EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AND PERCEIVED SOCIETAL INSECURITY BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY

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Abstract

One major challenge of African nations is provision of employment for the mass populace of the unemployed. Employment has been viewed as a critical response to achieving societal security. Nigeria universities are expected to lend support in the struggle of overcoming the challenge of unemployment by providing employability skills. Employability skills will no doubt help in reducing societal unrest among graduates particularly those with disabilities that suffer twice what their counterpart without disability experienced. Therefore this study investigated the prediction of societal insecurity from the employability skills of undergraduate students at 300 level in Universities of Ibadan, Uyo and Calabar in Nigeria. The study adopted survey design. The sample consists of eighty six (86) students. Data was collected from employability skill and insecurity rating scale (ESSRS). The scale was validated, with reliability coefficient of 0.68, 0.71, 0.73, 0.81, 0.78, and 0.76 for subscales of ICT, problem analysis, team spirit, innovative, entrepreneurial skills and societal insecurity respectively. Data collected was analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that the composite effect of the employability skills investigated were found to significantly predict ($f_{value} = 3.065$, $p<.05$; adjusted $R^2 = .108$) and account for 10.8% of perceived societal insecurity. The team spirit and ICT skills are significant predictors with the former having the greatest influence. It was recommended among others that university education should gear effort toward skill-building especially for those with disabilities.

Keywords: *Employability Skills, Societal Insecurity, Students with Disability*

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1. Introduction

The number one threat to national security in Nigeria like most of the other African countries is unemployment, arising from potential unrest witnessed among the large population of unskilled persons in the labour market. This position stems from one undeniable yet astonishing fact that in Nigeria, the production of graduates with required skills for labour market has not been met in the face of the economy challenge sin Nigeria (National University Commission, NUC, 2004). A concern in the mind of the researcher is that existing programs of higher education are not yielding graduates with the kind of lifelong skills which they need to be successful in their careers. Again, to face the challenges posed by the increasing global competition in the labour market, decisive kills are needed by university graduates and particularly by those with disability. Disability posed twice as much challenge as those faced by ordinary person in the society. While graduates without disability only require a good employment, those with disability faces the more rigor of unemployment heightened by the challenges of the disability.

Obanya (2012) noted that everywhere in the globe, the world of work has been questioning the preparation of universities and other higher institutions to fit into a knowledge-driven economy. The need for productive employment has found relevance as it becomes one of the major agenda on the recent sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2015-2030, as mapped out by United Nations which Nigeria is a member. The SDG agenda has therefore, provision to promote sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment as well as decent work for all by the year 2030 including those with disabilities.

Employment is often seen as a rewarding engagement of an individual in productive activities as a result of a set of achievements, skills, understanding and personal attributes that may benefit the work force, the community and the economy. The situations of people with disability are more pathetic because most employers discriminate against them. Besides most of them do not have access to opportunities of establishing their own business. Only few of them who are from very rich homes will be able to sustain themselves if they are fortunate to have family who are empathic. Meanwhile, most often when graduates leave the school and are without any employment, they become nuisance and constitute threat to the society. However, Isah, Oboh and Lawal (2012) observed that youth unemployment appears to be shooting up the sky because many of them lack the employability skills that are often required. In Nigeria, the unemployment rate-measuring the number of persons actively looking for a job as a percentage of the labour force, is recorded by the

National Bureau of statistics to have increased from 6.4 percent in the last quarter of 2014, to 7.50 percent in the first quarter of 2015. The rate of unemployment averaged 11.93 percent from 2006 until 2015 reaching an all-time high of 23.90 percent in the last quarter of 2011 and a record low of 5.30 percent in the fourth quarter of 2006 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

Furthermore, the vanguard of December 23, 2004 noted that youth unemployment moved from 4.3 percent in 1985 to 5.3 percent in 1986; to 7.0 percent in 1987 and jumped to 60 percent in 1997. The report further showed that the tertiary schools constituted 12.4 percent, an indication that Nigeria's higher institutions lack the tools to give students the skills employers need. Unemployment has a far reaching effect on the economic life of a nation and the citizens. Isah *et al* (2012) note that, the nation's poverty level was put at 70 percent and more than 91 million Nigerians are said to live on less than one dollar per day. As a way of attaining self-employment through skill development, Fafunwa (1974) opines that some form of school-work based learning to be in-corporate in studies in higher institutions across the land as an integral part of national development strategy to reduce the burden of unemployment and its consequences on the people and the nations as a whole.

