

CARRIER MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES EFFECTIVENESS IN ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract

Unemployment among business education graduates is alarming particularly in the absence of significant industrial involvement and requisite skills expected. The study examines the Carrier Management skills required by employers of business education graduates for effective performance in business organizations in Nasarawa State, Middlebelt, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 2101 managers of large, medium and small scale business organizations. The researcher used proportionate stratified random sampling technique to select 316 respondents, which were all human resource managers. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient method was used to establish the reliability coefficient and 0.80 was obtained. One research questions and one null hypotheses guided the study. The researcher administered 316 copies of questionnaires with the help of three research assistants, while 300 copies were duly completed and retrieved making 94% returned. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation, while ANOVA was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that emotional intelligence skills is required to a moderate extent. There is significance difference in the mean ratings of low, medium and high capital based managers on the extent of carrier management skills required of business education graduates for effective performance in business organizations. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that managers and curriculum designers should develop appropriate curriculum that will enable business education graduates improve their skills to enhance their performance. Managers of organizations should also support tertiary institutions by engaging the students in proactive industrial training activities so as to enable them imbibe and apply their skills creatively.

Key words: Carrier Management, Business Education, Employability Skills. Effectiveness

Introduction

In a challenging economy, the role of tertiary institutions is not only to produce graduates with specific areas of specialization, but more importantly, to develop graduate employability skills that are most demanding in the 21st century (Lee & Tan, 2003). Skills have become increasingly important in the globalized world. Vocational and technical skills are essential, but employers are seeking applicants who can continue to learn and adapt; read, write and compute competently; listen and communicate effectively; think creatively; solve problems independently; manage themselves at work; interact with co-workers; work in teams or groups; handle basic technology, lead effectively as well as follow supervision. These core skills for employability are both important to employers' recruitment and enhance an individual's ability to secure a job, retain employment and move flexibly in the labour market as well as engage in lifelong learning (Bowman, 2010).

Career Management Skills (CMS) are a wider range of employability skills than just generic competencies. Career management skills encompass career and self-management skills that have positive effects on graduate learning outcomes and employability at a broader economic level (Mayston, 2002). The term career can be used to depict how

individuals live their lives across different contexts and settings, including education, work, family and leisure time. Vaughan (2011) asserts that all individuals need to carefully coordinate their life, work and learning choices and experiences, at all ages and stages throughout their lives. This process of coordination requires the exercise of Career Management Skill(CMS).

Career Management Skills (CMS) is the term used to describe the skills, attributes, attitudes and knowledge that individuals require in order to manage their career.Sultana (2011) posited that career management skills are often used to describe, not only skills, but also aptitudes, abilities and attitudes. It is therefore expected that business education graduates should processes these skills in order to perform optimally in their enterprises.

Employers today are concerned about finding workers who do not only have basic academic skills like reading, writing, science, mathematics, oral communication and listening, but also higher order thinking skills like learning, reasoning, thinking creatively, decision making and problem solving. CM skills, variously referred to as non-technical, professional, key, core or generic skills are considered vital in enabling graduates to apply disciplinary knowledge effectively in the workplace. Similarly, the skills typically considered important in developed economies are team work, self-awareness, motivation, empathy, self-regulation, communication, self-management, and analysis and critical thinking (Jackson, 2013).

Business educators need to provide students with the opportunities to the understand and develop the skills that they will require to succeed in the working environment and educators have the responsibilities to provide their graduates with a strong foundation in both technical and carrier training so that they will be well-rounded individuals, and hence worthy employees, effective managers and dynamic leaders.

Career management is an important aspect of employability, addressing an individual's strategies for building a sustainable work profile (Bridgstock, 2009). Career advice through university-based centers contributes to students' development of employability strategies by providing a range of services to develop skills, such as interviewing practice, preparation of CVs and résumés, engaging in networking opportunities and self-reflection (Kuijpers&Scheerens, 2006). Career management skills and knowledge are essential to employability in that they play a large part in determining which, to what extent, in what manner, when and where generic and discipline-specific skills are learned, displayed (example in applying for a job) and used (McQuaid& Lindsay, 2005). Bridgstock (2009) identified career management skills as necessary graduate attributes that would allow graduates to proactively navigate the world of work and self-manage the career building process regardless of the dynamically changing and unpredictable work contexts.

