Global Awareness Of Graduate Employability Skills: A Challenge To Africa Nations

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Abstract—The rise in the rate of youth unemployment has gingered countries across the world to looking inward order to stem and reverse the trend. Several studies by researchers revealed reasons for the unabated rise in the rate of unemployment among graduates. This includes teaching approach which is basically theoretical and constant changes in technology in the developed world. Towards this end, several strategies have been canvassed by authors and researchers. These include curriculum remodeling, provision of infrastructures in schools and vigorous campaign against corruption in both high and low places. The most recently suggested solution is the introduction of employability skills into the curriculum of higher institutions. This is designed to make the graduate's job ready and meet the requirements of the employers. Therefore, this paper is a meta-analysis of the competitiveness of Africa in the global race for reducing the menace of youth unemployment rate by the deployment of the principles of employability skills.

Keywords— Global, Employability Skills, Graduate, Awareness, Africa)

I. INTRODUCTION

Employability skills are not restricted to a particular course of study. It transcends all facets of educational institutions, departments, and courses as long as the aim is to produce graduates. Employability is a lifelong process and no one is ever perfectly employed (Dacre Pool and Sewell, 2007). The rapid rise in the unemployment rate has become a major source of concern (Asaju, 2014). Several school leavers and employable adults are either finding it difficult to secure employment or are laid off from their work for one reason or the other (Uddin, 2013).

Due to the rising rate of unemployment among graduates, many scholars and researchers have called for the reform and re-modularization of the school curriculum (Asaju, 2014). It has also been canvassed that Higher education system, both public and private should be assessed based on the employability of their graduates (Amusan, Afolabi, Omuh, Ojelabi, & Oluwatobi, 2016). Merely being in possession of employer-relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes are not enough for an individual to either move self sufficiently in the modern labour market. People also need the capability to exploit their assets, to market them and sell them to the employer (Tymon, 2013). There is no doubt that a skill-gap and educational mismatched already exists between the educational institutions and the industry (Bowman, McGann, Kimberley, & Biggs, 2016).

Gowsalya; and Kumar, (2015) noted that factors such as language skills, outdated syllabus, insufficient practical sessions and absence of career counseling facilities are responsible for the low employability rate of graduates. The way out is the development of integrative research approaches for the development and improvement of graduate's employability skills.

The compounding issues for employability skills today is as a result of the technological shift from product industries to service industry (Mansour & Dean, 2016).This has created a skill-gap in the developed world, while a mismatch between the qualifications of graduates and the needs of employers, coupled with lack of students' exposure to the realities that exist in the job market was identified

as part of the factors responsible for the high level of unemployment worldwide. Mansour, (2016) like many researchers, sees employability as the capability of individuals to effectively utilize his knowledge, skills, and attitudes within a particular context for self-sufficiency to realize his potential by sustaining his employment.

This evolution has increased the need for research into employability skills; How is employability skills doing, who is doing it, who are the recipients, why are the teachers and the institutions involved, why is it necessary for the students and what are the effects (Cardoso, 2014). Badu-Nyarko, (2013) indicates that higher education can provide a lead way to employment by developing the relevant workplace knowledge, skills, and attitudes that employers cherish.

The job market of today is now more complex than in the past. It consists of more extensive generational differences among graduates towards work, careers, and learning. Furthermore, the increasing rate of change in the labour market continues to increase as a result of rapidly evolving and different practices between small and large firms as well as numerous changes and advancements within various industries. Higher education must, therefore, strengthen its connections with industry to ensure that graduates understand the conditions of the job market. This will enable graduates to develop the skills required by employers. Moreover, employers must effectively inform students and higher institutions about the skills they value. This is because, the relationships that are common to employers, institutions, and graduates are complex, and are dependent upon how engaged graduates are with opportunities for the development of their employability.

This paper is a meta-analysis of the methods applied in extant employability skills literature, emphasizing which continent of the world is more

actively involved in the race to make their graduates work ready.

A. *Methodology*

Table1: Overview of Journals retrieved

1. Journal of Vocational Education	2. Proceedings Frontiers in Education Conference
3. European Journal of Education	4. International Education Studies
5. On the Horizon	6. Procedia Engineering
7. Prospects	8. Anthropologist
9. Applied mechanics and Metrics	10. British Journal of Educational Studies
11. Communication in Computer and Information Science	12. Development Southern Africa
13. Engineering Education	14. European Societies
15. Global Journal of Engineering Education	16. Higher Education Skills and Work-based Learning
17. IEEE International Professional Communication Conference	18. International Journal of Lesson and Learning Studies
19. International Journal of Electronics Commerce Studies	20. International Journal of Engineering Education
21. International Journal of Innovation in Science and Mathematics Education	22. International Journal of Technology Enhanced Learning
23. International Journal of Training Research	24. International Review of Education
25. Journal of Curriculum Studies	26. Journal of Engineering Design
27. Journal of Geography	28. Journal of Higher

in Higher Education	Education Policy and Management
29. Journal of Universal Teaching and Learning Practice	30. Research in Comparative Studies and International Education
31. Research in Post – Compulsory Education	32. Software Engineering Education Conference Proceedings

Inspired by Blenker, Elmholdt, Frederiksen, Korsgaard, & Wagner, (2014) to capture all relevant publications for this study, the keywords on the subject were carefully composed into search strings as shown in Table **1**.

Table 1: Search strings on Employability in Technical and Vocational Education

Main search: Employability skills
Sub search 1: Employability skills + Technical Education
Sub search 2: Employability skills +Vocational Education
Sub search 3: Employability skills + Technical and Vocational Education

Based on the search string a total number of 118 publications was retrieved from the database. The Scopus citation index services analytical tool was used to analyze the result of the search to reflect the publications by authors, and regions of the world. This number was pruned down by setting a scope for the search strings.

Findings

In arriving at the findings, we look at the development of publications over time and the distribution of publications across regions and journals. We also looked at the methods used in employability skills research in terms of methods, data sources, technique and analysis by various authors.

The increased amount of papers attest to the growing importance of employability skills across the world. Since technology settings are changing and everything seems dynamic, employability skills are central to matching graduates with employment. The fact that a growing number of papers go as far as journal publication could be a sign of improved quality since journal reviewers consider methodological strengths.
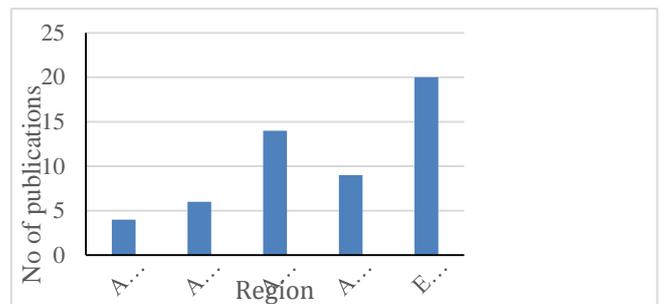
Conclusion and Recommendation

It can be concluded that the interest in employability skills is growing beyond borders. Research in this area has grown significantly. And a good number of research has reached refereed research journals. This, however, occurs primarily in Europe where most of the researchers and journal originated from. However, the review shows that Africa and African researchers have to do more on employability research. This is judged by the low level of high profile research journal emanating from the continent, unlike other continents.

The review shows that more awareness is shown to employability skills by the Europeans, Asians, Australians, and Americans than the Africans. Employability skills enable an individual to secure

employment and advance in it (Jackson, 2014). Therefore, the high level of unemployment in Africa may be significantly related to the poor perception and acceptance of employability skills compared to other regions of the world that have a low unemployment rate. Consequently, employability skills and unemployment are job-related.

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