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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Basic Skills and Managing University Graduates for Job Creation in Cross Rivers State Universities, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how basic skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State. Two objectives were stated, two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were also tested. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population was 80,100 university graduates comprising 49,420 male, 30,680 female and 204 Administrative heads from the three Universities in Rivers State. A sample of 420 respondents comprising 232 male and 188 female was drawn using stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used to generate data was a self-designed questionnaire that has a reliability coefficient of 0.82. The data generated were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that each of the basic skills components such as production skills and agricultural skills can create jobs for university graduates in Rivers State who practice them economically by having them to either become gainfully employed or self-employed. Based on the findings, conclusion was drawn and the following recommendations among others were made: Government should lay more emphasis on the development and teaching of basic skills as general courses in the Universities. University administrators should monitor and supervise adequately the teaching and learning of basic skills in their various institutions.

Keywords: Basic Skills; University Graduates; Job Creation; Rivers State.

INTRODUCTION

Generally, education is the single best predictor of skills acquisition and also the hall-mark of a nation's socio-economic development. Educational attainment plays an important role in the start-up of adulthood life of young people because of the increasing need for skills in today's economy. Education at the tertiary level, stands as a critical factor in the knowledge economy to a very large extent, because certain skills acquired at that level determines the manpower requirement of a country as well as labour market outcome. The role of skill acquisition in educational management cannot be over emphasized because it is stated clearly in the national policy on education (NPE) document and blue-print of universal basic education (UBE) of the need to get students exposed to basic meaningful skills that can drive the economy of a country if practiced so as to help create job for themselves and the society at large.

Nigeria as a country with an increasing population estimated at about 200 million individuals has an always expanding need and interest for fundamental necessities like food, cover, clothing, medical care,

water, foundation, social conveniences, great clean circumstances among others. In any case, the accessibility of these necessities in sufficient structure, extent, amount and quality is missing because of the openness pace of her populace consequently the threat of joblessness as well as deficient work valuable open doors that will get together with the sped up development pace of graduating adolescents from the colleges each year. A higher capable degree of schooling for the most part makes better business possibilities and subsequently opens up the opportunities for better day to day environments for youngsters.

Essential abilities securing is viewed as the capacity to learn and gain new mastery for individual and monetary advancement. Truth be told, it improves' comprehension individuals might interpret themselves and their general surroundings. It works on the nature of their lives and prompts wide friendly advantages to people and the general public where they reside. Abilities raises individuals' efficiency, innovativeness, business venture advancement and mechanical development progression (Robert et al., 2014). The procedures embraced by different social orders towards abilities obtaining had empowered numerous feeble countries to have an exit from the shackles of neediness. One successful instrument for accomplishing close to correspondence in an economy described by a huge pool of untalented and semi-gifted work, is to give an open door to human limit building (Embankment, 2017). This is conceivable on the grounds that it targets giving sufficient abilities through preparing of individuals at various levels to accomplish strengthening and occupation creation.

For clearness, fundamental abilities can be mastered through conventional tutoring, professional focuses, imaginative/innovative preparation, apprenticeship and so on, where learners are taught under the supervision of someone who already has such abilities. Ozofor (2016) made sense of that fundamental abilities have to do with the capacity of a person to carryout works or undertakings with the target of an outcome as a primary concern given limits of significant investment. It is qualified to take note of that preparation and the obtaining of an expertise isn't normally completed by the public authority alone, yet through the endeavors of people who can choose to foster themselves.

Essential abilities are a bunch of projects or guidelines instructed to people of society with a plan to do one, two or the entirety of the accompanying:-

- Assist with honing the current abilities in the person.
- Assist the person with perceiving the presence of specific capacities
- Assist the person with fostering the ability a capacity for impressive skill
- Associate people on the same page and capacities along with a point of motivating them to gain from one another and work on their abilities
- Familiarize people with the basic systems of ability and expertise execution.
- To address known and obscure blunders
- To ingrain amazing skill
- To assist with trim business visionaries who will cater for them and necessities of the economy.

It is on this reason that ability obtaining is extended (Ekere, 2014).