Sultana (2011) stated that career management skills refers to a whole range of competencies which provide structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyze, synthesize and organize self, educational and occupational information as well as the skills to make and implement decisions transitions. The concept of career management skills recognizes that career development is based on individuals moving around in a fluid labour market (Skills Development Scotland, 2011). Career management skills are pivotal to enabling individuals to make and take an on-going decision about work and learning that will shape their personal career journeys.

Skills Strategy Refresh (2010) outlined that developing career management skills will equip individuals to:Access and use effectively the full range of career management products and services at a time and place that suit their needs; Identify opportunities to develop their learning goals and employability skills and understand how the labour market works, how to find job, to appreciate how and why industries and individuals jobs within them are changing and what sort of skills they need to progress; To identify how they can progress within the workplace and equip themselves to do so;To access the services they need with partners working together to signpost them or where appropriate, co-ordinates and integrated package of services; and be better able to take career decisions to manage change and uncertainty by forward planning and to make confident choices for themselves.

Career management skills are divided into two categories of competence: self-management and career building.

Self-management skills

These skills relate to the individual's perception and appraisal of themselves in terms of values, abilities, interests and goals. These competencies are closely related to the concept of career identity (Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999; Jones &deFillippi, 1996), which is the perceived congruence between aspects of the individual and their career roles. In their study of mentoring and career success, Day and Allen (2004) found that the career identity subscale of the career motivation scale they used positively predicted salary levels, subjective reports or career success and job performance.

Eby, Butts and Lockwood (2003) demonstrated that students who have a well-developed concept of their career goals and a positive, realistic appraisal of their own abilities and aptitudes report themselves as possessing higher levels of employability than other students.

Career building skills

Career building skills are the skills relating to finding and using information about careers, labour markets and the world of work and then locating, securing and maintaining work, as well as exploiting career opportunities to gain advancement or other desired outcomes. It has been suggested that the acquisition of this kind of competency will result in more realistic expectations of the labour market (Watts, 2006) and fewer mismatches between labour market supply and demand resulting in poor employment outcomes (Mayston, 2002; Watts, 2006). A student who is aware of a high unemployment rate in an occupation or geographical location can draw on their self-management and career building skills to construct alternative career scenarios involving different locations, training options, occupational choices or work modes through the process of proactive career management. Career building skills according to Eby, Butts and Lockwood (2003) include:

1. Being familiar with one's industry – the opportunities and threats that exist and which factors are critical to success. This involves a knowledge of 'the rules of the game', including industry structure, beliefs, norms, values and culture, as well as labour market information, such as unemployment rates and median salaries.
2. Being able to effectively identify and choose the best opportunities for advancement in terms of geography, projects and role.
3. Knowing how long to stay in a role, when to exploit a new employment or training opportunity and the ability to move quickly once an opportunity arises.
4. Knowing how to effectively apply for and obtain work; representing one's skills and abilities in a way that is attractive to employers or clients.
5. Creating social capital by creating strategic personal and professional relationships with those who might provide opportunities and important resources.

These kinds of relating skills have been shown to have a direct effect on perceived (Eby, Butts & Lockwood, 2003) and actual employability (Brown & Konrad, 2001; Marmaros & Sacerdote, 2002). Despite the obvious theoretical appeal of a link between career building skills and employment outcomes, surprisingly little empirical examination has been conducted thus far. Werbel's (2000) study of college graduates showed that individuals who engaged in work exploration behaviours were both more active in the job searching process and experienced more success. Saks and Ashforth (1999) demonstrated that the underpinning trait of graduate job-search self-efficacy (one's confidence in performing tasks that are important to the job-search process) and active job search behaviours are positively correlated with employment outcome.

A wider range of employability skills than just generic competencies, encompassing notions of career and self-management, can be seen to have positive effects on graduate learning outcomes and employability and also at a broader economic level. There would appear to be economic benefits if higher education providers begin to play a more active role in developing students' career management skills. This suggests that universities must begin to comprehensively and actively engage with the employability agenda, including career building and self-management skills, in order to remain competitive in a diverse training market where providers vie for students and funding. Several questions and considerations relating to the inclusion of career management skills into the university experience thus become apparent.