Unemployment of youths has become synonymous with restiveness and violence among Nigerian youths (Amagada, 2012). Youth (the period between childhood and adulthood) is characterized by a state of restlessness and impatience. With their brain (mental ability) and brawn (physical ability) in the face of unemployment, when physical ability is unemployed in negative areas, the result is violence. Engaging the brain in ventures that are devoid of meanings could be devastating. The sum total gives rise to a situation that poses a threat to the security of the society harbouring the unemployed youths (Amagada, 2012).

Today's world is full of insecurity and crises with restiveness and violence as evident in the Nigerian society. A typical case of youth restiveness and violence is the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The Niger Delta is endowed with enormous natural resources of which oil is the most exploited. The genesis of conflict and militancy in the Niger Delta is traceable to the perceived injustice surrounding the distribution of oil wealth, couple with the displacement and irritations from severe environmental pollution arising from oil exploration. As the entire vast territory became agriculturally unproductive, and the people could no longer carry out meaningful occupational (Fishing and Farming) activities, the result was criminal activities.

The high unemployment rate increases the possibility of unproductive and antisocial activities which add to slow growth of the economy, and thus, subject our youths to vulnerability to crises such as drug addition, cultism, armed robbery and ready tools for political and other violence. Insecurity in the Nigerian society has assumed an imaginable scale and become a great challenge and a threat to peace, unity and development. Several dimensions of violence are witnessed and they include activities of the popular and notorious Boko-Haram insurgency, originating from the north-east and characterized by terrorism such as suicide bombing, sporadic shooting and killings, destruction of lives and property, abduction of human beings of all categories, kidnapping and hostages for ransoms, among others. In Nigeria, societal security is a highly prized matter, as it is of utmost importance to the progress and development of the polity. No sector of any meaningful economy can afford to treat with levity issues that threaten its national security.

Societal security can be used to refer to a branch of national security, an analytic tool that is particularly efficient in helping to understand the security concerns of multi-ethnic environment. Societal insecurity is a term that was frequently used in eastern Europe during the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, as an analytical instrument of its constituent conflicting societies in the Yugoslav State and afterwards. Everywhere, societal insecurity refers to sustainable development of traditional patterns of languages, national identities and traditions of countries (Collins, 2011).According to Collins (2011), the term societal insecurity has extended the security concept to include discussions on security of collectivities and societies' as an approach in between the human security and global security. Societal security became separated from being a dimension of national security, and became a referent object of security whose concerns were related to threats and risks posed to the identity of society, the survival of its identity as survival of the society itself.

Societal security is crucial to the issues related to the national identity for instance, Western Balkans' states and national States of Macedonia (1991-2001); they can therefore, be used as analytic framework or study objects of societal insecurity. The two states faced security dilemma at one time or the other. The crisis that existed in the two states was explained by Zela (2013) as being attributed to delayed and incomplete process of state building, typical of political developments of the late 19th and the early 20th century. There have been consistent reports of eruption of violence, bomb blasts, kidnaps and killings of innocent Nigerians in the country. A great deal of the security challenges have again been blamed on the reaction to the failure of government, multinational companies and the Nigerian educational system (Denga, 2015).

The educational system is not expected to produce graduates who through their employability become threats to the social and economic stability of our society. Rather, the system should prepare the individual learner to be self-reliant and earn a living. The system's vocational and technical education should facilitate behavioral changes in an individual towards acquisition of self-skills that make him or her relevant in any employment setting. Onyenkwu (1977) bases this on sound knowledge, applied to creative and innovative thinking, decision-making and problem-solving of societal needs and thereby making a living out of them. Education is a dynamic instrument of change and should therefore, be utilized   to re-orient the society. In its broadest sense, education constitutes aggregation of all the processes by means of which an individual develops necessary manipulative skills, attitudes, abilities and forms of behaviour of positive value in the society Obanya (2012) presents a number of self-skills drawn from the case of Australia which guide the development of higher education curricular of Nigeria: communication that contributes to productive harmonious relations among employees and customers.