Asodike (2016) recommended that abilities securing is a course of getting abilities through proper guidance or mastering. It is an extended type of finding out about a gathering of exercises. Since learning involves the putting away of data (ecological or mental data) in memory, abilities obtaining includes putting away of data concerning a specific expertise over a delayed time of time.fanan Ategwu and kenn-Aklah(2022) thought that work creation abilities in this manner diminishes joblessness, neediness and other social menence among the youthful ones in the general public in one more examination led by Ategwu Kenn-Aklah and fanan(2023) in their exploration the saw that work creation abilities achieves the arrangement inside the fundamentals of understudies reliance and worked on their chances of being independently employed. with this the chance of being compelling and effective is been grantee.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Production skills

Production skills could be seen as the making of goods by hand or by machine that upon finish, the merchandise/business is offered to a shopper/clients to produce day to day pay. The significant point of creation abilities is to guarantee that innovative appreciation would have been initiated and maintained, likewise to establish a groundwork for understudies' entry into their preferred employment.

Creation abilities is depicted in the Public Arrangement on Training FGN (2013) archive as a part of schooling which prompts procurement of functional and applied abilities as well as fundamental logical information. As

a professional subject, it manages essentials of mechanical headway with the plan to lessen obliviousness comparable to innovation and furthermore help establish a strong starting point for genuine public turn of events, productive work as well as pay age. Content implanted underway abilities educational plan in Nigeria tertiary foundations envelops parts of globalization, data and correspondence innovation close by business adventures. These abilities are extremely major as they are exceptionally essential in the improvement of the understudies, country working as well as a puzzling device to impact positive patterns of conduct of understudies in a unique mechanical society.

Ribawa (2018) an American sociologists declared that creation abilities are fabricating talented technique that incorporates all apparatuses, machines, utensils, weapons, instruments, lodging gargets, material creation, imparting and shipping gadgets close by the abilities utilized in their creation and their use. Meaning every one of these previously mentioned abilities can get ready understudies for monetary limit building. In light of the above composition, it is extremely essential to decide the status and pertinence of creation abilities on college graduates. Creation abilities is one of the pre-professional subjects pointed toward empowering college graduates to live successfully in our cutting edge period of science and innovation.

One of the reasons for creation abilities to people in the general public is to make a system for both underlying, functional classes and hypothetical encounters that will zero in on the destruction of neediness, hunger, viciousness, fears and sickness and to make roads for income age (Ogumisoh, 2018). Moreover, it likewise helps in advancing proficiency, balance, basic freedoms, sterilization, cleanliness, training, physical, mental and social prosperity of a group.

Creation abilities cover areas of monetary, social and natural improvement which can't be deducted from the lists that tight spot abilities being shown in Nigeria colleges. Likewise, these capacities underway abilities comprise the work situated or vocation arranged capabilities that endeavors to work on the effectiveness and efficiency of its beneficiaries as specialists, finance managers and experts at expert or sub-proficient level. (Ribana, 2018).

Horticultural abilities

The reasonable abilities in farming is vital to college graduates since understudies become familiar with multiple approaches to take care of a prospering populace and gain a superior comprehension of food creation, bundling and dissemination productively. College graduate who are presented to these abilities are braced with confident information about horticultural instruction through the use of logical and business standards. Advancing critical thinking techniques, makes sense of the interdependency of connection between the horticultural business and business world joined close by the whole monetary underlying unpredictable of social construction of society (Barkey, 2017).

Agrarian abilities centers around the procurement of abilities and concentrates in agriculture, backwoods preservation, regular assets, produce and handling, creation of food and fiber, hydroponics, motorized cultivating, deals and administrations, bundling and promoting as well as authority improvement. Every one of these previously mentioned abilities help to furnish college graduates with information on agrarian capability abilities that could be useful to them squeezed into the general public and furthermore face difficulties assuming the need emerges (Okoneka, 2016).

Atopan (2015) proposed that horticultural abilities is assimilated in light of the fact that a casual abilities can be obtained from the home front because of parental impedance, contribution and training as far as subsistent cultivating, meaning college graduates who hail particularly from country regions probably been shown from home about how to do specific rural abilities as they helped their folks on their farmlands. Agrarian abilities isn't just for understudies to graduate and turn out to be simply ranchers yet in addition prepares the upcoming researchers, nutritionists, educators, etc. A blend of homeroom guidance and applied rural encounters outside the study hall constructs an establishment for instructed purchasers and agriculturist (Barkey 2017).

