use of numeracy effectively	66 (22.0%)	115 (38.3%)	79 (26.3%)	40 (13.3%)	2.69	3 rd
3	Teach how to negotiate with people positively	81 (27.0%)	126 (42.0%)	72 (24.0%)	21 (7.0%)	2.89	1 st
4	Teach how to persuade customers effectively	84 (28.1%)	118 (39.3%)	61 (20.3%)	37 (12.3%)	2.83	2 nd
B Teamwork Skill: Business Studies Curriculum							
5	Teach students on how to work with people of different backgrounds	81 (27.0%)	98 (32.7%)	74 (24.7%)	47 (15.7%)	2.71	3 rd
6	Teach how students can identify and define roles in a team	96 (32.0%)	78 (26.0%)	95 (31.7%)	31 (10.3%)	2.80	1 st
7	Teach how to apply teamwork skills in different job situations	79 (26.3%)	85 (28.3%)	11 (36.7%)	26 (8.7%)	2.72	2 nd
8	Teach how to coach and mentor members of a team	57 (19.0%)	108 (36.0%)	86 (28.7%)	49 (16.3%)	2.58	4 th
Problem Solving Skills: Business Studies Curriculum							
9	Provide different problem solving strategies to students	78 (26.0%)	99 (33.0%)	81 (27.0%)	42 (14.0%)	2.71	3 rd
10	Teach and develop practical solutions to real life business/work problem	77 (25.7%)	120 (40.0%)	59 (19.7%)	44 (14.7%)	2.77	2 nd
11	Resolved practical problems in teams	63 (21.0%)	115 (38.3%)	86 (28.7%)	36 (12.0%)	2.68	4 th
12	Guarantee the development of creative and innovative solutions	93 (31.0%)	12 (40.3%)	59 (19.7%)	27 (9.0%)	2.93	1 st



D Self Management Skills: Business Studies Curriculum						
13	Teach how to have personal vision and goals	78 (26.0%)	98 (32.7%)	88 (29.3%)	36 (12.0%)	2.73 2 nd
14	Create confidence in own ideas and vision	82 (27.3%)	101 (33.7%)	76 (25.3%)	41 (13.7%)	2.75 1 st
15	Develop means of evaluating and monitoring performance	84 (28.0%)	77 (25.7%)	99 (33.05)	40 (13.3%)	2.68 3 rd
E Planning and Organizing Skills: Business Studies Curriculum						
16	Teach students how to manage time and priorities	73 (24.3%)	87 (29.0%)	101 (33.7%)	39 (13.0%)	2.65 3 rd
17	Teach how to establish project goals and deliver on time	71 (23.3%)	108 (36.0%)	85 (28.3%)	36 (12.0%)	2.71 2 nd
18	Teach how to allocate people and resources to different tasks	56 (18.7%)	105 (31.7%)	89 (23.3%)	50 (16.3%)	2.56 4 th
19	Teach how to identify risk, how to develop and evaluate alternatives	86 (28.7%)	95 (31.7%)	70 (23.3%)	49 (16.3%)	2.73 1 st
F Technology Skills: Business Studies Curriculum						
20	Guarantee student proficiency in basic IT skills	93 (31.0%)	92 (30.7%)	89 (29.7%)	26 (8.7%)	2.84 1 st
21	Teach how to use IT to organize data	88 (29.3%)	71 (23.7%)	112 (37.3%)	29 (9.7%)	2.73 2 nd
22	Guarantee student application of It as a management tool	77 (25.7%)	103 (34.3%)	75 (25.0%)	45 (15.0%)	2.70 4 th
23	Ensure students are willing to learn new IT skills	72 (24.0%)	100 (33.3%)	97 (32.3%)	31 (10.3%)	2.71 3 rd
G Learning Skills: Business Studies Curriculum						
24	Create enthusiasm for learners to learn	81 (27.0%)	125 (41.7%)	68 (22.7%)	26 (8.7%)	2.87 1 st
25	create opportunities to learn new ideas and technology	70 (23.3%)	107 (35.7%)	73 (24.3%)	50 (16.7%)	2.66 4 th
26	Create willingness to learn in any setting- on and off the job	80 (26.7%)	109 (36.3%)	75 (25.05)	36 (12.0%)	2.78 3 rd
27	Create different mediums for students to learn	87 (29.0%)	97 (32.3%)	92 (30.7%)	24 (8.0%)	2.82 2 nd
H Initiatives and Enterprise Skills: Business Studies Curriculum						
28	Give enough knowledge to translate ideas into action	62 (20.7%)	113 (37.7%)	87 (29.0%)	38 (12.7%)	2.66 3 rd
29	Teach students on how to adapt to new situations	82 (27.3%)	105 (35.0%)	74 (24.7%)	39 (13.0%)	2.77 1 st
30	Induce creative thinking in the students	86 (28.7%)	95 (31.7%)	77 (25.7%)	42 (14.0%)	2.75 2 nd

