

The Role of Teaching-Learning Process in Employment of Graduates of University of Gitwe

MBARAGA Eliezer

The University of Gitwe

Faculty of education

Abstract

Background

The expansion of higher education is viewed as the harbour of economic growth by equipping with graduate possessing a set of skills and/or competencies that enable him or her to compete and secure employment, whether in formal employment, self-employment. However, employability still remains a critical issue for both government and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). With the expansion in HE and recent economic downturn, there is intense competition for jobs. This study intends to assess the role of teaching- learning in the employability of graduates of the University of Gitwe.

Materials and methods

The target population of this study was 1722 composed of 65 staff members of the University of Gitwe, 1577 students and 80 Ruhango District JADF organisational members. This population was sampled according to Yamane formula. The study was therefore administered to a sample of 325 using questionnaire and interview. The analysis of the data was based on descriptive statistics and linear regression.

Results

Descriptive analysis indicated the perception of respondents regarding learning and teaching process in University of Gitwe, the researcher found that School program, Laboratory equipment, use of books, teaching aids and learning environment play a big role in teaching and learning process while technical skills, personal management skills, teamwork skills, leadership and management skills and Entrepreneurship skills contribute to the employability of graduates of the University of Gitwe. Using linear regression, it was found that teaching-learning and employability of graduates are significantly correlated at 96%.

Conclusion and recommendation

Though the results revealed that Teaching-learning plays a big role in the employability of graduates of the University of Gitwe, graduates deprive their platform of their innovation and lack some infrastructures. There is a need for government to intervene to ensure effective teaching-learning and employability of University graduates.

Keywords: Employability, Teaching-learning

Introduction

The University has seen a massive expansion over the past decades. It generates significant and multiple direct, indirect and catalytic economic impacts which result in well-established benefits pertaining to both individuals and wider economies. The University has characteristics similar to other industries in having a sizeable portion of demand that is both domestic and international.

The international component is given a growing prominence by increasing international students and academic faculty, academic and business research collaborations, and for some countries, makes a sizeable contribution to exports and GDP (British Council, 2012).

The economic indicators are achieved through the development of the human resource, therefore, investing resources in the form of adequate teachers, logistics, infrastructure and teaching and learning materials is fundamental to the growth and development of the potentials, competencies, abilities, capabilities, attitudes and values of people for better life (Levy & al., 2007). From this perspective, education can be viewed as the heart of Human Resource Development, which plays a considerable and corrective function in complementary with the socio-economic underpinning of a country (Owusu & Asamoah, 2015). It is in this regard the world in general and every country, in particular, adopts different means to achieve development through education.

Traditionally, universities had major two functions: to prepare the elite to govern the nation and to provide an institutional basis for research into all forms of knowledge (Jarvis, 2010). Employability refers to a new graduate possessing a set of skills and/or competencies that enable him or her to compete and secure employment, whether in formal employment, self-employment or any career (Harvey L., 2003). Besides the skills, employability also includes various attributes and experiences obtained through higher level learning where prerequisite knowledge and skills at lower levels are important (Harvey L., 2001). This paper focuses on the skills and attributes in relation to the formal employment of HEIs graduates. Barrick and Bush (1987) state that employability comprises attributes besides technical skills (skills required for the accomplishment of a specific task) that makes employees an asset to employers.

Given the current state of the labour market, HEIs now need to focus on employability and prepare students for work (King, 2003), because this is demanded by the government, industries, higher education agencies and researchers (Mason & al., 2009). Employability is also of immediate concern to students. This is because by attending university, students not only acquire in-depth subject knowledge but also their employment prospects are enhanced (King, 2003). In this context, many countries worldwide have been paying increased attention to skills development in higher education, since these prepare graduates for the world of work (Tran & Swierczek, 2009).

Studies have explored the connection between the enterprise education in universities and subsequent employability and career development and identified a clear link between individual learning and institutional integration of enterprise, personal and career development (Rae, 2007). Challenges faced in this integration include academic management, academic culture, and perceptions of employers, institutional experience and expectations and behaviour of students. The study by Rae (2007) suggests the need to increase the interactions between university students, faculty, and employers using innovative learning methods which include both curricular and extra-curricular activities.

As far as Africa is concerned, higher education is considered as the key to economic growth. For years the emphasis has been put on primary and secondary education and it seemed as if higher education was neglected, and this was due to the fact that it was not evident how poverty reduction would be impacted by tertiary education. The World Bank (2008) suggests that by raising the level of education and its quality, countries in Sub-Saharan Africa may be able to stimulate innovation, promote the diversification of products and services, and maximise returns from capital assets through more efficient allocation and management. Nevertheless, research has proved the greater role of higher education in economic development than previously thought (Bloom & al., 2014). For instance, the results of the study on the assessment of the university students' skill acquisition for employability in cross river state Nigeria showed that the level of university student's skill acquisition for employability is significantly low.

Conventional university students do not differ significantly from those in specialised university in their skill acquisition for employability. It was concluded that university students' skill acquisition for employment is significantly low (Uchendu, 2015).