Ogumisoh (2018) made sense of that civilization began with farming which right up to the present day, remains vital and assumes a huge part in the existences of people day to day. Today, agrarian abilities have augmented the skyline/scope likewise it incorporates abilities like handling, circulation, advertising of yields and domesticated animals items. Farming itself assumes a fundamental part in supporting and driving the economy. As a matter of fact, in the event that college graduates are shown horticultural abilities they will actually want to support themselves and their families as far as food supply/creation as well as income age.

Davidson (2015) made sense of that applying horticultural abilities is urgent in exchanging in light of the fact that farming makes significant commitments to the monetary flourishing of a country. That expansion in cultivating exercises can be connected with the ascent in per capital pay of a local area or even a country, with industrialization and urbanization prompting the unmistakable expansion in agro-based exercises which is frequently productive to all. Thusly, obtaining of agrarian abilities might result to an expansion in agro efficiency, paid worker proportion raise complex abilities/ability for praiseworthy acknowledgment in agro-prenuership commitment. By suggestion, assuming college graduates are shown rural abilities between wovenly regarding hypothetical and functional encounters, they will at last accomplish the objective of confidence and worldwide pay info and result foundation.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

It's obviously true that, great abilities never drop by some coincidence, it is fairly a result of compelling thinking, creative mind, vision, development, motivation, innovativeness and predictable practice that prompts improvement of a general public. In Streams State, most college understudies upon graduation need confidence abilities to have the option to live freely and furthermore contribute seriously to the economy consequently the over dependence on middle class positions, which at present is hard to come by subsequently bringing forth high pace of joblessness in the country. There is also this saying that “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop’’Due to the idle nature of most young university graduates today, there is an increase in unpatriotic behavioural patterns such as prostitution, kidnapping, armed robbery, school truancy, cultism, militancy, oil bonkery, human trafficking, terrorism, drug abuse, rape, pornography, alcohol addiction, gambling (betting), thuggery, gangsterism, assassination and so on. These also could be due to lack of basic skills to stimulate them to add value to the education acquired at that level towards economic empowerment leading to job creation.

Parents and other educational stakeholders are of the opinion that, the economic environment students found themselves in sometimes affects the students directly or indirectly after graduation. It also appears that, some people have this notion that the basic skill of a thing is an inborn idea rather than perceive it as raw talent that requires total refining for societal use. Again educational stakeholders are of the opinion that an ideal society should strategically prioritizes in the search for competitiveness under the current conditions of globalization. In most developed world today, skills acquired at the university education level are seen as the products that enable the integration of the global market in science, culture and technologies into the network of multi-stage benefit creation chains.

Interestingly, some research works carried out in the past revealed that job creation is solely the responsibility of government. It is on this premise that this study was set out to find out how basic skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to find out how basic skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study include to:

i. Find out how production skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State.
ii. Find out how agricultural skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were answered in the study:

i. To what extent can production skills be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State?
ii. To what extent can agricultural skills be managed for and job creation of university graduates in Rivers State?

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

i. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female respondents on how production skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State.
ii. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female respondents on how agricultural skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The design adopted for the study was descriptive

survey design. The population of the study consisted of 80,100 university graduates comprising 49,420 males and 30,680 females from the three (3) public universities in Rivers State. Sample of 420 respondents which consisted of 232 males and 188 females was drawn using stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a 10 item questionnaire titled ‘‘Basic Skills for Job Creation of university Graduates Questionnaire’’ (BSJCUGQ). The instrument was face and content validated by two Measurement and Evaluation experts from University of Port Harcourt. The questionnaire had a reliability coefficient of 0.82 which was estimated using Cronbach alpha statistics. Out of the 420 copies of questionnaire administered, 408 copies which was 97% were retrieved. Research questions raised were answered using mean and standard deviation while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results to research questions

Research question 1: To what extent can production skills be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State?

Table 1. Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Male and Female University Graduates on Production Skills for Job Creation in Rivers State.