Table 1 details the percentages and ranked items of the perception of students and teachers about the potentials of Business Studies curriculum to create employment after secondary school. It was indicated that the percentages of Very Certain and Fairly Certain were more than Certain and Not Certain, and this implies that the perception of both the teachers and the students were high based on the potentials of Business Studies curriculum to create employment after secondary school.

However, based on Communication skills: Business Studies Curriculum, item 3 with mean score of 2.89 was ranked 1st while item 1 with mean score 2.61 was ranked 4th; based on Teamwork Skills: Business Studies Curriculum, item 6 with mean score of 2.80 was ranked 1st while item 8 with mean score 2.58 was ranked 4th; based on Problem Solving Skills: Business Studies Curriculum, item 12 with mean score of 2.93 was ranked 1st while item 11 with mean score 2.68 was ranked 4th; Self Management Skills: Business Studies Curriculum, item 14 with mean score of 2.75 was ranked 1st while item 15 with mean score 2.68 was ranked 3rd; Planning and Organising Skills: Business Studies Curriculum, item 19 with mean score of 2.73 was ranked 1st while item 18 with mean score 2.56 was ranked 4th; Technology Skills: Business Studies Curriculum, item 20 with mean score of 2.84 was ranked 1st while item 22 with mean score 2.70 was ranked 4th; Learning Skills: Business Studies Curriculum, item 24 with mean score of 2.87 was ranked 1st while item 25 with mean score 2.66 was ranked 4th; Initiative and Enterprise Skills: Business Studies Curriculum, item 29 with mean score of 2.77 was ranked 1st while item 28 with mean score 2.66 was ranked 3rd. For justification of positive and negative responses it is based on mean score of 2.50, which means negative responses in less than 2.50 while positive responses is greater than 2.50 and therefore since all the mean scores were above 2.50, this implies that the perception of students and teachers about the potentials of Business Studies curriculum to create employment after secondary school is also high.

Hypotheses Testing

Main Hypothesis: The Business curriculum does not significantly influence students' employability after graduation

Table 2: Relationship between Business curriculum and students employability after graduation

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	Calc. r-value	Critical r-value	Decision
Business Curriculum	300	54.644	5.68	298	0.839*	0.095	Rejected
Students employability	300	87.432	7.56				

*Significant; $p < 0.05$

Table 2 shows the relationship between business curriculum and students employability after graduation. Based on the analysis of the results, it indicated that the calculated r of 0.839 is greater than the critical r of 0.095 at 0.05 level of significant. Thus the hypothesis is hereby rejected. Meaning that, The Business curriculum does significantly influence students' employability after graduation.

Hypothesis H₁ : The business studies curriculum do not significantly influence team work and cooperative skill of students.

Table 3: Summary of Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship Between the teachers and student employability and Team work skills after graduation and Business curriculum in Nigeria Secondary school.

Variables	1	2	3
Curriculum	1.000		
Team Work Skill(Students)	0.689**	1.000	
Team Work Skill(Teachers)	0.410**	0.216	1.000

*Significant; $p < 0.05$

The results from Table 3 reveal that team work skill from student had significant influence from Business Studies Curriculum after graduation from secondary school ($r = 0.689$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that Business Studies Curriculum have significant influence on team work skill of the student after graduation. The table also shows that teachers view on team work skill in Business Studies Curriculum and employability after graduation from secondary school ($r = 0.410$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that team work skill in Business Studies Curriculum have significant influence on of the students' employability after graduation. The hypothesis is rejected implying that team work *and* cooperative skill in Business Studies curriculum do significantly influence students' employability after graduation.

Hypothesis H₂: The business studies curriculum do not significantly influence Initiative and Enterprises skill of students.

Table 4: Summary of Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship Between the teachers and student employability and Initiative and Enterprises Skill after graduation and Business curriculum in Nigeria Secondary school.