Statement of the Problem

Despite efforts by universities in equipping students with skills and knowledge, there is some evidence to suggest that graduates moving from higher education to the workplace in many developing economies do not meet industry expectations. Although the graduates are acknowledged as being sufficiently equipped with technical know-how, there is an agreement that they lack certain employability skills (Shury, Davies & Oldfield 2010). In today's competitive world, a degree is no longer a guarantee to employability unlike decades ago when enrolling in almost any degree program ensures a choice of employment offers in the graduating year. Employers asserted that graduates are deficient in transferable skills required of the workforce as a result of the unsuccessful development of their employability skills during their stay in the university. Skill deficiencies imply reduced productivity and organizational underperformance and are likely to have an effect on the economy's ability to achieve sustainable growth and global competitiveness.

Although, effort has been made by Nigerian government to curb this problem through the introduction of Industrial Training Fund (ITF) 1971 and Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) 1973, the problems still exist. Duoc and Mertzger (2006), states that for the past ten years, educators, employers and university administrators have been greatly concerned about the quality of graduates because those graduates have less demand in the labour market. Employers' complain that most of the graduates lack necessary skills needed to succeed at work and future career. The problem of this study therefore, is how effective business education graduates would perform with CM skills or requirement of CM skills by employers for effective performance in organizations. Accordingly, this study is anchored in two research questions. What constitutes emotional intelligence skills? Secondly, to what extent are emotional intelligence skills required by employers of business education graduates for effective performance in business organizations in Nasarawa State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain carrier management skills required by employers of business education graduates for effective performance in business organization in Nasarawa State.

Research Questions

To what extent are carrier Management skills required by employers of business education graduates for effective performance in business organizations in Nasarawa State.

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of managers with high, medium and low capital base on carrier management skills and business graduates effectiveness in organizations in Nasarawa State.

Human Capital Theory

Schultz 1961 propounded Human Capital theory. Schultz pointed out that knowledge, skills and competencies are a form of capital. Schultz compared the acquisition of knowledge and skills to acquisition of the means of production. The difference in earnings between people relates to the differences in access to education and health, in his seminar book entitled "Human Capital" viewed human skills and competencies as similar to physical means of production such as factories and machines. According him, human capital is skills and knowledge that individuals acquire through investments in schooling, on-the-job training, and other types of experience.

Becker's (1964) definition suggested differentiating human capital along two distinct conceptualizations of human capital attributes: human capital investments versus outcomes of human capital investments and task related human capital versus human capital not related to a task. Human capital investments include experiences such as education and work experience that may or may not lead to knowledge and skills. The outcomes of human capital investments are acquired knowledge and skills. Task-relatedness addresses whether or not human capital investments and outcomes are related to a specific task, such as running a business venture. The distinction of different human capital attributes is important because it helps to (1) theoretically dismantle causes and effects of human capital attributes and to (2) theoretically derive moderators of the human capital - success relationship.

The relevance of human capital theory by Schultz 1961 and Becker 1964 to the present study is that education increases individuals' productivity, which consequently enhances job performance. As such, business education provides graduates with employability skills and abilities relevant to job performance, and thus the more highly educated business education graduates are, the more successful they will be in the labour market in terms of both incomes and work opportunities (Yuzhuo, 2012). This theory does not lean much towards the acquisition of generic skills to succeed in the workplace. It focuses more on the educational knowledge acquired through higher education to be successful in work. Human relation functions cannot be applied in the workplace if one has the technical or theoretical knowledge of it, but the point is, one does not apply them in the air, one deals with people because that is the nature of the human relation profession, one will need both set of skills for success.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey method. The population for the study comprised 2,101 with the help of proportionate stratified random sampling technique, 316 human resource managers of large, medium and small scale business organizations in Nasarawa State were utilized. A five point scale questionnaire varying from very high extent,

high extent, moderate extent, low extent and very low extent were used to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was given to three experts, one in Measurement and Evaluation Unit in the Educational Foundations Department and two in Vocational Education Department of the Faculty of Education all in NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka. By the use of test re-test method and Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient and 0.80 was obtained. The administration and collection of copies of the questionnaire was done by the researcher through the help of three research assistants. Mean and standard deviation was the main statistical tool to analyze the data, while ANOVA was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question

To what extent are carrier management skills and business graduate’s effectiveness in organizations in Nasarawa State? Data relating to this research question are analyzed and presented in Table I:

Table 1: Employers’ mean ratings on career management skills and business graduate’s effectiveness in organizations in Nasarawa State