Employers in today's competitive work economy look for graduates who communicate well both verbally and in writing with a wide variety of people, and have active listening skills. Such employees demonstrate the skills with ease in addition to maintaining good eye contact, writing clearly and succinctly, exhibit a varied vocabulary and being able to tailor their language to their audience. Adequate communication skills presuppose that the employee will get messages across with less chance of misunderstanding.

Team work or cooperative skill contributes to productive working relations and outcomes.

- Initiative and enterprise that contribute to innovative outcomes.
- Problem-solving that contributes to productive outcome.
- Planning and organizing that contribute to short and long term strategic planning.
- Self-management that contributes to employee satisfaction and growth.
- Learning that contributes to continuous self-improvement and expansion in company's operations and outcome.
- Technology that contributes to effective execution of tasks.
- Personal attributes-loyalty, honesty, integrity, adaptability.

    (Australia Chamber of Commerce, 2002).

Employability is a generic term that could mean acceptance to an employer. Often, it seems to refer to possession of the skills, knowledge, experience, attitude, energy and other potentials including personal qualities that will enable a new graduate to make productive contribution to the objectives of the organization in which he is employed. Possession of employability skills makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits them, the workforce, the community and the society at large.

Employability goes beyond employment. Being employed means to have a job and being employable involves having the qualities or abilities needed to attract and maintain employment and become more employable (progress in the work place). The ultimate goal of employability is to fit into today's world of work both as an independent creative and entrepreneurial individual, or team member (Obanya, 2012). Employability skills in the context of this paper are competencies, abilities, aptitude and qualities found in communication, problem-solving, cooperation, innovation and entrepreneurship which in this paper are to be used to predict the level of societal insecurity as perceived by graduate students in University of Calabar.

Employability skills are those skills necessary for getting, keeping and being successful in a job. They are skills that enable employees to get along with colleagues, make critical decisions, solve problems, develop respect and ultimately become strong ambassadors for the organization. As transferable skills (skills that are not specific to one particular career path but genetic across all employment sector), they make employees flexible in the work pattern. Employability or soft skills form the foundation of one's career building blocks and they are frequently referenced as lacking in school-leavers, graduates and those already in employment (Obany, 2012). This often makes employers in the presence of too many applicants; choose to favour those with well-rounded employability skills.

In an investigation carried out by Fallows and Steve (2000), it was discovered that higher institutions have not provided their graduate students with creative, innovative and entrepreneurial skills for employment outside fulfilling the traditional goal of a good degree or qualification. As a result, these categories finding themselves without employment, engage in all manner of threatening activities, violently destroying lives and property due to personal feeling of aggression, grievances, persuasion for rewards of coercion (Obogo, 2015).

In another study, Brennan, Koogan and Teichler (1996) in Amadi et al (2014), surveyed graduates across Europe and UK and found that UK graduates rated team work, working under

pressure, oral communication skills and problem-solving in the top ten skills viewed by them as essential not only to gain employment but to remain employable across sectors. In contrast, none of the above skills appeared in the list of competencies rated high by European graduates; instead, learning skills, working independently and written communication skills were highlighted.

In the survey study on assessment of employability skills of undergraduate students in Nigerian universities in the south-south geopolitical zone, Amadi et al (2014) employed a sample of 600 students drawn through stratified random sampling from six universities and analyzed the relevant data using descriptive and inferential statistics, to find that the results of the seven hypotheses tested (one for each identified skill), implied high mean values. This translates to high employability skills among the final year students. The authors believe that high education curricula can make further difference by exposing students to a wider range of people's beliefs and attitudes to make them more confident in their own abilities. The need for greater employability of graduates cannot be overlooked in a society where graduate population is ever expanding.