Sr.	Production skills for job creation of university graduates.	Male N =	Grad. 246	Decision	Female N =	Grad. 162	Decision
1	Production skills impacted in university graduates has helped them to start their own businesses.	2.86	0.68	Agreed	2.79	0.70	Agreed
2	Some university graduates can produce soap, detergent, disinfectants and perfumes to earn their living.	2.73	0.74	Agreed	2.88	0.66	Agreed
3	Shoe production skills acquired in the university has motivated some graduates to go into shoe making business.	2.69	0.76	Agreed	2.74	0.73	Agreed
4	Furniture/wood work skills acquired in university is very relevant to some people in their furniture business.	2.92	0.65	Agreed	2.80	0.69	Agreed
5	Production skills acquired in the university is helping some people to earn a living and to be independent/self employed.	2.98	0.62	Agreed	2.94	0.64	Agreed
	Aggregate mean and standard deviation	2.84	0.69		2.83	0.68	

Table 1 showed that all the items had mean score values that were greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 and they were agreed on by the respondents that production skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State. The aggregate mean scores of 2.84 for the male and 2.83 for the female university graduates showed that both respondents have a common view that production skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State.

Therefore, production skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State in the following ways: Production skills has helped some university graduates to start their own business; some university graduates can produce soap, detergent, disinfectants and perfumes to earn a living; shoe production skills acquired in the university has motivated some graduates to go into shoe making

business; furniture/wood work skills acquired in university is very relevant to some people in furniture business and production skills acquired in the university is helping some people to earn a living and to be so independent.

Research question 2: To what extent can agricultural skills be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State?

Table 2. Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Male and Female University Graduates on Agricultural Skills for Job Creation in Rivers State.

Sr.	Agricultural skills for job creation of university graduates.	Male N =	Grad. 246	Decision	Female = N	Grad. 162	Decision
1	Agricultural skills acquired in the university has helped some people to start small scale poultry business.	2.94	0.64	Agreed	2.92	0.66	Agreed
2	It helps some people to grow vegetables to boost their income.	2.96	0.63	Agreed	2.98	0.61	Agreed
3	Agricultural skills impacted into university graduates has helped to boost food security.	3.04	0.59	Agreed	3.02	0.60	Agreed
4	Agricultural skills acquired by university graduates has helped some of them to become self employed.	3.08	0.56	Agreed	306	0.57	Agreed
5	Agricultural skills acquired by university graduates is very relevant in their entrepreneurship/business management.	2.88	0.67	Agreed	2.82	0.69	Agreed
	Aggregate mean and standard deviation	2.98	0.62		2.96	0.63	

Table 2 showed that all the items (1to 5) had mean score values that were greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. They were agreed on by the respondents that agricultural skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State. The aggregate mean scores of 2.98 and 2.96 for male and female university graduate respectively signifies that both respondents unanimously agreed that agricultural skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State.

Therefore, agricultural skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State in the following ways:: agricultural skills has helped some people to start small scale poultry business; it has helped some people to grow vegetables to boost their income; agricultural skills impacted into university graduates has helped to boost food security; it has also helped some people to become self employed and agricultural skills acquired in the university is very relevant in their entrepreneurship/business endeavour.

Test of hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female respondents on how production skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State.

Table 3. z-Test of Difference between the Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Male and Female Respondents on Production Skills for Job Creation of university Graduates in Rivers State. N = 408

Gender	N		Sd	Df	z-cal	z-critical	Level of sign.	Decision
Male	246	2.84	0.69	406	0.145	1.960	0.05	Ho_1 not significant.
Female	162	2.83	0.68					

*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 406

Results in table 3 showed that the mean scores of male and female respondents stood at 2.84 and 2.83 respectively. A close look at these means score showed that they are closely related and did not differ significantly from each other. Furthermore, at 406 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, the calculated z-score of 0.145 was by far less than the z-table or critical value of 1.960. Hence, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis and therefore established that, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the male and female respondents on production skills for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female respondents on how agricultural skills can be managed for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State.