However, the products of Universities in this 21st century appear to be skill deficiency that is they lack basic skills such as entrepreneurship skills, communication skills, personal management skills, teamwork skills, computer literacy skill, and leadership skills among others. Thus, they lack what it takes to provide employment for themselves and others.

This has given rise to producing students who are more of job seekers and dependence on others for survival. The result of this type of education (training) has been a high level of unemployment. It increases every year because of the number of graduates that enters the labour market and the unemployment rate has increased from 21 percent in 2010 to 24 percent in 2011 (Muslim, 2013).

In the tracer study of graduates from higher learning institutions (HLIS) and employers' satisfaction of graduates' competencies among employees, 35.3% said graduates lacked practical skills, and 17.7% identified lack of language proficiency especially in English. Only 66.9% said they were satisfied with the graduates' competency in general knowledge. One cannot divorce the relationship between employment type and the concept of employability (HEC, 2015) which is controversial to the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2008-2012 which shows that the number of public and private institutions and students has been rising significantly over the last decade; however, enrolments in higher education in Rwanda is still low in comparison to regional and international standards (MINEDUC, 2008). Given that the tracer report 2014 shows that the quality of higher education is critical to the job market, this proves that the situation evolved less efficiently than it was expected.

Employability is a critical issue for both government and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). With the expansion in HE and recent economic downturn, there is intense competition for jobs in the graduate employment market. The critical challenge for Rwanda is how best to provide strategically the workforce needed to strengthen economic development, this because higher education prepares a quality of workforce by offering instructional programs, matching instruction to needs of job creation and helping individuals learn through their lives. To overcome this challenge, Rwanda has seen that increasing the access and the quality of higher education was the priority (MINECOFIN, 2007).

Materials and Methods

The research design that was used in this study was a descriptive case study. It was used to examine the situation and ensure the reliability of the information from the findings of the matter arising which is assessing the role of teaching -learning process in the employment of graduates of the University of Gitwe. Data for this study was collected from the population is distributed in different clusters namely: 65 staff members of UG, 1577 students of UG and 80 members of Ruhango District JADF.

In this research, the sample size is determined based on Yamane's formula (1967) that proposed the confidence level of 95% and the margin error of 5%. Therefore the formula is computed as follows $n = \frac{N}{1 + \frac{N(e)^2}{4}}$. With n =Sample size; N = Population of the study; and e = Level of precision. This formula is the one that was used by the researcher in the determination of the sample size of this study. Thus the sample size (n) of this study was approximately $= \frac{1722}{1 + \frac{1722(0.05)^2}{4}} = 324.9 \approx 325$. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select respondents. The tools of data collection instruments used in this study were: documentation, questionnaire and interview. After data collection, the researcher used SPSS 20 to analyse data. He used descriptive statistics and linear regression to assess the relationship existing between teaching –learning and employment of graduates.

Results

Using descriptive statistics indicating the perception of respondents regarding learning and teaching process in University of Gitwe, the researcher found that school program, Laboratory equipment, use of books, teaching aids and learning environment play a big role in teaching and learning process while technical skills, personal management skills, teamwork skills, leadership and management skills and entrepreneurship skills contribute to the employability of graduates of the University of Gitwe. Using linear regression, it was found that there was a significant correlation between the indicators of the independent variable and dependent variable.

Table 1: Perception of teaching-learning process in University of Gitwe

		Very inadequate	Inadequate	Moderate	Adequate	Very Adequate	Total	Mean
School program	Fr	13	24	62	116	110	325	3.97
	%	4.00%	7.40%	19.10%	35.70%	33.80%	100.0%	79.4%
Laboratory equipment	Fr	16	29	44	119	117	325	3.93
	%	4.90%	8.90%	13.50%	36.60%	36.00%	100.0%	78.6%
Use of Books	Fr	23	24	43	116	119	325	3.83
	%	4.30%	5.20%	15.10%	38.80%	36.60%	100.0%	76.6%
Teaching aids	Fr	16	20	47	119	123	325	3.90
	%	4.90%	6.20%	14.50%	36.60%	37.80%	100.0%	78.0%
Learning environment	Fr	11	18	59	123	114	325	4.10
	%	3.40%	5.50%	18.20%	37.80%	35.10%	100.0%	81.9%

Source: Researcher

In Table1, the research revealed that the school program is adequate as it was scored at 79.4%. The respondents argued that. Laboratory equipment is adequate in teaching-learning process at 78.6%. The respondents indicated that the use of books contributed to the teaching-learning process at 76.6%. The adequacy of teaching aids was scored 78.0%. The learning environment plays a big role in the teaching-learning process in the University of Gitwe at 81.9%.