According to Zela (2013), this region is composed of a multiplicity of issues that are in the central hearth of societal, political and ethno-territorial conflicts and with the region's characteristic or composition of weak state structures, the Western Balkans' region developed security dynamics different from what obtains in a setting where states are strong. For instance, following the disintegration of Yugoslavia, ethnic identity became the main security issues in the Western Balkans up to the first decade of the 21st century. And if a society loses its identity, it can hardly survive again as a society. In another words, states may become unsafe due to threat posed to their society. The increasing rate of societal insecurity in Nigeria is a clear indication that lives and property are far chiding the citizens on a daily basis. The spate, according to Zela (2013) is noted in political, religious and ethno-cultural disagreement to antisocial or criminal activities across the country. Obogo (2015) notes that, bad and ineffective governance and corruption have constituted major virus that impedes and ruins colourful and lofty employment policies and other programs of government, leading to the option of violence among the privileged, deprived, energy-full but skill-lacking youths.

2. Methodology

The research design used in the study was a survey design of correlation type. The sample consists of eighty six (86) post graduate students from University of Calabar, University of Uyo and

University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Employability skill and security rating scale which was content and constant validated by experts and yielded as reliability coefficient of.68,.71, .73,.81, .78, and .76 for subscales of ICF, problem analysis, team spirit, innovative entrepreneurial skill and insecurity respectively. Data was collated through stratified and accidental sampling of 86 undergraduate students with disability in the universities. Respondents were stratified into faculties and accidental sampling was used to collect information from the respondents in their respective faculties. The instrument was directly administered to the respondents after due permission from the school authorities and consent from the students. The responses were collected immediately. The data collected was analyzed using multiple regression analysis.

3. Results

The results of the analysis of the data collected are explained as follows by the stated hypothesis.

$H_0$1. There is no significant inter correlation among the employability skills and perceived societal insecurity.

TABLE 1

Correlation matrix of employability skills (ICT), Problem Analysis, Team Spirit, Innovation, Entrepreneurial and Perceived Insecurity by postgraduate students of University of Calabar.

S/N	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Insecurity	1.00					
2	ICT Skill	.180*	1.00				
3	Problem Analysis Skill	.082	.183*	1.00			
4	Team Spirit Skill	-.178*	.472*	.041	1.00		
5	Innovation Skill	.105	.169	.396*	.328*	1.00	
6	Entrepreneurial Skill	-.038	.168	.482*	.231*	.493*	1.00

*p<.05 is significant

Table1 is the result of the correlation matrix of employability skills and perceived societal insecurity among post graduate students in University of Calabar. The result shows that the correlation between ICT and perceived societal insecurity is positively weak but significant (r=.18, p<0.05). The correlation between team spirit and perceived societal insecurity is also though week but significant (r = .18, p<.05). There was a weak and non-significant correlation between perceived

societal insecurity and problem analysis skill (r=0.08, p>.05), innovation skill (r=.105, p>.05) and entrepreneurial skill (r=-.04, p>.05). Among the variables of the employability skills, ICT and problem analysis skills (r=.183, p<.05), team spirit and ICT skills (r=.472, p<.05), innovation and problem solving skills (r=.328, p<.05), innovation and team spirit skills (r=.328, p<.05), as well as entrepreneurial and problem analysis skills (r=.482, p<.05), all relate significantly even though their correlation were not too high. Those with negative values show that their relationships are indirect in nature. The implication of this finding is that those employability skills that relates significantly have significant association with each other and hence they are have role and influence in the prediction of societal insecurity. The reason for the significant correlation can be inferred on the importance of these skills among one another in employment. In order words, there is direct and indirect significant influence of the skills among the variables of employment. If the variables relate directly, then, the two variables move along the same direction. That is the higher a variable, the higher the other variable. If the variables however relate indirectly, then they move at opposite directions. Meaning that the higher a variable the lower the other variable.

H$_0$2. There is no significant relative influence of employability skills (ICT, problem analysis, team spirit, innovation and entrepreneurial skills) on the perceived societal insecurity.