Table 4. z-Test of Difference between the Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Male and Female Respondents on Agricultural Skills for Job Creation of university Graduates in Rivers State. N = 408

Gender	N		Sd	Df	z-cal	z-critical	Level of sign.	Decision
Male	246	2.98	0.62	406	0.316	1.960	0.05	Ho_2 not significant.
Female	162	2.96	0.63					

*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 406

Results in table 4 revealed that the mean scores of male and female respondents stood at 2.98 and 2.96 respectively. A closer look at these mean score showed that they are closely related and did not differ significantly from each other. Furthermore, at 406 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, the calculated z-score of 0.316 was by far less than the z-table or critical value of 1.960. Hence, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis and therefore established that, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the male and female respondents on agricultural skills for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Production skills for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State

Production skills such as the skills for making soap, detergent, perfumes, disinfectants, shoe polish, furniture and shoe making play significant roles in job creation of university graduates in Rivers State. This skill enables some people to produce some of these items for their domestic or house hold use. Thus saving the money that they would have spent buying these items. This skill has also empowered some university graduates to take up the production of some of these items as a business. They produce soap, detergents, disinfectants and so on in a large scale to earn their living.

Production skills acquired in the university has helped some people to operate shoe making businesses and wood work/furniture workshops. This business earns money for them and their families. This finding agrees with Akoloh (2017) who observed that production skills has equipped the recipients with rightful skills to become income independent because production skills such as shoe making, furniture making, food processing and packaging etc, are income generating ventures. This skill plays key role in job creation of many university graduates by helping them to become self employed and entrepreneurs. This skill equally plays significant role in the socio-economic stability of the society, it has helped some university graduates to train other young people on these skills, thus helping them to empower some youths and pull them out of the streets and reducing unemployment, youth restiveness and criminal activities in the society.

Agricultural skills for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State

Agricultural skills for job creation of university graduates in Rivers State include: helping some people to start

small scale poultry business; helping some people to grow vegetables to boost their income; helping to boost food security; helping people to become self employed and enhancing entrepreneurship management. Agricultural skill is very important in the life of every youth because it enable people to take up agriculture as a career or a part-time business due to the fact that food is an essential requirement for everyday life. Agricultural skill helps us to achieve food security and also has a wide range of employment opportunities for people. Some people engage in production of food stuffs, livestock, poultry and fishery (aquaculture) and so on. Others engage in packing, marketing and distribution of agricultural products to earn their living.

Some university graduates in Rivers State engage in small scale poultry farms for the production of eggs and meat to sustain their living. Others grow vegetables, fruits and food stuffs in small scale to compliment their income and enhance their economic sustainability. The findings of this study is supported by Okeke (2012) and Asodike (2016) who in their respective studies underscored the prospects of agricultural skills impacted into university graduates and its potentials in enhancing food security and tackling unemployment of youths. Engagement in agricultural practice is very profitable and capable of sustaining some school leavers and their families economically.

There is a need to encourage university graduates to practice the agricultural skills they have acquired during their studies because there is high demand for various kinds of agricultural products locally and internationally. Each sector of agriculture that is well practiced has the potentials of sustaining those who engage in it economically. So many university graduates in Rivers State engage themselves in the cultivation of cocoa, banana, plantain, yam, cassava, oranges and bush mango. They also harvest these crops and sell them to earn money to themselves and their families. Agriculture is the mainstay of the people of Rivers State and agricultural skills acquired in the school has surely helped people in practicing agriculture which plays a key role in their day-to-day living.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusion was made based on the findings of the study:

Results of the study revealed that basic skills play positive roles in creating jobs for university graduates. Basic skills such as production and agricultural skills are very good and they can help university graduates to get jobs/employment as well as create jobs too. These skills are trending practical skills that when appropriately acquired and applied, are capable of sustaining people economically. In these days of high level of unemployment and economic recession, university students need to be adequately prepared for life challenges after graduation. This can be done by equipping them with different forms of skills currently relevant in the society. This will be of enormous benefit to them and the society. Emphasis today is on skills acquisition and not on certificates, therefore proper management, teaching and acquisition of basic skills in our universities will go a long way in stabilizing the society by reducing unemployment, social vices and other criminal activities common among university graduates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

a. Government should lay more emphasis on the developments and teaching of basic skills in the university system.
b. University administrative heads should monitor and supervise adequately the teaching and learning of basic skills in their various institutions.
c. Students on their part should be rational and prepare themselves for life challenges after graduation by acquiring a skill in their areas of interest.
d. Government should encourage university graduates who have acquired various forms of basic skills to be independent or self employed through the provision of business capital or loans and sound economic policies.
e. Government should enhance the provision of basic social amenities such as electricity, good roads, water, good communication network and so on which have positive influence on investment in business.

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