Table 2: Perception on employability of graduates from university of Gitwe

		Very inadequate	Inadequate	Moderate	Adequate	Very Adequate	Total	Mean
Technical skills	Fr	12	25	42	126	120	325	4.07
	%	6.50%	10.50%	13.80%	33.50%	35.70%	100.0%	81.4%
Work ethics	Fr	8	13	57	123	124	325	4.04
	%	4.00%	5.20%	18.80%	35.10%	36.90%	100.0%	80.7%
Teamwork skills	Fr	6	12	55	124	128	325	4.03
	%	4.00%	7.40%	19.10%	35.70%	33.80%	100.0%	80.7%
Leadership and management skills	Fr	6	11	56	125	127	325	4.06
	%	4.90%	8.90%	13.50%	36.60%	36.00%	100.0%	81.3%
Entrepreneurship skills	Fr	6	8	58	127	126	325	4.12
	%	3.40%	5.50%	18.20%	37.80%	35.10%	100.0%	82.4%

Source: Researcher

Regarding the perception of respondents on the employment of graduates of the University of Gitwe, Table2 demonstrated that technical skills are adequate at 81.4%. Respondents argued that work ethics contribute to the employability of graduates of the University of Gitwe at 80.7%. The respondents indicated that teamwork skills contributed to employability at 80.7%. It was revealed that leadership and management skills play an important role at 81.3% while Entrepreneurship skills are adequate at 82.4%.

Table 3: Correlation between teaching-learning process and employability of graduates

	Times		Technical skills	Work Ethics	Teamwork skills	Leadership and management skills	Entrepreneurship skills	General mean
School programs	Ratio		0.98	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.96	
	Percent		98%	98%	99%	98%	96%	
Laboratory equipment	Ratio		0.97	0.97	0.98	0.97	0.95	
	Percent		97%	97%	98%	97%	95%	
Books	Ratio		0.96	0.96	0.97	0.96	0.94	
	Percent		96%	96%	97%	96%	94%	
Teaching aids	Ratio		0.96	0.97	0.97	0.96	0.95	
	percent		96%	97%	97%	96%	95%	
Learning environment	Ratio		0.97	0.97	0.98	0.97	0.95	
	percent		97%	97%	98%	97%	95%	
General mean	Ratio		0.96	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.95	0.96
	percent		96%	97%	97%	97%	95%	96%

Source: Researcher

According to Table3, the teaching learning aspects such as School programs, laboratory equipment, Books, Teaching aids, the learning environment is correlated with technical skills at 96%. The teaching-learning process is correlated with work ethics, teamwork skills and leadership and management skills at 97% while the Entrepreneurship skills and teaching-learning aspects are correlated at 95%. Generally, teaching-learning process and employability are significantly correlated at 96% which proves that teaching- learning activities play a great role in the employment of graduates of the University of Gitwe.

Discussion

This research on the role of teaching-learning process in the employability of graduates from the University of Gitwe revealed that teaching-learning is strongly correlated with employability of graduates from the University of Gitwe. This association can be due to the fact that students perform enough practical courses enabling them to perform successfully their jobs. Due to rigorous internship carried out in big organisations of Rwanda. Like other Graduates from Higher education institutions, the computer science management Graduates from UG face the problem of unemployment due to few job opportunities or lack of capital enabling them to run their own business. Furthermore, the outcome from the University of Gitwe especially those who graduated in General Nursing are the most employed by both public and private institutions because they perform efficiently. This is due to the fact that students in this area perform enough practical courses enabling them to perform successfully their jobs.

The role of teachers cannot be ignored in the employment of graduates because they take the lead providing necessary skills for the labor market. The role of the university programs (curricula) was rated at 84.7%. This score mainly results from the fact that the curriculum of the university adapted to the reality of the labour market. The Remoteness of school was a conducive environment for students because they focused on their studies and keep them out different distracters which played a big role in the employment of graduates. Sharing information about the reality of the job market. Generally, it is obvious that the experience plays a big role in the effective performance of job because it reflects the reality of job environment.

However, the University of Gitwe faces different challenges related to inadequate infrastructures where the lack of modern roads affects the transport means of students and the staff. The lack of modern hospitals affects students of medical sciences who travel away of Gitwe to carry out practices. In addition to this, the Graduates especially the computer science and engineers face the problem of finding the market of their products and services. Furthermore, despite the high-quality teaching-learning delivered by the institution.

Conclusion

Teaching-learning process plays a big role in the employment of graduates of the University of Gitwe. This is due to the fact that the institution avail all patterns favouring employability such as School programs Laboratory equipment, books teaching aids, learning environment. The employability of graduates is perceptible in different skills and behaviour such as Technical skills work ethics, teamwork skills, leadership and management skills and Entrepreneurship skills. However, the graduates face the problem of the lack of infrastructure and limited to the market of their products and services.

Recommendations

- i. The District of Ruhango should work hand in hand with the Ministry of Infrastructures namely: to build a modern road from Ruhango via Gitwe to make this area more accessible to both students and lecturers of UG to construct a macadamized road to facilitate the accessibility to the school.
- ii. There is a need for the University of Gitwe to build a partnership with different institutions which are in need of recruiting competent staff. The University should mobilise financial institutions to grant loans to Graduates who need to be self-employed and promote a platform for graduates' innovation which enables to win market of their products.

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