Variables	1	2	3
Curriculum	1.000		
Initiative and Enterprises Skill(Students)	0.219**	1.000	
Initiative and Enterprises Skill(Teachers)	0.883**	0.151	1.000

*Significant; $p < 0.05$

The results from Table 4 reveal that Initiative and Enterprises skill from student had significant influence from Business Studies Curriculum after graduation from secondary school ($r = 0.219$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that Business Studies Curriculum have significant influence on Initiative and Enterprises skill of the student after graduation. The table also shows that teacher view on Initiative and Enterprises skill in Business Studies Curriculum and employability after graduation from secondary school ($r = 0.883$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that Business Studies Curriculum have significant influence on Initiative and Enterprises skill of the student after graduation. Therefore, the

hypothesis was rejected meaning that Initiative and Enterprises skill in Business Studies curriculum do significantly influence students' employability after graduation.

Hypothesis H₃: The business studies curriculum do not significantly influence Communication Skill of students

Table 5: Summary of Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship Between the teachers and student employability and Communication Skill after graduation and Business curriculum in Nigeria Secondary school.

Variables	1	2	3
Curriculum	1.000		
Communication Skill(Students)	0.284**	1.000	
Communication Skill(Teachers)	0.915**	0.216	1.000

*Significant; $p < 0.05$

The results from Table 5 reveal that communication skill from student had significant influence from business studies curriculum after graduation from secondary school ($r = 0.284$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that business studies curriculum have significant influence on communication skill of the student after graduation. The table also shows that teacher view on communication skill in business studies curriculum and employability after graduation from secondary school ($r = 0.915$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that communication skill in business studies curriculum have significant influence on students' employability after graduation. Therefore, the hypothesis rejected meaning that communication skill in business studies curriculum does significantly influence students employability after graduation

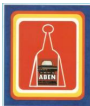
Hypothesis H₄: The business studies curriculum do not significantly influence problem solving skill of students

Table 6: Summary of Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship Between the teachers and student employability and Problem Solving Skill after graduation and Business curriculum in Nigeria Secondary school.

Variables	1	2	3
Curriculum	1.000		
Problem Solving Skill(Students)	0.382**	1.000	
Problem Solving Skill(Teachers)	0.915**	0.051	1.000

*Significant; $p < 0.05$

The results from Table 6 reveal that problem solving skill from student had significant influence from business studies curriculum after graduation from secondary school ($r = 0.382$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that problem solving skill in business studies curriculum have significant



influence on students' employability after graduation. The table also shows that teacher views problem solving skill as having significant influence on students' employability after graduation from secondary school ($r = 0.915$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected meaning that problem solving skill in the business studies curriculum do significantly influence students' employability.

Summary of Findings

The perception of both the teachers and the students were high based on the potentials of Business Studies curriculum to create employment after secondary school. This was because the percentages of Very Certain and Fairly Certain were more than Certain and Not Certain

There is a strong relationship between Business Curriculum and students' employability after graduation because the calculated r of 0.839 is greater than the critical r of 0.095 at 0.05 level of significance.

3. There is a strong relationship between team work skill in Business Studies Curriculum and employability after graduation from secondary school ($r = 0.689$, $p < 0.05$) at 0.5 level of significance

There is a weak but positive relationship between Initiative and Enterprises skill in Business Studies Curriculum and employability after graduation from secondary school ($r = 0.219$, $p < 0.05$) at 0.5 level of significance

There is a weak but positive relationship between Communication in skill Business Studies Curriculum and employability after graduation from secondary school ($r = 0.284$, $p < 0.05$) at 0.5 level of significance.

There is a weak but positive relationship between Problem Solving skill in Business Studies Curriculum and employability after graduation from secondary school ($r = 0.382$, $p < 0.05$) at 0.5 level of significance.

From the view point of teachers all the variables had a strong positive relationship with employability after graduation. Initiative and Enterprise skill (0.883), Communication skill (0.915) Problem solving skill (0.915) while team work had a weak but positive relationship with employability (0.410).

Conclusions

From the findings of the study it can be concluded that students of Business Studies in Kwara State public schools have high opinion and expectation that the curriculum is adequate enough to guarantee employability after graduation.

It can also be concluded that the students believed that team work skills had the highest potential of guarantee employability among the listed employability soft skills. However, Business studies teachers were of the opinion that all the employability soft skill listed in the study are embedded in the curriculum and all have high potential of guaranteeing employability to business studies students after graduation .



Finally it can be concluded that the Nigeria Secondary School Business Studies curriculum has a high potential of securing jobs to secondary school graduate because of its adequacy in the provision of soft employability skills required most often by employers of labour.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that subject teachers should adequately teach and emphasize these skills to students during teaching and learning process. Also as new skills emerges, curriculum developers should be intimated promptly to facilitate review that can accommodate the new skills.

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