S/N	Business Education Graduates Require these Career Management Skills:	X	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to Identify opportunities and generate appropriate ideas to optimize such opportunities.	3.86	0.75	HE
2	Recognize the need for employees’ professional development	3.82	0.85	HE
3	Accept responsibility, flexibility and undertake them with resilience.	3.83	0.93	HE
4	Improve one’s performance based on feedback/ reflective learning.	3.75	0.76	HE
5	Employ one’s skills in a way that is attractive to employers or clients.	3.93	0.87	HE
6	Identify and choose the best opportunities for advancement in terms of geography, projects and role.	3.43	0.67	ME
7	Be familiar with the opportunities and threats that exist in the business and also recognize factors that are critical for success.	3.33	0.65	ME
8	Create an enabling environment using strategic personal and professional relationships for smooth transactions	3.43	0.69	ME
9	Persevere when things are not working out as anticipated	3.22	0.85	ME
10	Employ good time management in executing tasks	3.34	0.76	ME
Grand Mean		3.59		HE

Results of analysis in Table 4 showed that items 31,32, 33, 34 and 35 on career management skills listed above revealed are required on a high extent, while items 36, 37, 38, 39 and 40 showed they are required on a moderate by employers of business education graduates for effective performance in organizations. The grand mean of 3.59 showed, that on the whole, career management skills are required to a high extent by employers of business education graduates for effective performance in business organizations. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range showing the respondents are not wide apart in their ratings.

Null Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of managers with high, medium and low capital baseon career management skills required by employers of business education graduates for effective performance.

This null hypothesis was tested using ANOVA and at 0.05 level of significance and the summary of the results are presented in Table 7.

Table 2: Summary of one – way analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the mean of managers with low, medium and high capital based in Nasarawa State in ratings of career management skills required by employers of business education graduates for effective performance in organizations

Sources of Variance						
Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-cal	F-tab	Inference
Between Groups	4987.317	2	2493.659	28.010	3.02	Significant
Within Groups	26440.869	297	89.026			
Total	31428.187	299				

The result of the ANOVA presented in Table 8 shows that the F-cal. (28.010) is greater than the F-tab. (3.02) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there was a significant difference in the opinion of low, medium and high capital base managers in their mean ratings on career management skills required by employers of business education graduates for effective performance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Discussion and Findings

Findings of the fourth research question on the extent of career management skills required by employers of business education graduates for effective performance in business organization revealed that career management skills are required to a high extent for effective performance in business organizations. This is in line with the findings of Jarvis (2003) which revealed that career management skills are required to equip graduates in making the right occupational choice. Jarvis further stated that career management skills are required of business graduates to make the myriad choices with which adults are confronted continuously in all aspects of their lives.

In support of the foregoing view, Sanders (2003) pointed out that career management skills such as personal management, learning and work exploration and life/work building are demanded by employers of labour from graduates. Sanders further stated that university education needs to emphasize the development of students' career management skills to enable them fit into job roles and succeed for employment on graduation. Also, while technical and job-specific skills have sufficed in the past, it is now increasingly being accepted that workers in the future may require more comprehensive set of career management skills that are not occupation-specific but transferable across all facets of life and work. The economic value, to the individual and the nation as a whole, a work force to equip with these career management skills cannot be underestimated and their development cannot be left to chance.

Furthermore, the test of the fourth hypothesis showed that there was a significant difference in the opinions of low (mean = 29.61), medium (mean = 39.25) and high (mean = 40.29) capital base managers in their mean ratings on career management skills required by employers of business education graduates for effective performance. The findings of this study are related to the study of Al-Mutairi, Naser and Saied (2014) which revealed that employers of labour differ on the types of skills required of their employees. Al-Mutairi, et al. further stated that managers of business organizations differ on the level of importance attached to graduates knowledge, soft skills and ability to work within groups.

Conclusion

In the light of the findings of this study, it could be concluded that for effective performance of business education graduates in business organizations, generic skills, discipline specific skills, and career management skills are required to a high extent while emotional intelligence skills is required to a moderate extent. Therefore, it becomes imperative for business education students to be equipped with these employability skills to enable them gain employment on graduation and perform efficiently in their job role.

Recommendations

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

- Human resource managers and curriculum designers should develop appropriate curriculum that will enable business education graduates to enhance their performance. This will help to reduce unemployment rate.
- Managers of organizations should support tertiary institutions by engaging in the students proactive industrial training activities so as to enable them imbibe and apply their skills creatively.
- Managers should continuously update themselves with the technological changes and new job skills in the market place and make it known to curriculum designers to ensure that relevant skills are regularly renewed, in order not to be obsolete.

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