TABLE 2

Coefficient of Relative Influence of Employability Skill for Perceived Insecurity among Postgraduate Students of University of Calabar

	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	12.226	2.288		5.344	.000
ICT skill	.491	.169	.344	2.905	.005
Problem Analysis skill	.002	.163	.002	.015	.988
Team Spirit skill	-.439	.140	-.390	-3.138	.002
Innovation skill	.294	.157	.235	1.869	.065
Entrepreneurial skill	-.148	.153	-.123	-.963	.338

From table 2, it is clear from the analysis that only ICT and team spirit skills are significant predictors of societal insecurity among postgraduate students in University of Calabar. Again estimating their relative influence, team spirit (β=.390) influence most follow by ICT skill β=.344, innovative skill (β= .235), and entrepreneurial skill (β =.123). The implication of these results is that only ICT and team spirit skills influenced insecurity significantly as perceived by postgraduate

students in University of Calabar. Again, team spirit contributes most while problem analysis skills share the least contribution. It can be inferred from these findings that the sustenance of the any activity be it positive or negative is strongly influence by the cooperation of the members involved. Skill of team working or spirit of togetherness is very necessary among people for a common success particularly on positive ventures. The world today has gone viral, so no meaningful contribution can be made without the ICT skill. This explains why the finding of this study was significant on the ICT skill. In fact virtually all organizations require the ICT skill for employment now. Therefore efforts should be intensify on the development of the ICT skill at all levels of education to position the society for the demand of this age and increase the chance of school leavers for employment consequently reducing insecurity.

H_03. There is no significant combined influence of variables of employability skill on insecurity.

TABLE 3a

ANOVA from the multiple regression showing the combined effect of the employability skills.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	f	Sig
Regression	180.67	5	36.135	3.065	.014
Residual	943.14	80	11.789		
Total	1123.81	85			

*significant at p<0.05

The ANOVA shows that the combined effect of the variables of employability skill is significant. With the model summary in table 3b

TABLE 3b
Model of the Combined Effect of the Employability Skills

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.401	.161	.108	3.434

This adjusted R square indicate that the combined effect of employability skills considered in the study accounted for 10.8% of the total prediction of the perceived societal insecurity. The findings of the study summarily show that when the employability skills are put together, they significantly predict societal insecurity and by the model obtained their combined effects contribute 10.8% of all that could influence societal insecurity. This finding is relatively of important consideration.

This implication is that if the employability skills can be in proper perspective, the society will control insecurity by 10.8%. The challenge of the graduates with respect to employability skills is the over dependence of the societal on the higher certificates with higher grade at the expense of the vocational skills. There societal is now flooded with graduates with certificates with less employable skills. Again, there is higher concentration of the graduates of higher certificates chasing relatively few positions available for their cadre. This is grossly abnormal because the middle power workers should be more in a normal distribution but they are gradually fusing out as no encouragement for them. This is a major source of youth unrest in the country. So, with higher certificates and no job, frustration of the graduates are on the increased and the demand for survival can push them to engage in insecurity threat that could earn them much without minding the consequence.

4. Conclusion

Unemployment is a critical threat to societal insecurity, and its rate has been fueled by lack or inadequate employability skills that could meet the global challenge in the field of work. The relevance of the certificate of any graduate is now in the application of the employability skills and not by the class of the degree as it was in the past. The cost of the lack or inadequate employability skills to societal insecurity can be irreparable loss to the nation if not quickly checked. Therefore graduates now require beyond the theoretical knowledge and acquire all technical skills that could offer them gainful employment and consequently reduce societal insecurity.

5. Recommendations

The following are recommended to bridge the gap identify in this study

1. The curriculum planners should develop realistic vocational skills across all levels of education curriculum with trained expert to impact the life-long skills for students with disability.

2. Government should encourage skill acquisition and entrepreneurship as against certification for white collar job through funding, loan provision and free training and empowerment for large and small scale businesses for all students their disability notwithstanding.

3. Government should increase technical colleges as against conventional Universities with adequate human and material provisions and motivate youths into the colleges for skill acquisition.

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